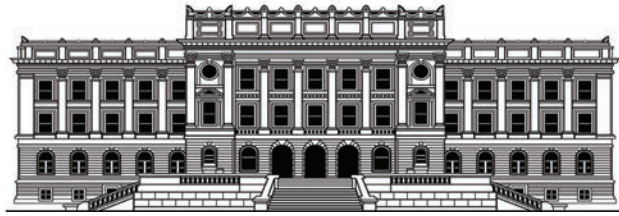


The Register



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What a wonderful phrase

Katie Besancon
staff writer

HAKUNA MATATA! Central students experienced the performance of a lifetime during the March 19 Broadway performance of “The Lion King” at the Orpheum Theater. Students were able to watch the show and interact with several cast members after the performance.

Sitting in the orchestra section of the Orpheum, students got to experience the magic up close as cast members would make their way down the isles throughout the show, giving the audience a chance to see the intricate detailing of their costumes and the talent they carry as they are singing, dancing, and holding props while moving down the isles to get on stage.

Talkbacks, where the cast answers questions from the audience, and other outreach opportunities have always been offered by “The Lion King” but need to be requested, causing availability and frequency to change from venue to venue. Central students were extremely lucky with this opportunity, as many other musicals and shows do not offer a chance to interact with the cast.

Students asked questions about if cast members ever get nervous before shows, how the cast members got started in the performing arts industry, and what it was like to perform with a large show.

Cast member Eric Bean Jr. joined “The Lion King” tour in 2017 and is the show’s dance captain, swing, and an understudy for Ed, one of the hyenas. He told the students about what it is like being the dance captain on the show, what some of the most difficult parts of the show are, what the preparation for shows looks like, and how he was introduced to the performing arts.

“I actually grew up on the island of Bermuda and during my childhood had no idea that performing was something that I wanted to do,” Bean Jr. said. “It wasn’t until I joined the performance team of Pride Youth Programs and was cast in a summer production of a theatrical traveling road show that I realized how much I loved it.”

Talkbacks are not just exciting for the



Actors and producers in “The Lion King” spoke with Central students after the musical on March 19. Photos Courtesy of The Lion King & The Cast and Crew of The Lion King

students and audience but also for the cast members; they allow the cast to interact with those they perform for. “It provides an opportunity to both educate participants about the show while simultaneously inspiring them about the opportunities and possibilities that can be provided through the arts,” Bean Jr. said.

Having talkbacks like the one Central students attended allows students to learn more about the work of art and performing. Creating those experiences enables students

to dive deeper into interests and things that they could pursue as a career.

“I love interacting with students and the audience. I actually have a degree in education (dance and choreography), and teaching is one of my passions. Inspiring hopefully the future artists and performers is always exciting,” Bean Jr. said.



OPS’ future rests with Ray; moves from interim to permanent role

The newly selected superintendent will be tasked with expanding academic programming, creating more channels for accountability and alleviating the staffing shortage through ‘grow your own’ pipelines.

Steven Dickerson
staff writer

Walk around any Omaha Public Schools building, athletic event, musical, or even the North versus Central boy’s state basketball game at Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, and there’s a decent chance you’ll see Matt Ray.

While many students may not know who he is, his job might very well have a role in their present and future success.

The OPS Board of Education unanimously selected Ray, currently serving as interim superintendent, to be the next superintendent for the district at its Feb. 13 meeting. He will succeed Cheryl Logan, who left the position at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

Ray will receive a base pay of \$336,500 in the contract approved by the board, which goes into effect on July 1, continu-

ing through the 2026-2027 school year.

Ray has developed close ties with the board, working with its members as he navigated his way from teacher to board secretary to chief of staff to deputy superintendent, and eventually where he is now as interim superintendent and soon-to-be superintendent.

Board Member Nick Thielen of Subdistrict 3 said Ray is “a thoughtful leader, and he’ll take their [constituents] concerns seriously as he makes plans for how to move forward.”

The board’s choice came after a yearlong superintendent search with significant community involvement. Ray was chosen over finalists who were a former superintendent from Des Moines, Iowa; a current superintendent in Fort Myers, Florida; and a deputy superintendent from Detroit, Michigan. Thielen said Ray’s long history with OPS was a major factor in

the board’s decision.

“The ultimate decision to hire Mr. Ray should not be taken as an indication that the process wasn’t worth it,” Thielen said. “It was an important step in making sure we hired the best person for the job.”

The selection comes at a crossroads for the state’s largest school district. OPS schools have struggled to handle a multitude of issues, like vaping, staff shortages and chronic absenteeism. The high school dropout rate districtwide was 6.7% for the 2022-2023 school year, significantly increasing from its low of 2.5% during the 2013-2014 school year. The district has also undergone major changes with the introduction of programs like Pathways and Academies under Logan’s leadership and the COVID-19 pandemic.

RAY is continued on page 2

News

English in the age of AI p. 5

With the rise of generative AI, Central High’s English Department is grappling with how to best use the technology in class and whether to use it at all.

Opinion

Legislature looks to ban books p. 8

Nebraska’s legislature is seeing an alarming trend of bills being introduced that would limit Nebraskans’ access to information and materials at their schools and public libraries.

Arts & Culture

GUTS! p. 12

Rodrigo is performing 57 shows in 2024 and opened in Palm Springs, California. Omaha’s CHI Health Center on March 13, 2024, was her 12th stop on the tour.

Sports

Central’s state wrestling success p. 18

The Central wrestling program sent six athletes to the NSAA State Wrestling Championships in February.

'Devious Licks' leave devious impacts, even three years later

Steven Dickerson
staff writer

Senior Charlie Palmer still remembers the autumn of his sophomore year. It was the first time since the start of the pandemic that all students were back in the building full-time, with no remote learning option. The chaos of the time birthed an alarming TikTok trend that Palmer described as an evolved version of vandalism: devious licks. "Central was a dark place," he said.

"Devious lick" was a term used to describe when someone stole, damaged or vandalized a piece of property at school, such as a soap dispenser or a pencil sharpener. The TikTok trend, which peaked in September 2021, focused mainly on school bathrooms and had kids across the country posting their "outrageous licks."

"I did not know chaos until the devious licks era," Palmer said.

The trend's time in the spotlight coincided with the first attempt since COVID to return to normalcy. Assistant Principal Jodi Dierks said the time was weird and confusing. "97% of our kids were following the bare minimum expectations," she said. She believes the small minority of kids responsible for the licks were just very "loud."

The initial response to devious licks from the Central administration was to push students to see how unacceptable it was. "We would get on the intercom so much, it was honestly tiring," Dierks said. Video assemblies were also common during Eagle Time.

The problem was exacerbated by Central being short-staffed on security guards at the

time. To help alleviate the issues, administrators began taking on the role of security guards. "I was constantly scanning, trying to be as proactive as possible," Dierks said. "It's surreal looking back now."

"Teachers were really outnumbered," Dierks said.

Dierks and other teachers around the building still say that the devious licks era was one of the building's most impactful events in recent times. The biggest impact Dierks identified was financial repercussions.

Head Custodian Chad Knott agreed, pointing to the hefty bills the school had to pay for the damage. He said Central was not hit as hard as other OPS schools, mentioning that Burke and Northwest had upwards of \$15,000 to \$20,000 in damages each, but said Central still had quite a bit to pay for.

"We had at least three sinks ripped off, and we went through about 60 to 70 soap dispensers," Knott said.

Palmer recalled someone seriously damaging a water fountain, saying it took quite some time to get it replaced. He said OPS was not great at replacing small items like posters and pencils.

Another impact was how the school approaches social media and how policies have changed since that semester. Dierks explained that the administration now monitors social media as best as possible, something they didn't do strongly before. She said they also now have students who report information to them, something that wasn't common before



A soap dispenser torn off the wall in a Central bathroom. WHITMAN RUTLEDGE | The Register

then.

"Students really care about this school and building, and they've gotten better at self-reporting," she said.

Things have changed since the troubling time, though. "We're a well-oiled machine with security now; I'm confident it would never get to that level again," Dierks said. She also said all kinds of misbehaviors have decreased drastically since the 2021-2022 school year.

Palmer said, "Our administration has handled instances of vandalism appropriately, and vandalism has decreased as a result ... we

have grown from this era, and, hopefully, it will never return."

Dierks continues to admit that it was one of the hardest points in her career, but she believes even a time as difficult to manage as that could be used as a learning experience. She said it made her focus more on building relationships with students and thus encouraging good behavior.

"It strengthened my connections with students, and I am forever grateful for that," Dierks said. "The circumstances are so different."

Crossroads development delayed, now planned to open in 2027-28

Becca Rock
staff writer

Sitting at 72nd and Dodge Street is 40 acres of dirt – an eyesore for the average Omahan commuter.

The Crossroads, a mall and living center similar to an Aksarben and Village Pointe combination, was originally set to be done in late 2024 or early 2025. However, little progress has been made visually, other than mounds of piled-up dirt.

The Register reached out to Lockwood Developments and the City of Omaha to determine if construction will be finished within the 2024-2025 timeframe, but they did not respond. In the Omaha Daily Record, they relay that the completion of The Crossroads is projected to be in 2027.

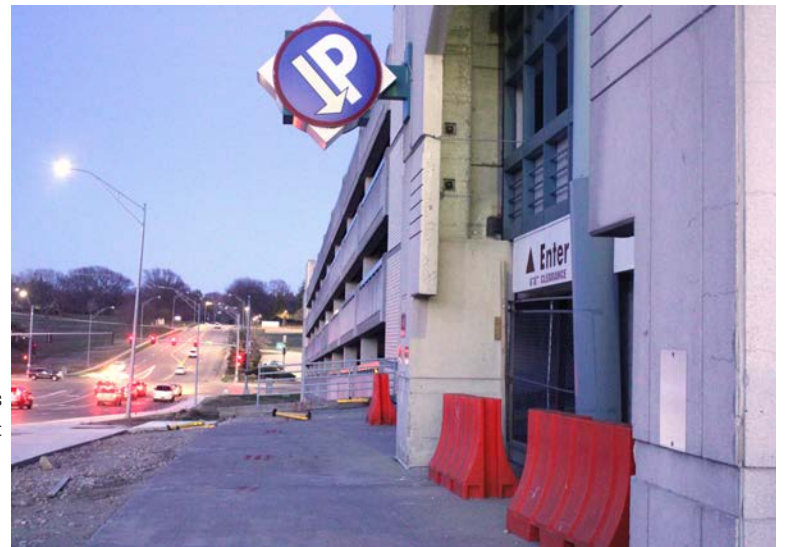
Additionally, the price to revamp The Crossroads has grown to \$862 million. Originally, the project was going to cost \$553.8 million. The majority of this increase in funds is for the demolishing of the garage in the northeast corner of the property, which could fulfill the parking

needs the city wants on the property but does not fit the "aesthetics," City Council President Pete Festersen told the Omaha World-Herald.

The Crossroads is also being paid for through tax increment financing (TIF); this is a redevelopment tool created by the Legislature in the 1980s. Normally, tax payments go to help maintain schools and other public organizations that rely on tax increments for funding. TIF redistributes tax funding to help pay for other projects.

Once The Crossroads finally does see its completion, Central students and the community will benefit from this new area to hang out with friends and family.

The delay in the production of The Crossroads makes it so that current high school students at Central will not be able to experience this mall and area to hang out during their high school career, but students in high school in 2027 and 2028 will find this place to be somewhere they can hang out and interact with their community.



The current parking garage at Crossroads Mall. JOSIE MCLAUGHLIN | The Register

How to learn more about Omaha's Cinco de Mayo festivities

Brianna Martinez
contributing writer

Cinco De Mayo Omaha is an event that happens annually three days of the week on all of 24th Street, and this year it will go on May 10 through May 12.

The event has amazing performances, vendors, carnival rides, live events, food and the grand parade "The parade is always a highlight that kind of kicks off the day," CEO and Executive Director Marcos Mora said.

Students can get involved with setup at the actual Cinco de

Mayo event or even the Adelante Banquet that kicks off everything, recognizing the grand marshal and giving out scholarships.

"Sometimes we just need help with set up and greeting people," Mora said. Students can visit the website, click on volunteering and fill out the info.

"Put information in then we will contact them, they can let us know when they are available," Mora said.

Go to cdmomaha.com for more information.

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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Students, teachers, musicians respond to MAHA cancellation

Charlie Yale
co-editor-in-chief

Omaha's marquee annual music festival, Maha, has been canceled for this upcoming summer, according to a press release put out by the organization. The festival board explained that they canceled Maha to undergo a rework of its operating model.

Grayson Shuler-Morgan, a Central senior and a fan of riot-grrrl punk, indie pop and freak folk, explained that they don't see Maha as incredibly important to the local music scene. "I'm most worried about the local artists. When I went to Maha, people were only there for Car Seat Headrest. Small basement concerts for local artists are really fun, but it's not as big of an audience [with Maha being canceled]."

In recent years, artists like Big Thief, Peach Pit, and Car Seat Headrest have taken main stage at the festival. During the same time, the festival's popularity has grown for fans near and far.

"I've gone to every [Maha] except the first one, and I did play it in 2015," said Jon Flanagan, English department head and trumpeter of All Young Girls Are Machine Guns. "I don't know if playing Maha really advances you as a band much. It's more of a celebration of local music. It's a cool thing that's an honor."

Band members of Bad Self Portraits, an indie rock band from Omaha, echoed Flanagan's sentiment. Connor Paintin, Ingrid Howell and Jesse White all graduated from Central between the years 2017 and 2019. Paintin explained that "[f]or the Omaha music scene, I think that local bands' shows will be largely unaffected by the cancellation. However, I'm incredibly grateful that Maha has included local acts in the festival each year, and the cancellation unfortunately means one less opportunity for local artists this year."

At the same time, the band had a tremendous time playing the festival in 2022. "As an Omaha artist, Maha is one of those gigs you really hope you can make happen someday, so to

see it happen was very surreal," White said.

The band emphasized that the Omaha music scene involves many elements in both "festival and non-festival" sites, according to Howell. For example, Outlandia and GRRRL Camp are happening in Bellevue, along with PETFEST in Aksarben. All in all, the band feels like there are still many opportunities for fans to experience the Omaha music scene.

Maha had originally planned a move from Aksarben Village to the RiverFront for the 2024 festival, moving the festival 50 blocks east. Now, the festival has another year to recalibrate before it officially makes the move. "I hope that [Maha in 2025] provides a new and unique festival for Omaha. I think the local scene produces some of the best music I've ever heard, and I'll always be for more opportunities for that music to be heard," White said.

Aiden Whalen, another Central senior who performed his poetry live at Maha last year, worried about the effect on Omaha's cultural scene as a whole. Whalen enjoyed the crowd and experience of sharing his poetry on the Main Stage, but was concerned when he saw it was canceled. "I understand they have their reasons, but I disagree with the way that they're going about it," Whalen said. "When OGR performed, it was a younger band – a lot of littler people – exposing people to the fact that 'you are young, but you are still able to do the thing that that band that has been performing for 15 years can do.' I am sad

that people this year don't get to [perform poetry], but it feels different skipping a year."

Senior Chance Gaillard hoped that Maha's cancellation was only temporary. "I was definitely surprised at first," Gaillard said. "It's become a really big part of us as a city."

Gaillard said that the Omaha music scene has stagnated as of late. "If you look at the past couple of years, their lineups have not been as good as they have in the past," Gaillard said. "I love going to music festivals, but especially since Outlandia has started, I've been more looking forward to that."

"I hope that [Maha in 2025] provides a new and unique festival for Omaha. I think the local scene produces some of the best music I've ever heard, and I'll always be for more opportunities for that music to be heard"

JESSE WHITE
Bad Self Portraits Band Member

Mock ACT tests help prepare all students

Gaby Antunez
contributing writer

On the second week of February students were required to take an online ACT prep in all their required classes during class. Student first took the test in their English class, then their science class, then your math class and finally English class again but for the reading test.

It was taken on an app or website which is like the real ACT test but online and gave them a score at the end giving them an indication on their expected scores. The Register asked juniors for their opinion on the online ACT prep since they are required to take the real ACT test in April. The students asked were junior Hattie Moeller, junior Roberto Campos Ortega, and junior Ricardo Ic Vasquez.

Moeller thought the online ACT prep went well and was glad she got to practice one last time before the real test. "I'm glad we got to do it in class so that it wasn't homework because I think I would have procrastinated it and not done it

if it was homework," Moeller said. She was glad it didn't take time out of her own day so she could put her whole focus on it efficiently.

Ortega also thinks it went well and was glad that he got to do the online ACT prep but thinks he could have put more effort and prepared more so he wasn't really proud of his score. "I'm going to be honest this ACT prep I didn't prepare as much but I'm ready for what I need to remember in lessons I need to acquire in order to get a great score for my future," Ortega said. He thinks it helped him know in what areas he should practice more in and what skills he should develop for the real test.

Ic also was glad he was able to take the online ACT prep because it helped him know what the real thing is like. "I think it was helpful and kind of reminding since I took the paper pre-ACT," Ic said. He was glad that there were many options to prepare for the real ACT with many different practices.

All think it is preparing them for the real ACT and helps

them know what they should focus on more. Campos thinks it helps show different strategies like eliminating choices and obtaining information fast.

Ic agreed and also say how it is giving him an idea of what the test will be like and not seeing it as just a waste of a whole class period. "These practices are actually helpful instead of a waste of time," Ic said. They all think that it is helping them for April and are glad they got to prepare one last time and know what they should work on for the real ACT.

All were also proud of their scores and showing no regret for how it went. Ic especially was glad that it shows them a score and a range of what they are expected to get. "I don't know if I'll get a similar score but I'm sure it gives me an indicator that I am improving and getting ready for the real thing," Ic said. They all think they are improving and know in what subjects to study in and make sure to be more determined for the real test in April.

Ray creates personal connections between OPS and community

RAY from page 1

Ray believes the board was right in thinking he would be the best leader for the district during this period. He believes increased accountability will be a huge component of success. He said OPS must admit shortfalls and show improvement to be successful. "I'm not perfect; I will make mistakes," he said.

Sharing more data and being transparent is a part of that goal. "We're sharing more data with the Board of Education than we have in years ... it's not all good data, but we know it, and we're going to do better," Ray said.

Another goal is to increase OPS's personal connections with teachers, students and the community. So far, he believes he has made great strides towards achieving that goal. Ray's schedule is consistently packed full of school-related events. Talking to people and getting input has made the job more peaceful because people trust him, he said.

"How we move forward with treating people is super important," Ray said. "Because of my relationships with people, there is no shortage of people that tell me reality."

Many people around Central echoed sentiments that he is improving connections and trust. "He's super visible, and I believe that is very important," Assistant Principal Jodi Dierks said. Multiple teachers who spoke to The Register also appreciated his visibility. Many students didn't know who he was but grew to know and like him after his popular decision for multiple snow days at the start of the second semester.

"I really liked him after those snow day calls; he automatically earned my support,"

sophomore Nichole Palfini said.

Ray believes these connections have been helpful to many big decisions in the past few months. These decisions include switching OPS's busing vendor from Student Transportation of America to Zum Services, Inc. for the next three school years and increasing the variance for special education teachers from 7% to 10%. Increasing the variance was an idea that Ray and OPS took to the teacher's union, which overwhelmingly supported the idea.

Connections with parents are also being prioritized by Ray, as all three of his children went through OPS and graduated from Central. "Experiencing the school district as a parent helped me understand Omaha Public Schools ... my son also had to stand outside for the bus," he said.

"[Because of my three kids,] I'm able to tell parents, 'I'm confident in the Omaha Public Schools.'" He appreciates when parents reach out, saying, "I get more information to make more informed decisions."

While accountability and communication help influence success in the district, it's not everything, Ray admits. Real strategies must be put forward to change the course of the district. His major policy platform is to decrease staffing shortages, which he believes is possible through "grow your own" programs that he and other district officials are heavily promoting.

These programs, including EdRising and the University of Nebraska Omaha Teacher Scholar Academy, an academy Ray is strongly advocating for, are the ideal starters for

improving staffing. The district also has an education pathway, but Ray said he was focusing on EdRising and the UNO partnership.

The Teacher Scholar Academy is a partnership between UNO and OPS that allows new OPS graduates interested in becoming teachers to apply and get a \$5,000 scholarship each semester they attend UNO if they are selected. At the end of their UNO schooling, they will be given an open job in OPS immediately.

"Long term, the program will yield impressive results," Ray said. On teacher retention, however, Ray said the district will need to adapt to teachers not staying with the district as long as they have in the past.

Ray said he isn't in a position to introduce major programs like past superintendents, as he feels OPS is doing too much.

"I'm not interested in implementing things that will derail the school district in the long term," he said. "I'm wildly interested in figuring out what we should stop doing."

To figure out what the district should stop doing, Ray brought up the concept of post-schooling case studies. District employees will analyze data on former students, no matter if they graduated or not. The goal would be to identify and solve negative patterns or influences.

The studies would allow the district to look at the potential educational impacts of frequent moves as a kid or look at how things like Pathways and Next Level Learning, OPS's summer school program, affect the likeliness of students attending postsecondary education.

The only major change Ray was willing to bring up was school start and end times, which have been a hot topic around the country.

While it may appear overwhelming, Ray believes conversations about it need to begin now, especially as changes to OPS's calendar, start/end times, and schedules could have an impact on helping solve staffing shortages and improving teacher retention.

"All research points to us flipping elementary and secondary school start times," he said.

However, Ray acknowledged the fact that it is a huge change that could influence everything from athletics to transportation to students who have jobs and what their work schedules look like.

"It's not a quick decision; we're going to take time on it," he said.

Ray acknowledged that things could change but believes the district will mellow down chaos, solve problems, and become more peaceful if he sticks to his plan by staying in OPS for a long time and breaking the spell of short tenures, as seen with the past two superintendents.

"I feel this calmness, this sense of peace in the organization," he said.

Ray said his message for people unsure of the district's future is that he will always make the best decisions for the students of OPS. "Wait and see before you judge whether or not I'm the right person."

Guatemalan consulate opens in Omaha; serves nearly 3 percent of Central students

Jasmin Gutierrez Garcia
Paula Gutierrez Martinez
contributing writers

A third Latin American consulate has set up office in Omaha. Last November, the Consulate of Guatemala joined the governments of Mexico and El Salvador in serving migrants in Nebraska.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, about 7.2% of residents in Nebraska are foreign-born and 46.5% of those foreign-born residents are from Central America.

Data from Omaha Public Schools show that of the 2,514 students currently enrolled at Central, 2.7% were born in Guatemala, making it the top birth country for Central students after the United States.

These numbers collectively reflect the Latino population's need for governmental representation in Nebraska. Together, the consulates will open new doors of opportunity for the local Latino community.

"Our main objective is to be able to document more than 75,000 Guatemalans who have not had a consulate close by for 15 years," Vice Consul Ricardo González Maldonado said. Before Guatemala established a local base last year, Guatemalans in the Midwest had to drive at least eight hours to Chicago or Denver just to get their legal documents or wait for a mobile consulate to stop by.

Elsie Melgar, a bilingual liaison at Central, said her church hosted consulate appointments in the past. "It was just easier for them than going to Colorado and Chicago, so we would host them before they announced they would open up here," Melgar said.

The consulate plans on implementing several strategies to help advocate for the Guatemalan community in the Midwest. Among them, connecting Guatemalans to institutions that can help them obtain the necessary documents to make their lives easier and creating work visas for Guatemalans to cover the needs of the states.

Like most consulates, the consulate general of Guatemala will offer primarily document-related services. What sets it apart from other consulates is that the building doubles as a passport printing center, meaning that anyone with an appointment can leave in an hour with a freshly printed passport in hand.

Besides passports, the consulate offers consular identification cards, personal identification documents, and birth certificates. The building also has special windows dedicated to giving legal, financial, and health guidance to residents.

The consulate also aims to promote Guatemalan culture in Omaha for Nebraska migrants, and Guatemala itself as a tourist

destination through festivals and other activities.

Last September, the diplomatic branch, alongside the consulates of Mexico and El Salvador, hosted a three-day celebration for Fiestas Patrias (national independence holidays) to kick off Hispanic Heritage Month that drew about 15,000 visitors.

Even before setting up an Omaha of-



Elsie Melgar, a bilingual liaison at Central.

ice, Guatemala already had well established connections with Mexico and El Salvador. Together, the three consulates are going to form a TRICAMEX alliance.

The TRICAMEX initiative is a partnership between the consulates of the Northern Triangle of America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) and Mexico that aims to monitor and protect the rights of Central American migrants in the United States.

"It was a very nice activity that took place on September 15 of just last year and was the first glimpse of this TRICAMEX agreement that is going to take us sky-high on many occasions," Maldonado said.

The Consulate General of Guatemala can be found at 1010 North 96th St., suite 200 in Omaha.

The Consulate of El Salvador did not respond to requests for interviews.

Consulado guatemalteco abre en Omaha

Jasmin Gutierrez Garcia
Paula Gutierrez Martinez
escritores contribuidos

Un tercer consulado latinoamericano ha establecido oficinas en Omaha. En noviembre pasado, el Consulado de Guatemala se unió a los gobiernos de México y El Salvador para atender a los migrantes en Nebraska.

Según el Instituto de Política de Migraciones, alrededor de 7.2% de los residentes en Nebraska son nacidos en el extranjero y el 46.5%

sólo para obtener sus documentos legales o esperar a que llegara un consulado sobre ruedas.

Elsie Melgar, enlace bilingüe en Central, dijo que su iglesia organizó citas consulares en el pasado. "Era más fácil para ellos que ir a Colorado y Chicago, así que los recibiríamos antes de que anunciaran que se abrirían aquí," dijo Melgar.

El consulado planea implementar varias estrategias para ayudar a defender a la comunidad guatemalteca en el Medio Oeste. Entre ellos, conectar a los guatemaltecos con instituciones que puedan ayudarlos a obtener los documentos necesarios para hacerles la vida más fácil y crear visas de trabajo para guatemaltecos para cubrir las necesidades de los estados.

Como la mayoría de los consulados, el consulado general de Guatemala ofrecerá principalmente servicios relacionados con documentos. Lo que lo distingue de otros consulados es que el edificio también sirve como un centro de impresión de pasaporte, lo que significa que cualquier persona con una cita puede salir en una hora con un pasaporte recién impreso en la mano.

Además de pasaportes, el consulado ofrece tarjetas de identificación consular, documentos de identificación personal y certificados de nacimiento. El edificio también tiene ventanas especiales dedicadas a dar orientación legal, financiera y de salud a los residentes.

El consulado también tiene como objetivo promover la cultura guatemalteca en Omaha para los inmigrantes de Nebraska y Guatemala como un destino turístico a través de festivales y otras actividades.

En septiembre pasado, la rama diplomática, junto con los consulados de México y El Salvador, organizaron una celebración de tres días de las Fiestas Patrias (fiestas nacionales de independencia) para comenzar el Mes del Herencia Hispana que atrajo a unos 15.000 electores.

Incluso antes de establecer una oficina en Omaha, Guatemala ya tenía conexiones bien establecidas con México y El Salvador. Juntos, los tres consulados van a formar una alianza TRICAMEX.

La iniciativa TRICAMEX es una asociación entre los consulados del Triángulo Norte de América (El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras) y México que tiene como objetivo monitorear y proteger los derechos de los migrantes centroamericanos en los Estados Unidos.

"Fue una actividad muy bonita que tuvo lugar el 15 de septiembre de solo el año pasado y fue la primera visión de este acuerdo de TRICAMEX que nos llevará a un cielo en muchas ocasiones" dijo Maldonado.

El Consulado General de Guatemala se puede encontrar en 1010 North 96th St., Suite 200 en Omaha.

El consulado de El Salvador no respondió las solicitudes de entrevistas.

RAKHIIJA MOHAMMED | The Register

de esos residentes nacidos en el extranjero son de América Central.

Los datos de Las Escuelas Públicas de Omaha muestran que de los 2.514 estudiantes actualmente matriculados en Central el 2.7% nació en Guatemala, lo que lo convierte en el principal país de nacimiento de estudiantes de Central después de Estados Unidos.

Estas cifras reflejan colectivamente la necesidad de la población latina de tener representación gubernamental en Nebraska. Juntos, los consulados ofrecerán oportunidades para la comunidad latina local.

"Nuestro principal objetivo es poder documentar a más de 75.000 guatemaltecos que hace 15 años que no tienen un consulado cerca", dijo el vicecónsul Ricardo González Maldonado. Antes de que Guatemala estableciera una base local el año pasado, los guatemaltecos del Medio Oeste tenían que conducir al menos ocho horas hasta Chicago o Denver

Kent has maintained Central for more than two decades

Millie Jackson
staff writer

For over two decades, Curtis Kent has been a hero behind the scenes at Central. Since 2004, Kent has served as a custodian, ensuring that the halls where he once walked as a student remain clean and welcoming for today's students.

Kent's journey into custodial work began before he joined the staff at Central with a five-year job as a full-time custodian at Springville Elementary School.

A day in the life of Kent starts long before the sun rises. He wakes up at 3 a.m. and arrives at school between

5 and 5:30 a.m. every day. Kent begins by turning on all the lights, brewing the morning coffee, and completing other tasks that may pop up as he scans the building. His main responsibility is taking care of the laundry. He cleans, dries, and folds it. Whether it's moving furniture, dusting, or assisting with lunch, Kent is always on the move and ensuring that the school runs smoothly behind the scenes.

Despite the early mornings and demanding tasks, he takes pride in his work. "It takes a lot out of you," Kent said. His dedication to Central is strong. A proud graduate of Central's class of 1973, he sees his role as a cus-

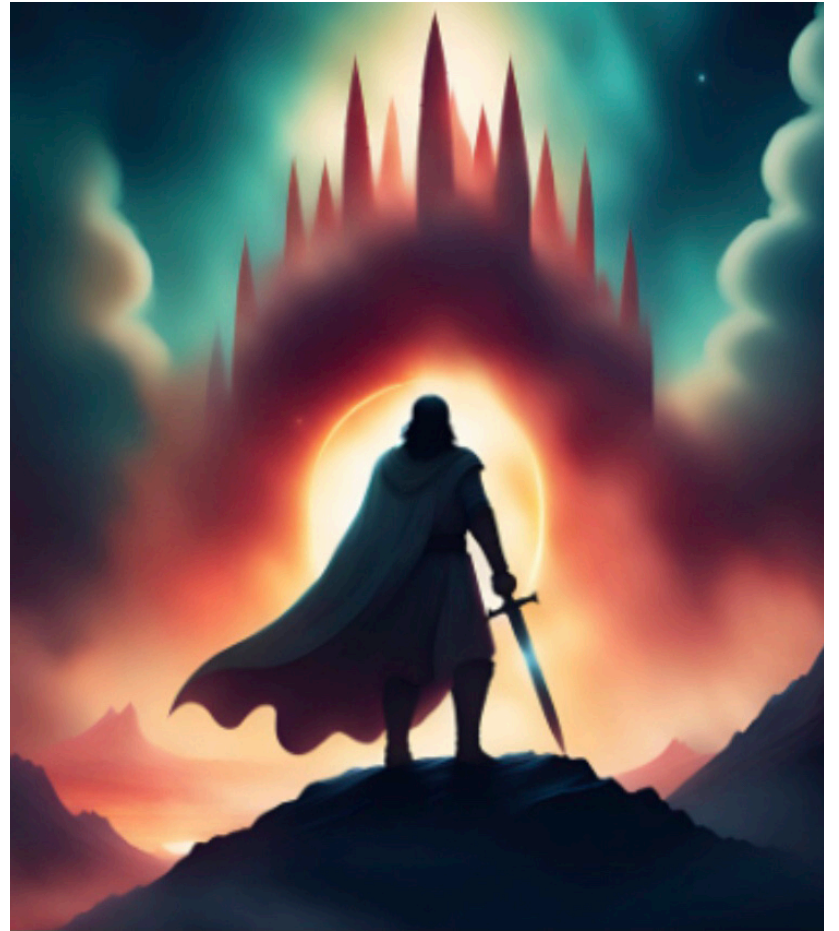
todian not just as a job but as a labor of love. "I like working at Central," Kent said. "When I first had the chance to work here, I knew this is where I'm going to retire."

For him, the highlight of the job is the people he works with. From fellow employees to teachers, he cherishes the sense of community that Central brings. "I like working with all the employees and teachers here," Kent said.

After two decades of service, Kent acknowledges that retirement is on the horizon. Once thing is certain - Central will always hold a special place in his heart. "This is the only place I really want to work," Kent said.



Cris Bataillon | The Register



Images generated by the Canva AI Magic Studio based on passages from William Shakespeare's "Hamlet submitted" by Ben Justman's English class.

How Central is teaching English in the age of artificial intelligence

Jane McGill
staff writer

English teacher Anna Wiksell first noticed something unusual two weeks into the school year. A student in her sophomore English class, who was not a native English speaker, turned in an essay using language far more sophisticated than anything he had used in class. When she confronted the student, he eventually admitted that the essay had been written by an A.I. chatbot.

High schools across the country have been grappling with the boom of freely available A.I. tools, which generate human-like text and images based on user prompts, since the public launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT in November 2022.

All 19 English teachers at Central said they had read essays submitted by students that they knew or suspected were written by A.I., a Register survey of the English department found.

Twelve English teachers reported establishing classroom rules about how students could use AI in their coursework, while six teachers said they either had yet to address AI usage in class or only addressed the issue with individual students.

Five English teachers said that they have instructed students to use AI in their coursework.

Central Librarian Jennifer Kawecki used A.I. to help students in Ben Justman's English classes understand the use of figurative language in Shakespeare plays. Students searched through the text to find instances of figurative language and then copied and pasted the lines into the A.I. in the graphic design platform Canva, which generated images based on the excerpts.

"I thought it would give them a deeper understanding of how figurative language works," Kawecki said. "I wanted [learning Shakespeare] to be more playful as opposed to students just feeling weighted down by it."

Seven English teachers said they had used AI to lesson plan for their classes, but no teacher reported using the technology to grade coursework.

English teacher Tracey Menten said she used Canva's A.I. to generate a presentation for a lesson on logical fallacies. "Instead of taking an hour, because I overthink things when I lesson plan, it maybe took me 20 minutes to plan," Menten said.

Menten said that she has also found ChatGPT to be helpful in writing critical thinking questions but said that when she asked the chatbot to write a multiple-choice test on Macbeth, almost all of the information was inaccurate. "You do have to have working knowledge of whatever you're having it produce."

The majority of teachers who responded to The Register's survey agreed that there are con-

texts where it is appropriate for students to use A.I. in their coursework.

Many teachers said that A.I. could be used as a first step to help students develop their own ideas and writing but stressed that it should not be used as a substitute for student thinking. Brainstorming, outlining, researching, and revising essays were the most common examples of what English teachers considered appropriate uses of A.I. in students' coursework.

Five teachers said they believed A.I. should never be used by students in their coursework.

Wiksell has begun requiring seniors in her AP Literature and Composition classes to include statements of how they used A.I. in their essays. Students must either attest that they did not use A.I. or that they did use the technology but did not copy and paste text directly from an A.I. chatbot. If her students attest to using A.I. at any stage of essay writing, they are required to detail how they used the technology and include links to the conversation with the chatbot.

English Department Head John Flannagan pushed back against alarmism surrounding the rapid proliferation of A.I. chatbots. "It's not really a crisis," he said. "Twenty years ago, this is what Google and SparkNotes were to teachers. Suddenly, students could just go find all the answers online. This is just kind of the next step."

Flannagan touted the English department's more than century-old tradition of requiring students to write essays by hand in class, which he said makes it difficult for students to use A.I.

"I think most of us have a good sense of how our students write," he said. "So, when you see an outlier, you know there's a good chance this student didn't write this essay because you've seen other writing samples."

Flannagan said he discussed A.I. usage by students with curriculum specialists from other OPS high schools, but that no district-wide guidelines have yet been proposed.

He plans to assemble a working group of English teachers who have experimented with A.I. over the summer to draft guidelines for how the technology should be used in Central's English classes. He speculated that policies on A.I. usage may one day be included in Central's famed Stylebook.

Many English teachers said that while they hoped more discussion at Central and throughout OPS about how A.I. can be used appropriately by students, they were wary of policies that too strictly regulate how teachers and students use the technology.

"[A.I.] is still developing so rapidly," Wiksell said. "We don't know how best to use it in instruction yet. So, I'm hesitant to ask for a big general policy when we have such a diverse population of students and staff who need to use it."

"We need to trust in teacher discretion," Menten said. "Because we are professionals, after all."

Central DECA competes at state; 15 qualify for nationals

Katie Besancon
staff writer

Central's DECA chapter traveled to Lincoln over spring break to compete in the Nebraska DECA Career Development Conference.

This year, 15 students in Central's DECA chapter, made up of students in marketing and business classes, received top eight recognition. Ten students qualified for nationals, and two of those double-qualified. Juniors Dilan Aguirre-Valez and Joel Salvador-Huerta took first place in integrated marketing campaign-product, and Hafsa Osman took first place in principles of marketing.

Second place was received by seniors Scarlet Losole and Brody Losole in integrated marketing campaign-project, Isabella Johnson in human resource management, and Desiree Steffen in retail food service management.

Third place was received by senior Madalynne George in business services management. The additional national qualifiers are junior Ewan Jones in food marketing services, senior Christian Steinbaugh in the marketing communications series, and Scarlet Losole and Brody Losole in business law and ethics team decision making.

The DECA competition is a two-part process, one being

the written test that is 100 questions in 60 minutes and the other in-person competition where they took part in role plays or submitted a year-long written project.

Students can choose to compete in any of the 27 different role-play options. In addition to their role plays, they could also take the chance to opt in to compete in any of the 23 different written project options. Throughout the year, students can compete in online competitions or challenges to help them qualify for the International Career Development Conference, which takes place on April 27 - May 1 in Anaheim, California.

The qualification needed to compete at state is to be a member of DECA, but the Central DECA chapter does it differently. Central DECA makes a requirement to compete in one of the two prior competitions before they can compete in state to ensure that they have some experience and are prepared before the stakes are higher. This allowed Central to take about 32 students, or 75% of its chapter, this year.

Many preparations take place before the competition, and students who compete in state will take time to do a lot of studying practice, mock role plays in different areas, and memorizing speeches.

"Central specifically hosts different study sessions, print off practice tests for us to complete, and they grade, which tells

us the things that we got wrong, and we study those," George said.

The environment at state fluctuates between competitive and business like but is also very fun. The competition takes place throughout the first day, and that night, there is a dance "like homecoming but without the formality," marketing teacher Micheala Kavanagh said.

Many students consider this their favorite part of state because "it takes away some of the nerves from the first day and allows us to relax and have fun with our friends," senior Miroslava Sredl said.

Throughout the year leading up to state, Central DECA has meetings and is preparing for the spring when state and inter-nationals take place. "We're all really close and have become best friends," George said. "No matter what happens, we can talk to them and be with them."

Many students who join are searching for a future in marketing or business.

"I originally joined for business but since then have changed my anticipated major," Sredl said. "I heard that DECA was a lot of fun."

Despite rocky journey, CHS Singers impress in Minneapolis

Iyanna Wise
staff writer

Central's CHS Singers group took a trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota, in February for a performance at the Minnesota Music Educators' Association Conference.

Music Department head and choir teacher Sara Cowan said that she received an email from Minnesota for entries to the Nebraska Music Education Association, and she decided to apply.

"I sent two recordings from last year's group, and in August, I got the call that we were accepted as a feature performing ensemble," she said.

A big goal for Cowan was to ensure that no student would have to pay for the trip themselves, as everyone in the ensemble was needed. So, grants came in from OPS, the CHS Foundation, private donors and a lot of fundraising. In December, CHS Singers sold cookie dough, had holiday performances, and sold musical Christmas cards.

The singers performed eight pieces at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The pieces were in a variety of languages, such as Hebrew, Latin, Italian, English and French. They were mostly contemporary, with one piece being from the Renaissance Era.

The two pieces that stuck out to Cowan were from the choir accompanist Stephen Bouma and poetry written by two students, Norah Purcell and Hime Moore. Cowan was impressed by how the singers performed.

"They were just locked in and gave a truly beautiful performance of all their pieces. They amaze me!" Cowan said.

Cowan added that strangers came up to her to express their



CHS Singers sing at the Minnesota Music Educators' Association Midwinter Convention.

Photo Courtesy of Sarah Cowan

amazement of the performance.

Senior Chloe Sheehan also felt that the performance went well. They said that there were silly moments, like hearing a band that was nearby practicing, but for the most part, things went smoothly.

When not performing, the singers group went out to the Mall of America, watched "Dial M for Murder" at the Guthrie Theater – one of the top theaters in the Midwest – and visited the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Cowan and Sheehan both

agreed that a memorable moment from the trip was the emergency hatch flying off the ceiling of their charter bus. After pulling over, trying to find the hatch, a truck swiped the bus's rearview mirror clean off. Cowan said there was screaming, but everyone was perfectly fine.

Besides the emergency hatch, Sheehan enjoyed the "Avatar: The Last Airbender" ride at the Nickelodeon Amusement Park within the Mall of America. They liked the ride because of the number of drops and falls.

"I had to hold onto my glasses for dear life to make sure they didn't fall off during the ride," they said.

Cowan enjoyed the trip with the kids. She loves teaching CHS Singers since they're all in her A Cappella class, and she gets to see them grow every day.

They build friendships, develop trust, and value one another as a team, which is conveyed through their singing. Cowan said the group gets really busy with performances, but the students never complain and ask to do more.

As a member, Sheehan enjoys the community created within Singers. They said similar things to Cowan about the relationships built within the program and how they work together as a team to better their singing individually and as an ensemble. Sheehan said that though they get giggly at times, the group always manages to be productive and get back to work.

"Choosing to be in CHS Singers is probably the best decision I made in high school," they said.

Mentoring program continues to offer support for freshmen

Fiona Bryant
opinion editor

Central's mentoring program, which pairs freshmen with upperclassman mentors, has come under new leadership and has new goals in mind.

The mentoring program is organized by the Freshman Academy and its advisory board; with former Freshman Academy Lead Katherine Rude's departure, current Freshman Academy Lead Martha Omar now runs the program. The program was started in 2022 and now includes 29 mentors and 34 mentees.

Omar said the program aims to ease the transition from middle school to high school, foster students' social involvement to give students another reason to attend school, increase social confidence, and ultimately increase graduation rates. "You get to have an upperclassman that has some stake in your success," Omar said.

Freshmen mentees are identified by teachers in the second quarter as students not involved in extracurricular or social activities at school. Omar has changed the program by being slower in identifying mentees until the second quarter.

"They're just the kiddos that are here every day," Omar said. "They just haven't found a home yet where they feel comfortable."

Mentors are upperclassmen, often previous mentees, and fill out an application. Omar said when many mentor seats need to be filled, the program is advertised; otherwise, teachers may encourage students to join.

"Sometimes it's nice for me to even select sophomores I know have faced adversity in their education but have persevered through it," Omar said. "[Students who have found high school easy] don't have any humility or ability to tell the freshmen, 'This is life. Life is kinda hard sometimes and we need to reach out to other people.'"

Mentors and mentees are paired up based on each one's level of enthusiasm for the program, as well as getting along at the program's first event.

The mentoring program aims to host a total of five events where mentors and mentees can interact, hear guest speakers, go on a field trip or perform community service.

Mentors may also visit their mentees and offer advice in Eagle Time or communicate outside of events.

Junior mentor Liebe Akue said more opportunities to meet with mentees and learn what support they need could be beneficial, as she and her mentee only interact at mentoring events or for major milestones.

"I feel like it's a monthly thing," freshman mentee Makiyah Wardlow said. "I don't really feel like I see people in the

program a lot." Wardlow said connecting with her mentor could be easier if there were weekly interactions.

Yet the program still appears to be involving freshmen in the Central community and providing guidance.

"It is important because it is teaching young people to not just joke around in high school and do their work and take it serious[ly]," freshman mentee Ali Salah Hamadi said.

"I was kind of excited so I could be into something like in activities with other people," Wardlow said. "Maybe [I would] meet new friends and get closer with people." Wardlow said the program somewhat helped with that but that it did not help her transition into high school.

For the future of the mentoring program, Omar hopes to continue organizing five events a year with previous guest speaker Karla Avila Juarez as a staple visitor and to possibly partner with OPS elementary schools. Additionally, Omar hopes to recruit mentors in their sophomore year so there is a group of "veteran" mentors by senior year. Next year, Omar expects vacancies in the optimal 25 to 30 mentor spots.

"The future of the mentoring program is just a bunch of students who have gone through Central and just felt loved and supported," Omar said. "Really the dream is that people just leave Central feeling like they were part of this community."

Free telescope viewings available in Lincoln at Hyde observatory

Bradley Smith
contributing writer

Have you ever wondered about the infinite void in the sky with the little dots sprinkled across the sky? Turns out, there is a place very close to us where anyone can find out more about the infinite universe.

Hyde Memorial Observatory placed at Holmes Lake Park in Lincoln, Nebraska is open on Saturdays for anyone to go and learn more about the night sky, but there is a catch that makes it even more enticing is that the presentations, and telescope viewings are FREE.

Coming up really soon, Hyde Memorial Observatory will be hosting viewings for the partial solar eclipse coming on April 8, 2024. The observatory will be open from 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. that day to allow the public to view the eclipse at 12:38 p.m. for entirely free. They will also have free viewing glasses on a first come first served basis and will also be playing informational videos.

The observatory has four different telescopes, many different presentations, is ran by volunteers, and has many more things to offer.

The observatory has a rich history which is traced back to The Prairie Astronomy Club, that was founded in 1960. In October 1977, the observatory was officially opened after a long struggle of promoting, gaining members, purchasing equipment, and the hardest part of all, convincing the city council to help build the observatory.

Since then, the observatory has seen 47 years of events, use, struggles with funding and the city, and people wondering about the stars.

If you would like to keep our own version of the famous Griffith Park Observatory alive, they are many ways people can get involved including visiting, donating, and volunteering.

Anyone can go visit Hyde Memorial Observatory any Saturday starting March 15 until August 31 from sundown to 11:00 p.m. to look through their telescopes, listen and watch presentations, and learn more about the stars for entirely free.

DISPARITIES IN ACCESS, LAW

Parking scarcity challenges student body

Grace Sunseri
staff writer

It is a well-known fact among Central students that parking sucks. If you want to park at Central and do not have access to a senior parking pass, you are screwed. You must either rely on extremely limited free parking, spend at least \$40 per month, or use unreliable busing.

While public transit and school transportation are options for many, there are cracks in this seemingly perfect option.

OPS recently also lengthened the distance from the bus stop to a student's house. For high school, the distance is eight to 10 blocks, or about half a mile. Half a mile can be a long way in rain, snow or blistering heat.

I took the bus for my entire freshman year and the first three months of sophomore year before I could drive myself. In my experience, OPS busing is semi-reliable, with my driver last year being late to my stop in the morning and late for pickup at school in the afternoon. This disrupted both my parents and their job, as they dropped me off at my stop, and my own work schedule as I could not get home on time to make it to work because my driver was consistently late.

The senior lot is \$40 per year, but the spots are extremely limited. First, you must be a senior to apply. Second, it is a raffle, and you are not guaranteed a spot, even if you meet the class requirement.

The "junior lot" has not been an option for several years now. It used to be under the I-480 overpass on Cass Street. The overpass has been under construction for many years, rendering the lot unusable. The city then bought the land,

and it is still affected by construction. The junior lot ran similarly to the senior lot, as you had to get a pass at a fixed fee at the beginning of the school year. There are now two classes, juniors and sophomores, vying for parking close to Central.

Most student drivers I know park in the ParkOmaha garage on 19th and Capitol Avenue. The garage is spacious, and ParkOmaha makes it quite easy to call and reserve a spot. They have no daily parking passes, so you pay for a month at a time. The monthly pass is \$50. Many students and families cannot sacrifice approximately \$500 a year for just parking. You then must trek up the infamous "hill," which is quite unpleasant during wintry weather.

Other common parking spots for students are meters. There is a plethora of parking meters near Central. During school hours, the meters can cost up to \$10 per day. This adds up to over \$2,000 for the entire school year.

The only free parking is "the hill." This space has about 30 spots for students to park in. It is on a first come, first served basis and fills up way before school starts.

Central students deserve close, affordable parking. This will promote student independence and contribute to students' overall feelings about Central. If questions like where you are going to park, how you are going to pay for it, when to pay for it, and how early you must leave to find a spot were not always on the minds of enrolled students and students considering Central, it could dramatically increase attendance. Students should not have to pay to get to school.

Diplomats must face accountability

Charlie Yale
co-editor-in-chief

In his 1903 State of the Union Address, President Teddy Roosevelt said, "No man is above the law and no man is below it. ... Obedience to the law is demanded as a right; not asked for as a favor."

That is, unless you are a foreign ambassador. Foreign ambassadors are diplomats who represent the interests of their home country in foreign settings. Under the 1961 Vienna Convention, diplomats are immune from prosecution in their host country. It is imperative that we alter this detrimental decision because of egregious acts committed by diplomats and for international accountability.

Let's recall a 2019 instance where diplomatic immunity saved an American. Anne Sacoolas, the wife of a U.S. government employee, was driving on the wrong side of the road in Northamptonshire on the night of Aug. 27. Her car collided with a motorcycle ridden by Harry Dunn, a 19-year-old Briton, killing him.

Sacoolas claimed diplomatic immunity, allowing her to flee the country without any consequence.

What Sacoolas did is, unfortunately, not an outlier. An article from the ACLU in 2013 reported that "in a disturbing number of cases diplomats have abused this privilege by luring women ... with promises of good jobs but trap them in their homes by confiscating their passports ... Diplomatic and consular officials

who engage in such abuse escape responsibility for these crimes because immunity laws protect them."

Other specific cases reveal slavery; in the summer of 2005, Kumari Sabbithi, Joaquina Quadros and Tina Fernandes were brought to the United States under false pretenses, where they were subjected to physical and psychological abuse by the Al Saleh family – Kuwaiti diplomats – and forced to work against their will. In the winter of that year, fearing for their lives, each of the women individually fled the household. Major Waleed Al Saleh and his wife Maysaa Al Omar, the aggressors, each have diplomatic immunity.

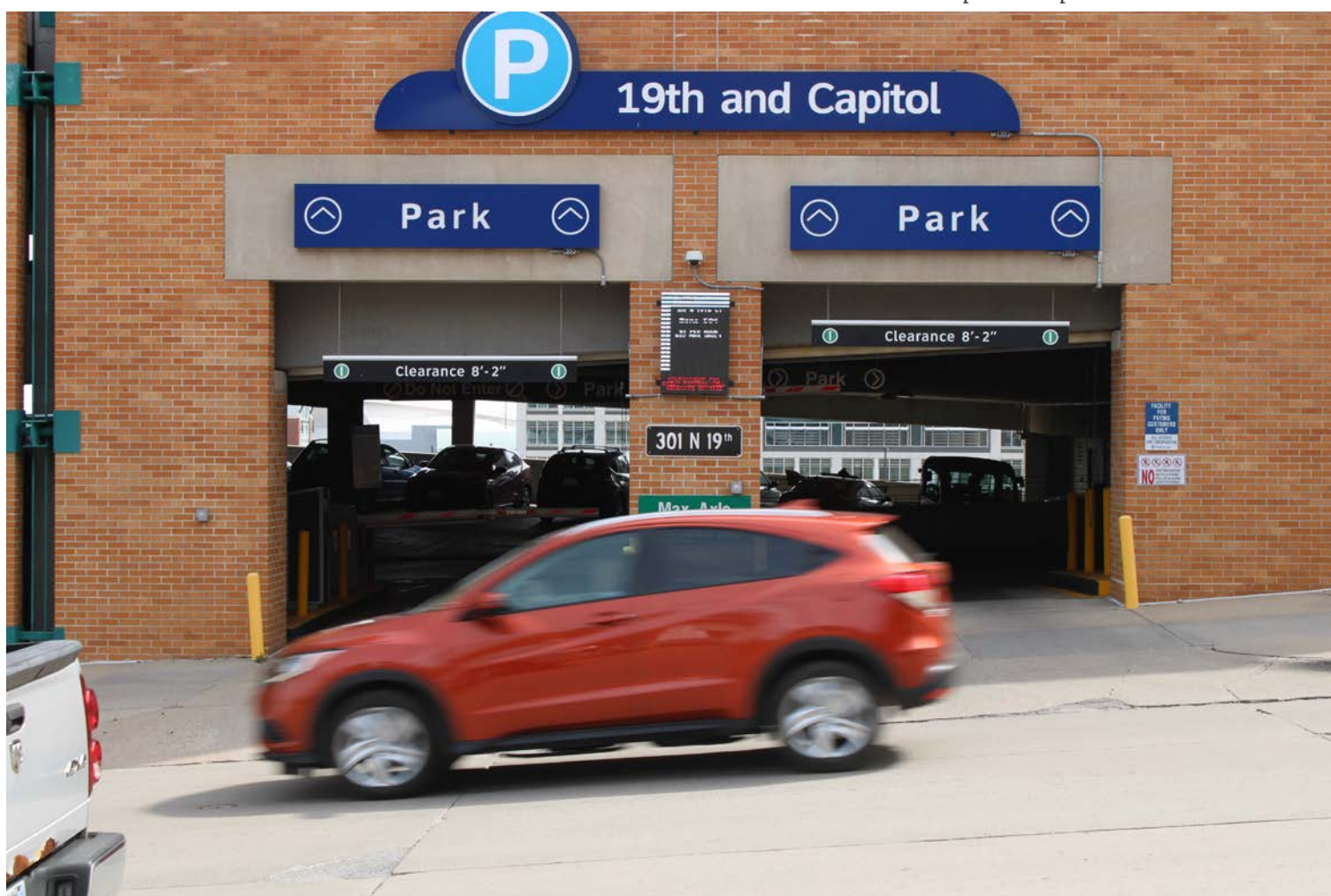
The U.S. Department of State estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year. However, in cases in which the traffickers have diplomatic immunity, the victims, unlike other victims of trafficking, have no avenue for redress or compensation for the abuse and exploitation they suffered. Domestic workers – people who work mainly in household positions – are extremely vulnerable to exploitation for a variety of reasons, including unfamiliarity with their domestic and international rights, cultural and language barriers, and, in many cases, long work hours in isolation from their peers.

The United States is giving leeway to a system that allows known human traffickers to violate our constitution by having slave laborers in their homes and then fleeing the country without any consequences.

The only way to prosecute and get around diplomatic immunity is to have a request accepted by the sending country of the diplomat. For example, an English diplomat can't be prosecuted in the U.S. without the permission of England. This doesn't happen, according to the ACLU. They say, "Such requests are rarely made or granted. Even when victims have been able to escape their abusers and seek restitution, immunity laws are often used to prohibit courts from so much as considering their claims."

As Geoffrey Robertson of The Guardian put it in 1999, "Diplomatic immunity may have been expedient during the Cold War, to protect diplomats from being framed. But it produced the result that foreign officials – and their spouses and children and chauffeurs – may fearlessly engage in serious crime, using their inviolable embassy premises and baggage for drug and gun-running and money laundering, or assist terrorists with whom their state is in political sympathy."

People deserve to have their grievances addressed – there is no single person living in the U.S. who deserves to be above the law. For the recourse of victims – most of whom will never be able to come forward – we must abolish diplomatic immunity.



The parking garage at 19th Street and Capitol Avenue.

JOSIE MCLAUGHLIN | The Register

Book banning bills pose frightening future p. 8

Nebraska's legislature is seeing an alarming trend of bills being introduced that would limit Nebraskans' access to information and materials at their schools and public libraries.

Omaha history class should be required p. 9

Omaha History is an elective course at Central taught by Jay Landstrom, taking students through Omaha's history.

Firefighting makes for an appealing career p. 9

I learned about what makes the foundation of a city a part of the Nebraska Civics Leadership Program on March 19.

OPS grading scale requires revision p. 10

The OPS grading scale is lacking. A Central student proposes a way to fix it.

Prom requirements acceptable

Brayden Simpson
staff writer

In recent years, Central has adopted prom requirements to help enforce positive behavior in school. Students who wish to attend the formal dance must garner no more than five days of absences and acquire no suspensions throughout the second semester until prom. I find these rules to be rather effective at convincing students to clean up their act before the big dance.

Firstly, they're not very restrictive. Five full days' worth of absences add up to about 37 hours. This eliminates chronic skippers from eligibility, but not the average student who misses out on a "catch-up day" every once in a while. Also, suspensions are only advised as punishment for level three violations, according to the OPS Code of Conduct; these include violations such as assault or serious damage to school property. This plan is not going to keep many students from attending prom. But that's not the goal.

Instead, these prom requirements work by convincing students who are on the fence about these behavior or attendance issues to commit to meeting school goals, like our attendance quotas. Let's face it, if someone got suspended for serious damage to school property and never showed up to class, they probably wouldn't be all that interested in attending prom in the first place. But I've heard it said on multiple occasions from more punctual students that they only come to school at this point in the second semester to be eligible for the dance.

Seniors are especially affected by this. As senioritis kicks in during the latter half of the school year, students feel it is less and less necessary to attend school or complete work. By put-

ting attendance requirements on prom ticket sales, the school can ensure that seniors who may be tempted to stay home will consider the possibility of losing their senior prom and decide to get to school on time. It's a far better motivator than an attendance certificate or the mere expectation that every student shows up every day.

All of this makes Central look good. With OPS always trying to "Strive for 95," attendance has become a priority for the district in the last few years. Putting an absence cap on prom eligibility is a smart way to boost the numbers just a bit for the students who only need a little convincing to attend school more often.

There are, of course, some students who will not be moved to action by these requirements, but that's to be expected. The attendance and suspension restrictions serve as an ultimatum – one that students can and will break, understanding the consequences. There's an inherent choice in it; students can skip, or they can go to prom. So, the students who are dead set on missing classes willingly give up their admission to the dance. The restrictions are never going to boost attendance significantly – but perhaps they're not designed to. If a few occasional skippers attend one more class to just barely qualify for prom attendance, then they've succeeded.

So, while the prom requirements may seem like they keep many students from getting into prom, they only act as a motivator for the average student to make Central look extra good during a time of year when kids tend to care less about their academics. It's a decently effective practice which has a negative effect on very few people who actually want to attend prom, and I think it's a good idea to continue with the requirements in this way.

Book banning bills pose frightening future

Fiona Bryant
opinion editor

Nebraska's legislature is seeing an alarming trend of bills being introduced that would limit Nebraskans' access to information and materials at their schools and public libraries. Over the current two-year legislative session, which began in 2023, at least six bills with this goal in mind were written. These bills vary from wanting parents to be more involved in approving school reading materials to limiting certain websites to adults, creating requirements for library materials, and criminalizing teachers for teaching "obscene" material.

I attended the LB441 committee hearing last year, where the public could testify to the small group of senators deciding if the bill should be heard by the entire Legislature. LB441 would allow teachers to be criminalized for teaching books or coursework considered "obscene," which has a very loose and subjective legal definition. This definition, consequently, could dangerously be applied to almost any learning material with "adult" content, including books aimed toward teenagers and the real problems they face. This could include books containing depictions of violence, sexuality, LGBTQ+ characters or anti-racism.

That hearing, with conservatives reading smut and young adult books out of context to senators in support of criminalizing teachers for teaching "obscene" material, was eye-opening. I've always valued everyone's access to books that represent them; after all, had I not had access to the queer YA available at my public library, I would not have started on my journey of discovering my queer identity. Honestly, I think the LB441 hearing was the pivotal event in pushing me towards my future career as a librarian.

The roles of school librarians and public librarians are becoming ever more vital and difficult in the current political atmosphere. Librarians do more than just shelf books; they are the guards against challenges to books and, unfortunately, those who suffer greatly when book-banning becomes a pandemonium. The American Library Association (ALA) reports that in 2023, at least 4,240 books faced challenges, a huge increase from 1,858 in 2021 and 305 in 2003. Everyone suffers greatly when book-banning becomes more organized and widespread, and with the rise of groups compiling lists of and challenging books with LGBTQ+ characters, themes of anti-racism, or any sexual content, book-banning is a major problem.

The six bills in Nebraska's legislature illustrate this concerning trend of demonizing young people's learning materials.

Censorship in American schools and libraries has become so much more than just a few parents complaining of witchcraft in "Harry Potter." For one, censorship is not just about books anymore. With the rise of internet databases and research for students, the widely used EBSCO databases have been the target of baseless claims that they "lead children to pornographic materials." LB635 would require subscriptions to educational databases to be discontinued if they have content "obscene" or "harmful" to minors. Again, not only are these regulations vague, but the so-called crisis of databases being "unsuitable" rarely occurs and does not constitute the creation of conspiracy theories. LB1092 would require age verification for access to some websites in an attempt to prevent minors' access to pornography, although this is still criticized by civil rights groups as a large overreach of government power.

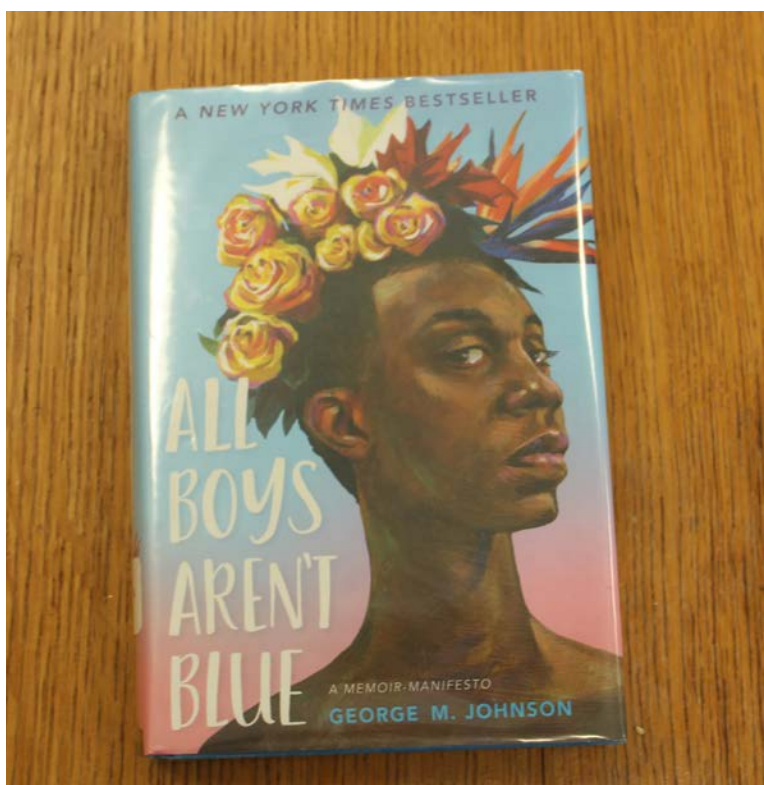
In theory, these bills may sound beneficial; it's important to protect children on the internet. However, bills targeting internet resources, along with book challenges in recent years, do not have the goal of protecting children. Librarians are trained to serve their patrons effectively and with intellectual freedom in mind. Intellectual freedom is a principle of American libraries that supports critical thinking and free access for all patrons to the information and varying perspectives that foster it. Librarians are trained to cultivate a material selection appropriate and timely for the population they are serving. When people challenge materials in libraries, they directly undermine all Americans' right to intellectual freedom.

Additionally, the books challenged and pulled from libraries in 2022 to "protect children" were most often books with LGBTQ+ characters, according to the ALA. Seven of the top 13 challenged books had LGBTQ+ content that challengers considered "sexually explicit." These bills that are introduced to "protect children" certainly aren't protecting the literature that LGBTQ+ students find themselves in.

Those instances also show how vague labels like "sexually explicit" and "obscene" can be applied to books with diverse characters. LB441 sounds great to some because it criminalizes teachers for teaching "obscene" materials. Yet, this will be used to remove books with LGBTQ+ characters, any sexuality or violence from schools. Plus, it undermines students' right to intellectual freedom. These bills set the stage for "don't say gay" legislation and policies in schools, as seen in states like Florida.

Bills promoting parental involvement in library materials, such as LB1399 and LB374, are also of concern. Parents already have the ability to control what their child checks out from a school library, making the bills frankly unnecessary and ripe for disaster. Many of the members of "concerned parent" groups challenging books want to remove books or materials entirely. This would remove every student's opportunity to check out some materials. Not only is this an instance of parents not just worrying about their own kids, but this is also an overreach of parental rights into institutions protected by intellectual freedom and education. Again, librarians know what they're doing. Parents can control their child's school library access and how they parent their child at a public library. Every patron with a card has and should continue to have access to all materials. Parental involvement bills undermine the principles of librarianship and limit others' access to information.

If some of these bills pass, students and young patrons of the public libraries will lose their access to some materials. School reading curriculums would have to be changed to avoid "obscene" material. Even "The Great Gatsby" could be considered "obscene." The books affected are books representing LGBTQ+ people and people of color and depicting issues teenagers face. In the LB441 hearing, testifiers were reading "The Perks of Being a Wallflower," "The Kite Runner," and "This Book is Gay," wanting the bill to pass so these books would be banned from schools. As students, we all deserve access to books that represent us, that expand our minds, that educate us. Bills like these would limit that. Contact your state senator today to make sure that you and your peers maintain your educational and intellectual freedom at nebraskalegislature.org/senators/senator_find.php.



George M. Johnson's "All Boys Aren't Blue" is often challenged in public libraries and schools. Whitman Rutledge | The Register



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Omaha history class should be required

Katie Besancon
staff writer

Omaha History is an elective course at Central taught by Jay Landstrom, taking students through Omaha's history. In the span of a semester, you start with learning about the Indigenous peoples that lived in Nebraska, all the way to modern times.

In this class, you learn about what the early city looked like, who helped get the city going, how the government performed, and famous Omaha residents who have made their mark on the world. As a student who attends the original Omaha high school, I believe this class should be required; we walk daily in a building over 100 years old, holding more history than most Omaha buildings. Every day, we immerse ourselves in the extensive and rich history and culture that is housed in this school.

Besides being the oldest school in the state, our campus is the site of two state historical sites, one being the Nebraska Territorial Capital site and the other being the exact site where Omaha officially became a city. We are in Downtown Omaha with a ton of Omaha history surrounding us, including landmarks, buildings and historical events that helped shape the city. "The city started and grew from here," Landstrom said.

As residents of Omaha, many of us do not know what year the city we call home was founded in, let alone most of the significant historical details regarding our city. Topics surrounding Omaha and all of what it has to offer are what Omaha residents today should be learning about.

Young people see Omaha as another city in the middle of the Midwest where we just grow corn, when Omaha is home to four Fortune 500 companies, has the best zoo in the nation, and is where the Union Pacific railroad started. Omaha offers a history of the first jobs, people, and famous names we still know today; we just need to encourage younger generations to learn about it.

"The history of Omaha reflects the history of Nebraska and the United States and [for] many topics we think about nationally," Landstrom said. "We can use events that happened here as a way to touch on larger themes."

Not only do students learn about the historical events that took place in Omaha, but they also learn about the people who were from Omaha who have made differences in some way or another throughout history.

There are many famous Omaha citizens. James Fous earned the Congressional Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; Roger Sayers was the fastest man in Omaha for many years; Gerald Thomas created

the TV Dinner; and many more, including athletes, professors, doctors, and photographers. All shine a spotlight on the footsteps we follow and prove to students that Central High is not just an ordinary high school.

"The history is relevant and very specific to their [students'] everyday lives," Landstrom said.

The history we learn about in this class can be applied to everyday life. For instance, if you are driving down the street, you can point out areas where notable events in Omaha occurred. I think that it is important for students to understand where they grew up or are living, no matter the good or bad parts. Central being in the location that it is enables us as students to have the roots of its history at our fingertips; we can walk a block outside of our school and be standing at the site of a historic event. Not many schools can say that.



The historical marker for Central High School along Dodge Street.

WHITMAN RUTLEDGE | The Register

Firefighting makes for appealing career

Arisa Lattison
arts editor

I learned about what makes the foundation of a city a part of the Nebraska Civics Leadership Program on March 19. We heard from Omaha Parks & Recreation, the Omaha Police Department and the Omaha Fire Department. While I enjoyed hearing about all of them, the occupation that stood out to me most was firefighter.

The Omaha Fire Department takes applicants every two years. The testing process consists of filling out a form, taking a written multiple-choice exam, the physical ability test (CPAT), and an oral interview. If you make it through all these steps, you will be placed onto a list from which they hire from until applications open up again in two years.

There are a lot of benefits to becoming a firefighter that hooked me on the idea.

1. There is no college degree needed to become a firefighter. At the age of 19, you are able to apply to become one. This means it is a viable option right after high school.

2. On top of this, the pay is extremely good. Starting at around \$62,000 a year, you can earn a \$65 increase every month on the job working for the Omaha Fire Department. Which means after one year, you would have \$780 added to your salary. With most jobs, you are only eligible for vacations after your first year of working. As a firefighter, you would get two vacations annually, and paid sick leave as well.

3. The number of hours you work is limited. In Omaha, there are three rotations you could potentially get—A, B and C. Each shift works every other day in 24-hour shifts and once you have worked five days, you get six days off. This means you work roughly 10 days a month.

4. Having all that free time allows most to have a second job on the side. Many firefighters choose to start their own business or go to school.

5. Tuition is paid for if you decide to go to college! I see this to be a huge perk, especially because college can be expensive, and this allows you to get that education debt-free.

6. This one applies a little further into the future, and it went into effect recently—any children of a firefighter get to go to an in-state college for free. Your child would not be paying a cent.

7. Even further into the future, a pension is set up for you. A pension refers to money you get paid put into your retirement fund. You would have an income when you are no longer working, and you would be set for life.

Based off of the experiences I heard about, being a firefighter is not easy, but it is a very gratifying job. Many love what they do, and I was able to see the charm in the occupation after hearing from one's perspective.

Of course, being a firefighter has so many pros because of the cons that also come with the job description. It is dangerous, to say the least, to throw yourself into situations where others need help. You will be dealing with many challenges—fires, trapped individuals, the fear that arises from being in less-than-ideal circumstances. Because of this, in order to pursue a career as one, you have to be sure that all the advantages outweigh the risks.

Apart from the listed benefits, the feeling of helping another individual lands pretty high on the list. To make a change in the world and create lasting impacts on others' lives is a gift in itself. To be the reason someone aspires to be a firefighter might be the biggest reward of all.

Passing periods need extension

Jack Wilderman-Nielsen
contributing writer

I am not talking about anything crazy, nothing in the realm of a 12-to-15-minute break to get to class. But even something as small as moving for an eight-to-10-minute passing period could really improve the school day, in multiple ways.

The number one way in which this would improve the lives of many students is cutting down on tardies. Many students at Central are familiar with the dread of having to walk from the bottom of the new addition all the way up to the third, or God forbid the fourth floor, knowing they are going to have to bust their chops to make it in the door on time.

In fact, even most teachers are aware of this, letting their students out a few minutes early to help eliminate their chances of being late. But, that cuts into valuable class time. It isn't much but a few minutes goes a long way. The administration is always talking about limiting tardies, and this would be a helpful way to cut down on tardies.

For the students that do make it to class on time, the extra minutes would allow for a better transition into their next block. Not only could these students have time to get out all the things they need for their next block, but they could even get just a few moments to reset their brain into their new learning environment.

Teachers as well would benefit in more ways than just not having to mark as many tardies. The extra minutes can be used by themselves to also get ready for their incoming students. This could be done by pulling up their new PowerPoint or setting papers on desks. Either way would create a less hectic start for everyone involved in the class. The problem with this idea is finding where the extra 3-5 minutes in each passing period would come from. The day is already packed very tightly into itself with not much room for anything else.

The two places I see losing time are Eagle Time and lunch. If all four lunch periods got five

minutes taken and moved to a passing period, there would be enough time. In the empty space during lunch, this shortens the time for third block by five minutes but does not cut into the already scheduled class time. Think of how giving up five minutes of lunch could grant you 25 extra minutes to get to class all day long (one before each of the lunches and after the fourth lunch). There would be less tardies, and students and teachers would be better prepared for the beginning of lectures; the entire school day would improve with just a few added minutes to the passing period



Third block passing period on April 8

WHITMAN RUTLEDGE | The Register

OPS grading scale requires revision

Henry Carstens
contributing writer

The OPS grading scale is lacking. While it's meant to assess student performance and provide a basis for evaluation, it often falls short of recognizing the consistency of students' efforts. Instead of incentivizing hard work, it simply averages grades, leaving students feeling unmotivated and frustrated.

Formatives, typically general assignments, make up 35% of a student's grade, while summatives like tests and finals, comprise 65%. Seems straightforward, right?

Not quite. The issue lies in the formula; the formula calculates the student's grade by multiplying the average of formative assessments by 35% and adding it to the average of summative assessments multiplied by 65%. It doesn't consider the number of assignments, rendering the number of formatives irrelevant.

OPS states on its website that a 4:1 ratio of assignments in these categories is highly suggested. Unfortunately, this is sometimes not followed because, for instance, English has multiple standards at which they need to assess students. Therefore, the formatives may often exceed the 4:1 ratio, allowing for a discrepancy between classes. So, a student with many A's on formatives but a singular F on one summative could still end up with a disappointing grade of a D. This isn't fair.

I propose a simple adjustment to the grading formula. The new system boosts the weighted value of formatives compared to summatives based on the number of assignments. If tons of formatives get graded, that 35% will transform into a higher value, capping out at 50%.

This ensures that while formatives never outweigh summatives, they hold more weight when they are numerous. The rationale

incentivizes consistent effort and rewards the completion of excessive assignments.

Below is a chart that shows the ratio of formatives to summatives and the change in weight. For example, five formatives to one summative is roughly 36% to 64%, thus giving the formatives more value than their initial 35% of the grade.

Most teachers stick to a ratio of four formatives to one summative, so the proposed adjustment won't be a drastic change. Some students may dislike the switch to a system that doesn't prioritize testing and finals. However, it will impact those who consistently work hard, giving a more accurate representation of student responsibility through its ability to regulate excess assignments and better prepare students for the working world. After all, in a job, consistency is key.

With this minor adjustment, OPS can directly equip students for success beyond the classroom.

By altering the weight based on the number of formatives, we create a more regulated class, allowing for a fairer distribution of assignments that motivates students to be more productive and responsible. There will be no more overwhelming loads of assignments with little value. Instead, students will see the direct impact of their efforts on their grades.

In conclusion, this proposal aims to improve grading in OPS, fostering fairness, productivity and preparation for the real world. So, let's embrace change and pave the way for a brighter future in education.

Summative: formative ratio	4:1	8:1	12:1	20:1
Formative weight	0.35	0.3875	0.425	0.5
Summative weight	0.65	0.6125	0.575	0.5

Shorten school weeks

Jazmin Guimenes-Mills
contributing writer

Attending school for five continuous days with no breaks, a bunch of schoolwork and early mornings is very exhausting. For this reason, school should not be a full week.

School can be very draining to students if they don't have any breaks. Their mental health can start to decline due to the stress of over piling schoolwork. Students are at school for about eight to nine hours and during this time it's mostly schoolwork.

Often students are expected to take some work home for homework which adds even more hours to their learning. If students are continuously working on busy work every single day, they are bound to get overwhelmed.

Most students dedicate their entire time to homework and studying. With more days off in the week, students can spend more time with family and friends. They can get more work done without having to worry about school.

Less school days would also be good for teachers. Teachers are usually behind on grading due to the many classes they teach. With less days, they could catch up with grading faster. Teachers are also humans that need breaks too, and they have limited days they can miss. The teachers could use the extra off days to spend time with their family or just have a mental health day.

This affects students and teachers all over the world. A way we could solve this problem is talking to the school board about shortening the week.



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THE REGISTER

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‘DUNE: PART 2’ UNTOUCHABLE IN ITS GENRE

Haylon Sipe
staff writer

There may not be a bigger movie produced in 2024 in terms of narrative, visual scope and box office performance than “Dune: Part Two.” Director and writer Denis Villeneuve returns to the outlandish science fiction series with the second installment of the blockbuster series.

Villeneuve is no stranger to the genre, having previously directed 2016’s “Arrival” and 2017’s “Blade Runner 2043.” Despite these movies themselves having mass acclaim, “Dune: Part Two” seems as though it could be Villeneuve’s best outing so far.

The movie continues the story of the first film. The plot revolves around a desert planet far in the future called Arrakis, where a house of nobles called the Harkonnens colludes with the emperor of the galaxy to take the resources out of the hands of another noble house, the Atrides. Despite the efforts of the Harkonnens, Paul Atrides and his mother, Jessica, escape into the desert, where they utilize and manipulate a prophecy held by the native people to lead them back to noble status.

I struggle to find many flaws in “Dune: Part Two.”

Some criticism exists against Timothée Chalamet for some of his recent role choices. If you were viewing “Dune: Part Two” preced-

ing his starring role in “Wonka,” you may have a hard time taking him seriously. Any doubts about his ability to perform in the role of Atrides are extinguished upon viewing. Understanding the protagonist’s motivations and intentions in his actions requires nearly no extraneous thought. His speech to the Fremen to convince them of the truth of their prophecy that he is their chosen is chilling and perhaps one of the most unforgettable moments of the film. Chalamet’s passion and intensity go unmatched throughout the film, and he absolutely sticks out in the film’s setting as a leader.

Having had such a large cast, all of whom performed spectacularly in their roles, it would be difficult to cover every performance, but two that stand out are Zendaya as Chani and the Harkonnen family.

Along with Chalamet, Zendaya reaches levels she has not quite hit before in “Dune: Part Two.” Her development throughout the film, going from doubtful of Paul to supposedly in love with him to realizing his betrayal, is very well done. Empathizing with Chani is vital to engaging with the story and furthering the underlying meaning of Paul’s treatment of the Fremen. Without Zendaya’s emotional performance as Chani, it would not be emphasized enough that what Paul is doing to the Fremen is immoral. She serves as the point of view of rationality, the only person among the Fremen who truly knows Paul and

perceives his actions as manipulative.

Stellan Skarsgård continues to impose his will upon the people of both Arrakis and the theater as the sadistic Baron Harkonnen, developing his rule over the planet with his brutish nephew Rabban, played by Dave Bautista. What really ties the maniacal family together, though, is Austin Butler as Feyd-Rautha. Butler’s portrayal works very well in both developing him as a ruthless threat to Paul and showing the power dynamic of the Harkonnens. He bursts into the film, quickly showing why he is relevant through his fighting in the arena and humiliation of Rabban.

“Dune: Part Two” may be one of the most visually compelling movies in recent memory. The environments are expertly created. The scale of the structures is intimidating; the design choices are perfect for a human-centric society that has expanded into an intergalactic setting. The depiction of their technology works very well in showing that these are people who have reached a sort of scientific peak.

This establishment supports the morals of the story. The noble houses live spectacularly with technology that gives them control of nearly every aspect of life. On the other hand, the Fremen live in isolation and base their lives upon the preservation of water, since they do not even have access to that. The involvement of the Fremen in the noble houses conflict is an excellent parallel to how,

in reality, world powers wage war against each other at the cost of those who are merely trying to survive with what they are given by those powers.

“Dune: Part Two” is an adaptation of the novel “Dune” by Frank Herbert, specifically the second half. It works well as a cinematic version of the story overall, with some issues. The best change from the books is Chani’s characterization. In the novel, she is not nearly as opposed to Paul’s treatment of the Fremen as she is in the film. She is far more developed as someone concerned for the fate of her people rather than someone who is equally as manipulated as everyone else in the novel. She becomes Paul’s concubine in the novel, a fate she thankfully avoids in the film.

Some plot points are introduced, though they are not necessary, such as Paul’s relations to the Harkonnens, which is barely discussed among the characters and has no plot significance besides two inconsequential lines in the climax of the film. The worst change may be the forced inclusion of Paul’s sister. In the novel, she is far more of a character that drives the other’s decisions and motives, affecting the plot through her ideas and relationship with Paul. While the idea of having an intelligent infant that speaks to its mother in the womb is unique and interesting, she just never has anything significant or important to say. It should have been further developed, or otherwise completely excluded.



Photo Courtesy of Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures

‘Dune: Part Two:’ one of the greatest sci-fi films of all time

Brayden Simpson
staff writer

“Dune: Part Two” has already cemented itself as one of the greatest science fiction movies ever made. Denis Villeneuve’s sequel to the 2021 film “Dune” released on March 1, 2024 to commercial and critical success.

The film begins not long after where the first “Dune” left off, throwing audiences right back into the action as Timothée Chalamet’s Paul Atrides learns to survive in the desert of Arrakis with the help of the native Fremen people. We follow Paul on his journey to exact revenge on the conspirators who destroyed his family and past life.

The movie is, in a word, breathtaking. Rarely do we get to see a film so ambitious, so grand as “Dune: Part Two.” Everything about it demands the audience’s full attention. Hans Zimmer’s score is masterful, and the combination of music and beautiful shots composed by cinematographer Greig Fraser can be overwhelming. It is a welcome assault on the viewer’s senses: the dunes of Arrakis are harshly bright and orange against the clear blue sky, the howling vocals of the music sharp in the ears of the audience. The atmosphere built by Villeneuve and his team is so enveloping that I felt guilty for slurping my soda while surrounded by the dry heat of the desert.

As impressive as the technical aspects are, the writing and acting are just as glorious. Everyone in this movie is giving an immensely powerful performance. The only exception to that statement might be Christopher Walken, whose Emperor Shaddam Corrino IV looks, acts, and talks exactly like himself. Walken’s an icon to be sure, but he feels out of place surrounded by people not of our world. Rebecca Ferguson is terrifying as the pragmatic and increasingly unnatural Lady Jessica. Zendaya’s character Chani has a much larger role in this film than the

last, and she commands respect as a leader of the Fremen. This is the movie that convinced me that Austin Butler was a good actor. (Stories from his method of becoming Elvis Presley had previously made me think otherwise.) And of course, Timothée Chalamet deserves so much praise for his portrayal of Paul Atrides.

The script for “Dune: Part Two” should also be applauded. The sequel accounts for about the last third of Frank Herbert’s original novel, and Villeneuve makes a few changes to the story to make it more suitable for the big screen. This included cutting a few subplots about side characters from the first movie such as the Atrides’ Mentat (a person with the mind of a computer) Thufir Hawat and focusing much more on Paul’s hunger for revenge. He also introduces much more action than was present in the book. In Herbert’s “Dune,” the battles which decided the fate of Arrakis were simply described by characters far away from the conflict. In “Part Two” Villeneuve instead shows the audience the sheer scale and violence of the fight for the planet. Not only does this allow the viewer to truly grasp the weight of these events, but it also allows the creative team to show off, as the visuals used during the battle scenes are absolutely stunning. It’s a little early to call, but I will be very surprised if “Dune: Part Two” does not receive an Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay.

“Dune: Part Two” is monumental. Previous generations saw “Star Wars” in theaters for the first time or witnessed the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy’s adaptation. We get the “Dune” films. The first challenged the typical blockbuster by being a world-building-intensive and philosophical sci-fi epic that was also high-budget and very entertaining. The second absolutely seals the deal. “Dune: Part Two” is exciting, tense, and thought-provoking. It blows most other recent movies completely out of the water. I’m so grateful to have been able to witness film history by watching it so soon after its release.

Is KNTRY back? p. 13

While coastal cowgirl may be a trend, the simplicity of the classic cowgirl style such as denim, cowboy hats and cowboy boots are here to stay.

Get up, stand up for ‘One Love’ p. 14

While confusing at times, “One Love” is a vibrant film with rousing images, a spectacular amount of drama and a brilliant soundtrack.

How a cafe became a design hub p. 14

Every Tuesday night at 7 p.m. a group of local Omaha board game designers gather together to demo, test, workshop, and most importantly, play each other’s current projects.

Streaming service faceoff p. 15

The infamous battle between Apple Music and Spotify for elite streaming service is a constant topic of discussion for many. But what are the specifics of this debate?

Rodrigo's concert sparks connection with Omaha fans

Becca Rock
staff writer

The best two-hour \$100 therapy session I have ever had.

The night opened with a few words from Olivia Rodrigo: "we will have so much fun tonight. I want you to jump, to scream, to cry if you feel like crying. I am so, so happy you are here."

She gave every single person the freedom to express their emotions and connect with her music on a much deeper level than just listening.

A connection was made between her fans and her as if everyone knew Rodrigo personally.

Rodrigo is performing 57 shows in 2024 and opened in palm springs, california. Omaha's chi health center on march 13, 2024, was her 12th stop on the tour and included midwest singer/songwriter Chappell Roan.

Roan opened the show with lots of energy, with the crowd on their feet spelling H-O-T-T-O-G-O with their arms. This is from the song "HOT TO GO!" It was the first song that started the energy in the concert. This type of energy created the base on which rodrigo came into the room, and time froze.

Rodrigo played songs from her "Guts" and "Sour" albums. Being able to fully scream out the lyrics of songs that have been on repeat since 2020 felt wholesome. My inner self, who listened to Rodrigo's songs when experiencing joy and sadness, was healed.

Rodrigo cared for her fans; when performing, she thanked them. Popular artists typically skip over Omaha, and fans find their way to kansas city instead. But Rodrigo recognizing Omaha gave listeners, young and old, the chance to experience her concert in person.

One concert can change one's perspective on life, and I feel like this one did. I finally was able to let go of anger and sadness, like a therapy session would allow me to do. After this concert I looked at everyone surrounding me as people who just need someone to listen and care about what they are going through. Rodrigo gave people a place where they were heard.



Rodrigo soars above the crowd on a moon.

BECCA ROCK | The Register

Rodrigo stops in Omaha for her 'GUTS' world tour

Ella Levy
staff writer

She leaves you at the top of the world, and it feels like she has led you there.

This was Olivia Rodrigo's first concert in Omaha, and the crowd did not disappoint. Though there were a lot of empty seats, fans were very energetic. Everyone who came also dressed the part. The crowd was a sea of purple, her signature color, and sparkles.

The opener, Chappell Roan, was the perfect complement to the show. She appeared as another form of Rodrigo and got the audience on their feet even if they did not know the songs.

As for Rodrigo's wardrobe, it is a mature step up from her first tour for her debut album "Sour." Her outfits held true to her personal style and featured a signature color of hers, red. The clothing also had a resemblance to Taylor Swift's "Eras" Tour outfits.

Like every concert artist, she transitions from song to song. Her transitions were beautiful and funny. They got the crowd excited for what was coming but also let them in on little secrets to each of her songs, like when they were written or the meaning behind them.

The dancers and instrumentalists of both the opener and Rodrigo were nothing short of incredible. The stage was full of talent, and it was showcased to the audience. Rodrigo herself played the piano and the guitar for two different songs in the show.

Something that stood out was the lighting. Flashing lights of white, purple and red often matched Rodrigo's outfit and the beat of her song. She made the lights unique to the show, even at one point turning them all off so the audience could envision something that angered them for them to scream about it.

Rodrigo brought tears to eyes and smiles to faces. The concert was a perfect mix of deep feelings rooted in sadness and happiness. So many people, especially girls, relate to her music. She touched the hearts of all these girls at her show. Standing on stage, you find Rodrigo is just a person like the rest of us. She is relatable and, in her vulnerable state, amazing.

She is an inspiration to so many. As she walked around the lower bowl, fans reached out to touch her, and by just looking at their faces, you knew they felt like it was a dream come true. The entire stadium even sang happy birthday to a little girl, a moment she will remember for the rest of her life.

Being at the show was such a different experience than listening at home. You are surrounded by women who have experienced the same hardships you have. You form a bond with the person next to you, and they are your sister for the night.

Rodrigo makes people understand that it is okay to go through things. That it is okay to be angry, make mistakes, scream and cry. Everyone in the crowd listens to her music because they find themselves in it.

Being at the concert with everyone, you realize relating to her music makes you a real person. Going through things changes you and makes you grow. Though we often question why things are happening, we can find the answer to be that it's what makes a human. It's what makes us buy a ticket to Olivia Rodrigo. And it's what brings us to this amazing crowd of strong people singing our hearts out.

By the end of the show, I felt like I could do anything, like I was at the top of the world, and she had taken me there.



The crowd waits for the concert to start.

ELLA LEVY | The Register

A 'Percy Jackson and the Olympians' review as a new fan

Iyanna Wise
staff writer

I've never been a Greek mythology person, mostly because I never understood it. So, it wasn't a shock that I'd never heard of "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" until now. The closest I've ever been to liking Greek mythology is the 1997 Disney movie "Hercules," but "Percy Jackson" was different and caught my attention in a good way.

"Percy Jackson and the Olympians" is a book series written by Rick Riordan. The series gained attention for its lovable characters and lighthearted comedic moments, but it wasn't afraid to go into darker topics, like death, for a children's series. The series' popularity resulted in adaptations of the first two books, many spinoff books, and now this TV show.

The show follows Jackson (Walker Scobell), a 12-year-old who always felt and knew he was different. He soon discovers he's a half-blood — half mortal, half god. Jackson is sent on a journey alongside his best friend Grover Underwood (Aryan Simhadri) and frenemy Annabeth Chase (Leah Jeffries) to prevent a war between Poseidon and Zeus while also saving his mother from Hades.

Something I liked about the series was the characters and their relationships. All the actors did an amazing job bringing the characters' personalities from the book to life while being able to give a more emotional performance when needed.

Scobell and Virginia Kull, who plays Percy's mother, Sally Jackson, portrayed the close relationship between Jackson and his mom. It pulls some heartstrings when you look at Jackson's face as he "reunites" with his mom, and you see how happy he was. Throughout the season, you could see the love Sally had for her son and how hurt she was that she had to lie to him about his Greek background.

Jackson and Chase started as frenemies at the beginning of their journey, eventually building a friendship throughout the season. Their relationship went from small name-calling to self-sacrifice to help the quest. There are some sweet, "more-than-friends" moments between them that set them up for their relationship in the future, like when she defended Percy on how

he wouldn't end up like the power-hungry, backstabbing gods on Olympus.

The comedy throughout the season was also on par and fit very well with the characters. Chase had never been outside Camp Half-Blood, so her never seeing a movie and not knowing what Disneyland was are very fitting for her character. Underwood's sassy, cranky scene on the train when he kept getting woken up was an episode highlight. But Jackson takes the comedy crown in the scene where he crashes Hermes' car multiple times in the parking garage after saying driving couldn't be that hard.

From a musician's perspective, the score created by Bear McCreary was amazing. There's a rich brass sound, and the balance between them with the woodwinds and strings on the lighter, articulate end is incredible. But I liked how the roles can switch, like when the strings take on the heavier sound while the brass is lighter. I also loved the gradual switches in tempo, changes in dynamics, and style shifts. This might be basic, but I really enjoyed the show's theme. The low brass is really present with this serious but heroic tone, but the strings and upper woodwinds push them back to balance it out to keep it light and optimistic. I also love the trill of the flute; it was unexpected yet pleasant.

I think the fight between Jackson and Luke Castellan (portrayed by Charlie Bushnell) in the finale could have been longer. There was a lot of anticipation since Castellan was already known as the villain in the books. But when it came to the fight, the emotional elements, like Jackson's feeling of betrayal, were there but the physical elements weren't.

But what I disliked was the hate from most of the fans, especially about the casting. Good representation in media for people of color isn't very common. It is especially important for young people of color to have someone who reminds them of themselves when they look at TV. Characters like Chase and Underwood are the focus of this criticism because they were race-swapped, but the race change of the characters didn't impact the actors' portrayal of them. Riordan himself even supported the casting, and the actors of these characters were phenomenal.

All episodes of "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" are currently streaming on Disney+ and Hulu. Season two has also been confirmed.

My experience at Brett Young as a non-country fan

Arisa Lattison
arts & culture editor

On March 8, I had the pleasure of going to a Brett Young concert. Now, I am not a fan, but my dad had gotten tickets for the entire family, so I decided to go just for fun.

When we got to the venue, everyone was dressed in a country style. All I could see were flannels, cowboy hats, denim and boots for miles. It was definitely not my scene. I am not a huge fan of country music — maybe the occasional Dan + Shay or some old Taylor Swift, but that is it — so I felt out of place.

Everyone was mingling with their drinks, laughing amongst themselves, and light chatter could be heard spread evenly across the area. It was dimly lit, with the stage up front illuminated. When we got there, another artist was opening for him, and people half-watched, half-talked. Most of the crowd were adults with the occasional older teens, but there were not many kids (if any) there to see Young.

When the show started and the screen behind the stage started to play footage, a hush fell over the crowd before they began to cheer. Before I knew it, Young was there, in the flesh. My first thought was, “Wow, he’s super close to us, and the audience is pretty tame.” From previous experiences going to shows more geared toward my age group, I was used to being shoved and touselled; mosh pits were a thing, and everything was chaotic. At this show, despite the larger crowd, everyone was respectful of everyone’s space. Not once did I feel uncomfortable or need to step back. I would say that was the biggest difference that I noticed.

In terms of the content of the concert itself, I had researched him by looking up some of his songs on Spotify ahead of time. I ended up only recognizing one song (which also was his most popular), “In Case You Didn’t Know.” The crowd seemed to know most of the songs, however, and if not, they did not show it.

I think that is what I liked most — despite not being an avid listener of his music (or most country music in general), the vibes of the interactions within the crowd transferred over to me. I observed many couples dancing together, whether it was just swaying or full-on ballroom steps. I watched as the people around me bonded through music, and everywhere I looked, there were smiling faces.



Brett Young performs a song during his March 8 concert at the Steelhouse. ARISA LATTISON | The Register

Though this can probably be said for most groups with something in common, Young’s music did a good job of bringing people together, and that was the best part of attending the concert that night. It was eye-opening to see this side of country music, an experience you cannot get just from sitting at home listening to it. I think being there slightly changed my mindset about Young and country music because it wasn’t just music — it was the thing connecting the hundreds of people in that venue to each other.

Country’s cultural comeback

Ella Levy
co-editor-in-chief

Every aspect of country was crossed off every list of cool years ago. But in 2023 and 2024 country has been making a comeback in fashion, music, and culture.

For the past couple years, cowboy boots have been trending. This was the first sign of the country style on the streets.

Trending on TikTok over the summer of 2023 was the style coastal cowgirl. This style consists of seashells on a cowboy hat, a satin dress with cowboy boots, linen, a long skirt, any denim, and the colors white and blue. Eventually, as summer ended so did the trend. But it led to college girls tying ribbon to their cowboy boots for gameday.

While coastal cowgirl may be a trend, the simplicity of the classic cowgirl style such as denim, cowboy hats, and cowboy boots are here to stay.

Country music is also very popular.

Artists such as Zach Bryan, Morgan Wallen, Noah Kahn, Tyler Childers, Megan Moroney, and Kacey Musgraves are very popular with Generation Z.

Morgan Wallen’s “Last Night” topped the charts of 2023 for 16 non-consecutive weeks. “Last Night” was the first male solo country song since 1981 to become number one. The last country song to reach number one was in 2021 with Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version) (Taylor’s Version) (From the Vault).”

It is no surprise Beyoncé is coming out with a country album. She is finally taking the time to explore her roots while country music is on top. “Act II: Cowboy Carter” is scheduled to be released on March 29th. The album has become highly anticipated after Beyoncé released a 10-day countdown and her song “Texas Hold ‘Em went viral, debuting at number four on the Billboard Global 200.

Culture is fun. Wearing trendy clothing and listening to the heartfelt music, there is just one thing missing; the lifestyle. And while we can’t all live the country life we can most certainly try. Line dancing, exploring the outdoors, and eating classic southern dishes like shrimp and grits and fried green tomatoes.

Country may not be for everyone, but everything must go through the trend cycle. Country has made its comeback but only time will tell if this trend is going to continue past 2024.



CRIS BATAILLON | The Register

Roadshow moves to end of April

Brianna Martinez
contributing writer

The road show will be in April rather than February this year. The road show is a central high school event that happens annually around the end of the school year. The road show is a talent show where students can sign up to show their talent to an audience of people. Anyone at Central high school can sign up, they must have a contract signed by their parents and themselves which is the only requirement.

Drama director Scott Mead is the director of the show and the whole performing arts department teachers take a big part in planning and preparing for the show. The road show has lots of singing, dancing, instrumental acts, skits, and varieties of other acts “I just love seeing what the students of central have to offer,” Choir Director Sara Cowan said. Auditions will have a group of judges that anonymously give points and at the end they tally up the scores and choose who will be part of the show.

Aiden Ramirez, a Junior at Central high school, is only 16 years old and is part of four acts including a K-pop act, an act for the step team at central, and

two acts for his choir class. Ramirez did the road show last year as a sophomore. “I had a really fun experience with those acts alone and I wanted to do something like this again because it’s so much fun and in general I just love to perform,” Ramirez said. Ramirez has loved to sing and dance since he was a kid, so the road show is a good chance for him to show off his incredible talents “always something I’ve had since I was growing older and it just kind of stuck with me,” Ramirez said. For class acts Ramirez practices with his group and for other acts he stays after school to practice in preparation for auditions and the show.

Ramirez is most excited to perform with his friends and show his talent to everyone in the crowd “generally showing the crowd a good show, I remember last year the crowd really loved our performance,” Ramirez said.

The road show will be April 26 at 7 p.m. and 27 at 2 p.m. and another show at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at Central high school tickets for this event will be \$10 for adults and \$8 for students.

'Love Lies Bleeding': Entertaining, but occasionally for the wrong

Hadley Forsen-Yepes
chief copy editor

Sweat, skin, spandex, and synthesizers: These are the defining characteristics of writer and director Rose Glass' 2024 queer thriller "Love Lies Bleeding."

Set in 1980s New Mexico, the movie follows gym manager Lou (Kristen Stewart), who is estranged from her father (Ed Harris) and spends her free time looking after her sister (Jena Malone), who is trapped in an abusive marriage. When hitchhiker Jackie (Katy O'Brian) turns up at the gym, Lou is immediately drawn to her. While Lou helps Jackie prepare for an upcoming Las Vegas bodybuilding competition, the two begin a tumultuous romance, but their plans are quickly disrupted when they find themselves the target of Lou's crime-ridden family.

Viewers are thrust into an immersive depiction of '80s New Mexico from the very first scene. After emerging from a desert abyss, with a starry sky above, the camera slowly approaches Lou's place of employment, bathed in red, neon light. Working at the gym is not glamorous, but working out at the gym is.

"Love Lies Bleeding" uses extreme closeups of veiny muscles, sweaty hairlines, and strained faces to show people from all walks of life as they join together and wield their physical strength. In the 1980s, gyms opened their doors to anyone hoping to improve their health, not just bodybuilders and professional athletes. This is the movie's first introduction

to the idea that nothing is more powerful than muscles, not even weapons.

Coupled with the opening scene is an anxiety-inducing score that proves "Love Lies Bleeding" will be more than just the glitz, glam, and neon tracksuits featured in the gym; it lets the viewers know that there is something dark and violent hiding under the film's surface. The synth-heavy instrumentals are balanced with energetic '80s pop hits that make it impossible to forget the film's time period.

Equal parts criminal thriller and sapphic romance, "Love Lies Bleeding" is reminiscent of 1996's "Bound," though fans of the former will not necessarily enjoy "Love Lies Bleeding." While Stewart and O'Brian have phenomenal chemistry, and the romance between Lou and Jackie is electric, it is not always convincing; this is a fault of the script and not the actresses.

Stewart is beautifully awkward as Lou, who feels fully developed as a character. O'Brian's Jackie is incredibly captivating, with a confidence that seems artificial. Jackie has what can best be described as a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde situation in the film, and O'Brian does a fantastic job at distinguishing between Jackie's two personas, but there is not much exploration of why Jackie acts this way, and it is shocking that Lou is accepting of this behavior.

Viewers will enjoy the cinematography and special effects done during Jackie's "episodes," which are incredibly trippy and often disturbing. This is the closest one can get to understanding what occurs in Jackie's brain, which the movie could

have used more expansion on.

Unfortunately, the film's crime aspects are less engrossing than its romantic ones. "Love Lies Bleeding" plays with red filters and flashback scenes to heighten its mystery, but viewers quickly catch on to what these scenes are alluding to, so they lose their "shock factor" early into its runtime. Occasionally, the crime plotline feels like an afterthought, or at least manipulated in illogical ways to make room for Lou and Jackie's relationship. Still, the constant shifts from crime to romance make for a fast-paced, engaging watch.

Adding to the movie's entertainment value is the comedy, which always appears at the most inappropriate times. Sometimes this is intentional, like when Lou cracks a joke in an ill-suited environment. Other times, what is meant to be shocking or scary is spoiled by bad CGI or pure absurdity. One minor example that can be seen in the trailer is Harris's wig. Viewers cannot take his character seriously, let alone fear him, with the getup that he has on in the film. These moments make it easy to be taken out of the movie's immersion, but they also make for an entertaining viewing experience — just maybe for the wrong reasons.

For those looking for a crime thriller that will keep them on the edge of their seat, they will not find it in "Love Lies Bleeding." However, for those seeking a fun, sexy, empowering, gay, and fast-paced '80s period piece, "Love Lies Bleeding" is an excellent choice for the next movie night.

How an Omaha cafe became a game design hub

Jack Wilderman-Nielsen
contributing writer

Every Tuesday night at 7 p.m. a group of local Omaha board game designers gather together to demo, test, workshop, and most importantly, play each other's current projects. The group, known as the Spielmasons, have been getting together for over nine years at Omaha's board game café, Spielbound. The group was formed just a couple months after Spielbound itself was founded.

Co-founder and co-owner of Spielmasons Marcus Ross spent the months leading up to Spielbound's opening helping the café's owner and personal friend, Kaleb Michaud, store, catalogue and organize the extensive collection kept on the shelves of Spielbound. In fact Ross said that many of the games had been moved at one point from Michaud's home into Ross's basement for some time before the opening of Spielbound.

Ross, who is the most published member of the Spielmasons with four games to his name, was never really aware that game design was a job. "Game design to me felt like something people do at Hasbro. Who knows how anybody gets that job?" he said.

It wasn't until 2003 that he discovered that smaller niche games existed when he first played "Settlers of Catan." But still he didn't realize it was something he could actually do, believing you either had to be at Hasbro or in Germany to design games at all.

It took years before Ross played his first modern game, and it clicked that game design

was something a person could do. Before the Spielmasons, Ross had immediate success as a designer, taking his game "Discount Salmon" to a competition known as Tabletop Deathmatch and winning first place, which wound up being his very first published game.

But when the opportunity came, he and fellow game designers Floyd Pretz and Ann

Journey saw that there was a need to establish a group like the Spielmasons. As game designers, they knew the most important thing they needed was feedback. "Other people are the real judge, a game is not the game unless other people are playing it. Otherwise it's just bits in a box," Ross said.

Getting a group that can establish itself for other game designers to meet and discuss their games, give each other weekly ideas, feedback, help and support with their games was going to be a very valuable resource and asset to anyone trying to make games. Ross believes that the Spielmasons have vastly improved each other's game designing ability through their time with the group.

Ross noted being able to watch the progress of other members, such as Aaron Kempkes,

who when he had showed up to Spielmasons for the first time brought with him a game he was just about to take to the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter. Off the bat, the longer tenured members of Spielmasons knew it was not going to have success. Their predictions came true but coming to the meetings and working with the fellow Omaha designers, Kempkes's game design skills vastly improved, Ross said that he now goes to game



Members of the Spielmasons pose in a game room.

MAURO GUTIERREZ | The Register

design competitions and he wins, but it was because he came to Spielmasons and learned the fundamentals of game design that he was able to gain the knowledge.

The group of people at the Spielmasons are experienced designers, having multiple published games among them, as well as the professor at University of Nebraska Omaha's game design class, Journey. During their sessions they are always giving feedback and sharing ideas. During a game of Journey's newer project, "Cretaceous Rails," thoughts were flying everywhere about things that

could be changed or parts of the game they really liked. Seeing as most all of them had been playing the game since its first inception, many callbacks to old game elements that had been improved or removed were made.

The Spielmasons are an open and inclusive community. There is no registration process or age restriction. Prospective members only have to show up to participate, they don't even have to be a game designer. Pretz even spoke about how much they appreciate and regularly have people who are just there to play and test new games.

Don't worry, be happy by watching 'One Love'

Steven Dickerson
staff writer

Get up, stand up, and go see the new Bob Marley biographical picture, "One Love." While confusing at times, it is a vibrant film with rousing images, a spectacular amount of drama and a brilliant soundtrack. Running at one hour and 44 minutes, it wasn't one of those movies that is way longer than it needs to be.

I'll start with the marvelous casting. Kingsley Ben-Adir as Marley was a choice I hope they don't regret. Not only was the resemblance astounding, but Ben-Adir's commitment to the accent and indulging in Marley's lifestyle was very entertaining. Lashana Lynch played Rita Marley incredibly well, showcasing strong emotion in every scene while also portraying a very open and honest version of what Rita's life was like. The other cast members were also extraordinary.

The images in the film were just astounding. Color was abundant, fitting for the film's setting in tropical, culture-rich Jamaica, and the scenes were fantastically realistic. The visuals added to the essence of the movie and provided a wonderful viewing experience. I felt like I was there in the movie at some parts, and it honestly made me feel like it was time to start saving for a trip to Jamaica.

The plot was confusing, mostly because its format was so different from other biopics. It focused on just a few specific years in Marley's prime as opposed to his life from birth to death. It was a great format to keep things interesting and concise; however, I often felt left without context. The movie included short little flashbacks, but they just didn't cut it. I would've liked to see more context, which could've been accomplished by skipping irrelevant details from his prime and instead focusing on key parts from his childhood in poverty, time spent learning music, and meeting Rita.

Some scenes also chose to focus on less interesting aspects than they could have. For example, one scene took place in the studio and focused on what the "Exodus" album cover would be when it could've focused on Marley's process of songwriting, which would've been far more fun and informative to watch.

Despite the flaws of the plot line, boy was it dramatic. Many scenes had me on the edge, wondering what could possibly come next. That's not typically a feeling a biopic would induce, mostly because biopics tend to focus on the larger details as opposed to the small things. Director Reinaldo Marcus Green did an outstanding job displaying those little details, largely through his specific time frame, which I greatly

appreciated.

The real star of the movie was the soundtrack, though. Built from Marley's discography, which was better than having someone else sing, it included all his classics and made for exuberant background music in many scenes. "Get Up, Stand Up," "I Shot The Sheriff," "No Woman, No Cry," "Three Little Birds," and many more were all present in the movie, and the reggae sounds made me feel at ease. I honestly wished they had played more music.

The soundtrack's impact even went beyond the movie. YG Marley, Bob's grandson and the offspring of Bob's son Rohan and the iconic Lauryn Hill, went viral on TikTok and music streaming platforms for his song, "Praise Jah In The Moonlight." The song feels like it could've been performed by Bob himself, and in many ways resembles his style of songwriting and performing. The success of this song alone shows how influential the soundtrack was to the positive connotation of the movie.

If you're interested in the king of reggae, the face of Jamaica, or just need to hear a good soundtrack with stimulating visuals, I would highly recommend seeing "Bob Marley: One Love." It is a decision you will not regret.

'Goddess' by Laufey is an emotional and powerful ballad

Iyanna Wise
staff writer

Coming off her recent Grammy win for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album with her hit album "Bewitched," recording artist Laufey released her new single "Goddess."

Laufey is a 24-year-old musician of Chinese and Icelandic descent. Her songs are typically known for their fusion of jazz, classical and pop, alongside collaborations with live orchestras. Laufey plays instruments such as piano and cello in her songs. She even collaborates with her identical twin sister Junia, who is a violin player.

Laufey entered the music world in 2020 with the release of her debut single "Street by Street," which topped Icelandic charts. She then released her EP "Typical of Me" and single "Let You Break My Heart Again" in 2021. She gained recognition from other musicians and talk show hosts leading to the release of her debut album "Everything I Know About Love" in 2022. She dropped "Bewitched" in 2023.

The instrumentation on the new single, "Goddess," was amazing. The piano is the first thing heard in the song, starting very slowly, but eventually speeding up when Laufey begins singing. The chords played throughout the song give it sad, depressing undertones, and it's really present when the strings come in the last quarter of the song. The strings' entrance was unexpected, like it came out of nowhere, but it did an amazing job of carrying on the lively and melodic feel that the piano originally played.

The piano also became more present as the song continued. In the beginning, there was

more focus on Laufey's voice, so it acted in the background, not sticking out too much.

But when it finally came towards the end of the song, the piano was played with more force so the accent on the notes can be heard. I also liked that there was emphasis played on the first note of each beat, making the lower notes feel heavier and more impactful.

A detail I loved throughout the song was whenever Laufey sang "I'm a Goddess on stage/Human when we're alone," the instruments got softer and eventually cut out, making it seem like she really is by herself.

Laufey has a very angelic voice. Her lyrics really hit close to home. The song is about her feeling like an actual goddess. She thinks that she's this invincible, larger-than-life person on stage, but in reality is broken-hearted. She is stripped of this superior feeling and becomes vulnerable to feeling human again.

Her vocalizations give a very ethereal feeling, having a lot of power in the lower notes and being light and airy in the higher notes. The slight vibratos she sings at the end of certain words really adds more emotion to the lyrics.

Towards the end of the song when the strings come in, you can hear the hurt and intensity in her voice. She's not belting but she's also not overly soft. Her voice throughout really reminds me a lot of the Disney princess sound, most around the era of Snow White or Cinderella.

Laufey is set to release a deluxe album titled "Bewitched: The Goddess Edition" on April 26. It will consist of the songs from the "Bewitched" album, "Goddess," and two other new songs. The album is available for pre-save and pre-order.



Photo Courtesy of @LAUFEY/X

Once and for all: Apple Music or Spotify?

Millie Jackson
staff writer

The infamous battle between Apple Music and Spotify for elite streaming service is a constant topic of discussion for many. But what are the specifics of this debate?

First, the similarities:

Cost is a huge aspect to consider when comparing services. However, Apple and Spotify prices are exactly the same. Apple Music for one person is \$10.99, and Spotify premium is the same. Both services offer family plans with up to six people. Each member gets their own individual accounts, and both services have the price of this plan set at \$16.99. They also both offer student plans for \$5.99 a month.

Both Apple Music and Spotify curate mixes, recommendations and playlists according to a user's listening history. Apple Music recommends certain albums, playlists

and more to a user. Each Apple user gets a "station" that plays songs from the library, or songs recommended to them. Spotify has a similar function but often makes more complex and specific playlists like "Night Drive" or "Dreary Thursday Afternoon."

Another similarity between the two apps is the widgets available. Both apps have the option to display varying sizes of widgets, which show the song playing and recently played albums or playlists. You can also pause or skip a song and open the app from the widget.

Now, the differences:

Apple Music and Spotify both have a yearly activity summary feature, but they differ significantly.

Apple Music's Replay highlights a user's top albums and artists. It shows how many plays an album or song has and how many minutes a certain artist has been played. They

also make playlists for each year that contain all your top songs. One of the most significant features of Apple's Replay compared to Spotify Wrapped is that it can be viewed all year long and is updated weekly. You can also view summaries for individual months or previous years.

Spotify Wrapped can only be viewed at the end of the year but offers users a more detailed overview of their music listening habits from the past year. This includes top songs and artists, highlighting the most-played tracks and favorite musicians. Users can also explore their preferred genres and total listening time. The Wrapped Story feature shows users an interactive visual journey through their music experience over the year, showcasing milestones and trends.

When listening to a song with lyrics available, a user on both Apple and Spotify can click an icon to display the lyrics line by

line. However, there are some aspects that differentiate the two.

On Apple Music, there is a microphone icon that can change the lyrics to a karaoke kind of mode. The lyrics are highlighted word by word as the song plays, and a user has the option to adjust the volume of the vocals.

Spotify only has one mode for lyrics that just goes line by line with the song.

Both streaming services have lots of content available, but there are quite a few variations.

As for overall songs, Apple Music wins the battle. They claim to have over 100 million songs available.

Spotify claims to have over 80 million songs. An advantage to Spotify, however, would be their podcasts. While Apple has a separate app for podcast listening, Spotify incorporated podcasts into its service.

FLETCHER's newest album reminds of complexity in life, love

Fiona Bryant
opinion editor

Beginning with the song "Maybe I Am," an embrace of being called "crazy," FLETCHER's newest album "In Search of the Antidote" is a whirlwind of the sapphic (woman loving women) pop singer's imperfections, messy relationships and healing.



Photo Courtesy of CAPITOL RECORDS

Despite the recurring chaos characteristic of FLETCHER, her recent album lacks the danceability and smiting lyrics of the "Girl of My Dreams" album and other earlier releases. "In Search of the Antidote" is softer and more developed, yet I crave the solo, heartbroken dance party I used to associate with FLETCHER. Lyrics that stab and wrench tears out appear to be rationed. Nevertheless, I go to FLETCHER in my weakest moments and consume her voice like a drug. I'll take any dose I can get.

"In Search of the Antidote" follows suit with FLETCHER's past discography including the drama-causing "THE S(EX) TAPES" and "Girl of My Dreams" albums. This album is (per usual) the perfect companion to a breakup with lyrics like "your heart is constantly running, just never to me."

My favorite song on the album is the gut-wrenchingly nostalgic "Eras of Us." I can't get enough of her build-up of her young, ruthless love and the hollowing emptiness left in its wake. It's an extension of "Wasted Youth," describing the warm, hazy days of a first love but grieving how the moments are firmly in the past. The exhilaration "[stole] the air right from our lungs" and time stole young love right from her grasp.

FLETCHER's songs are never just about simple heartbreak; they're about wanting your partner to be happy but also to never leave you, about attachment issues ruining a relationship before it starts, about hating your ex's new partner but also finding them hot. Her recent album does not disappoint with "Two Things Can Be True" and more allusions to online drama with her ex and her ex's then-girlfriend.

Even though FLETCHER's 2022 "Girl of My Dreams"

album shows hope and healing in the last third of the album, in "In Search of the Antidote," FLETCHER's personal development truly shines through. Her depiction of being crazy in love (or heartbreak) is held with more confidence. She acknowledges that she goes back and forth on her feelings and continually loses herself only to eventually find herself again. "Why does better feel worse?" she asks on "Doing Better."

FLETCHER's songs are never just about simple heartbreak; they're about wanting your partner to be happy but also to never leave you, about attachment issues ruining a relationship before it starts, about hating your ex's new partner but also finding them hot.

"In Search of the Antidote" is more than a heartbreak album; FLETCHER returns to hope and new love by the end, all while granting herself grace. The album truly is a search for the antidote; it's FLETCHER's love letter to her love of adrenaline from the simultaneous pain and elation of love.

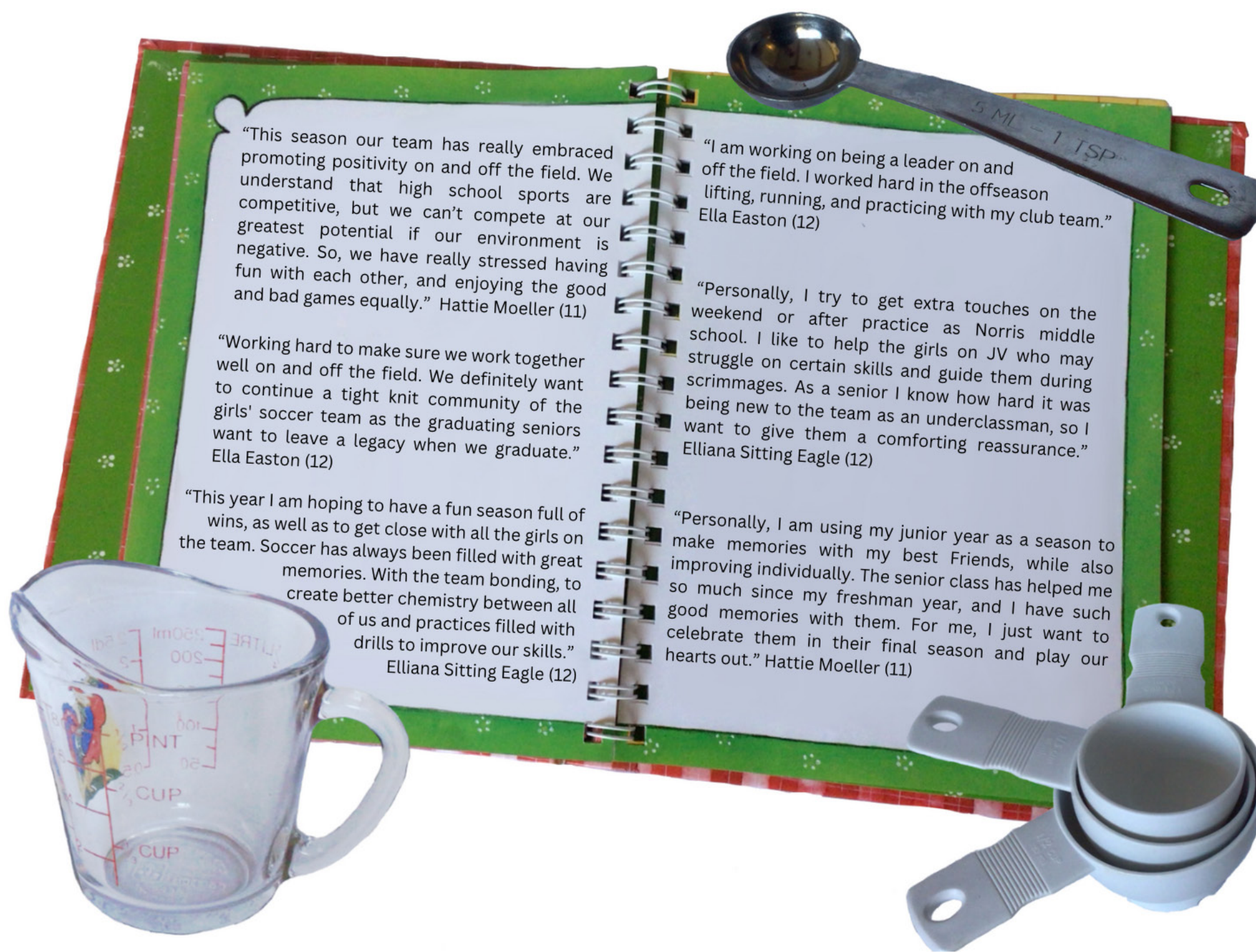
FLETCHER wrote a chaotic, imperfect album for the sapphics. She reminds us of the complexity of feelings with regards to life, heartache, lust and love in that specifically sapphic way.

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'RECIPE FOR SUCCESS'



CRIS BATAILLON | The Register

Central girls soccer pursues 'we over me' mentality

Katie Besancon
staff writer

SHE SHOOTS, SHE SCORES! The Omaha Central Girls soccer team has officially started their season and is currently four and six. This is coach Jen Gillespie's second year as head coach, and she is continuing to strive for a successful season, putting the "we over me" mentality into how they play.

For most of the girls' team this is not the beginning of their season but the time to show off the continual effort and work they have put in during the offseason. Starting in October, assistant coach Casey Denton started fitness conditioning and the team joined a high school girls' indoor soccer league, where they finished third overall.

This will be the first generation of Central seniors that Gillespie has been with for all four years, two as an assistant and two as a head coach. "I'm excited to watch them take the reins and make this season theirs, I would love to see them end on a positive note in their four-year careers here at Central," she said.

Many of the girls that have been with Gillespie for all four years have had a mentality instilled in them to help better push and advance them throughout the game. This includes a positive mindset and a positive attitude and continually focusing on a "we over me" mentality. "This is a team sport, with a lot of working parts, everyone has to believe in a common goal and do what it takes individually and collectively to achieve that."

She believes having a coaching staff that the girls can look up to is beneficial. "I know I grew up with female idols in the game and was lucky enough to be coached by a few, and it literally changed my life, my thoughts and my outlook as a woman and the game," Gillespie said.

Whether it is talking about life, college, soccer, or a future career, Gillespie is building an environment where players are encouraged to find a coach that they relate to most, one they feel most comfortable talking and working with. "With our diversity in age range, our life experiences and soccer knowledge, we bring so much to the table for the girls to learn from," Gillespie said.

Many athletic teams have coaches creating their own goals for their teams' season.

That is not the approach Gillespie is taking with her team though. "As a coach I like to let the girls decide their goals for the season and then have coaches provide the necessary tools to accomplish them," Gillespie said.

At the end of every day a coach can create goals for their team or in this instance have their athletes create their own goals but "at the end of the day, we provide them with some of the best coaching in the state, but they are the ones there day in and day out on the pitch putting it into motion and making the decisions," Gillespie said.

Overall, Gillespie said, "I am hoping for a successful season with no injuries and to just have the team have fun and enjoy playing the game."

Powerlifting hosts state tournament, dominates p. 17

Omaha Central's powerlifting has a lot on their plate with state this year.

Kevin Boston wins state title p. 18

"Never Satisfied" were the two words boys wrestling Head Coach Matt Storm used to describe the now-state champion in the 144-pound weight class, Kevin Boston.

Andrew Brown's track preview p. 19

Central senior Andrew Brown is a three-sport athlete who plays football, basketball and track. Brown is most passionate about track is poised to break his coach's record this season.

Central grad plays professional rugby p. 20

Hill started out his athletic journey on Central's football, powerlifting and baseball teams. After stopping baseball his junior year, he decided to join the rugby club to play alongside his friends.