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MEET MATTHEW RAY

The interim superintendent of Omaha Public Schools plans to build relationships, maintain previous commitments and guide the district through a time of transition

Jane McGill
arts and culture editor

The man tasked with leading Omaha Public Schools over the upcoming school year can't go very far in one of its school buildings without running into someone from his past. On the windswept Tuesday afternoon we met in the library of Central High School, he made it about 20 feet.

Debbie Galusha first met Matthew Ray in the late '90s when he was a fresh-faced elementary teacher just out of the University of Nebraska-Omaha's College of Education. He was one of six young teachers she hired for City Sprouts, a summer science education program for disadvantaged students she led at the time. "He had a lot of joy and excitement about teaching," recalled Galusha. "He was very easygoing but with a great sense of responsibility."

City Sprouts was one of Ray's first teaching experiences, but the two had not spoken in years before he ran into her while she was tutoring a group of algebra students, and he was on his way to speak with me. "Who would have ever guessed this was going to happen?" asked a beaming Galusha. "Not me!" exclaimed Ray.

Ray began at UNO studying criminal justice with hopes of becoming a park ranger, but his career aspirations changed dramatically after he

sparked an interest in elementary education. "It was my first experience doing observations as an undergraduate," explained Ray. "Seeing that click when students get new information or a concept comes into play, seeing that recognition, that was where my passion was."

Those undergraduate observations at Columbia Elementary, where Ray's three children would later attend, spelled the beginning of a 26-year career in Omaha Public Schools. He started as a student teacher at Ashland Park Robins Elementary, then spent a semester as a substitute teacher across the district, before returning to Ashland Park Robins to teach fifth grade for four years.

He left the classroom to become a student personnel assistant at the TAC building, worked on the Infinite Campus implementation, served as a student due process hearing officer, and later became the district's chief of staff, secretary to the OPS Board of Education, and then briefly became deputy superintendent prior to his appointment as interim superintendent for the 2023-2024 school year.

When meeting Ray, the personal qualities that allowed him to rise through the ranks of the district are plain to see. He's good-humored and sincere, possessing the kind of industrious character you would want in your group for a class project. But he can also be conspicuously



Student walkout protests anti-trans legislation

Haylon Sipe
contributing writer

Omaha Central High School students organized a walkout on Trans Day of Visibility March 31. The event was developed by Noa Gilbert and Charlie Yale in response to Nebraska legislative bills LB574 and LB575.

LB574 would ban gender-affirming care for youth under the age of 19, and LB575 is a bill focused on education that would ban trans youth from participating on the sports teams that align with their gender identity, and bans them from using the locker rooms and facilities that align with their gender identity.

The walkout also happened in conjunction with events organized all over the country by Queer Youth Assemble for Transgender Day of Visibility. The Day of Visibility is an event that started in 2009 to recognize transgender people and raise awareness for their struggles.

Gilbert was present at the first round hearing in Lincoln March 23 in which LB574 was advanced forward to a second round of votes. After meeting with Yale, they had decided that the students at Central needed to have their voice heard.

"I was really devastated and heartbroken at how much pain and hurt these bills cause," Gilbert said.

The two organizers believe that bills such as LB574 and LB575 are ones that are pushing young people out of Nebraska. They created the walkout to send a message to transgender students in Omaha that they are loved and seen, with a community that cares and will fight for them. Gilbert said another important point of the walkout was to have Nebraska's representatives realize that the young voices of the state matter.

"A really strong message we can send is that we are young people, we are opposed to this bill, and we don't want to stay in Nebraska when bills like this come forth," they said.

The walkout was arranged to take place on Dodge Street. Speakers were organized for the event, and included students Jane McGill, Aiden Whalen, Jade Watson, Grayson Shuler-Morgan and Harley Lawton. The Nebraska Executive Director of Planned Parenthood North Central States Andi Curry Grubb also spoke.



Sophie Youngs | The Register

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Matthew Ray seeks peace for OPS Central opens student prayer space

SUPERINTENDENT from page 1

reserved, sheepishly telling the Register's photographer how he finds it difficult to smile on command for photos.

Ray's calm demeanor is at odds with a district that has often felt consumed by chaos as it weathers the lasting effects of the pandemic, staffing shortages, rising student poverty and declining test scores. Over his upcoming year as OPS' interim superintendent, Ray hopes to bring his sense of peace to the school system he will lead.

"I think of Shalom," Ray said of his leadership philosophy. "This idea that how we lead brings peace to an organization. How we interact with each other, how we problem-solve, brings peace. Despite everything else that's happening, what's most important is the students in the classroom and their experience in the Omaha Public Schools."

Since the leadership transition from Dr. Cheryl Logan officially began on April 1, daily life for Ray has become a whirlwind of meetings with administrators, citizens and stakeholders in preparation for him taking the district's reins. "I don't sleep as well as I once did," Ray said. "So many things are going through your mind and you're responsible for all of it."

Our conversation in the sunlit library office was sandwiched between a debriefing on the consent agenda for the next school board meeting and his first official meeting with the Omaha Education Association, the OPS teachers' union, as interim superintendent.

Ray's greatest trial as interim will be handling OPS' ongoing teacher shortage, a crisis he acknowledged is likely to worsen with another wave of resignations expected at the end of the school year. "If I had the answer [to the teacher shortage] I could probably sell it to every school district," Ray said. "What's important for the organization to understand is that we're all recruiters. It's not just [Human Resources] that recruits employees. As a former sub, I know how important how you treat substitute teachers is. It's all about that connection and understanding that everybody, from the students we serve to the staff, we're all recruiters for the Omaha Public Schools."

Ray said that he hopes to improve relations between teachers and district administration during his tenure. "It's important to me in this transition year that we include staff in district initiatives at the beginning, rather than in the middle or at the end. Staff has to be involved in the creation rather than responding to something that's already been created."

Building upon the district's relationship with the OPS teachers union is instrumental to Ray's hopes of increasing teacher retention. "OEA's success is our success," Ray said. "The district's success is OEA's success, which is students' success. We're

all connected in that common mission."

In many ways, Ray's year as interim will exist in the shadow of Logan's leadership of OPS. The district's planning for the 2023-2024 school year is nearly complete, said Ray, with the formation of those initiatives being overseen by Logan prior to her departure. With the school year already plotted out, much of Ray's tenure will be dedicated to implementing unfinished initiatives launched by Logan. In fact, according to Ray, the success of his tenure as interim superintendent could very well be measured by how little you notice it. "The goal is not to see a difference," Ray said. "That everything's maintained, we're moving forwards as planned, and we're keeping the commitments we have."

While Ray reaffirmed his commitment to the implementation of Career Academies and Pathways, he said that changes to the program are inevitable as more data on its effect on student achievement is collected. "There should be some time to reflect on what's happened and what's not happened," Ray said. "Dr. Logan laid out a plan, it's not just her plan, it's the district's plan, it will move on without her; it will move on with my support. As we get more information and learn more about things that are working or not working, we'll have to absolutely adjust."

In an unusual move, the OPS school board is allowing Ray to apply for the permanent superintendent position, opening up the possibility for him to lead the district for longer than just one school year. But, for the time being, Ray remains tight-lipped about whether he plans to apply. "My focus right now is this transition with Dr. Logan and making sure that the district is ready for the start of the next school year," he said. "When the Board posts the superintendent position, it will be a discussion with my family to decide if it's something I want to do."

If there is one attribute that makes Ray uniquely suited to the superintendency, it is the depth and breadth of his experiences in OPS, the kind of personal history that makes it impossible to walk into a school building without having spirited reunions with old mentors.

A school district as large and complex as OPS can be experienced in a manifold of different ways by students, parents, teachers and administrators. At various times in his life, Ray has occupied every one of those positions. As he prepares for the superintendency of Nebraska's largest school district, he said that his experience as the father of three OPS students, all of whom graduated from Central, continues to shape his outlook.

"To experience the school district as a parent is so valuable," Ray said. "You can relate to students and their parents and how they experience the school district. I have experienced the Omaha Public Schools from all angles, and it gives me a different insight into everything."

Isabel Hoiberg

staff writer

After many years of trying, the 2022-2023 school year is the first time a prayer space has been open to all Central students.

"We as an EL department have had students who have wanted to pray for the last five years. In the past we have used our office as a prayer space for them out of respect and freedom of religion, something all students should have access to," EL department head Megan Kaminski-Doloto said. "However, for the past couple of years, we have been advocating that this should be for the whole building, not just a small select group of students that know us and are comfortable expressing that they want to pray."

I had the opportunity to talk to four Muslim students who actively participate in the prayer room: Asia Mohammadi, Malene Hussaninkhel, Fawzia Mohammadi and Masdoora Abdullah.

They moved to Omaha from Afghanistan almost two years ago because of the Taliban.

"The Taliban took [over] our country, that is why there is no school for girls and the girls cannot continue their education so that is why we come here," Asia Mohammadi said.

Their first year here, Hussaninkhel said, "We did not have space for prayer, so we did pray in Ms. Kaminski's office."

After a long year of struggling to find a designated space for students to express their religious beliefs, Central dedicated the women's locker room, by the old weight room, as a prayer space.

"At school there is a different time for the prayer, so

in the school it is 12:30," said Fawzia Mohammadi. "We pray in the women's locker [room], that is the space for our prayers."

Though, the women's locker room was not administration's first choice of the prayer room.

"They started doing it in the main office/conference room and they found it was overwhelming and they did not have anyone leading it, so they asked me to take over again. So now we have 25 to 40 students coming in to pray every afternoon," Kaminski-Doloto said.

The girls agreed that they had not experienced religious discrimination other than some looks from other students.

"I think they are so good; they respect our religion and when it the time for pray all teachers respect and say you can go. Some students do not respect, but we are so happy for our teachers," Hussaninkhel said. "Before the prayers you have to do washings, so we go to the bathroom and people are laughing because they didn't know it."

The girls also agreed that, if someone asks about what they are doing, they will happily inform them of their religious customs.

Kaminski-Doloto thinks there is always room for growth and improvement.

"Religion is tricky because that is not part of public education, but I feel like there should be space to talk about how we can include student's religion into the process whether or not we are educating students on religion, but making sure they feel welcome to practice their religion here," Kaminski-Doloto said.

Exist Green offers path for Omahans venturing into a sustainable lifestyle

Millie Jackson

contributing writer

Exist Green in Dundee opened in May of 2019 and sells eco-friendly alternatives to products ranging from market goods to fresh produce. The founder, Leigh Neary, spent years developing and perfecting the idea. Exist Green aims to encourage a transition to a sustainable lifestyle.

Neary expressed her support of Central's new Green Team, saying it's a great way for people to start thinking about their footprint. "It's not just what bin you throw something in, it's thinking about what you're throwing in the bin," Neary said.

"When you're trying to reduce waste, you don't have to buy everything new and we try to encourage that," Manager Mary Range said.

Neary was inspired while working as an environmental engineer in Northern California. She found many role models like Bea Johnson, who wrote a book called "Zero Waste Home," which inspired Neary to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

While adopting the lifestyle, Neary picked up on some of the inconveniences. It was very difficult to access a way to try a recipe or product without buying large quantities. This struggle inspired Neary to help people get only what they need in situations like these, which lead to the opening of Exist Green.

Neary said that shopping sustainably has many benefits. Not only can one reduce their impact on the earth, but they can also experience health benefits. "Shopping sustainably is often times also associated with health benefits because people aren't exposing

themselves to the hormone disruptors and carcinogens in a lot of products," Neary said.

Neary said the business doesn't green wash its products, which is when a business fakes an eco-friendly policy or product for profit. Many "eco" stores and options have misleading ingredients or packaging. Exist Green takes donations of refillable glass jars and containers for new customers to use for free and continue to use on following visits. They also sell new reusable jars and containers. Other packaging is compostable or reusable. "I think people can come here and have the trust in us that we have done the research for them," Neary said.

Exist Green is tailored to help people get only what they need. Instead of having to order an item online, being unsure if it fits a shopper's standards, they can go into the store to test out and pick from many options.

Exist Green also has local and fresh produce, which draws many into a sustainable lifestyle. "We want to help guide people to live more sustainably," Neary said. "You might be ready to have a bamboo toothbrush, and then see some of our period care products or things that you didn't even know were an option."

Many people point out that a sustainable lifestyle is expensive, or inaccessible. "The misconception is that sustainable living is only for a certain kind of person, but really these options are for everybody," Neary said. Exist Green has competitive pricing with many large corporations. Many organic herbs and spices at Walmart are up to 70 percent more than what they are at Exist Green. For example, 0.64 ounces of rosemary at Exist Green is \$0.96, and at Walmart it is \$3.45, while 0.72 ounces of dill at Exist Green is \$2.30, and \$5.18 at Walmart.

I am thrilled to present the sixth and final 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, to keep up with current stories and events. We are also active on Instagram at @chs.register and Twitter at @chsregister. Thank you for your continued support and reading of The Register.

Shyla Youngs
Editor-in-Chief



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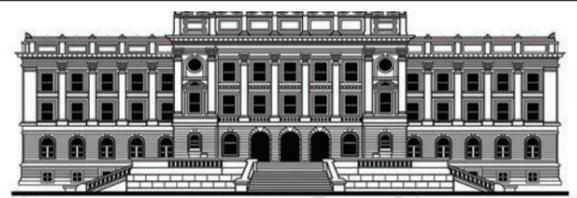
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It is the goal of the Central High Register to represent the student body in issues affecting their lives as young people and students. If you feel that we are not covering an issue that is important to you, we welcome contributing writers who bring 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 or come to room 029 to discuss your idea.



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OMAHA CENTRAL HIGH

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Students uncover North Omaha history through Making Invisible Histories Visible

Chlöe Johnson
staff writer

Everyone who lives in Omaha is aware of the stark differences between West Omaha, Northeast and South Omaha. Because these differences are so normalized, it is easy to assume things have always been this way. However, last summer, a few Central students joined other high schoolers in uncovering that this is far from true.

These students took part in the Omaha Public Schools program Making Invisible Histories Visible, which selects around a dozen OPS honors high schoolers to create free online educational resources on forgotten Omaha history since 2010. The selected students, along with some UNO history majors, meet at UNO for a week in the summer. They are taught to interview community members, visit museums, read historic maps, and use library archives of newspapers in order to paint holistic pictures of what life was like in the past.

Each summer high schooler who meets a GPA requirement can apply to join this week-long program that has a different focus each year. "Somehow every summer they have found something new that is unknown in Omaha history and because [of that] it made me more interested in history. I am taking an extra history elective this year," said senior Bailey Peters, who has participated in the program since before her freshman year.

Last year's focus was the golden era of the 1950s-1960s for North 24th Street, a historically Black business district. Each student was given a block to research and create an interactive map of. The information they found was then used to create free curriculums on redlining for teachers to use. The idea is if a picture can be painted of North Omaha as a successful district at one time, then systemic issues, not people, become the clear cause of poverty in North Omaha today.

Without factual historical explanations, racist ideas become more accepted, "And they are kind of not being taught—but spoken out west," Peters explained.

Not only is the information powerful, but the tangibility of the places and people makes this information more likely to be remembered.

One Central sophomore, Kaleciana Perry, not only took part in this educational program, but wrote her own book, "Why The Black Man Cries," on her personal journey to understand Black history at its root, rather than the start of

American slavery. Perry is also uniquely tied to North 24th as her mother was a cheer captain at Elks Hall, the famous social hall of this time.

Her block was Pratt to Spaulding, a stretch once known for its locally owned industrial supply stores. She has observed the effects of redlining today firsthand, beginning with the high rates of crime in her neighborhood.

"Law enforcement is not quick to go on a case," Perry said. However, Perry quickly learned that her neighborhood did not always have a negative reputation.

"Lakes Street had Elks Hall, they had the Ritz Theater, I mean they were popular. And people didn't like that. And essentially, they wanted to destroy this place, they didn't want Black people becoming prominent. Over time these businesses started deteriorating and people started moving out"

Perry also used individual stories from the community to fully illustrate her report, "Basically, back on Spaulding there was like this window washing shop that used to be there. It was owned by this lady named Ms. Olsen, and her business burned down. Buildings like this were not able to afford insurance because of redlining, so they were not able to get their business back."

When asked about new investment in North Omaha, Perry suggests that changemakers look at the whole historical picture and have patience for the tide to turn. "Here we've had to work for everything. We had it taken away. We've had to rebuild it, and we are just getting back on our feet."

Peters grew up in the suburbs of West Omaha, an outside background that she says made this past summer so much more educational. "I had one African American kid in my third-grade class," Peters remembers. A community of little diversity led to views on diverse communities initially being shaped by the descriptions of others. An early memory of North Omaha is of her grandmother warning her, "Oh, those are bad parts of town. Don't go near them. Don't go in them."

However, Peters adds, "I was never explained why things are this way."

Those like Peters, who were not from the area had a slightly different role in the project. "We took on a role as listening for a while and then we were able to share what we found," Peters said.

What she found was community whose thriving was despite redlining, which categorized American cities into areas depending based on resources, populations of color, and



Photo Courtesy of MAKING INVISIBLE HISTORIES VISIBLE

each other," Peters said. "It killed a bunch of the businesses to put in a Safeway and it killed a bunch of the businesses, and it was only there for a year. All the businesses started shutting down one by one and people who were not putting money into the community just because they didn't see it as a good opportunity—they wanted to put it into out west."

When the dominoes began falling, community members who were able to afford inflated suburban home prices decided to move west. This dragged the downward spiral further as these were also the group with most means to reinvest in the community, leaving mostly working-class people in North Omaha.

Despite being a generally outgoing person, Peters says she appreciates holding back from sharing more now. "I am more inclined to want to listen to other people's stories," she said. The listening piece of this program helped to deconstruct the subconscious bias that is inherent in a segregated city. Both Central students expressed that they hoped through further incorporation of their research into OPS history curriculums, other students can be proactive about their own bias as well. When asked about her current history classes, Peters reflected.

"The word redlining was brought up, but I just never realized how much it pertained to me."

"It came into pay that people couldn't refuse to sell to people based on their skin color, but what they could do is up prices and refuse loans pretty easily," Peters said.

The ironically positive result was a high concentration of African American, as well as Jewish homes and businesses in northeast Omaha. "It was all of these people who needed dentists, grocery store, places for fun. All in one little area. There was a lot of lawyers, there was a dentist, there was a lot of clubs. We had big names coming in for concerts," Peters said.

Peters' block was Patrick Street to Spaulding Street, home to the only still-running Black Omaha newspaper, The Omaha Star, which began operating in 1938.

"The main newspapers were not publishing what was happening. That's why the Omaha Star was started. African American people and Jewish people, there were not getting good press," Peters said.

The good press that was missing was that of a community full not only of economic growth, but also full of empathy. "24th Street was lined with businesses and it was mainly people in the community, and when one business would open, many people in the community would pay for advertisements or congratulation messages in the paper, and so it was people in that community supporting

movie, football games, basketball games, cheerleaders... things that are usual for you all are going to be the coolest thing for me. When I came, I was like, Oh my god, they even have lockers like in the movies."

If she were to use one word to describe her experience, it would have to be "ephemeral."

"Even though I was here a whole year, I had so much fun that time flew and now it's already almost May," she said. "It doesn't make sense."

Caterina Ponti, a senior, is also a foreign exchange student. Ponti is from Perugia, a city in Italy where she also previously attended school.

High school in Italy is five years, and throughout this period classes never change. The people you learn with stay the same as well as your teachers. In this way, most of your friends are classmates.

Additionally, there's a variety of high schools to pick from. These schools are subject schools, which have core classes (English, Math, Science, and History) along with a focus topic of choice. Caterina goes to a general high school without a particular focal point. Even so, she stated this has drawbacks. Like in Spain, school in Italy heavily focuses on the student part of being a student.

"Once you choose your school you can't choose your classes," she said. "We don't have journalism class, we don't have art class, we don't have pottery class, or all these other fun classes. It's just about academics."

A class she extremely enjoyed was history. When learning about the past, one is often only exposed to a singular perspective—the one of their country. By attending school in the United States, Caterina was able to get both sides of the story.

"It actually was interesting to see

history from a different perspective since I studied things from a European perspective," she said. "It opens your mind."

Her favorite thing specific to Central is its diversity, which is something the school is known for in the district.

"I would love to spend all my years here, seeing so many different people, so many cultures," she said. "They're free to be what they want to. I feel like in Italy it's not that easy, so I like that there's freedom."

Jamison Baker, a sophomore, is a transfer student who resided in Iowa. He previously attended school in South Sioux City. Baker has only been a student at Central for roughly two months, but he likes it so far. What particularly stands out to him is the scenery. Central was built with its intended purpose being the location of the state capitol. n amazing view from any place in the building. As for similarities with his old school, there aren't many.

"It's very different," he said. "Lunch is the same, the grading is the same, but the teachers are not."

South Sioux City had an extremely strict regimen to adhere to, where individuals could not be late, and could not use their phones without significant consequences, among other things.

Because of this, he sees Central as "comfortable" due to its easier, more relaxing atmosphere.

Upon integrating into the school, one of the first things he was curious about was the sports program, which he now believes to be "way better than South Sioux."

As an avid tri-athlete in football, baseball, and wrestling, Baker cannot wait to participate and contribute to the teams the following season. He has had the opportunity to talk to the coaches and has mentioned how good he thinks they are.

Walkout includes speakers

WALKOUT from page 1

Whalen, who was contacted by Gilbert and Yale through Central's Student Progressives, performed poetry that portrayed the struggles that someone who is young and transitioning will experience. Whalen believes the bills cast a wide net on Central High School's student body who identify as trans and are looking to seek treatment.

Whalen himself receives hormone treatment and is seeking top surgery, a gender-affirming procedure for female-to-male transgender people to provide physical traits that are more comfortable to their male identity and functioning. The passing of LB574 would make doing both nearly impossible.

"I would no longer be able to easily access my healthcare, which would be detrimental to my mental health and physical health. I would not be as happy as I am now," Whalen said.

Central's walkout led to other schools in the area arranging their own as well. Students at Westside, Ralston, Lincoln Southeast, Burke, North and Northwest also walked out. Students from these schools reached out to Gilbert and Yale, and the two provided them with resources and let them know how Central would be organizing and reaching out to members of the media.

"It's really awesome that when we organized this, we kicked off a trend across the state of students showing their opposition to these hateful and harmful bills," Gilbert said.



Sophie Youngs | The Register

Once an Eagle: New students share experiences

Arisa Lattison
contributing writer

Like any other high school, Omaha Central High has had students to welcome to the growing nest every year. With the end of the school year approaching, all students new and old are bound to have made memorable moments here at Central. To commemorate this, three students were interviewed regarding their thoughts and views as a new Eagle.

Maider Gonzalez de Uriarte, a senior, is a foreign exchange student whose previous school was in Spain. She loves Central, and it is the favorite part of her exchange year. Gonzalez de Uriarte said that Central High is different from her school back in her home country since sports and clubs are outside of school. In Spain, you only go to school to study.

"Teaching and learning is different because they value your ability to memorize and then write in the test," she said. "Here there's more activities and they value working hard and homework."

Overall, she enjoys her time here. A big difference however is the amount of screen time spent around others. There's more socializing in school in Spain, and they do not use their phones as much.

"If we have free time in class, we are going to come up with a game or something fun rather than be with our phones without talking," she said. "Here everyone is in their world."

Gonzalez de Uriarte participates in track and powerlifting, and emphasizes how much she adores all the friends she made thanks to these extracurriculars, enabling her to interact and create more memories. She loves track meets and spending time with her team.

"For me it's kinda like the American

movie, football games, basketball games, cheerleaders... things that are usual for you all are going to be the coolest thing for me. When I came, I was like, Oh my god, they even have lockers like in the movies."

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"It actually was interesting to see

Community partnerships offer unique experiences

UNMC High School Alliance

Bobby Winton
staff writer

Central High School offers many courses for students of all grade levels and interests. While Central offers many classes on campus, there are also opportunities for students to pursue their education off campus. One such opportunity is the University of Nebraska Medicine (UNMC) High School Alliance program.

Students accepted into the program take their science classes at the UNMC Med Center for the second half of the day, each day of the week.

"I really enjoy the time I spend at UNMC" said Isabel Walocha, a junior in the program. "The classes are really interesting, and I feel like I'm genuinely being prepared for the careers I wish to pursue."

Students in the program take all their required classes (besides science classes) and any electives they can fit into their schedule at their home school.

"On both A and B days I start my day at Central with my required classes. This year I'm taking Band, AP Language and Composition, Honors Pre-Calc, and AP World History. Then when I get to UNMC I have a different class depending on the block day. This semester I'm taking pharmacy, and biology and prevention of cancer," Walocha said.

After second period finishes, Walocha meets with other Central students in the program to drive to UNMC.

"We grab school lunch or grab our sack lunches from our lockers and start heading to UNMC. Because we have access to other facilities on campus, we sometimes eat lunch in the hospital food court as well," Walocha said.

"It's a really fun experience because not only can we learn about subjects that will help us professionally, but we can meet up with people who are just as passionate about these subjects as we are, even from other schools."

The UNMC High school Alliance is open to juniors and seniors at most public schools within the larger metro area. However, this program is quite competitive, as only about 10 Central students were accepted this year, possessing the largest number of students at any other school in the program.

"I like it when we get firsthand experiences with medical professionals, and see the application of our knowledge," Walocha said. "Being surrounded by students who have the same interests as me is a really special experience."

Walocha stressed the importance of these educational experiences because it exposes students to different careers available to them within the medical field.

"I think it's also helpful for students to try look into the professional applications of any interests they have, so they can see if they would actually want to pursue it, before their professional career even starts."

Zoo Academy

Hadley Forsen-Yepes
proofreader

Junior Ella Jaksha is about to complete her first year of Zoo Academy. The program is a partnership between the Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, Omaha Public Schools and Papillion La Vista Community Schools. Its mission: "To provide students with knowledge and career explorations relating to life sciences through authentic STEM experiences at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium."

Jaksha's older sister, Madeline Jaksha, a Central and Zoo Academy alum, inspired her to apply to the program. Jaksha originally didn't think she would get into the program, but to her surprise, she was accepted. "I'm not super interested in science to be honest, but I just thought it seemed like such a cool opportunity to build my resume, so I was like, 'Why not?'" Jaksha said.

Despite not seeking a career in the sciences, Jaksha said, "I'd love to combine environmentalism and art somehow in a career."

Zoo Academy begins at 7:30 in the morning, just 10 minutes before Central's start time. Jaksha drives herself to school. Bussing is not offered to OPS Zoo Academy students, so they must figure out an alternate mode of transportation.

Jaksha has her Zoo Academy classes in the morning, while some students only take afternoon classes. The program operates on a block schedule, with two classes occurring both Monday and Wednesday and the other two on Tuesday and Thursday.

Every day, Jaksha starts her morning off in the classrooms of the Desert Dome. The trek from the parking lot to the Dome is exhausting, so she often procrastinates the walk by sitting in her car and scrolling on her phone. Her first class, depending on the day, is either English or Government. Classes are 90 minutes long, and half that time is usually spent on zoo grounds. Jaksha's smallest class has four students and her largest has nine.

Done with her first class, Jaksha walks over to the Education Building, where both her Environmental Science and Behavioral Science classes take place. There is no bell in Zoo Academy, so students are expected to be responsible and get where they need to on time.

"There'll be kids coming back or going to shadowing out on grounds, so they'll be in their zoo uniform and have penguin poop on them . . . It's so fun, and then you just chat about what's going on with the new baby giraffe, and you just get a lot of that special insight," Jaksha said.

She isn't currently enrolled in a shadowing course, where students get to go out into the zoo, but she will be next year. Most students participate in Zoo Academy both their junior and senior year; however, there is the option to enroll for one year.

Jaksha gets out of her second Zoo Academy class at 10:20

a.m., and then her classes at Central pick up at 11:15 a.m. She spends this in-between time on her phone or getting lunch.

Fridays are unique for Zoo Academy. On Fridays, all the juniors are in one classroom and all the seniors are in another. The students participate in a year-long group project together, and this is the time they are allotted to work on it.

While Zoo Academy classes must fulfill the requirements of the Nebraska Department of Education, teachers find ways to incorporate nature and the zoo's resources into the classroom. Jaksha believes her English teacher does a particularly great job at this. Some examples include her teacher taking students into the Desert Dome to write poetry and introducing her class to environmentally centered Indigenous stories.

The Zoo Academy government class focuses on international relations and environmental policy. They discuss topics like, "trying to globally unite people in an effort to combat climate change."

And a zoo is the perfect setting for Jaksha's science classes. "We're always out on the zoo for Environmental Science. We do all our labs and projects out on grounds. And then for Behavioral Science, it's focused on animal behavioral science instead of human behavioral science, so we'll go to the sea lion training room and watch them [the trainers] condition the sea lion. It's really cool because we have the opportunity to actually see that process," Jaksha said.

"Wherever they [my teachers] can drift away from the curriculum, they pretty much do," Jaksha said. Students still have to read "The Great Gatsby" like their Central peers, but as expected, their classes have much more of a focus on the environment and STEM fields.

Another perk of Zoo Academy is the speakers that are often brought in. "We have a lot of speakers come in from the different departments around the zoo, and sometimes there'll be people here from out of state for conferences," said Jaksha, who particularly enjoyed hearing a lion anesthesiologist speak to her classmates.

Jaksha said that one of the tradeoffs of taking Zoo Academy courses is that she's only going to have two Advanced Placement classes on her transcript by the time she graduates. "I'm in maybe one honors class because they [Zoo Academy] don't offer them . . . I'm not getting that GPA boost or the AP credits, but I obviously think it's worth it," Jaksha said.

Jaksha went from believing she wouldn't get into Zoo Academy to becoming an eager member of its community. She feels lucky to participate in such a unique, untraditional approach to Nebraska's required courses. Not many students get to say they scooped up penguin poop at school, but next year, Jaksha will.

Students showcase research, win awards at Science Fair

Noa Gilbert
news editor

Young scientists from across the Omaha area gathered on March 22 to present their research projects at the annual Metropolitan Science and Engineering Fair. Central students Aleena Pope, Jaylin Sims, MacKenzie Altuzar, Isabella Mitchell, Rayya Haider, Olivia Kiefer, Madeline Galloway, Charlie Yale, Elliot Brown, Savannah Sipp and Maleyna Navarette each placed in the top three of their respective divisions.

Galloway, a senior, collaborated with Omaha North senior Sophia Kolb during the Haddix program, a summer research internship at Creighton. They won first place in the microbiology division and top six overall. Galloway and Kolb studied the rate of reactions with mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that causes tuberculosis. "We ran reactions and tested different concentrations of inhibitors to see if they'd have a reaction," Galloway said.

Yale, a junior, studied the rate of the Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction, a chemical reaction between bromine and an acid. Because this reaction is a chemical oscillator, Yale said it's difficult to measure directly. "There are multiple oscillating concentrations," he explained. "To measure that you need really fancy equipment that I don't have access to." So, for his project, Yale developed a method to measure the rate of the reaction indirectly. His project placed first in the physical engineering category.

Navarette, a senior, researched the effects of herbal supplements that claim to boost the immune system on the heart rates of zebrafish. Her project placed second in the translational medical sciences category and top six overall. Navarette worked on her project during her Advanced Research class with science teacher Tracy Rumbaugh, a class Navarette has taken since her sophomore year. "It was a really cool thing for my senior year," Navarette said.

Galloway, Yale, and Navarette were proud of their performance. "We went up to receive the award and I was smiling really big," Galloway said. The students admired the projects of all the entrants, so some were surprised when they found out how well they placed. "My poster was not very pretty," Yale said. "I was pleasantly surprised, it was just really cool."

"I wasn't too confident in where I would place, but I knew I did well," Navarette said. When the overall top six awards were being announced, the announcer stated the school of the winners first. "I'm looking around because I'm like, Oh, it's going to be one of my peers. It's going to be one of my friends. I'm so excited. And then they said my name and I was like, What? It was fun!"

For the student researchers, the science fair was an enriching and educational experience that helped them prepare for their



Photos Courtesy of **TRACY RUMBAUGH**

future careers. "You not only got to share what you did, but then learn from others," Galloway said. "A lot of the judges would give you more information about your own project. It was valuable to have the science fair as a more inclusive or interactive experience, because we got to see what other people were working on."

Galloway plans on continuing to study STEM in her future, specifically neuroscience. "I do plan on doing more science work in my future," she said. "The science fair was good preparation for that."

"I have a big interest in both science and humanities for my future," Yale said. "But I think there's always a way to involve STEM in one way or another."

"I do plan on doing something in the STEM field, eventually, I just don't know about right away," Navarette said. She plans to combine her interests in environmental science and clothing design to work with sustainability and fashion.

"I thought the science fair was a great stepping stool for just like introducing you to experimental methods and research and just how that whole process would actually look in the real world," Navarette said.

Galloway agreed. She said that the science fair helped her hone her presentation skills. "Doing the research is something that I enjoy and I like, so doing the science fair helped me see the other side of it. It was a good preparation for what I will be doing when I'm oldest," she said.

COVID affects seniors' lives

Katie Besancon
contributing writer

March 15, 2020: a day everyone will remember. Everyone received the call of no school for two weeks. Two weeks later, students, teachers and staff found out that nobody would be returning to the building for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year.

That was freshman year for current seniors.

The seniors who will be graduating in just a couple of weeks will be the first graduating class to have all four years of high school affected by the global pandemic that is Covid-19. Their high school experience went from freshman year walking into Central having a total of seven-and-a-half-months in the building, to learning remotely for six months, to the three-two model, when students would attend in person either two or three days a week based on their last name, for another four months. Then everyone was back in the building, but with masks.

That was half of these seniors' high school experience that their access to the building was restricted.

"I feel like I didn't have a high school experience, we didn't get the football games or homecoming sophomore year. I feel like we missed a part of what students now are getting to experience," senior Heaven Newson said.

Even once returning for the first full in-person school year since the pandemic, all students and staff were required to wear masks until November.

In August of 2020, Omaha Public Schools made the decision to cancel the fall sports season, three months later turning the decision to family only for the winter sports season, and finally ending out the year with a full in-person spring season. "It was really weird, we didn't actually have a season, and even when we did come back, we were experimenting on how to make it work," senior Alea Kaan said.

Many sports like volleyball continued with conditioning throughout the summer, but students and staff were required to wear masks. They still hosted camps, but the same rules still applied. "Junior year was the same, we were still in masks, this time we actually had a season though," Kaan said.

Others stayed solely focused on academics, but even then, the relationships between student and teacher were not the same during Covid. All these seniors only knew their freshman year teachers for seven months before moving to remote learning, their sophomore year they didn't meet their teachers in person until November, causing that relationship building to be a few steps further behind than normal years.

"It was harder in the classroom since we didn't have those relationships. I felt like being online teachers and students weren't as socially engaged as previous years," Kaan said.

School choice bill sparks debate, highlights educational inequalities

Steven Dickerson
contributing writer

In a rare occurrence, Nebraska has found itself as the epicenter of the nation for a political issue: the ongoing debate about school choice. LB753, or the "Opportunity Scholarships Act," has ignited intense discussions about the future of education in Nebraska and inequalities within the system.

The proposal would allow low-income families to receive scholarships to attend private schools instead of public schools, and has received both positive and negative reactions. Supporters argue it empowers choice amongst a family and improves the quality of education, while opponents claim it would steal resources from public schools and exacerbate existing inequalities.

Introduced by State Senator Lou Ann Linehan of Elkhorn, a registered Republican, at the direction of Governor Jim Pillen, LB753 would give tax credits to scholarship granting organizations, or SGOs, which give out scholarships to low-income families to help cover the cost of attending private and parochial schools. Linehan said she introduced the bill for many different reasons.

"All children deserve a chance for the access to a school that best fits their needs," she said. Linehan pointed out that public schools may not be the best option for all families, including students who need special education services, students who are being bullied, and students who are being discriminated against at public schools. Many of LB753's supporters say educational inequalities hold students back from gaining the best education at public schools, and that private schools are the best option to turn to right now.

Omaha Public Schools, the largest school district in the state

and serves a highly diverse population of students, has multiple inequalities present in their schools. However, supporters of the bill mostly point to the shortcoming of education in public schools as the reason to support LB753. Only 47% of nonwhite students completed an AP exam and 56% completed at least one AP course, even though nonwhite students make up around 77% of OPS' student population. This is because AP courses were offered less at schools with higher nonwhite student populations.

These educational inequalities were cited by some progressives in the Legislature as the reason they plan to vote for LB753. Notable supporters include North Omaha senators Justin Wayne and Terrell McKinney, both registered Democrats. Linehan said it's not surprising to see progressives support the bill, considering it plans to help lower income families and students of all backgrounds. However, some in the Legislature say LB753 is not the solution to educational inequalities.

State Senator Megan Hunt of Omaha, a registered Democrat, said that the bill was pointless, aiming to put money into SGOs when it should rather go to nonprofits, and could cause other educational inequalities. She said it was an attempt to make the rich richer by using "poor people as nice marketing."

"Many private schools in our state openly discriminate against LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities this very day and they have been for quite some time. It is especially telling that the supporters of LB753, who say that private schools do not discriminate, refused to approve an amendment to the bill that would prohibit public funds from going to any school that discriminates," Hunt said.

She also took issue with how the scholarships would work. The use of tax credits for SGOs was a big red flag for Hunt.

"Tax dollars are public funds and public funds belong in public

schools," she said.

Linehan disagrees on all of Hunt's concerns, especially on tax credits. "A tax credit is not 'public' dollars," she said. Linehan pointed to the United States Supreme Court cases *Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn* (2011), when the court ruled tuition tax credits are not an appropriation of state funds, and *Carson v. Makin* (2022), in which the court ruled state scholarship programs must be neutral to religion, helping put to rest concerns about if the tax credits are considered public funds and if they would be religion based.

On educational inequalities, Linehan said, "school choice actually results in more racially integrated schools." She said those who oppose the bill are severely misled on several issues. "This bill will not discriminate against special needs children or other students. LB753, by design, will support poor children and does not only benefit urban students. No public funds are going to private schools through LB753, and private schools are not free to do whatever they please without accountability," she said. They will need to comply with all state education rules, have certified teachers, administer standardized testing, and follow all curriculum standards. SGOs will need to report to the Legislature every year on their operations.

It appears LB753 will pass. While the Legislature remains officially nonpartisan, the chamber's registered Republicans, joined by three registered Democrats, are poised to overcome a filibuster and push the bill forward. If it is signed into law, Pillen will be able to implement a huge policy of his education agenda and it will be a major legislative victory in a year where Pillen's agenda has largely stalled because of filibusters by Democratic senators.

Brandt leaves Central, becomes Lewis and Clark Middle School's new principal

Fiona Bryant
contributing writer

Danielle Brandt, one of Central's assistant principals, has been hired as the new principal at Lewis and Clark Middle School for the 2023-2024 school year.

Brandt will be replacing the current principal, Tyree Sejkora. When asked about Sejkora's departure, Jessica Anderson, an assistant principal at Lewis and Clark, said that Sejkora is leaving "to pursue new endeavors and opportunities with her family" and said that her decision was not made easily.

Brandt decided to apply for the principal position because she felt that she can make more of an impact when working with middle-school-age children who are in their formative years, and that the tie between Lewis and Clark and Central will be strengthened. Lewis and Clark is a feeder school for Central.

"I saw that there was an opening for Lewis and Clark and really just kinda did some soul-searching, on where is it that I feel I'm gonna be able to maximize and have the greatest impact for kids," Brandt said. "Where am I going to be able to lead in a way that's going to truly be in the best interests of staff and students?"

Brandt also said that starting a new role as a principal allows her to expand her commitment to empower others.

"I think that becoming a principal just kind of widens your area of influence and it widens those who you can advocate to, on behalf of those who you're leading, which is why it's such an important job," Brandt said. "And it's why I don't take it lightly that I'm being entrusted with an entire building, staff and students."

In her new position, Brandt plans to lead in an "organic" way, in which she will observe Lewis and Clark's community and vision first while also implementing skills that she learned at Central. In that transition, Brandt said her worry is "missing those little moments" when assuming a role that focuses on the macro level.

"I don't want to miss the moment to interact with the student who's in front of me, who needs someone to tell them that they're glad they're here today," Brandt said.

At Lewis and Clark, Brandt will be working with Anderson, who previously worked at Central, along with two other administrators with whom she has work experience.

Based on their past work together, Anderson said, "I have no doubts that [the] Lewis and Clark community will welcome her, and she will quickly become not only the leader of the school but a valued part of the school community."

Brandt completed her student teaching at King Science and Technology Middle School over 10 years ago, when she planned on becoming a middle school English teacher. Brandt said that the middle school environment has changed in those years and that she will need to get used to the "nuances" that differentiate middle school and high school.

"It's exciting to step into a place and to be able to learn and grow and watch and get to experience middle school all over again from a new lens," Brandt said.

On Central's side, Jodi Dierks, an assistant principal, said that Brandt's move will be a "smooth transition" that betters the communication between Lewis and Clark



Sophie Youngs | The Register and Central, but that she will "definitely be missed."

"It's bittersweet," Dierks said. "I'm super happy for her. That's the bottom line. She deserves it. She's going to be great at it."

Brandt was first hired at Central as a reading teacher in 2010 after originally planning to teach in the middle school setting but found few job openings. She planned to teach in a classroom forever but was approached by an administrator and encouraged to apply for a leadership position.

"I was fortunate to have leaders in my life look to me and identify my leadership qualities and then encourage me to pursue that for myself," Brandt said.

Brandt said that while she has learned to never say no to opportunities in life, "there is no plan [for job promotion] past Lewis and Clark at this time."

"Right now, my focus is giving the best that I have to the staff and students in the community of Lewis and Clark," Brandt said.

Brandt said that she is most proud of being a part of Central's "team" and said that Central taught her what it felt like to be in a "vivacious community of humans."

In her email announcing her departure, Brandt said, "I am also thankful to be making this transition at a time when CHS is moving from strength to strength, and I am excited for the future of Central, under the steady, committed leadership of Ms. Kirksey, to whom I owe so much."

Omaha's bumpy road to Vision Zero

Noa Gilbert
news editor

Omaha's Active Living Advisory Committee first recommended that Omaha become a Vision Zero city, or a city with zero traffic fatalities or serious injuries, in October 2017. That year saw 38 crash deaths in the city, according to the City of Omaha Fatal Crash Dashboard.

Omaha has been pursuing the Vision Zero goal for nearly six years. And yet, in 2022, there were 41 traffic crash fatalities in the city. 2023 is set to continue that trend, with 10 traffic fatalities recorded for the year by the beginning of April.

Vision Zero is "a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all," the Vision Zero Network states on its website. Vision Zero sees traffic deaths as preventable and, instead of focusing on changing the behavior of individual drivers, seeks to construct systems that prevent fatal and severe injury crashes.

Vision Zero was first implemented in Sweden in the 1990s. In the 20 years after Vision Zero was established in Sweden, traffic fatalities were reduced by 1/2, Bloomberg writes. 53 communities in the United States have adopted Vision Zero as a goal. Omaha has yet to be officially recognized by the Vision Zero Network and plans to release a Vision Zero Action Plan in September. Two recent infrastructure reforms on Farnam Street reveal that systemic traffic safety may be difficult to achieve.

Omaha's most significant step towards becoming a Vision Zero city was implemented in the Blackstone neighborhood. Farnam Street, lined with bars and restaurants, is also a commuting corridor. High speeds and heavy pedestrian traffic are a dangerous combination. In December 2021, a drunk driver struck and killed a 20-year-old woman near 38th and Farnam.

In April 2022, the City of Omaha announced a pedestrian safety pilot for Farnam Street between 36th and 40th streets. The infrastructure-centered approach aligns with Vision Zero goals. The middle lane, previously a west-bound lane, was converted to a left-turn lane. Traffic lanes were narrowed, and parking spaces widened, creating a larger buffer between pedestrians on sidewalks and moving cars. Pedestrian crossings were clearly marked.

"These changes are 100% about improving public safety which is our number one priority and responsibility," Mayor Jean Stothert said in a 2022 statement. "This pilot is also an ex-

ample of how our Vision Zero strategy is incorporated into the review of road safety and design changes to better protect all users of the road."

But on the same street, a few blocks west, the city tabled a Vision Zero solution after a contentious neighborhood fight.

For years, the Dundee/Memorial Park Neighborhood Association advocated for Farnam to become a two-way street throughout the day, replacing the confusing one-way switch during peak traffic hours. Commuters move through the residential neighborhoods at high speeds, and crashes and near-misses are common. A study from 2015 to 2020 found that four intersections on Farnam between Dodge Street and Saddle Creek Road had a crash rate nearly twice that of the average crash rate in Omaha. Over half of these crashes were caused by drivers running red lights.

In August 2022, an engineering and traffic analysis recommended that Farnam be converted to a permanent two-way street, with roundabouts installed at 50th and 52nd streets. "Roundabouts slow down traffic, reduce crashes, and eliminate red light running," City Engineer Todd Pfitzer said. Stothert supported the plan as a Vision Zero solution and brought it before the City Council on April 4.

Mode Shift Omaha, an active transportation advocacy organization, supported the plan and stated: "The Farnam Roundabout proposal will help Omaha get to our goal of Vision Zero: zero deaths in our streets."

Meanwhile, however, the Dundee-Memorial Park Association gathered 821 signatures against the roundabout plan, though the plan would also change the street to all-day, two-way. Residents cited the reduction in crashes after traffic light timing changes and concerns about pedestrian navigation of roundabouts, as well as the uneven traffic flow throughout the day, against the plan. This movement against the Vision Zero plan contrasts with the neighborhood's wholehearted support for the "Fix Farnam" movement only a few years previously. "Fix Farnam" is a grassroots neighborhood movement to make Farnam Street two-way for the entire day. The City Council voted unanimously against the roundabout plan.

"Based on Council testimony and information from the Mayor's Office, it is unlikely Farnam Street will ever be two-ways as a result," Mode Shift Omaha said in a statement.

opinion

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Two students face the two toughest years of high school. As the year comes to a close, one learns from their experience to provide a guide and the other questions everything as it all

How to survive senior year

Alice Larson
copy editor

Senior year was my most stressful throughout high school. Filling out college and scholarship applications, playing a sport, working a job, trying to stay on top of normal schoolwork, and trying to participate in all the “final” experiences that make senior year enjoyable is a lot for anyone to manage. However, there are a few tips I learned this year that would have helped me throughout the year, had I learned them prior.

One of the biggest things I learned this year that I think would help all future seniors is that to succeed during your senior year you have to prioritize yourself. Whether this means putting homework away at 11 p.m. and actually getting a good night’s sleep, spending a Friday night in to decompress from a stressful week instead of going out with friends, or getting some space from a friendship or relationship that’s causing more stress and drama in your life than happiness, choosing yourself over others is one of the best things you can do to make sure you don’t get burned out and are able to enjoy senior year to its fullest.

If you’re planning on going to college, I cannot express the importance of checking scholarship and college applications early. I’m a chronic procrastinator and often did not complete applications until the very last minute, which largely worked out okay in my case. However, had I even read certain scholarship and application requirements prior to the day before the deadline, there would have been a lot more opportunities I could have applied for. Checking application requirements early doesn’t mean you have to apply for opportunities months ahead of time (although if that realistically fits into your schedule, that would be beneficial), but it does mean that when it’s the day before a scholarship is due you don’t have to scramble to line up all your letters of recommendation, or additional documents, and potentially not be able to submit your application. Writing down a list of which scholarships and colleges you’re applying for, what documents are required for them, and marking their due date on a calendar would have helped me so much and ensured I was able to apply for all the opportunities I wanted to.

Filling out dozens of applications can be incredibly taxing so remember to take breaks, relax, and have fun!

I think there’s pressure to participate in every opportunity you can during your last year in high school. While you most certainly don’t have to go to every event offered, I think it’s worth it to go to as many as you can. Going to most football and basketball games this year, and even just standing in the same vicinity with other seniors, I forged friendships and became a lot closer to people I maybe had said two words to prior to this year. Central’s student section is truly like no other, our school pride and the energy we bring to each game is electrifying, and it is a wonderful place to fully take advantage of a unique high school experience. If sporting events aren’t your scene, there are plenty of other opportunities to make your last year in The Nest a positive one. I highly encourage all future seniors to join a new club, go to a school event like homecoming, participate in a senior class activity, or simply talk to people in your classes

that you haven’t before.

Before this year I really only spent time with a small group of people I went to middle school with. Senior year is over in a flash, and by branching out from my usual social circle and involving myself in more school activities, I was truly able to enjoy this year to its fullest.

When you’re considering options for life after high school, make a decision that is in your best interest, not anyone else’s. Don’t compare your future plans to anyone else; if you’re making a choice that’s right for you, that’s all that matters. If you’re attending college, realize it’s only four years of your life. If you don’t get accepted into your top college or program and end up going to a school that wasn’t one of your top choices, realize that doesn’t determine your course for the rest of your life. When deciding what college I’d be attending in the fall, I really struggled with comparing my future plans to others. Because my college plans don’t align with what I thought they’d be, when making my final decision I felt in so many ways like I had failed somehow. While I think that feeling is absolutely normal, I think it’s important to realize if your plans after senior year are made in your best interest, at the end of the day that’s all that matters.

I found myself becoming incredibly nostalgic this year. I really struggled with the idea this was my last year living at my childhood home, and my last going to school with people I had since elementary school, a feeling I know many fellow seniors were overcome with this year. If you too find yourself becoming nostalgic, I think it can be incredibly beneficial to find a way to capture senior year— in some form or another. For me, I chose to capture this year through taking pictures on my digital camera, and keeping a semi-regular journal. For others this could be keeping a memory box, or starting a scrapbook. Whatever way you choose to capture senior year, I think finding a way to physically capture this year can be incredibly beneficial in working through the, at times, terrifying thought of growing up and moving onto a life outside of high school.

While senior year was my most difficult year of high school, it was also my best. With all the stress this year brought, there was also so much happiness and fun. Senior year is what you make it and although it can seem extremely daunting, it is absolutely survivable, and at times quite enjoyable.

Junior year: is it worth it?

Ella Levy
opinion editor

“Is it all worth it?” is the question I have been asking myself this past week. Every test, every assignment, every club, every practice, every day spent without rest, every day wasted on anxiety, is it all worth it?

Maybe I should be asking myself a different question. Is everything I’m doing and giving to the world worth what I will be getting out of it? Maybe if I get into my dream college it will be. Or if I end up as successful as I’ve dreamed. But neither of those are guaranteed. Without my end goal being a guarantee, these questions start to seep into my brain.

Junior year should come with a warning. When you receive your schedule there should be red letters reading: “Caution: this year will make you question your worth, existence, and test every ounce of stability you have.”

Maybe if I had ready this warning, I would have been more careful. I would have held onto my confidence harder and prioritized sleep when I still had the chance. I would not have pushed so hard in the beginning and saved some of my drive for my hardest moments.

It seems every time I check something off my to-do list, another task pops up. I find myself prioritizing some classes over others. Choosing the most important essay over a small formative assignment. This then puts me behind. I’ve tried to catch up, but every time I do the cycle repeats itself.

Despite this, I have always completed the cycle. I wrote that essay, finished a unit, and did that lab. At this point in time, I am having the hardest time completing the cycle. The question “Is it all worth it?” beats with my heart as tears fall to the assignment I am completing. Is it worth this pain? These tears? These emotions?

I have no chance to stop and take a break. No chance

to stop and think about quitting. No time for regret and no time to waste. Time goes on no matter which assignment I complete or which assignment slips my mind.

I have no choice but to keep going. Once I get to the end, I will be able to answer my question, but for now I just have to carry around the weight of it and let it become lighter with every task I get done.



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Unicameral legislature unparalleled in efficiency, transparen-

Noa Gilbert
news editor

Nebraska state politics have featured prominently in recent national news. State Senator Machaela Cavanaugh held an extended filibuster against LB574, a bill that would ban gender-affirming healthcare for transgender youth. With the publicity of the debate around this bill, Nebraska's one-of-a-kind state legislative system has also received extra scrutiny. Nebraska's one-house, or unicameral, legislature is unique among the United States and is the most effective and efficient structure for state-level lawmaking.

Nebraska's unicameral legislature has 49 senators. Other states, which have both a Senate and a House of Representatives, have various numbers of lawmakers. Iowa, for example, has 50 senators and 100 representatives, three times as many lawmakers as Nebraska. Because Nebraska has fewer spots for lawmakers to take, elections are more competitive. This increased competition places a higher standard on candidates, who, as the only representative of their district, must run a tighter campaign to win.

Compared to the bicameral structure, the unicameral legislature makes it easier for citizens to stay informed about the actions of their state legislatures. In bicameral legislatures, bills move rapidly through two houses. For ordinary citizens, who may be working jobs or going to school, tracking the movement in two houses is difficult. News coverage, especially in smaller states, might lack the capacity to cover movement in two legislative bodies. This results in an uninformed populace and a legislature that passes bills without much public scrutiny. In Nebraska, the single house can be covered every day by media, and citizens simply have less to keep track of when it comes to state politics. When the political process is more transparent and easier to track, there is more political accountability, which leads to

better governance for all. Nebraskans often refer to the voice of the people as the "second house," a force that can speak their minds about bills and influence lawmakers. The linear, clear proceedings of the Unicameral mean that Nebraska's citizens have more opportunities for their voices to be heard.

Similarly, the linearity of this process means that, when bills emerge that senators find abhorrent and unacceptable, filibusters can happen with remarkable efficiency and efficacy. This session has proven the power of the filibuster to slow down the bill-passing process and prevent harmful bills from being enacted. This remarkable shutdown of the legislative process has amplified the fight against transphobic legislation in Nebraska and engaged a new generation of Nebraska's youth in conversations about civic engagement. In a bicameral legislature, for a similar filibuster to be achieved, there would need to be coordination in both houses about how and why, adding substantial logistical difficulty. But in Nebraska's Unicameral, senators' opposition to bills can bring a session to a snail's pace.

Nebraska didn't always have a unicameral legislature. But, in 1934, U.S. Senator George Norris campaigned for a ballot initiative that would turn the legislature from a bicameral into a unicameral. With the state still reeling from the Great Depression, Sen. Norris said that a unicameral would be a cheaper and more efficient system of state governance. The state voted overwhelmingly to implement the unicameral legislature, which was implemented in 1937. The implementation of a unicameral government forced senators to prioritize only the most essential bills and streamlined the legislative process.

Today, Nebraska is still unique among states for its unicameral legislature. Preserving the unicameral means preserving a unique, efficient, and important piece of Nebraska's history, one that reflects the rich history of the state and the ultimate ideal of a government for the people and by the people.



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

AP curriculum overloaded

Claire Nipper
staff writer

For students around the country who take Advanced Placement classes, the month of April is comprised of little more than classes, studying, and more studying. AP classes are college level classes offered to high schoolers at certain schools throughout the United States. These classes are operated by the College Board and give high schoolers the opportunity to earn credits for college while still in high school. While in AP classes, students learn college level curriculum and prepare for an end of the year, comprehensive exam that is typically taken in early May.

AP classes, since they are, by definition, college level classes, contain curricula best suited to college students. Although many highschoolers throughout the United States are intelligent enough to learn college level information, the time constraints of a high school schedule paired with extracurricular activities give AP classes an extra level of challenge. College class schedules allow for more time to study outside of the classroom, whereas high school schedules keep students in class for upwards of seven hours a day and allocate significantly more time for instruction.

The fact that many AP classes, including AP Biology, AP World History

and AP Calculus can include eight units or more of content does not aid highschoolers in their journey towards success on AP exams. Teachers of AP courses must teach information from the AP curriculum incredibly quickly due to the extensive amount of content included, leaving little to no time for in-class studying or end-of-the-year review. This leaves AP students on their own to carve out times to study from their already packed schedules. How can students be expected to attend tedious school days, participate in numerous extracurricular activities and volunteer in their community as well as study multiple hours a day for each AP class they take?

The expectations placed on high schoolers to work at advanced levels and participate in many programs is unreasonable and will lead to extensive issues in the future. Many students already have difficulty managing stress and anxiety surrounding school, which is only exacerbated by AP classes with demanding curriculums. Teachers must speed through lessons to cover all the curriculum in the limited amount of time provided by high school schedules, and students struggle to understand content shoved onto their desk. AP Classes only add to the towering pile of work which lies on the desks of many high school students, and eventually that pile will come crashing down.



1120 Jackson St
&
6023 Maple St

Monday - Sunday
11AM-10PM

Abolish grass to revive the prairie

Chlöe Johnson
staff writer

Omaha should abolish grass as we know it. The turf grass that covers our lawns, mediums, and city parks is an invasive species from northern Europe, brought over in the late 1800s so that wealthy Americans could mimic the lawns of the British. We have planted it everywhere in the name of an outdated and aesthetic. And in striving to upkeep this aesthetic, we are missing out on the possibility of native grasslands within our city.

As these grasslands evolved to live in the plains, they will require little resources after being planted. A prairie is generally 75% tall grass and 25% wildflower, making for far more interesting scenery. Their deep larger root systems can hold onto more water for longer than turf grass. The tall nature of these grasses and flowers means that they also will not need to be mowed. Tax dollars can be reinvested in needs like teacher salaries, instead of paying for the seeding, watering, and mowing of turf grass on sidewalk medians and highway verges.

Their capacity to trap carbon is higher than trees as well, as they store it within deep root systems as opposed to trees which can be cut down, releasing all their carbon.

Urban prairies also become habitats for pollinators, that are essential for 75% of all flowering plants in the world. Locally, pollinators are important for Nebraska crops such as alfalfa, and sunflowers. 25% of these same pollinators are at risk for extinction due to invasive plants such as turf grass killing out the native ones that feed and home pollinators. By repainting these native vegetation these important pollinators will regain their habitats.

As extreme as it sounds other cities have abolished grass already. The most well-known case of this is Las Vegas, which banned turf grass in 2021 as watering grass took up about 10% of the city's at-risk water resources. In Nevada losing grass had a dramatic visual effect as the native plants replacing it are just scatterings of cactus. This would not be the case for Omaha where native lawns of clover or other native cover crops that look nearly the same as turf grass yet do not require mowing or seeding. Outside of lawns we would also have an upgrade with colorful prairies replacing where city grass was.

We should capitalize on native prairie grass as a distinguishing characteristic. Omaha could be rebranded as a city within a plains state, as a true prairie city. Imagine if boring right of ways—green for less than half the year—become tall wild looking grasses, that bloomed flowers from May until September. Abolish grass and its expensive carbon footprint for the good of Omaha today and generations to come.



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

Nebraska won't be home when I'm older

Steven Dickerson
contributing writer

Home is described as the place where someone lives. But home can be a lot of different things. Family, happiness, work and more. For as long as I can remember, Nebraska has been home.

But, Nebraska won't be home when I'm older. The state I was born and am being raised in is, to put it simply, falling apart.

Growing up here, for me at least, was amazing. The space this state offers, the friendliness, the closeness of the people, the experience of all sorts of weather and all four seasons, and many more made this state pretty spectacular. However, as I get older I realize how I may have been mistaken.

Nebraska has become boring as I am in my teenage years. There's not much to do, and everything here seems just okay. The weather, which used to be so fun as a kid, has become annoyingly hot summers and winters where snow days are done inside on an iPad. Worst of all are the political trends of this state.

As a Democrat in Republican-dominated Nebraska, I've learned to accept what I want will not come true in this state. But that doesn't mean I have to be fully unsatisfied. Before my teenage years, the politics of this state were about as unnoticed as our state from an airplane. We were an independent thinking, sometimes swing

state. The far-right turn has changed things a lot though.

This state's politics are now pay-to-play, where only the conservative elite get to set the stage for the whole state. Pete Ricketts got to the Senate because he funded Jim Pillen's campaign for Governor. Plus, our state's wonderfully unique nonpartisan unicameral legislature used to be just unique; now, we make national headlines for the extremely conservative bills being pushed in the state.

Our public schools are under threat of being defunded, reproductive rights are being challenged, and being different from the status quo could soon come with practically state approved discrimination.

LB177, dubbed the "My Student, My Choice Act," would allow for the state to approve scholarships for low-income students to attend private schools rather than public schools. While we have educational inequalities in Nebraska, we should be funding public schools to fix those rather than take the money away entirely. If I want to continue to live here, would I really want my kids to attend underfunded public schools? No, absolutely not.

LB626, dubbed the "Nebraska Heartbeat Act," would ban abortion after six weeks of pregnancy if a physician can detect a heartbeat. What kind of dystopia is this? Where women have no rights over their own body? Never would I stay in Ne-

braska if this passes.

LB574, dubbed the "Let Them Grow Act," would prohibit minors in Nebraska from accessing gender-altering procedures. Since when have legislators become doctors?

LB575, dubbed the "Sports and Spaces Act," would ban transgender youth from playing on sports teams with those other than their sex assigned at birth. Is the legislature now the parents of these kids and the school administrators?

All these bills come as real issues, such as potholes remaining unfixed, guns running rampant on our streets killing people, climate change putting us on alert, taxes remaining too high, inequality is everywhere, and opportunities are running about as dry as the rivers will be soon.

This was not the Nebraska I would ever want to raise my kids in. So, I've already made the choice that if there was any hope of Nebraska keeping me here, it's gone. There are simply better places where I can actually thrive and be successful when I'm older.

Leaving Nebraska might not be the case for a lot of us, but many like me see the same issues and have the exact same thoughts. We cannot thrive in a dull, dystopian Nebraska, and while I would love to stay and try to encourage change, I'm afraid that change will never come. For now, Nebraska will not be the place I reside in when I'm older.

What a difference a year makes

Fights, chaos made sophomore year feel unsafe

Isabel Hoiberg
staff writer

I have been at Omaha Central High School for two years now, only one of those years being somewhat “normal” after the global pandemic. I was super excited to start high school because one of my sisters graduated from Central and absolutely loved it, so I had a lot to look forward to.

Coming into freshman year, I knew that I was in for a weird high school experience, but during sophomore year things were starting to get a little bit more traditional. But I would shake in fear while walking into school; I was not afraid of getting COVID, I was scared for my life.

Walking around the halls hearing about the three fights that had happened that day, the two from the day before, and the ones planned for the next day. I had never seen one, so hearing about them was funny until one broke out right next to me and I almost got hit. That’s when my fear became real.

Waking up on a Saturday morning after the first football game of the year just to see all over social media that a girl had gotten kidnapped and sexually assaulted when leaving Seemann Stadium, that’s when my fear became real.

As I was crushed in the corner of Mr. Leslie’s fourth floor classroom on May 12 during a lockdown, texting my family telling them I loved them because as far as I knew there was an “active shooter” in the school. That’s when my fear became real.

We have security guards for a reason, they are there to protect you. But when you see a video of one getting slapped in the face and not reacting, how are you supposed to trust them?

I heard one of Central’s teachers made his daughter transfer because “Central was getting too out of hand.” I wanted to be next. I spent most of my days coming up with reasons why my parents should let me transfer. I even got some of my friends from other schools to try and convince them. I never got a yes, even though I have never felt more unsafe in my life.

Rules, regulations made junior year feel safe

Isabel Hoiberg
staff writer

Summer break was ending, and the beginning of my junior year was starting. I savored every last day because I dreaded going back to school. People told me that junior year is the absolute worst, but I was more afraid of the terrifying events engraved in my mind repeating all over again. But to my surprise, Central implemented a lot of new rules which some may think are stupid, but I finally feel safe again.

That feeling you get before a fight starts, when everything gets quiet, the only thing you can hear is shoes squeaking, and everything feels like it is moving in slow motion is rare now. Most fights are getting stopped before they even start.

Getting yelled at by the administration at a football game because the chant you did is “too mean” can be annoying, but they want to make sure no one gets hurt, along with the security guards standing at the top of the student section. Not only has security increased at sporting events but every time I leave class, I see a security guard roaming the halls. I have never personally seen one use their authority while they are taking their laps around the hallways, but I do get a good laugh out when the skippers hear security coming and they bolt somewhere else.

Every time I see a mass shooting on the news, I always wonder what would have happened if our threat last year was real. I also have thought about my escape plans in every classroom in the building and I know other students who have too, which is a really sad reality we have come to live with. But it is the reason why I think the newly implemented doors rule is so smart. If you are caught opening a door for anyone to enter the school, you get suspended. If someone gets mad that you will not open a door for them that sucks for them, like seriously how lazy do you have to be to not want to walk to the three side doors.

I am happy my parents did not let me transfer schools, because now I can finally remember why I love coming to school every day.



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

Making change in debate

Charlie Yale
sports/web editor

Those unfamiliar with the debate world might ask why this story has “critique” misspelled. The spelling is intentional. “Kritiks” (pronounced critiques) – often referred to as a “K” – are philosophical arguments that challenge the mindset, structure, assumptions or otherwise preconceived notions of the opposing team or of the debate world itself.

Kritik, derived from the German word for “critique,” means quite literally the same thing as its homophone – the word is used to differentiate between oral critiques given by judges after rounds and the process of “kritiking” a debate.

A kritik often requires departure from the topic at hand, to discuss a concept that must be furthered in the debate world. One of the most prominent examples of a kritik comes from the 2007 documentary “Resolved,” where a team was able to win a national tournament by arguing that their voices were intentionally silenced because they were Black. Their argument hinged on advancing Black voices throughout the tournament, because it was something that had never been done – it sought to point out the inherent and systemic biases that the debate world itself held, and fight those when it got the chance. This is the spirit of the kritik: to point out inequities and advance voices not listened to.

More than just making a statement, this type of debate brings about real change within the debate world. The Louisville Project, led by Ede Warner of the University of Louisville debate program, was an initiator of kritik that avoided debating the prescribed topic entirely: instead, the team used media such as music and personal experience to show how debate as a whole is exclusionary, and asked the judge to “sign their ballots” to sign on to their project, which they believed would reduce exclusionism within the debate world. Since then, K’s have been used in debate tournaments across the country – from tournaments like the National Speech and Debate Tournament (NSDA) to the Tournament of Champions (TOC) at the University of Kentucky, it has been a winning strategy to point out exclusionism within the debate world.

More recently, women, queer and trans debaters have been using K strategy to their advantage. In debate, voice is everything to portraying a point. Judges have for many years preferred the voices of white cis men, because they are closest to that of “standard English.” So, when women, queer and trans individuals started to point out that they were being

marked down because of their voices, accents or mannerisms, the debate community responded. This year, I was lucky enough to qualify for the Tournament of Champions. While there, I heard of another distinct K that was being run within the policy debate world: trivialization of nuclear war. To oversimplify: the winner of a policy debate round often can prove that, in their world, the extinction of humanity will happen less quickly, or that extinction will happen more quickly in the world of their competitors. The antecedent to human extinction within these rounds is often nuclear war, simply because of the theory of mutually assured destruction. The specific K argument that this team ran talked about the trivialization of nuclear war in policy rounds: it desensitizes young people

away from discussing the topic as a real issue, which it is. They also argue that debate in this fashion is decreasing the political involvement of young debaters, because all the issues seem abstract. When K’s – like the aforementioned – are advanced to out-rounds of national tournaments, like NSDA or TOC, they gain real legitimacy.

What K’s teach the average non-debater is that questions must be asked to maintain an inclusive environment. The structure must inherently be challenged, because otherwise, it will be biased. Breaking the structure of debate – bringing up a topic that doesn’t relate to the resolution at hand – is a form of protest, and it holds the judges’ votes hostage. Protest in real life is also the only way change is made.

Central High School Foundation
chsfomaha.org

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Goodbye 029

Shyla Youngs
editor-in-chief

As I approach the end of senior year, and this is one of the last articles I'll write, I can't help but reminisce about the memories Central and the Register have given me.

Ever since I entered high school, I couldn't wait to graduate and gain the independence that comes with adulthood, but now I wish these last weeks would last forever. There never seems to be enough time to spend these moments with friends; I'm not ready to say goodbye to everyone. Not just my circle, but people I've interacted with through classes for the last four years.

Now, I take every opportunity I can to enjoy the small amount of time I have left, and it's only made me realize how much I value these people even more. These past few weeks have been filled with rites of passage of senior year like skip day, and movie night, but also smaller moments spent selling puppy chow with Alice Larson, sidewalk chalking in elmwood park, and attending too many soccer games. It just makes me realize how not only me, but everyone else is growing up, and with that comes saying goodbye to Central and the Register.

I cannot be thankful enough for everything that's happened in my time as an eagle, and I wouldn't be who I am without these experiences. Leading the Register has been one of the most enriching opportunities I've ever had. Leaving something I've worked so hard at over the course of four years is strange, and in my time at college I'll miss working on such a strong publication. Room 029 has been a home; a place to eat burnt popcorn with friends, cram in last minute designs of each issue and bond over the stresses of school, but above all meet some of the loveliest people I've ever known. Outside of the classroom, I've been able to travel and compete at both the state and national level. Everything the Register has given me has taught me so much not only about journalism, but about myself. So, goodbye Register. Thank you.

Central in its entirety has taught me so many valuable lessons I'll hold with me forever.

I have so much love for the people it has allowed me to meet, and all the extracurriculars I've been given the opportunity to be a part of. The "Once an eagle, always an eagle" mantra is something I never thought I'd admit to relating to, but as graduation is approaching quickly, it begins to become more relatable. Central has also challenged me academically and has greatly prepared me for this next chapter in my life. A handful of teachers have played a pivotal role in expanding my love for learning, and I owe a lot of my passion and drive in the classroom to them.

So, goodbye Central. Thank you.

Pandemic in the pantry

Chlöe Johnson
staff writer

While we are considered to be post-pandemic, that is only accurate in terms of the COVID 19 pandemic. The eating disorder pandemic born from quarantine is still affecting many. Masks are gone we are vaccinated but there is no vaccine for the epidemic of eating disorders (EDs) created by quarantine.

Rates of eating disorders among teenagers have increased by 25% since the pandemic began according to a study by Epic Research. More time at home meant less of the real-life interactions needed for healthy adolescent development as well as unprecedented amounts of time online viewing other teens looking their best. "With so much time alone, I picked every part of myself apart; it affected not only my mental health but physical health drastically," said an anonymous senior girl.

The online pressure to get fit or to not gain weight while at home was another aggravator. "During 2020 the 'What I Eat in a Day,' trend was very toxic because you were comparing yourself to other people who were skinnier and prettier," recalled a different anonymous senior.

"I saw someone who ate two meals and a granola bar and if I ate breakfast, I would feel like a failure," she said. "It felt like I had to time out all my eating."

The sheer rise in EDs because of the pandemic's isolation is disturbing by itself, but more so when one considers that eating disorders have a treated mortality 3% of untreated mortality rate of 20% while COVID's mortality rate is only 1% according to the CDC and the Center for Disease Recovery. In the same manner that the pandemic exposed the sedentary American lifestyle as a risk factor for more severe COVID -19, it also exposed high screen times as risk factors for eating disorders.

What is startling about this eating disorder pandemic is that because there is no simple vaccine, many whose disorders began 2020, are feeling its affect, even once treated. Nearly half of those who do receive treatment will relapse later.

While COVID did not cause these eating disorders, it did push over the edge the startling amount of those already at risk. While it is nice to think we are out of the woods post COVID, this will not be true until the dark woods of weight loss obsession are cleared to reveal healthy habits.



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

Thinking of the future

Bobby Winton
proof reader

As my junior year is coming to a close, I find myself pondering a question most of my peers are also asking themselves: what on this Earth am I going to do after high school?

Shortly after my freshman year started, I discovered that becoming a music educator would be a way for me to continue my love of music, in addition to staying in the public education system.

I've known for most of my life that teaching will inevitably become a part of my life. In my earlier years at Central it was between the sciences and music, but regardless I was set on being a teacher. However, as I'm nearing the end of my high school career, I'm beginning to have doubts on a life-path I've envisioned for myself most of my life.

Almost 40% of newly qualified teachers have considered leaving their profession in the last year, and I'm sure many found that the job has simply taken over their lives.

What first comes to my mind when deciding what profession to go into is that I mainly think of how I can be the most helpful. However, this question creates a conflict in my decision.

Many students look to their teachers far beyond their educational needs. Teachers are counselors, therapists, parental figures, and much more, regardless of their qualifications, to be all these things at once.

I question myself, why would I become a teacher if I oversaw my students' emotional needs as much as their educational? Would it not be more efficient to go into counseling instead? Why would I go through so much work to be well-versed in both music and education, when I could spend more time working only on music itself?

After discussing my thoughts with my peers also interested in pursuing education, I discovered I was not alone in my anxieties. What I found when talking to my peers was that most of our anxieties stemmed from an immense fear of failure.

My advice to anyone who is interested in pursuing a career in education, is to ignore those fears. Leaving high school is one of the biggest milestones in life. The added anxiety of deciding what to do for the rest of your life will only make leaving high school more stressful. Take the little time you have left to enjoy being with your peers.

arts & culture

Your mom's summer concert preview

Music from decades ago makes its way back up the charts. Omaha's slate for summer concerts reflects the trend towards older music



Chlöe Johnson
staff writer

This summer Omaha will host a majority of bands from decades ago, rather than newer trendier artists. This intriguing concert season will start with The Killers in May and wrap up with the Chicks in August.

The Killers, an indie rock band, are coming May 12. They were formed within the 90's indie rock scene but with a synth transcendence of the post-punk of the early 2000's. Oddly, the Las Vegas group became wildly popular in the UK, with its debut album *The Fuss* charting number one on the UK Charts while only reaching number seven in the US. Nearly twenty years after its release, "Mr. Brightside", the hit it single from *The Fuss*, just broke the record for most weeks in the top 100 hits with five years in a row in the UK, meaning they have seen a resurgence. Tickets are sold out from the venue, Steel House Omaha, but you may be able to find them second hand elsewhere.

In June Death Cab for Cutie, another late 90's indie rock band, with a more somber sound, will return to Omaha. Reaching number one album in the US with *The Narrow Stair's*, 2008 *Death Cab for Cutie* was described as "Showing emotion without using emotion," by *The Rolling Stone*. They will be performing their 2022 album, *Asphalt Mead-*

ows at The Admiral.

Exactly a week later on June 13 is the Counting Crow's, a rock (and roll) band, found immediate stardom in the mid 90's. High schoolers likely recognize their single, "Accidentally in Love" from *Shrek 2*, while their parents remember their billboard hit, "Mr. Jones" and of course "Omaha." They have maintained a significant following for thirty year's partially due to their infamously energetic concert's, which you can experience for yourself at Steelhouse Omaha.

July 2 brings Fleet Foxes, the first older band that does not belong to the rock family, but instead to indie folk. They made a name for themselves in the indie boom of the early 2000's with their album *Helpless Soul* but released a very successful album, *Shore*, in 2020. Their sound is earthy and almost spiritual, kept utterly unique by a mandolin and a British undertone, despite coming from Seattle. Central senior Mia Griffith plans to attend their concert. "It helps me feel connected to my family along with the past." She also says that, "As a musician, older music is a big teacher for the artists of the now." Take it from Griffith, their Steelhouse Omaha will not be one to miss.

The Flaming Lip's, the oldest of the 90's rock band's mentioned and the only one known for a psychedelic almost alien sound.

The Lip's are two-time Grammy winners, formed in 1983 but who gained fame in the 90's with the song "Do You Realize?". They have created a distinguishable but undefinable style by experimenting with sound effects, synth, and layering to create unique albums like the two produced in 2020 and 2022 which will both be performed at the Steelhouse.

The Chicks(formerly known as The Dixie Chicks) the most successful country band as well as all female band in recent history will be here August 30. Their first album, *Wide Open Space's* was an immediate smash success in the early 90's, capturing the abstract feeling of growing up with twangy fiddle and banjo. You can see them at the CHI Health Center with their new album, *Gaslighter*. "I'm interested in seeing these concerts because their music was playing in my house as I grew up," said senior Holden Fershee who will attend the August 30 concert at the CHI Center with his mother.

The large amount of older music groups coming to Omaha this summer could be explained simply by the brain drain, where many young adult's are moving away from midwestern hometown's like Omaha. In fact, 10-24-year-olds make up only 22% of Omaha while 25-44 year olds make up about 31% of the city. Most people want music they listened to as young adults and as the majority of Omaha concert goers are not young adults

Photo courtesy of Omaha Performing Arts

themselves, venues wanting to hire older bands makes sense. However, this would not account for why these older musicians even have new albums to be able to play out after year's and year's of quiet from the majority.

Like so many contemporary phenomenon, COVID may also hold the answer. The aggressive shove forward by the Internet Age was intensified by pandemic, giving all age's a reason to look backwards for comfort, into "normal times." These "normal times" happened to include a greater shared culture of less processed music. "Being able to relate to artist's emotional expressions from decade's ago is always comforting," Griffith said.

The music industry capitalized on that growing discontent and its resulting nostalgia, especially for the 90's. This means more albums are being produced by older artist's and less investment is going into newer artist's. Tik-Tok has also helped revive this music by exposing new generation's to detached catchy soundbites of songs like "Mr Brightside" by the Killers.

In fact the top 100 song's of 2023 include songs from the very early 2000s and before such as Nirvana, Coldplay, Eminem and the Killers. Thus, older artists are coming back to Omaha with new album's and comforting sound, to the delight of young and old and those in between.



MUSIC TRIP on page 12



MIA GOTH on page 13



BUCKET LIST on page 14

Central students grow closer as community of musicians

Caterina Ponti
contributing writer

Central students from the music department went on a three-day trip to St. Louis, Missouri. The 95 students on the trip were part of the school band, choir or orchestra.

Six Central High School staff members from the music department accompanied the students: Sara Cowan, Kathryn Bohn, Chiyo Trauernicht, Brad Rauch, Stephen Bouma, and Brent Larson. Parents of students participated too.

Students arrived at Central at 7 a.m. on April 14. Later, the bus left for St. Louis. When they arrived at their destination, students visited the City Museum, a big building where you can explore and climb tunnels, caves, slides and rides. "A great place to get our energy out," junior Sasha Gates said.

For dinner, the students went to the City Foundry, a dining place with different restaurants. After a long day, they finally checked into the hotel, swam in the swimming pool and got ready for bed. Cowan said that for most students the best part of the trip was "just hanging out in the hotel with friends."

On the second day, April 15, the students woke up at 6:30 a.m. to have breakfast at the hotel. They prepared to perform clinics at Rockwood Summit High School. All choir, band and orchestra students had a clinic to work on their music pieces to prepare for the District Music Contest.

"A clinic is where an expert conductor works with the ensemble, listens to them perform and works with them a little bit to make them even better," Cowan said.

"I've learned a lot, I realized that I wasn't playing with a lot of emotion, but when I did it, it sounded a lot better," sophomore Emma Miranda said.

Later, the students drove the bus to the next destination, a riverboat cruise on the Mississippi River. On the way to the Mississippi River, it rained a lot, but later it cleared out, so the students were able to have lunch on the boat. While the riverboat was taking them down the river, the tour guide gave the students a brief history of St. Louis.

Afterward, the students visited the Gateway Arch. They admired an amazing view from the top. For dinner, the students went to BB's Jazz, Blues, and Soups where they enjoyed a live jazz show.

"The musicians were outstanding," Cowan said.

Suddenly all the students' phones went up for tornado warnings. The students had to shelter in the club's basement where they waited for one hour and a half. "We were squished in pretty tightly, but the students really handled it well," Cowan said.

"It definitely was not the best memory, but it is something I will never forget," Gates said.

When the sky cleared out and it was safe to drive, the students finally returned to the hotel.

On the last day, the students packed up their things and rode the bus to the St. Louis Union Station where they visited the aquarium and a huge Ferris wheel. Around 1:30 p.m. they headed to the bus back to Central. They arrived at around 7:40 p.m. in Omaha.

Traveling together made students discover new things about each other and it strengthened friendships. The music-learning and the fun experiences lived together in a new environment made the students not only grow as musicians but also as humans.

"We grew closer as a community of musicians," Cowan said.



Photo Courtesy of SARA COWAN

June

Noa Gilbert

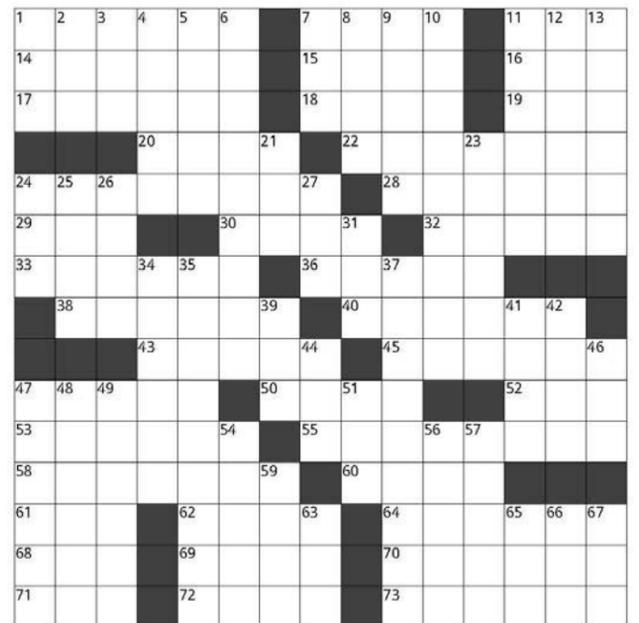
ACROSS

- 1 Film featuring a canine basketball star
- 7 Helper, abbrev.
- 11 "Te ___" (I love you)
- 14 Imagine
- 15 Singe
- 16 PINK
- 17 Blanks
- 18 RED
- 19 Put coins in a meter, say
- 20 Greek goddess of the rainbow
- 22 ORANGE
- 24 YELLOW
- 28 Barbie's sister
- 29 Lovelace considered the first computer programmer
- 30 Youth
- 32 Industrial German city
- 33 Medicine amount
- 36 Touches the ground
- 38 GREEN
- 40 Read again, as many a toddler bedtime story (again, and again)
- 43 Stinging insects with paper nests
- 45 "Already?"
- 47 TEAL
- 50 Try (maybe too hard) to impress a partner
- 52 U.S. spy org.
- 53 Pollution testing site, for short
- 55 INDIGO
- 58 Guide for a shopper
- 60 Clownfish found in a 2003 Pixar movie
- 61 Environmental prefix

- 62 Approved
- 64 VIOLET
- 68 Letter after pi
- 69 Title king in a Shakespearean tragedy
- 70 Layers, as in rock
- 71 Card game based on collecting groups of three
- 72 Does wrong
- 73 Pearl's home, for a time

DOWN

- 1 Sicken
- 2 ___ B. Wells, journalist and cofounder of the NAACP
- 3 Don Bacon, say, for short
- 4 Pesto base
- 5 Wombs
- 6 Creators of graphic content?
- 7 Ankle tendon
- 8 "Did you hear about the zoo that only had one dog?" "Yeah, it was a ___ tzu."
- 9 Deposit boxes
- 10 Bought dinner for, say
- 11 Horrific-looking jello salads
- 12 Jerk, on the playground
- 13 Tree's exhale
- 21 "Brown-Eyed Girl" refrain: ___ la la
- 23 Calf capturers
- 24 Aptly-named winter mental health condition
- 25 Pillowy Japanese noodles
- 26 Org. that operates the Hubble Telescope



- 27 Up to, informally
- 31 Distant
- 34 Whenever one wishes
- 35 Delicious avocado dip
- 37 Swanky home coffee machine
- 39 Short albums, such as boygenius' remarkable 2018 self-titled release
- 41 Centers
- 42 "Go ahead."
- 44 Bro's counterpart
- 46 Vote against
- 47 Some social media creators
- 48 Indigenous group of the Southwest United States
- 49 Bumbler or fumbler
- 51 Dudes

- 54 Gilbert ____, artist and activist, and creator of the flag that this puzzle celebrates
- 56 Devoid
- 57 Gritty films
- 59 Soft fruit that is often poached
- 63 Many med. professionals
- 65 "Scabby," an inflatable rodent that visits picket lines, for one
- 66 Mineral suffix
- 67 2022 film starring Cate Blanchett as a problematic composer

The Mill review

Bobby Winton
staff writer

On March 15, The Mill Coffee and Tea opened its first store in Omaha, with the first four in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Mill is a small-batch craft coffee roaster, espresso bar and tea house that opened its first store in 1975.

Since its opening in Omaha, I have found myself at The Mill more times than I care to admit.

I particularly enjoy the decorations and architecture of the building. The main seating area is filled with seats, fit for all meeting types. Many larger tables for bigger groups occupy the lower level, with many smaller tables scattered throughout the rest of the store, in addition to the individual seating at the bar. The art-deco decorations paired with the colorful chairs and bookshelves create a stunning visual when first walking in.

Between Leavenworth Street being my route to school, and the drive-through ordering option, it's a very convenient place to meet for me, and also other Central students. Meeting up before or after school is very easy as The Mill is only a few blocks away from Central, so students without a car could easily walk from school.

The hours are very nice, since Omaha lost most of its coffee shops with later hours. The Mill is open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

I was already familiar with the menu, as I had gone to Lincoln locations many times, so I knew that I would be satisfied with anything I ordered. The prices are pretty standard for an artisan coffee shop, but definitely worth it for the quality of the coffee and the environment.

Trying the monthly specials is always a fun roulette, but some menu highlights are their chai lattes, their cold brew, and any of their locally sourced teas.

Answers on Page 15

ACCESS TO EXCEPTIONAL

EDUCATION, LIFESTYLE, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Mia Goth: Horror Star

Claire Nipper
staff writer



Photo Courtesy of ELENA TERNOVAJA

As the medium of film progresses, audiences are being exposed to more films starring young women, including women of color. One of the most talented young actresses working today is Mia Goth, a Brazilian woman who has secured her place in film history.

Mia Goth has played supporting roles in many well-known films, including “Suspiria,” “Emma,” and “The House.” After seeing her in these films and recognizing her skill in acting, Ti West cast her as the lead role in his films “X” and “Pearl,” and Goth will soon reprise her role as Maxine in the planned sequel to X called “MaXXXine.”

Slated for a 2023 release, Goth was cast as Gabi Bauer in Brandon Cronenberg’s “Infinity Pool.” Her performance in this film was phenomenal; Goth embodied Bauer’s character and added a genuine sense to her role that flaunts her talent as an actor. Gabi Bauer is a wealthy, American woman vacationing on a resort in a foreign country. Cunning, manipulative, and lacking morals, she took advantage of James Foster, a fellow vacationer, and used him to entertain herself and her wealthy friends. The writing for Bauer had already marked her as an insufferable and annoying character, one that the audience was not supposed to like, but Goth brought to Bauer an entirely new level of intolerability. The shrill, loud voice Goth assigned to Bauer contributed to this, as well as her facial expressions. Goth’s skillful control over her face allowed her to show how crazed Gabi Bauer truly was.

Goth has a fascinating method of immersing herself in the characters she plays and aligning herself with the director she is acting under. She said that to embody her role, she would spend about an hour at a time writing streams of consciousness coming from her character. To encompass the style desired by her director, she watches the movies they have worked on in the past and all the films they reference as their inspiration.

Mia Goth is a brilliant, young, female actor making her way into the world of film. Her acting style is unique, and she is bringing forth a series of performances that continue to astonish audiences around the world.

All Time Low’s “Tell Me I’m Alive” does not live up to potential

E Dona Munoz
contributing writer

Maryland-based rock band All Time Low may not be as widely known outside of the pop punk fan base compared to other bands in the same genre, but they deserve the recognition. Their ninth studio album, “Tell Me I’m Alive,” shows the lyrical genius of lead vocalist Alex Gaskarth and backing vocalist Jack Bakarat and shows off the band’s distinct sound that incorporates elements of punk, pop punk and alternative rock music. But while the album has some truly catchy songs, it is not the band’s best album.

All Time Low’s albums usually have an implied story throughout its entirety that is supported by its track list. But in the case of “Tell Me I’m Alive,” while it does have an implied story, the track list makes it seem out of order. The first half of the album has a party-centric sound and theme reminiscent of their 2017 album, “Last Young Renegade.” On the other hand, starting with the seventh track, “The Sound of Letting Go,” there is a distinct shift in tone and theme that aligns more with the band’s 2020 album, “Wake Up, Sunshine,” making the album sound more like two combined EPs. Yet there are songs mixed in that do not fit the new sound once the tone does shift. “New Religion” is placed after “The Sound of Letting Go” but the mood aligns better with songs like “Are You There?” and “Sleepwalking.” The messy track list makes for a weird and jarring listening experience at times which detracts from the catchy, well-written songs. If the track list were slightly altered, the story would make more sense and make the album stronger.

The dual nature of the album is most prominently featured in the first and third singles, “Sleepwalking” and “Modern Love.” While both are about an infatuation, they each present two different points of views of said infatuation. “Sleepwalking” is about an overpowering infatuation and the feeling of being empty or out of place when not around the person of the speaker’s affections. On the other hand, “Modern Love” is also written with a sarcastic and satirical nature that pairs perfectly with its original release

on Valentine’s Day, as it talks about the frustrating process that is dating in the 2020s and dealing with hook-up culture, messy breakups, and the lack of an emotional connection.

The album’s fifth track “Calm Down” is the weakest on the album. It is a good concept that is not executed to its full potential. The song talks about the generational conflict that stems from the issues present in our society and how older generations do not seem to care about attempting to fix said issues. It talks about how younger generations want to be politically active but older generations are telling them to calm down and not to worry. The song’s thesis is “Don’t tell me to calm down” but the song is written in a mellow tone and slower tempo that contradicts this idea. All Time Low is fully capable of composing a fast, angry song like “The Irony of Choking on a Life-saver” from 2012’s “Don’t Panic.” This song would have been so much better and much more impactful if the song’s tone reflected its subject.

The best song on the album is its ninth track, “The Way You Miss Me.” The track talks about the speaker’s attempts to keep a relationship going even though it is pointless as it is already over. This is an all-too-common situation for All Time Low’s mostly teenage and young adult demographic, making it the most relatable song for its audience. Lyrics such as “I’m not trying to say I don’t wanna stay, I just know how this story ends” mirror thoughts that have gone through my own mind in the past when debating whether it is worth the energy to keep a friendship going long after it should have ended.

It takes a few repeat listens to fully enjoy and appreciate what “Tell Me I’m Alive” has to offer. The album’s lyrics describe themes of loneliness, frustration, and reminiscing, but the structure of the track list and the differing tones of the songs make for a dizzying listening experience. It does not make sense for two songs with such a contradicting nature, such as “Modern Love” and “Sleepwalking,” to be in the same album. With a few modifications, “Tell Me I’m Alive” could have gone from a good album to a mind-blowing album.

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The Register's Summer Bucket Lists

Alice Larson
copy editor

Having a picnic

Having a picnic is a delightful, cost-effective activity, that should be at the top of one's summer bucket list. Picnics are a wonderful way to enjoy the warm weather, by eating a scrumptious meal outdoors and enjoying beautiful scenery. Personally, I enjoy summer picnics at Omaha parks such as Memorial Park or Lake Zorinsky due to the exquisite views these two spots provide. While one can splurge on picnics by ordering takeout, more cost-effective options such as buying a few snacks at a grocery store exist, making summer picnics an affordable option for all. Other than simply eating a meal outside, picnics can be a longer social gathering

by bringing activities such as cards, art supplies or a good book to read. Picnics, which can be enjoyed solo or with other individuals are delightfully versatile and can be adjusted to each individual's preference, making them a lovely summer experience for all.

Picking up crocheting/knitting

With all the free time summer break provides, it is the perfect time of the year to pick up a new hobby. As a kid during summer break, I would spend hours bored in my room unsure of how to spend my time. Late during my elementary school years, I found random knitting needles and bundles of yarn in my basement and taught myself how to knit by watching Youtube videos. While I am not an advanced or avid knitter by any means, I thoroughly enjoy my summer-knitting projects,

that are simply a creative way to fill my time. Knitting/crocheting is the perfect summer hobby for one to pick up. It is a relatively easy skill to pick up, isn't outrageously expensive, and can be completed while doing other activities. During the summer I've found myself knitting while at the movie theater, watching swim meets, and at sleepovers with friends. It's a hobby that is completely based on muscle memory and can easily follow you on whatever summer excursion you take on.

Tanning/ Sitting Outside

Whether or not one is a fan of the steamy climate Nebraska summer's provide, the sunny days of the season have excellent health benefits and should be fully taken advantage of. Sunshine has proven benefits on one's mental health, and with Nebraska

winters that can be bitterly cold and gray for weeks on end, I highly encourage all Omahans to soak up the sun whenever they can during the summer. One of my favorite summer pastimes is simply lathering up with sunscreen, laying on a beach towel in my backyard, listening to music, and soaking up the sunshine. This is an easy, inexpensive, activity that one should try in these upcoming summer months.

Trying a new sport

Similar to picking up a new hobby, summer is an excellent time to try a new sport. Getting active during the summer, not only has physical health benefits but also can boost one's mental well-being. One of my favorite sports to play in the summer is tennis. Playing tennis doesn't require anything more than a racquet, which can be bought for no more than \$20 at Target, and tennis balls. Omaha has a variety of free tennis courts available for citizens at Bemis and Dewey parks that are perfect for those simply interested in playing tennis casually. As the weather is much warmer, if you will be playing outside, plan to play earlier or later in the day, so you're not physically exerting yourself under a violently oppressive sun. Playing a sport like tennis is an excellent summer activity that will surely improve one's enjoyment of the season.

Ella Levy
opinion editor

Make Jewelry

This can be done with a group of friends, one friend, or alone. All it takes is a trip to the craft store. Beads, string, and scissors are the only materials you need. You can put on a TV show or listen to your favorite music while working.

Make a Summer Playlist

When I think of summer, I think of driving with the windows down while singing my heart out to my favorite song. This cannot be done without the right song. Make a summer playlist with all your favorite upbeat music and let that smile spread across your face as the wind is blowing and the sun is shining. Some recommendations to get you started are "Yellow Mellow" by Ocean Alley, "Hot Rod" by Dayglow, and "Driving to Hawaii" by Summer Salt.

Go to a Drive In Movie

Grab a couple of your friends and somebody's car. Park at a drive-in movie with your favorite snacks and cozy blankets. Quasar Drive-In, located in Valley, Nebraska, plays free movies every Thursday for their "Throwback Thursday." There is also a drive-in theater located in Falconwood Park in Bellevue. They play free movies every Friday.

Watch the Sunset

As cheesy as it sounds, after a long day of running around the city with your friends, go to your favorite park or lake and watch the sunset. It's the perfect way to wind down and just enjoy your friend's company. I recommend going to Standing Bear Lake in the evening and walking around until the sun sets.

From my list I decided to make jewelry. It took my friend and I multiple stores to find the right beads. We settled on beads that resembled shells and we mixed it with beachy charms. We used elastic string and watched "Stranger Things" while we worked. It was very enjoyable.



Chlöe Johnson | The Register

Shyla Youngs
editor-in-chief

Roller Skating/Biking

As summer approaches, instead of driving take advantage of the nice weather! Not only will you save money on gas, but being outside has multiple physical and mental health benefits. After enduring yet another typical Nebraska winter, I advise everyone to enjoy these warm months as much as possible. One of my favorite pastimes is taking a daily walk on the South Omaha Trail, but biking or roller skates only makes this experience more fun. Roller skates can be costly, but I borrowed mine from a friend-however, this is only more of a reason to un-retire your bike from the garage. Most importantly, bring a friend and set a fun destination. Consider biking to the movies, a favorite spot for dinner, or even to a nearby park. I recently went roller skating with a friend, and now it's something I try to do weekly. Not only was it a delightful activity, but it's a more enjoyable way to exercise while soaking up some sun. This is an easy, accessible, and cost-efficient activity that should be on everyone's summer bucket list!

Hiking

I would classify myself as a hiking enthusiast, so I recommend this to anyone looking for a new hobby/activity to try. Omaha is home to a variety of sites located around the city, which we reviewed in the last newspaper! Just for a little refresher, Neale Woods, Hum-

mel, Zorinsky, and Fontenelle Forest are just a few great options to explore for your next endeavor. The wonderful thing about this option too, it's extremely cost-effective. All you really need are some athletic clothes, shoes you don't care about getting muddy, and some water and snacks! My personal favorite is Neale Woods, where I go all the time with my sister. With a variety of trails leveling from beginner, intermediate, to more challenging, and beautiful scenery, it's the perfect option for anyone just getting into hiking. If it's more accessible to you than biking or roller skating, you can still enjoy some quality time outside with friends, again with a more challenging workout. Most people will have to end up driving to these locations, so if you want to make it even more affordable, carpooling with friends is a great option. I'd even recommend bringing some food in your car to enjoy after. Most places have little picnic tables-so you could even check multiple items off your list and enjoy a nice picnic too!

Make a summer scrapbook

I am a huge fan of commemorating moments with friends in more creative, visual ways. Making a scrapbook is a great platform for this! You can get super into different layouts, backgrounds, and if you want, get fancy with other elements like stickers. I've made smaller versions of this like cards, but this summer I'm definitely going to test out scrapbooking. Some of the materials can be costly, but there are affordable alternatives! I'd recommend just working with what you

can easily access. I've seen people use inexpensive sketchbooks, or even a composition notebook. It doesn't have to look professional by any means, I think the important part is the sentiment behind it. For me, I think having something to look back on while in college is going to be so special. Another way to make this even more personalized is to use disposable film cameras to capture your summer moments. You can buy these pretty much everywhere, but I tend to look at Target or CVS/Walgreens. This is something you could do yearly, or even make for each year of high school so you have a whole collection to look back on. If you love to get crafty like me, making a summer scrapbook is something you should try!

Invest in a portable hammock

Investing in a portable hammock is yet another fun way to enjoy your summer outside. There's a wide price range to choose from online, but no matter what you'd have to spend some money on this. After doing some research, Target has some options for under \$20, which are pretty affordable. Keeping it in your car's trunk would be the best way to get the most use out of it, or bringing it to the park, on a hike, a picnic with friends, or even setting it up outside of your house are just some of the ways you could potentially enjoy this activity. Although you could still enjoy summer without one, I think treating yourself a little would lead to many wonderful summer memories.

something on you in an emergency. There are plenty of affordable options, and this is a purchase that will benefit you year-round.

-A good water bottle

Summer heat is no joke, and neither is staying hydrated. Many people need to drink more water but find it unenjoyable. Getting a fun water bottle you like and want to use can be the secret to surviving the summer.

- Keeping busy

Although everyone's expectations are high for the summer, only some moments will be filled with exciting activities. Consider using this time as a break from everyday technology like working on your iPad and phone. Books, games, and personal projects can

keep you entertained in those dull moments without distracting you from what's happening around you.

- Outfits and swimsuits

Being comfortable is essential. When choosing clothes for the summer, make sure you check fabrics. A good summer fabric is linen, but it is all up to what you find comfortable. Not being appropriately dressed for the weather can be a huge mistake, so make sure you are certain that everything you wear will result in feeling confident and comfortable. Take some time to look through your closet and get rid of things you no longer wear. Have a couple of basic items that go with everything and that you feel comfortable in.

Summer Essentials

Anja Kovacevic
staff writer

With the end of the school year approaching, summer is on everyone's minds. The big break will be here before students know it, so it is time to start thinking about the essentials of the summer. This article is a list of things everyone should consider adding to their vacation checklist to stay comfortable and have the best summer yet.

-Sunscreen

One of the most important ones. Being sunburnt is no fun and can take time away

from summer plans. Luckily, sunscreen is a way to prevent that. Picking the right sunscreen can be challenging, so know what to look for. There are two types of sunscreens on the market: mineral and chemical. Mineral sunscreen acts as a shield from the sun that stays on your face, while chemical sinks into your skin to deliver protection. Knowing your skin is essential. Things like looking for sunscreen with no white cast can give you a good relationship with the sunscreen you wear. Look out for pore-clogging ingredients such as zinc oxide for those with acne.

-Portable phone charger

A portable phone charger can be useful when traveling for long periods or having

All of This Will End

Noa Gilbert
news editor

All of This Will End,” Indigo de Souza declares in the title of her third studio album. She explores themes of existence, abuse, and healing in her signature radiant indie rock, creating an album so well-crafted that I wish its end didn’t come so quickly. But Souza suggests, through lyrics at once poetic and conversational, that perhaps the inevitability of endings is something to honor.

Souza sings of seeking peace after the end of a relationship in “Time Back,” the first song on the album. The song features warm electric guitar riffs, and a promise from Souza that “we’re going to love again on the other side.” But halfway into the song, the guitar falls away, leaving Souza’s voice haunted behind distorted synthesizers and the sounds of screams, as she mourns, “I’m sad, I’m tired, I want my time back.” “Time Back” is classic Indigo de Souza, with sounds and effects to complement her lyrical content. It is a microcosm of the larger emotional arc of “All of This Will End.”

“All of This Will End” relates to Souza’s previous albums, which also explored the complex intersection of hatred and healing. Many of the songs seem to address unhealthy relationships, such as “You Can Be Mean” and “Not My Body.” “You Can Be Mean” is written in conversational phrases and ends with Souza repeatedly asking, “When’s it gonna get any better?” in cadences slightly different with each repetition, emphasizing the sense of disorientation, confusion, and anger expressed in the lyrics.

“Losing” is my favorite track, with Souza’s voice confessional and gentle as she sings of yearning for connection. The drumbeat is even and steady behind Souza’s uncertain lyrics. “There is nothing I can do when the winds of change blow through. There is nothing I can say to make you stay,” Souza sings in the chorus. Few of us want to acknowledge the inevitable grief of human connection: the shared knowledge that all of this will indeed end. But with her sharply crafted lyrics, Indigo de Souza finds words for an emotion that I find often hard to express.

The rare weakness of “All of This Will End” is when Souza leans too far into reassurance and resorts to platitudes. The title track is essentially a mantra. “I don’t have answers, no one does,” Souza sings, “There’s only love, there’s only moving through and trying your best, sometimes it’s not enough.” This track lacks the depth that the rest of the album exemplifies. One reason existentialism is often difficult to express is how it is inherently disconnected from everyday life, and because the title track leans so far into the intellectual, Souza loses some of the physical and material connection from the emotional content of her lyrics to her listeners’ lives.

Luckily, the album, seen as a whole, is a well-rounded exploration of physical and metaphysical themes. “I want to be a redwood tree,” she sings in “Not my Body.” Though the album begins with admissions of pain, the second half of “All of This Will End” tends towards hard-won healing. “The Water” is a track singing about recovery after the end of a relationship, and “Smog” is a brilliant gem of indie pop. It’s easy to sing along as Souza sings, “I come alive in the nighttime, when everybody else is dead.”

Souza knows throughout “All of This Will End” that endings are a mixed bag. From the difficulty of loss to the joy of moving forward, Souza explores universal experiences in her luminous indie rock style. For Indigo de Souza, “All of This Will End” is both a statement of existential despair and a stubborn declaration of hope.

‘Swarm’ satirizes Beyoncé’s fan base

Hadley Forsen-Yepes
proofreader

We all know what it’s like to be a fan of an artist whose songs we listen to on repeat, whose face is plastered all over our bedroom wall. Sometimes, we act like we know the person; we talk about them like we’re old friends, defend them as if they have any clue who we are. But would we kill for them?

While it can be fun to be a part of a fandom, the lengths we would go to for these celebrities is concerning. “Swarm,” Amazon Prime’s psychological thriller starring Dominique Fishback, explores this phenomenon.

“This is not a work of fiction,” states the show’s introduction. “Any similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events, is intentional.” This witty intro, a play on the common “all persons fictitious” disclaimer, perfectly sets the mood for the seven episodes ahead.

Dre is a young woman living in Houston with her lifelong best friend, Marissa. Their friendship is sacred, but strained, as Dre disapproves of Marissa’s new boyfriend. Not just because he’s ingenuine and constantly ridicules her by calling her a virgin: he also disrespected her favorite singer, Ni’Jah.

Ni’Jah, who is so clearly the “Swarm” universe’s version of Beyoncé. Her fanbase is called her “Swarm,” a reference to the “Beyhive.” Her newest album is titled “Festival,” which is too similar to Beyoncé’s “Renaissance” to be a coincidence. She’s from Houston, something Beyoncé proudly boasts. Ni’Jah is even expecting twins, which was true for Beyoncé in 2017 when she was pregnant with her now 5-year-old twins, Rumi and Sir.

And you wouldn’t be a true fan without a stan Twitter account, one of which Dre has proudly maintained since she was a teenager. It’s dedicated to Ni’Jah, of course.

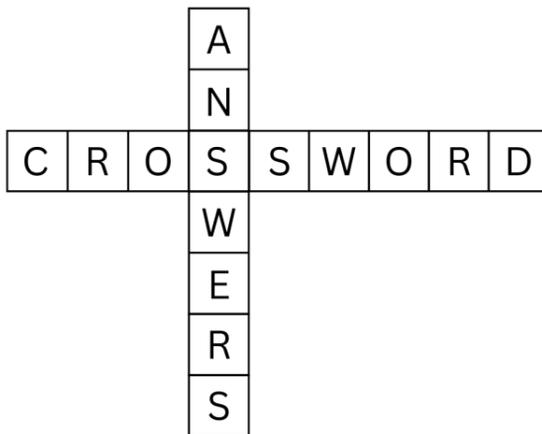
But this show is not just about parasocial relationships.



It’s mostly about grief and being angry with the world. It’s about Dre finding an incredibly unhealthy and deadly way to deal with her emotions. “Swarm” has the ability to induce laughs one second and winces the next, and that’s the beauty of a satirical thriller.

Not to mention the cinematography of the show, which somehow glamorizes the mundane. The footage is slightly grainy, with a warm filter over it. It invites the viewer to get comfortable. This comfort immediately dissipates each time viewers hear the sound of bees swarming around a hive, just one example of the way “Swarm” uses sound to its storytelling advantage. A sense of wrongness is lingering from the start—the first time we hear this chaotic noise.

Speaking of parasocial relationships, I love Donald Glover, the man who directed, produced, and co-created “Swarm” along with Janine Nabers. In typical Donald Glover fashion, he has created a clever social commentary on life in the digital age. “Swarm” is an unsettling psychological thriller, but what makes it even scarier is the fact that we can all see a little bit of ourselves in its main character, Dre.



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sports & leisure

POETRY TEAM VERSES ITS WAY TO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Central's poetry team dominated this past season, winning every single one of its bouts and edging past three of the best teams in the state to clinch the state title. The Register spoke with team members and coach Jonathan Flanagan about the monumental season. Check out page 17 to read a sample of the poems that got "Old School" its state title.



Central's poetry team nabbed first place at the All Writes Reserved spoken word performance state championship. Junior Aiden Whalen, who will be reading his poem on the main stage of Maha Music Festival this summer, said that "It could have been anyone's game." But in the end, the Eagles triumphed over the other teams in the final to take home the gold. Left to right: Isabella Mitchell, Rachel Slavik, Noa Gilbert, Cory Chiles, Lily Stecker, Aiden Whalen, Savannah Sipp, Jonathan Flanagan, Grayson Shuler-Morgan. Not Pictured: Jaylin Sims, who has competed for two seasons. Photo Courtesy of Sheri Shuler

Ann Carlson
staff writer

Central's All Writes Reserved Poetry Team is a Nebraska state champion.

"It was amazing to hear our name called when we won," senior, Isabella Mitchell said. "All our hard work finally paid off."

The team consists of Isabella Mitchell, Aiden Whalen, Savannah Sipp, Grayson Shuler-Morgan, Lilly Stecker, Jaylin Sims, and Noa Gilbert. They defeated Skutt Catholic, Norfolk and Lincoln High this month to win their first ever poetry championship.

To qualify for state the team had to make it through a tournament series called bouts

that started at the end of March. Teams from all over the state competed at venues across Nebraska.

"It's schools competing and as you win you advance to the next round," club sponsor and English department head, Jonathan Flanagan said. "It's similar to the March Madness bracket for basketball."

At the state competition there are five rounds, four individual and one group contest. The team was in first place by a point going into the fifth and final round.

"Going into fifth round we knew it was a close match," Mitchell said. "We had to really bring it and practice a lot to get a champion-

ship."

The state competition took place at the Holland Center with a crowd of professional poets, parents and students.

"The energy at state was very exciting, Flanagan said. "They played music and had local poets there to cheer everyone on."

At the state competition, five judges listened to the poetry, then took a minute to hold up a score between one and ten.

"The scoring during state adds even more excitement," Flanagan said. "The team is very supportive and cheers when the score is high and boos if they think they deserve a higher score."

Junior Aiden Whalen said the judging was intense.

"It was a nerve-racking situation since it was so close," Whalen said. "It could have been anyone's game."

But 2023, was the year of the Eagle as it was the team's first state title while coach Flanagan has been there.

"It was an emotional rollercoaster all season," Flanagan said. "Seeing the team get their medals and trophies was really a surreal moment and I'm proud of this team for all the hard work they put into the year."



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