

## CENTRAL LEGACY

### Central inducts 25th Hall of Fame class

Fiona Bryant  
*managing editor*

The Central High School Foundation (CHSF) hosted its 25th Hall of Fame Ceremony at Central on Oct. 17. The ceremony included a dinner and inducted 10 notable individuals who have contributed to Central's legacy, including a distinguished educator.

Matthew Aden, class of 1974, was awarded the Cable TV Pioneers Award in 1984 and has held leadership positions at multiple telecommunication companies. He has given back to Central with his former role as president of the CHSF Board, leading campaigns for funding technology and the arts addition.

Class of 2001 alum Robert X. Fogarty created the public art projects EvacuSpots and Dear World to help New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. EvacuSpots uses outdoor art to direct disaster evacuations, the only use of public art for this purpose. Dear World, which began as Dear New Orleans, encourages storytelling through writing the start to a life story on one's body.

Krisie Hayes, 1973 graduate and CHSF Board member, has served as the distinguished chair of dermatology and the assistant dean for students and multicultural affairs in the college of Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She has also earned the UNMC Unsung Hero Award, 2023 Distinguished Service to Medicine Award and Women's Dermatology Society Volunteer of the Year Award.

Attending Central until 1951, Keith Kretschmer went on to serve in the U.S. Army in Korea and then in the White House for presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. He then led successful careers in the founding and directing of companies, ranging from financial sectors to computer industries.

Class of 1964 alum Col. David A. Napioliello served in the Army for 28 years, retiring to work with veterans and in the defense industry. Napioliello received the Distinguished Service Medal, the highest award in the Army, and was in the UN Peace-Keeping Forces when they won the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize. Upon retirement, Napioliello was awarded over 30 decorations for his service in over 35 assignments.

1997 graduate Jed Ortmeier played eight seasons in the National Hockey League, the first player from Omaha to



Hall of Fame inductees and their announcers are honored in the Central auditorium on Oct. 17. BRADLEY SMITH | The Register

play professional hockey. Playing for the New York Rangers, Nashville Predators, San Jose Sharks and Minnesota Wild, Ortmeier won the Rangers' Steven McDonald Extra Effort Award twice. In 2015, he was inducted into the Omaha Hockey Hall of Fame.

Harold Pharoah, who graduated in 1966, helped found the Veterans Committee of Central's Alumni Association and led the restoration of the school's Vietnam veterans memorial. Pharoah has also created fundraisers, led initiatives for a Nebraska license plate, and started the Nebraska Prostate Cancer Alliance to raise awareness for prostate cancer.

Class of 1961 alum Richard Steele cofounded Peaker Services, a company providing backup generator maintenance. The company has grown to be worth \$35 million and serves clients in the utilities, railroad and maritime sectors.

Judy Storm, this year's distinguished educator, taught at Central for 27 years and continues to substitute teach. She began teaching at Central in 1985 and served as chair of the Special Education Department. In 2008, she received the Alice Buffet Outstanding Teacher Award and in 2005 received the National Association of Student Councils Award for Leadership of Youth.

2004 graduate Patrick Venditte pitched in five Major League Baseball seasons, the second Central graduate to play in the MLB. Being the first pitcher in the modern era of baseball to pitch ambidextrously, the "Venditte Rule" was established, which requires pitchers to communicate to batters which hand they will pitch from.

The inductees visited Central to share their achievements with students on Oct. 18.

## 2024 election results

### US Presidency

Republican Donald Trump wins.

In Nebraska, the Second Congressional District went Democratic and won Kamala Harris one electoral vote. The rest of the state went Republican and won Trump four electoral votes.

### Nebraska Senate

Incumbent Republican Deb Fischer wins, defeating Independent Dan Osborn.

### Nebraska Senate Special Election

Incumbent Republican Pete Ricketts wins, defeating Democrat Preston Love, Jr.

### Nebraska House of Representatives

In the Second Congressional District, incumbent Republican Don Bacon wins, defeating Democrat Tony Vargas.

## Initiatives and referendums on the ballot

Abortion Access Initiatives 434 and 439	School Choice Referendum 435	Paid Sick Leave Initiative 436	Medical Marijuana Initiatives 437 and 438
434, which would write the current ban on most abortions after the first trimester into the Nebraska constitution, passes. 439, a reversal of that ban did not pass.	Voters voted "repeal" on 435, ending tax credit vouchers for private school scholarships as LB1402 had allowed.	436 passes, requiring most Nebraska businesses to grant employees paid sick leave.	437 and 438 passed, allowing medical marijuana to be prescribed in Nebraska and for the industry to be regulated. However, the initiatives are being legally challenged.

### News

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Central organizo una noche cultural, la desproporcionalidad de la disciplina disminuyo en OPS

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In recent years, there has been a lack of student participation from a large portion of the student body in school activities and events.

### Arts & Culture

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Sex trafficking is often portrayed by American pop culture as something that only occurs in the seedy underbelly of society.

### Sports

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Senior Carina Hernandez made history this season as the first girls' golfer from Central to qualify for the state tournament since 2019.

## The night that brings the Central community together

Gaby Antunez  
staff writer

DECA students senior Priscilla Barney, junior Emma Kirby and senior Massimo Smith are planning a culture night for the DECA state project in hopes to go to nationals.

They also hope “to bring the community together and identify the important things about culture,” according to Barney.

At Culture Night, many things are offered by many different clubs. Last year at Culture Night, clubs were giving out things, such as candy, that represented their culture, from hot chocolate to paper cranes. Even face paint was offered. The date this year isn’t confirmed yet, but they are hoping for it to happen on Dec. 5 around 5:00 p.m. through 7:30 p.m. at Central.

Each item has a meaning, and asking about the meaning helps others in the community learn more about that country or group’s culture and helps them become more aware of how something from everyday life for some might have a bigger meaning for others.

Organizers said they don’t want it to only help themselves, but also help the community.

“Maybe have panels talking about different cultures and how to represent it everywhere you go,” Barney said.

Central is a diverse place, so they hope Culture Night helps others learn about all the different cultures. No one is the same and they hope for the differences to help bring everyone together.

They are currently reaching out to many places to help spread the word of Culture Night to make sure many people attend. They are also contacting several clubs at Central as well so they can also help spread the word. “We are doing lots of communicating, through social media to help contact students, contacting teachers, and even other schools as well to get their clubs come attend,” Barney said.



A student showcases their culture during last year’s DECA culture event. | The O-Book

## Students attend Blue Dot rally at Memorial Park

Paula Gutierrez Martinez  
arts & culture editor

Around 1,600 blue-clad Omahans organized a rally on Oct. 20 to create a human “blue dot” in support of Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris. Participants met Douglas County Democratic candidates, received slate cards and learned about the voting process and elections.

Many Central students attended the rally to make their voices heard. Among them were sophomore Norah Wessel and freshman Isabella Grace. Both heard about the event from Student Progressives club.

“I was looking for different ways that I could be involved in the community and show up in support,” Wessel said.

Attendees arrived at Memorial Park at 12 p.m. and assembled to form the dot beginning around 1 p.m. The massive human formation was captured from above by a licensed drone operator.

The dot disassembled around 1:30 p.m., and the event ended at 2 p.m. Entrance was free, and there were multiple family-friendly activities, including balloon art, face painting, food trucks and 1,000 free (blue) cookies. Additionally, there was live music by Omaha’s own DJ Hurricane Cole.

“It was very energetic and hopeful. And it was Kamala Harris’s birthday, so it was celebratory,” Grace said about the atmosphere.

“Everyone there was very nice, and everyone honestly seemed like they were having a lot of fun. Everyone there had a common goal,” Wessel said.

The rally was organized by an Omaha Facebook group

called Blue Dot Energy in conjunction with the Douglas County Democratic Party. Blue Dot Energy is a group dedicated to winning Nebraska’s 2nd Congressional District, which encompasses the course of the Omaha area and surrounding counties, and an electoral vote for Harris. The group takes its name from the blue dot yard signs that popped up in Omaha during the election.

In mid-August, Dundee couple Jason Brown and Ruth Huebner-Brown spray-painted a blue dot on a white sign and put in on their lawn. This was a sly reference to the electoral map, where Omaha shows up as a “blue dot” in an “ocean of red.”

Nebraska and Maine are the only two states that split their electoral votes. Nebraska allocates two electoral votes to the state popular vote winner, but the other three are awarded to the winner inside the boundaries of each congressional district. (Harris did ultimately win the electoral vote from the district in the 2024 election.)

The blue dot’s meaning was unique to each student.

“For me personally, the blue dot symbolizes voting blue, or at least supporting, specifically turning, Omaha into the blue dot in all of Nebraska being red,” Wessel said.

“It symbolizes being able to have another option within a red state. It’s a way to have a different vote for Nebraska and keep it separate,” Grace said.

Republican neighbors responded with their own “red dot” signs, some of which were topped with the hairstyle of President-elect Donald Trump, who was the Republican presidential nominee, and red state signs showing Nebraska as going fully red.

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

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

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The 2nd Congressional District leans conservative, turning blue only twice since 1992—once in 2008 for Barack Obama, and again in 2020 for Joe Biden.

Wessel and Grace think the rally sends a message of community. It was a moment of pride seeing everyone show up for a cause they believed in.

“It says that we are strong. We are still a community, even if we are different. There are still different ways that the state can have different votes and still work,” Grace said.



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# Brewing Confidence: Students Serve Up Success with “Guys in Ties” Coffee Cart

Hattie Moeller  
news editor

Twice a week, teachers and staff at Central are treated to a fresh cup of coffee, delivered by the “Guys in Ties” coffee cart – a program achieving more than serving up caffeine.

“Guys in Ties,” led by students in the Alternative Curriculum Program, was re-launched by ACP teacher Jamie Johnson in partnership with Business Education teacher Kevin Drwal.

The ACP classroom focuses on functional, academic, behavioral and social emotional growth for students with disabilities. The coffee cart program not only brings coffee to classrooms, but also allows the students to gain hands-on experience in job and financial skills.

“Our students have learned a vast range of skills, leadership, responsibility, and how to work as a team, which will translate to employment after graduation,” Drwal said.

Seniors Markell Buckley, Yaan Buom, Aaron De Arcos Vargas, Junior Deal and Exavier Myers are the leading baristas, dressed in purple aprons and patterned business ties.

Each senior has an assigned role each week. The student may organize inventory, brew coffee, pour cups, greet customers or help with cleanup. Then, the students embark on a four-floor tour in which they hand deliver fresh coffee to participating Central staff.

Deal said, “I like delivering Mr. (Gerald) Kreber and Ms. (Mary) Davies their coffee.”

The goal of the coffee cart is to increase independence in vocational and life skills.

“It has a huge positive effect on our students. Greeting a large number of staff members each day builds confidence while doing something that feels meaningful,” Drwal said.

From managing to constructing orders, each task is designed to give the students the kind of experience they can carry forward.

As the “Guys in Ties” roll their cart through the hallways, students encounter supportive staff members who appreciate their goods and look forward to interacting with them each week.

Exchanges with Social Studies teacher Jay Landstrom and Business Education teacher Jonathan Franta allow Buckley to trade coffee for a “joke of the day.”

“It has been great seeing the guys out in the hallways interacting with students and staff members, giving fist bumps, high fives, or delivering the joke of the day,” Johnson said.

Johnson joined the Alternative Curriculum Program in January. Then in March she proposed a reinvention of “the coffee cart” to Drwal and Assistant Principal and Data Administrator Amy Ellis. The rebranding advertised the service to a larger audience of staff members.

“Thanks to a lot of positive feedback, and creative problem solving, we expanded,” Johnson said. Now, teachers must contribute money to a subscription, in which they can pre-order their personalized drink to be delivered to them.

When not delivering coffee, the “Guys in Ties” will be visiting local businesses. These trips provide diverse experiences for seniors to explore possible career paths, along with the exposure they will get at a post-graduation transition program.

Thanks to the experience gained from working with the coffee cart, Buckley hopes to pursue a job as a barista after graduating from Central in May.



**Top: Senior Junior Deal delivers coffee to Brody Hilgenkamp. Bottom: The “Guys in Ties” are Yaan Buom, Markell Buckley, Exavier Meyers, Aaron De Arcos Vargas and Junior Deal.**

WHITMAN RUTLEDGE | The Register

MAURO GUTIERREZ | The Register

## Do Central Students Feel Safe at School?

Rosey Segura Xula  
staff writer

Central High School students are divided on whether they feel safe on campus, with many expressing concerns over recent school shootings and school security measures.

Junior Angel Aguirre feels that school is no more dangerous than being out in public. “I feel just as safe being out in the streets as I do being in school...you get all sorts of people roaming around,” Aguirre said. “You encounter a mix of personalities - some are friendly, while others can be unpredictable.”

Others express concerns about their safety. Junior Lilianna Guzman said she doesn’t feel safe while on school grounds. “No, I don’t

feel safe. There have been a lot of shootings happening near the school and them being close by, what’s going to stop them from happening inside school?” Guzman said.

Junior Teagan Dunn agrees, as most of the time she does feel safe, but it’s difficult when there are shootings happening around Central.

These students feel that, with the amount of administrators, security guards and police officers in the building, it is not adequate to respond quickly to violent behavior. They also believe that security guards shouldn’t be buddies with students.

“I understand the purpose of all these drills, but I feel like even if we were in a seri-

ous situation, [expletive] would happen,” Dunn said.

Jon Dotzler, a security guard, said building rapport with students goes a long way toward getting students to comply and respond to redirection, and that rapport has led to students telling security guards about potential fights that have been prevented, social media threats and other security concerns.

Students mentioned that they hold these opinions because of what has occurred at other Omaha Public Schools in recent years, such as Northwest High School and South High School. According to Gun Violence Archive, Everytown, and Education Week, as of Oct. 15 of this year, 58 school shootings have

occurred in the United States. One of those shootings occurred at Omaha Northwest High School on Sept. 10

Students were asked if they believed there was any way to prevent school shootings and/or dangers to their learning environments. “I’m not really sure, I feel like if there were ways, they would have happened by now,” Guzman said. “Prepare for them...we haven’t really done anything to prepare for them...I know we do the lock downs and all, but that’s not good enough,” Dunn said.

“I believe education on conflict resolution and mental health awareness might further help create a safer environment,” Aguirre said.

## Eagles Take Flight Day sends freshmen, sophomores around city

Jazmin Mills  
staff writer

This year, Eagles Take Flight Day was on Oct. 2, which was a B Day. Freshmen and sophomores attended school to go on different field trips depending on their pathway while juniors and seniors stayed home.

While at home, juniors and seniors were instructed to work on their resume if they didn’t sign up to take the pre-SAT or Amed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Most sophomores know a little bit more about what career they want to pursue rather than the freshmen because they’ve been in high school a year longer.

Sophomore Zyaire Bogan went with her pathway students to the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Bogan’s pathway is Global Health. She selected this pathway because she wants to pursue a career in the medical field as a neurologist.

“I really enjoyed my Eagles Take Flight Day this year. It was fun to see all the cool things done at UNMC and have all my questions answered,” Bogan said. She and her class toured the campus and learned about all the tools they use and how to use them properly.

Bogan’s favorite part was the CPR dummy because it could talk and had a pulse, mimicking an

actual person. Going on this trip was very eye opening for Bogan and she’s grateful for the experience.

“The field trip gave me more insight on the career I would like to pursue as well as what efforts I need to make to get me there. Overall, it was a good learning experience, and I definitely would come back if I could,” Bogan said.

However, sophomore Mikey Juarez didn’t have such a good experience this year. His pathway class is Theatrical Arts, and they went to the Rose Theatre. Juarez wishes to pursue a career as a filmmaker.

On the trip he learned about all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes of plays. He also learned about the props and tools the tech crew uses. Although he learned many new things, he was a little disappointed with his experience.

“I was really expecting more but sadly, my expectations were crushed. Mostly because we didn’t get to explore much since they were busy with building sets. But also, because they didn’t really answer my questions,” Juarez said.

He felt as though every time he would ask a question they would dodge it. Juarez was disappointed because of this, but glad he went since he gained more knowledge.

## Central brings back plastic trays and metal utensils for cafeteria

Arisa Lattison  
editor-in-chief

Central's cafeteria has switched from made some changes. What used to be paper trays and plastic utensils to have been replaced by red plastic trays and metal silverware.

This change is exclusively in the cafeteria.

Crystal Warren has worked in nutrition services at Central since 2018. In an interview, she mentioned that during COVID, paper trays were used due to Central being short-staffed and not having enough people to clean the plastic ones. Nutrition services decided to go back to the red trays recently.

Central's kitchen has increased the number of staff, allowing for this change to take place. Warren said the change takes some time to get accustomed to.

"We have to have more people in the dish room to get them ready during each lunch period," she said.

According to Diane Allen, English teacher at Central, the red trays were used at Central before COVID. When the plan was announced to use them once more, kitchen staff only had to uncover them in storage closets.

Warren believes this change is good for sustainability.

"It saves on trash, and the buying of the [paper] trays too," she said.

As of now, they do not have any plans to do more for sustainability.

Hezekiah Stratford, a junior who eats in the cafeteria, has some opinions about this difference.

While waiting in the lunch line,

said he finds he must wait longer in line now with the new implementation. Since the trays are bigger, the lunch ladies/nutrition staff can only prepare so many at once, so what used to be a "five-to-seven-minute wait is now a seven-to-ten-minute wait in the lunch line," Stratford said.

Not only do the bigger trays take longer to serve, but it also makes the proportions look sad to Stratford.

"The issue for me with the trays is that they're too big, [so] the proportions of the plates to the food don't match," he said. "It makes the food look depressing."

After eating, students must separate their utensils from their trays, put the utensils in a bucket of water and clear out their trays in the trash before setting them in a pile.

"A lot of people wait towards the end of lunch to throw their tray away, so it causes a line to start backing up," Stratford said, but he finds an easy fix to this problem is going before the last minutes of lunch.

In terms of sustainability, Stratford finds this change promising yet believes Central should do more.

"I think it's a good step, but considering we're a school of 2,000 something kids, we'll have to do more than just alter the lunch."

Nutrition services was not affiliated with the compost separation plan that took place in the Courtyard and Cafeteria last year, but Stratford mentioned it in hand with this new process taking place.



A Central student returns a plastic tray in the cafeteria during lunch.

WHITMAN RUTLEDGE | The Register

## The Central students who made The Penny Paw Project happen

Jasmin Gutierrez-Garcia  
staff writer

A trio of seniors at Central High School are running a fundraiser named The Penny Paw Project until early December. They are partnering with American Humane for the cause of saving animals' lives.

The Penny Paw Project started back in August. The seniors who began it are Joel Salvador, the project manager, Ewan Jones, the creative director, and Peyton Collins, the promotional manager. Their fundraiser goal is to raise \$5,000 for American Humane. American Humane is a non-profit organization that focuses on rescuing animals from catastrophes, putting an end to the cruelty of puppy mills, reunite retired military dogs with their holder, and overall animal welfare.

Salvador and Jones are in zero hour—Honors Entertainment & Sports Marketing 3-4. Through that class, being a part of DECA and a DECA project are necessary. Salvador, Jones, and Collins are all in DECA together and Salvador is the president of DECA. "I chose the category community giving which is fundraising for a cause with an organization, and we chose American Humane. I really like their cause. Initially we chose them because they have shown commitment to animal welfare. They do a lot of great work for disaster relief," Salvador said.

All three of them are passionate animal lovers and it is what inspired them to focus on animal welfare as their fundraising cause. The Penny Paw Project organized a school-wide fundraiser called Coin for Canines throughout the week of Sept. 23 to Oct. 1. It encouraged every Eagle Time classroom to donate coins in support of American Humane to aid their effort to help rescue animals affected by the recent hurricane.

The coin drive rallied over 2,500 students to contribute, raising \$1,065.60 for their fundraiser goal. The top fundraising class, Juan Trejo Hernandez's Eagle Time gathered \$146.52 and the whole class was awarded Crumbl Crookies. A certificate of Top Canine Supporter was given to the top three fundraising classes. Hannah Munson & Jonathan Flanagan's Eagle Time raised \$78.83 and got second place. Jonathan Franta's Eagle Time collected \$57.43 and received third place.

Jones' message through the project is that animal welfare is important. "It's important to take care of creatures of the world as they give back to us in many ways that we don't realize," Jones said.



Monica Pheng Many, left, accepts an award basket from seniors Joel Salvador, Ewan Jones and Peyton Collins. Photo Courtesy of Central DECA

Throughout October, The Penny Paw Project hosted a fundraising event called Howl-O-Ween Festival at Turner Park. The event invited dog owners to display their pets in Halloween costumes for their costume contest. A raffle, live music, outdoor games, and local vendors were available for attendees. This event did not only attract dog lovers, but the Omaha community as well to support. The contestants in the pet costume contest had the chance to win a Raising Cane's gift basket for the best-dressed pet. The Penny Paw Project raised \$497.37, and all proceeds were donated to American Humane.

Salvador, Jones and Collins did face bumps in organizing both fundraiser events, such as finding sponsors to promote, facing differences in school schedule, finding places to book, and spreading awareness outside of Central. In the end, they

are determined to spread awareness, keep their time management up, and have a set schedule.

Collins shares the challenge of getting taken seriously by older people outside of Central over what The Penny Paw Project is about and what they are doing. "People don't really take us seriously and are like they're just trying to play with us or whatever. But we're actually trying to do something serious for the world," Collins said.

Central students can support The Penny Paw Project's initiative by attending their community events that can be found through their social media pages such as their YouTube channel and Instagram. Other ways to support The Penny Paw Project is donating to their link or sharing their social media can have a significant impact on The Penny Paw Project.

# La desproporcionalidad de la disciplina en OPS

Steven Dickerson | translated by Paula Gutiérrez Martínez  
*sports & leisure editor* | *arts & culture editor*

Las suspensiones fuera de la escuela en las Escuelas Públicas de Omaha disminuyeron un 1,6% en el año escolar del 2023-24, según los datos recientemente publicados. Este desarrollo sigue una decisión del distrito de redefinir la forma en que se aplica la disciplina al pasar a una estrategia centrada en mantener a los estudiantes en la escuela y recibir una educación.

Mientras las suspensiones fuera de la escuela cayeron de 6.482 a 5.638, las suspensiones en la escuela aumentaron 0,4%, de 3.851 a 4.021 en todo el distrito. En Central, suspensiones fuera de la escuela cayeron 1,9%, mientras las suspensiones en la escuela aumentaron 0,6%, casi coincidiendo con cambios en todo el distrito.

“Escuelas y programas pudieron confiar en opciones manteniendo a las estudiantes en la escuela en comparación con excluyéndolos.” Danielle Starkey, una supervisora de MTSSB para OPS, le dijo a el Omaha World Herald en julio. Ella le dijo a la junta que el distrito se estaba enfocando en aumentar las tasas de graduación disminuyendo el ausentismo (incluyendo las suspensiones), lo que es evidente en la transición para mantener los niños en la escuela incluso cuando estén siendo disciplinados.

“No queremos rechazar las preocupaciones de maestros, estudiantes, y padres,” Superintendente de OPS Matthew Ray dijo en Julio sobre las preocupaciones con mantener estudiantes que se portan mal en las escuelas. “Tenemos que encontrar un equilibrio,” dijo Ray.

Oficiales del distrito han notado que el enfoque en mantener los niños en la escuela siempre es el primer paso en cualquier situación donde se encuentra la mala conducta, apuntando hacia los datos sobre tipos de resolución para varias situaciones donde se requiere la disciplina.

“En el 73% de los casos, se usan resoluciones no excluyentes como conferencias con el estudiante y los padres, detenciones, referencias a un consejero y otras intervenciones son usadas,” Amy Williams, directora ejecutiva de servicios para estudiantes y comunitarios, dijo en la reunión de la Junta de Educación de OPS del 15 de julio. Este paso es crucial, dijo, ya que ayuda a evitar disciplina que saca a los niños de la escuela.

Una escasez notada fue un aumento de 1,240 en los incidentes estudiantiles únicos, que subió de 83,914 a 85,154. Los incidentes estudiantiles únicos no se identifican por cuántos estudiantes reciben referencias, sino en cuantas referencias reciben los estudiantes, lo que significa que el mismo estudiante se puede contar varias veces si recibe varias referencias. Esta escasez no fue visible en Central, ya que el número total de incidentes estudiantiles únicos disminuyó un 58% en 2023-24 en comparación con 2022-23.

Aunque incidentes estudiantiles únicos aumentaron por todo el distrito durante el último año escolar, ese número es significativamente menor que el máximo del distrito durante el año escolar 2016-17, en el que hubo 118,174 incidentes estudiantiles únicos.

Miembro de la Junta de Educación de OPS Jane Eredenberger expreso preocupación sobre el hecho que, aunque referencias estudiantiles anuales disminuyeron, la moral sobre el ambiente de OPS desde todas las perspectivas había bajado. “Los números nos dicen que ha habido menos malas conductas desde antes de COVID y la gente no se acuerda, o los maestros ya no están dando referencias fuera de frustración; y basándome en esas anécdotas, me preocupa mucho que sea esto último,” Eredenberger dijo en la reunión de la junta en julio. En contra de la declaración de Eredenberger, Starkey dijo que, aunque el número de referencias no reflejan el hecho que los incidentes después de COVID han sido violaciones de el código de conducta mucho más graves, el número de referencias esta bajando continuamente en todas las violaciones y la percepción pública aún tiene que ponerse al día.

Otra pequeña mejora que muestran los datos es cómo la desproporcionalidad de la disciplina en OPS sigue avanzando hacia la proporcionalidad.

En el año escolar 2022-23, estudiantes más jóvenes constituyeron 24% de la

población estudiantil de OPS. Sin embargo, estudiantes más jóvenes constituyeron 47% de las suspensiones fuera de la escuela ese año. En el año escolar 2023-24, estudiantes más jóvenes constituyeron 23% de la población del distrito, pero disminuyeron hasta constituir el 44.5% de las suspensiones fuera de la escuela. Aunque no se acerca a la proporcionalidad, líderes del distrito dicen que estos datos demuestran que están cometidos a el progreso.

Otra área que demuestra el paso ligero del distrito hacia la disciplina proporcional en la educación especial. En el año escolar 2022-23, estudiantes de educación especial representaban el 17.6% del distrito, pero formaban el 21.9% de suspensiones fuera de la escuela. En 2023-24, ese número disminuyó a el 18.9% de suspensiones fuera de la escuela siendo estudiantes de educación especial, aunque formaban el 17.3% de el distrito, una extensión mucho más proporcional. Estos datos son bienvenidos para un distrito que ha sido penalizado por acciones disciplinarias desproporcionadas en educación especial en el pasado.

Una evaluación de 2015 por el Departamento de Educación de Nebraska encontró que OPS suspendió a más estudiantes más jóvenes de educación especial de lo normal en los años escolares 2011-12. El estado determinó que OPS tenía que desviar \$1.85 millones de fondos federales para resolver el problema.

# La noche que une a la comunidad

Gaby Antúnez | translated by Jazmin Mills  
*staff writer* | *staff writer*

Los estudiantes de último año de DECA, Priscilla Barney, Emma Kirby y Massimo Smith, están planeando una noche cultural Noche de Cultura para el proyecto estatal de para DECA con la esperanza de asistir a los nacionales. También esperan “unir r” a la comunidad e identificar los cosas aspectos importantes de la cultura,” según Barney.

En la Noche de Cultura, cultura se ofrecen se ofrecen muchas cosas de muchas otras actividades. h as cosas por parte de las actividades diferentes. El año pasado, en la Noche de Cultura, los. Los actividades repartían cosas, como dulces, que representaban su cultura, desde chocolate caliente hasta grullas de papel. Incluso se ofreció pintura facial para la cara. La fecha de este año aún no está confirmada, pero esperan que sea el 5 de Diciembre, alrededor de las 5:00 p.m. hasta las 7:30 p.m. en Central.

Cada artículo objeto tiene un significado, y preguntar sobre el significado ayuda a otros miembros de la comunidad a aprender más sobre la cultura de ese país o grupo y les ayuda a ser más conscientes de cómo algo de la vida cotidiana para algunos puede tener un significado mayor para otros.

Los organizadores dijeron que no quieren que esto solo les ayude a ellos mismos, sino que también a la comunidad.

“Tal vez haya tener paneles que hablen sobre diferentes culturas y cómo representarlas donde quiera que vayan,” dijo Barney.

Central es un lugar diverso, por lo que esperan que la Noche de Cultura ayude a otros a aprender sobre todas las diferentes culturas. Nadie es igual y esperan que las diferencias ayuden a unir a todos.

Actualmente están contactando comunicando a con muchos lugares para ayudar a difundir la Noche de Cultura para y asegurarse de que muchas personas asistan mucha gente. También se están poniendo en contacto comunicando con con varios otros actividades varias otras actividades en Central para que también puedan ayudar a correr la voz.

“Estamos haciendo mucha comunicación, comunicándonos mucho a través de las redes sociales para ayudar a contactar a los estudiantes, contactando a los maestros e y incluso a otras escuelas para que sus actividades asistan,” dijo Barney.

**ACROSS**

- 1 A sender's signature
- 5 Michigan, Ontario
- 6 43,560 square feet
- 7 Not this

**DOWN**

- 1 A dwelling in Britain
- 2 Short for "Rachel"
- 3 Gumbo staple
- 4 Rally

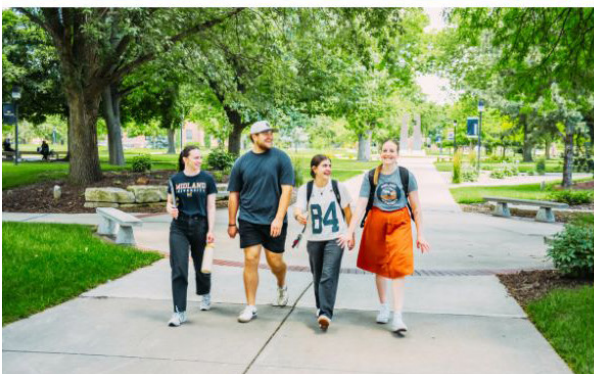
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# opinion

THE REGISTER

Vol. CXLI No. 2 | November 13, 2024

## Student life

### Nebraska athletes highlight gray area in NIL deals

Grace Sunseri  
*opinion editor*

Six University of Nebraska athletes have recently appeared in a political ad. It was shocking at first, but there is nothing wrong with athletes representing their beliefs in political ads.

The Nebraska athletes were voicing support for Initiative 434, the initiative that would codify Nebraska's current abortion ban that disallows the procedure after the first trimester, with exceptions.

Of the six female athletes, five were softball players — Jordy Bahl, Abbie Squier, Malia Thoms, Lauren Camenzind and Hannah Camenzind, and one was a volleyball player, Rebekah Allick.

The first thought that came to my mind when I saw this ad was: "Is this even allowed?!" This was the first time I had ever seen a college athlete in a political ad, but also the first time I had seen them possibly accepting campaign money for these ads.

But this is not the first time this has happened.

Athletes have only been able to accept NIL, which stands for name, image likeness, deals to profit off their athletic ability since 2021.

This is all uncharted territory for many and it is still odd to see college athletes in big-brand ads. Add the political tension of the country on top of that, and it is a complete gray area.

In the past two years, individual states have begun passing laws that set regulations and rules for the athletes making these deals. In Nebraska, the law that set our regulations into place was LB962: "Nebraska Fair Pay to Play Act."

One notable amendment to the law was, "May be prohibited from entering into contracts inconsistent with the educational mission of the school."

This wording alone shows how we are in the "wild west" of college athletes making money. Wording like this requires a massive amount of interpretation that could cause later issues, possibly legal ones, between students and administration.

In June 2022, just months after NIL deals were allowed for college athletes, the first political deal with an athlete happened.

Dresser Winn, former quarterback for the University of Tennessee at Martin, signed an NIL deal with Colin Johnson, who was running for district attorney in Tennessee's 27th District.

Winn worked directly with Johnson's campaign, and he wore a shirt endorsing Johnson at a football camp he hosted.

During this election cycle, two University of Montana soccer players endorsed their incumbent senator, Jon Tester, a Democrat, in his reelection bid. The women endorsed Tester on their respective social media accounts and received payment for it. The NIL deals were being offered around the campus and ranged anywhere from \$400 to \$2,400.

These women did not work with Tester's campaign directly, but the deal came through Opendorse, which markets itself as "The best deal marketplace for athletes..." The platform reached out on behalf of Montana Together, a political organization.

In the day following the ad featuring Cornhusker athletes, it was unclear if these athletes were paid to be in this ad. While this would not have been first instance of an NCAA athlete accepting NIL money in a political race, it is one of the very few.

Bahl later clarified that they were not paid to be in the ad.

"Imagine people seeing a commercial done with 6 young women supporting a pro-life movement, and immediately jumping to the conclusion that we were paid to take part." Bahl said in a posting on X. "None of us received a penny! We just aren't afraid to take a stand and protect life!"

When the NCAA eventually directly tackles this issue, they should allow athletes to make money off their political ideas, even if these ideas do not align with the university.

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When the NCAA eventually directly tackles this issue, they should allow athletes to make money off their political ideas, even if these ideas do not align with the university.

### School spirit should not be embarrassing

Becca Rock  
*chief copy editor*

Central follows a long tradition of creating a sense of school spirit among Centralites, but in recent years, there has been a lack of student participation from a large portion of the student body in school activities and events.

While many students are involved with extracurricular activities, sports, clubs and jobs, I fear that a large number of students lack any motivation to be proud of our school and bring spirit to extracurricular activities and sports games.

This past football season, Central has made the playoffs, which has not been done since the 2015 season. Typically, as a team gets better one would see an increase in student section participation, but our student section does not show how hard our football team has worked, especially at away games. School spirit makes our teams play better no matter the circumstances.

I don't think it is that we have no school spirit, but that an overwhelming majority do not want to participate in school events or do not have access to the events.

When Central shows our school spirit we show it loudly and proudly, but I think we need to grow this spirit even more, through the next year.

During spirit weeks I hope that we have more of the student body showing up in full support of the themes. In previous years people have been embarrassed to follow the themes during Spirit Week because most people do not participate. But, participating should not be embarrassing; it should be largely supported.

I hope people will not view going to school dances as boring and not a fun experience, because what makes events fun is when people show up in support of the event.

I wish for more people to support our theatre and arts departments by supporting the musical and play. I hope people show up to the girls and boys basketball games, in full support by cheering loud.

I wish for more people to join clubs and sports. By getting involved not only does your high school experience become more fun but Central will be more connected as a community and not just a school.



The student section cheers during a home football game during the season.

BRADLEY SMITH | The Register

# Do students prefer Halloween or Christmas?

Bri Martinez  
staff writer

Christmas and Halloween are polar opposite holidays and the students at Central agree. When it comes down to what holiday students like better, the students overwhelmingly prefer Christmas with 71% preferring Christmas and 29% preferring Halloween, based on the results of a survey of 78 central students.

When it came down to what holiday had the better candy, Halloween won 82% to 18%, which was expected because Halloween is about dressing up and trick or treating for candy.

Although when students were asked what holiday has better food, Christmas won this one in a landslide, 96% to 4%, making the big difference in the two holidays being what we eat. Seems like for Halloween we eat sweets, while for Christmas people make meals.

Decorations can go either way for this question, but all in all Christmas won this one 62% to 38%. Seems like students love the Christmas atmosphere.

Students were asked what kind of events for Halloween they like with most answers being trick or treating, dressing up, haunted houses, pumpkin patches, and carving and painting pumpkins. All this sounds so fun!

When asked about favorite Christmas-themed events, most student responses were Christmas feast, opening presents, decorating for Christmas, shopping, and being with friends and family.

The next question asked students was to make the best case on why one holiday is better than the other. Students who chose Christmas all mostly said that they enjoyed being around friends and family.

"Christmas is more exciting, there's more time with family than Halloween, and Christmas has the better aesthetic," Junior Steven Dickerson said.

Another reason students said they chose Christmas is better is simply because we don't have school. "I just think Christmas is better because we get a long break," Ilia Luen-gas said.

When students chose Halloween the majority of them said because of dressing up, getting spooked and getting free candy.

"I think Halloween is better because you can be whoever you want without judgment that day," Nirvana Croffer said.

"Halloween you get to dress up, get candy, scare or be scared. I love the rush of adrenaline," Leila Evan's said.

Some say that it is free from the stress of Christmas. "Halloween is better because it's free from the pressures of religion and family gatherings that make Christmas stressful," Jared Ganley said.

Halloween isn't all about the trick or treating and dressing up. The origin of Halloween dates back over 2,000 years ago when the ancient Celts held a festival of Samhain that was held in the area that we now know as Ireland, United Kingdom, and northern France.

A concept of Christmas has been celebrated for years by Europeans. People would always have celebrations in the middle of winter that celebrated light and birth. In Scandinavia the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21st through January. Later on the churches chose the date December 25th the celebration of the birth of Jesus.



CHLOE SCHWARTZ | The Register

## Students deserve Halloween and DOTD off

Ethan Hughes  
staff writer

Halloween and Day of The Dead should NOT be schooling days in Omaha Public Schools (OPS).

Most holidays in the U.S. are celebrated throughout the day. Christmas, for example, is an entire day, as are Independence Day and Thanksgiving.

Halloween, though, is a day (or night) where children stay awake far past normal times and receive candy and treats for fun. Day of the Dead, similarly, is a Latin-American/Hispanic day (or night) where children stay awake far, far past normal times and honor deceased loved ones.

So why are these back-to-back days – on which sleep is vastly lowered, as argued by The Sleep Foundation -- school days in OPS?

While the argument could be made that only elementary school students need the days off, this also ignores how many people spend Halloween and Day of the Dead ample amounts of time celebrating these holidays. Most starkly for high schoolers, Halloween parties are hard to attend when the next day is a full day of schooling.

There's also the downside for teachers. Teachers already have low sleep rates – according to one study by the American School Health Association, 43% of teachers in America get less than six hours of sleep per night. Teachers often have to stay up late at night, and it is unfair to expect them to have to deal with sleep-deprived, sugar-charged children, after at least one night where the teacher may not have gotten as much sleep as usual – which already tends to be very little – due to the nature of nighttime holidays. If they had these days off, they would

have more time to prepare for November and would not be forced to deal with uncooperative kids.

While I personally believe that Halloween should be a day off so parents and children can prepare for the night, I don't insist on it. I firmly state, however, that at least Day of the Dead should not be a school day.

Day of the Dead, while primarily a nighttime holiday, often features a long day of preparations, including cooking and event arrangement. It would be far easier for adults if they had the ability to get assistance from their children. As a bonus, if the day was indeed taken off, teachers would not have the "sleep-deprived children" problem nearly as much as Day of the Dead just so happens to be the day after Halloween.

There is also the added fact that Day of the Dead is a Latin-American/Hispanic holiday. It seems odd that a couple of holidays that are American-only receive time off – such as Thanksgiving, which gets an entire week – but an important holiday for the largest minority at not just Central (35.2% of students), but the whole district (around 40%) of students, is just not represented, not even with a shortened school day. I think that giving Day of the Dead off would show that OPS cares about its Hispanic and Latin-American students. Plus, many students who celebrate Day of the Dead also celebrate Halloween the prior night. It seems off that these students should have to go to school on two days in a row many of them would consider holidays.

Giving OPS students Halloween and at least Day of the Dead off holds only benefits for all the students and teachers, and there is no reason to not do so immediately.

## Climate change is only getting worse

Aubri Kolterman  
staff writer

Eighty degrees in October? 3 hurricanes in a row? The Sahara Desert flooding, and flowers blooming in Antarctica? This is not just a 'coincidence.' Climate change is real, and it is an issue that needs to be addressed by the government sooner than later. The climate clock is ticking, and this is a global emergency that we must do something about.

Climate change is the long-term shift in temperatures and weather. These shifts mostly are caused by human activities such as burning fossil fuels but can also be caused naturally. According to academic.oup.com, Human caused carbon dioxide emissions and greenhouse gases have said to be the leading cause of climate change.

It may not be too late, however I do think we can all

start doing something now about this to eliminate causes to the problem, which will not start until people realize this is a huge issue, a possibly world ending issue.

Global warming is causing drastic changes in our environment, such as hotter temperatures, increased drought, warmer sea temperatures, oceans rising, loss of species, food insecurity and health risks.

Severe storms have caused neighborhoods to get wiped out, as the country saw in the most recent deadly hurricane, Hurricane Milton- which was a very severe devastating hurricane that happened in Florida in early October of 2024, becoming one of the most intense Atlantic hurricanes on the Gulf of Mexico. Less than two weeks before this was another hurricane named Helene.

This is not normal, and hurricanes should not be hap-

pening this often, nor be this severe, causing life threatening damage, and tons of people to lose their lives.

Summer of 2024 was the hottest northern hemisphere extra tropical summer in 2000 years, according to academic.oup.com. Is anybody concerned yet? Not to mention, ocean acidity and heat content are both at record extremes, which I believe has also taken a key role on the hurricanes happening. Global Daily Temperatures are at record levels.

Global warming is happening faster than any scientist expected it too, I mean it seems like each year there is something horrific that happens that is related to the effects from climate change, and it does not seem to get any better. According to Oxford Academic, "We have now brought the planet into climatic conditions never witnessed by us our prehistoric relatives."



# arts & culture

THE REGISTER

Vol. CXLI No. 2 | November 13, 2024



Left: Brian Joseph poses with an old article he wrote during his time on The Register staff. Right: Joseph's new book on sex trafficking in Las Vegas.

Aubri Kolterman | The Register

## Central alum explores the dark reality of sex trafficking in new book

Paula Gutiérrez Martínez  
arts & culture editor

Sex trafficking is often portrayed by American pop culture as something that only occurs in the seedy underbelly of society. Victims are presented as foreign women desperate to escape the perils of their situations, and traffickers are depicted as powerful, glamorous men with influence.

According to a Central alum who just published a book on the subject, this portrayal is almost completely wrong.

News reporter and investigative journalist Brian Joseph set out to shatter these stereotypes and reveal the harsh realities of domestic trafficking in the United States in his book "Vegas Concierge," which chronicles over a decade's worth of investigative work.

Released on Oct. 1, "Vegas Concierge" uses public and private records, as well as first-person accounts, to show how intricate sex work networks span luxury hotel rooms, police departments and even newsrooms. Joseph set out to expose how law enforcement trips up, and how self-interest compromised some of Nevada's biggest news organizations.

Joseph hopes his book can serve as a starting point for a nuanced conversation about domestic sex trafficking.

"My belief is that pop culture has skewed the way that American society, particularly policymakers in Washington and in our state capitals, look at this issue and simply do not have a clear picture of what is going on in the United States," he said.

Joseph addresses many sensitive topics in "Vegas Concierge," including corruption, media ethics and, of course, sex trafficking, which require a more in-depth approach. This approach is what forms the foundation of the book. Writing about sex trafficking victims is already a difficult endeavor, especially when they have been mistreated for so much of their lives. Joseph spent a significant amount of time during his investigation establishing trust and building relationships with the victims he spoke to.

The Central alum, who graduated in 1999, first became interested in journalism after joining The Register. Joseph ended up taking journalism on a whim his sophomore year after the advisor, Matt Deabler, spoke to his English class.

"The advisor was talking about the ethics of journalism and as a journalist you had to tell the truth, even if you were the only person that knew the truth. And I just remember sitting there in my desk going, that's something I could really get behind," Joseph said.

"For some people, their world in high school is the football team, or the basketball team. My world was The Register."

It wasn't until college Joseph discovered his love for investigative journalism. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri, Columbia, which has one of the best journalism programs in the U.S. Missouri is also where Investigative Reporters and Editors, a nonprofit organization focused on investigative journalism, is located.

"I have done countless breaking news stories over the course of my life. That has never satisfied me nearly as much as long, in-depth work; getting to really know my sources, getting to really know an issue, and the taking the time to craft something in a meaningful way," Joseph said.

What's next for Joseph is a mystery to him. Although he would love to continue working in journalism, he doesn't see it in his future. He lost his job at the Las Vegas Review-Journal over the length of time his investigation into sex trafficking was taking and disagreements about whether to identify trafficking survivors and victims, and the split is a subject in the book.

"It is no secret that the news industry is struggling mightily these days," Joseph said.

Based on the Pew Research Center's analysis of financial statements from publicly traded newspaper companies, the total estimated advertising revenue for the newspaper industry in 2022 was \$9.8 billion. This is down approximately 68% from \$30.6 billion in 1992.

Joseph noted that the news industry's current business model leaves little place for in-depth pieces. "The basic economics of journalism is that journalism takes time and money to do it well," Joseph said. In fact, he spent \$3,000 of his own money on documents for the book.

In a digital age where news is more accessible than ever, many people now expect their news to be disseminated faster, and in real time. Reporters are expected to produce multiple stories a day, often with quick, surface-level reporting.

"That's not the kind of work I want to do with my life. I want to do work that's meaningful and has meaning to the general public," Joseph said.

## New DECA location offers more than just cookies



Michaela Kavanagh runs The Corner Store. Whitman Rutledge | The Register

Gaby Antúnez  
staff writer

The Central DECA store has moved to the courtyard and has upgraded to selling more than just cookies.

The Corner Store is a student based enterprise – students in business classes who were also a part of DECA were offered the opportunity to use the skills that they acquired in class to efficiently run their own business.

DECA plays a big part in the sales, by helping pitch ideas while also being a part of the staff. The profit of the sales goes to DECA in order to help them offset student fees and allow the members to have more opportunities and travel the country.

Many steps were taken for the expansion of the Corner Store. It was originally located in a small office on the third floor second side, but now they are located in the courtyard, as well as in room 326.

Senior London Dunsen helped play a big part in the move. She wrote up the business plan, pitched it, and did plenty of research to help get to the point where they are. She has been a member of DECA for three years and wanted to help continue the tradition.

DECA has sold cookies for a long time. "DECA sold cookies when my mom went here and that was in '98!" Dunsen said when asked over email.

She wanted to help DECA while also expanding it, to help not only herself gain more experience, but also to help others who will continue the tradition in the future.

The changes were very big, so they had to promote the change a lot more.

"We have been promoting on the Corner Store Instagram and on the Central DECA Instagram to advertise the change. Plus, word of mouth marketing, word moves fast in high school," Dunsen said.

Taylor Grennan, one of the DECA advisors along with Michaela Kavanagh, provide any help needed, but make sure that the Corner Store is student ran. Grennan doesn't regret the change of location at all and is proud of how well the students are adjusting to the change.

"We sell out every day and sell double the amount we did last year," Grennan said. The change of location not only helped them gain experience, but also helped the business grow.

Dunsen believes the change was good and needed to help stand for what the Corner Store was even made for, which is "...to be run like any other business and selling only cookies wouldn't give us that same experience," according to Dunsen.

The Corner Store had a big expansion, but they hope that future DECA students help continue the legacy. "Eventually, we will want to sell more items, such as clothing," Grennan said.

# Upcoming holiday events around the city

Grace Sunseri  
opinion editor

As the holiday season approaches, people are looking for ways to get festive. Omaha has no shortage of holiday events around the city to get you in the holiday spirit.

### Thanksgiving

1. Vala's Thanksgiving Market – Vala's knows Halloween, but they also know dessert. Dessert preparation can be stressful and extremely time-consuming during the already hectic Thanksgiving preparations. So, for eight years, Vala's has opened for the Tuesday and Wednesday before Thanksgiving for a pop-up market. The Market is in their exit barn/gift shop. Anything from pies to soft pretzels to cinnamon-glazed pecans are available for purchase. Online reservations for specific treats can be made for pick-up on one of those two days.

2. Omaha Turkey Trot – The tradition of running a 5K race before thanksgiving dinner is not unique to Omaha, but the city

has hosted one for eight years. The race begins at 9 a.m. in the Old Market and has a one hour and 20-minute course limit. Every runner is given a piece of merchandise and a donut at the finish line. The cost often fluctuates with discounts, but an adult race starts at \$60 per person.

### Holidays

1. Christmas at Union Station – The tradition of a large Christmas tree in Omaha's former Union Station, now the Durham Museum, is a long-running one. The tradition dates back to the 1930s but went on hiatus until 1975 when a tree was once again brought into Union Station. The tree is harvested by local families, and there are concerts, shopping events and even Santa has been featured in the event in the past. It runs from Nov. 29-Jan. 12, and tickets for ages 12 and up are \$15.

2. Boys Town Chanukah Parade — While this is a relatively recent tradition, the parade emphasizes Boys Town's inclusive nature. In the past, the parade has consisted of a parade of cars, with rooftop Menorahs throughout Boys Town. The event usu-

ally takes place on the last night of Chanukah, which during this holiday season is Jan. 2, 2025. The dates have yet to be released for this year.

### Arts and Performances

1. "A Christmas Carol" – The Omaha Community Playhouse puts on an annual production of "A Christmas Carol." It runs from Nov. 22 to Dec. 22 and has a show every Wednesday at 7 p.m., Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and two shows on Sundays at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. The tickets cost \$45, but students can get tickets for as little as \$10 with a valid student ID, for select shows only.

2. "The Nutcracker" – The 2024 season will be The American Midwest Ballet's, formerly Ballet Nebraska, 15th time putting on this timeless Christmas classic at the Orpheum Theater in the Old Market. The cast consists of students and professional dancers from the company. The show runs on Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 14 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 15 at 2:00 p.m.

# Best ice cream in KC steps into the Big O

Bri Martinez  
staff writer

Kansas City favorite has made its way to Omaha. Betty Rae's Ice Cream opened in Kansas City in 2015. The shop grew in popularity and was voted best ice cream in Kansas City year after year. This September, Betty Rae's opened a new location in Omaha around Aksarben village. The shop has a vibrant coral and blue color scheme that makes you even more excited to get a taste of ice cream.

Betty Rae's makes everyone feel included. I brought my mom, who is lactose intolerant, to try the ice cream with me, and they had a variety of options for those who are allergic to gluten and dairy. They also provided lactase pills.

I came in an hour before closing and stayed for 45 minutes. Surprisingly, there was still a good amount of people walking in and out as closing time approached. The service was amazing; I only saw one girl serving ice cream, and she was very welcoming. She offered customers a variety of samples, and even went as far as to offer the lactase pills.

I got a sampler flight that came with one scoop of six different ice cream flavors. What surprised me was that my favorite flavor had to be the gluten-free blood orange cream. The flavor was sweet and refreshing.

They had some wacky flavors as well. My family and I tried goat cheese, and we were all pleasantly surprised. If you've ever had goat milk, you know it tastes like a farm, yet I don't know how farm can be a flavor, it's just the best way to describe how goat milk tastes like a goat smells. It's a taste that can only be masked by adding chocolate. If you're into trying new things, I would not pass on sampling this flavor.

The only flavor that disappointed me was crème brûlée. I tried so hard to love this flavor, as it is usually my favorite. However, it tasted like black coffee. And, yes, I know crème brûlée is burned at the top to melt the sugar, but this ice cream only had that burnt top flavor.

The mango sorbet has to be the best dairy-free option. It had a refreshing taste, like a freshly peeled mango.

The ice cream never lacked mix-ins because here were so many toppings mixed in. For example, every bite the cereal and milk flavor had fruity pebble cereal chunks, making it my favorite regular flavor.

If you're having a night out with your friends in Aksarben, I would recommend trying this location, as there is a flavor for anyone and everyone, as well as ice cream sandwiches!

At Betty Rae's there is a taste for everyone.



Bri Martinez | The Register

### ACROSS

- 1 A sender's signature
- 5 Michigan, Ontario
- 6 43,560 square feet
- 7 Not this

### DOWN

- 1 A dwelling in Britain
- 2 Short for "Rachel"
- 3 Gumbo staple
- 4 Rally

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# Seeing Chappell Roan worth the journey

Arisa Lattison  
editor-in-chief

In late July I learned that one of my favorite artists was coming to Council Bluffs on Oct. 3: Chappell Roan. When my friend messaged me asking if I wanted to go together, I was ecstatic.

There were two days of presale, followed by the general sale. The first couple days, my friend and I joined the queue for tickets 30 minutes early and waited in anticipation, to no avail. They sold out each time. We lost hope, but nevertheless tried again on the final day. We logged into the ticket queue on over five devices combined and tried again. This time, there were still tickets, but they were resale and that had quickly come to be over \$300 per ticket. Way out of our budgets, we resigned.

I didn't think I was going to get another chance to see Roan after that. Shortly after tickets sold out, Roan posted on her story about working to make tickets accessible again, as most had been bought by bots and resellers. I was not optimistic considering the prices only continued to rise.

However, a week before her concert, I saw someone post two words on their Instagram Notes: "Chappell Roan!!" This spurred me to check the website one last time, and what I saw shocked me. For the first time in months, prices had dropped below \$300 and were sitting at \$140. I quickly notified my friend and stayed vigilant.

I assumed that this sudden drop in price had part to do with Roan resolving the bot situation, as well as her having cancelled two of her recent concerts. People thought she was going to end up cancelling her performance in Council Bluffs, but I took a chance. By that Tuesday I had secured tickets. Sadly, the friend I was supposed to go with couldn't make it anymore. I ended up asking around to see who else was going and we threw together a group in 24 hours.

The day of the concert, we met up at 5:30 p.m. and we started our drive to Westfair Amphitheater. However, we ran into a traffic jam. As we slowly inched past cars, we saw people dressed up for the concert and knew we were headed to the same place. At first, we had been so confident that we would get there early, but by the time we arrived it was 7:47 p.m. The venue wasn't as packed as we thought it would be, so we were able to get pretty close to the stage—right in front of the fence for the pit.

Just as we settled in, the drag queens that were opening for Roan made their appearance. Roan chooses local drag queens for her performances, and this show they were Domita Sanchez, Daphne Danger and Omaha's Mimosa Savage. They performed to pop and electronic dance music, and it was all met with positive feedback and applause.

The stage dimmed once more, and they played music on the speakers while we waited for Roan. About 30 minutes in, a note appeared on the screen on stage. Roan had written an announce-

ment saying that the concert was to be delayed due to traffic and she wanted as many people to be able to get here as possible. I was a little upset, but a few minutes couldn't hurt. At one point, people started sitting down on the lawn.

Finally, at 9:30 p.m., the music stopped, people in the pit started screaming, and the rest of us scrambled to get up. Roan appeared in a matter of seconds and began with the song "Feminomenon," followed by "Naked in Manhattan," "Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl" and "Love Me Anyway." By this point, my friends and I were shocked that she hadn't stopped to talk with us and just blew through the songs. If she kept this up, the concert would be over in a matter of minutes.

Roan continued with "Love Me Anyway" and "Picture You," in which she embraced a mic stand with a wig on it as she sang to it endearingly. I thought this was a nice touch, as the song is about Roan not being able to forget someone that meant so much to her in the past, hence the reminiscing. She also sang a cover of "Barracuda" by Heart, which has become one of my favorite songs today. It was quite different from her normal genre, but it showcased her vocals very nicely.

Then, it was the moment everyone was waiting for—as soon as the starting notes for "HOT TO GO!" began to play, more people chimed up and began singing along. People were screaming in front of me as they joined hands and screamed the lyrics. I felt as though a lot of people were only there for her more popular songs because the crowd considerably quieted down during "After Midnight."

When the song ended, she took a moment to talk to the crowd and everything she said made up for everything she hadn't up until now. Roan dedicated her words to all the queer people in the Midwest and made sure everyone knew they deserved to be loved regardless of their orientation or identity, regardless of what others around them think. People around me were getting emotional following her message, but they didn't have much time before she played "Coffee."

Compared to her more upbeat songs, "Coffee" was mellow and melancholic. About a third of the way in, people started putting up their flashlights and I followed suit. The venue was drowned in lights, and it was a beautiful sight. She transitioned into "Casual," and then paused to talk once more.

"Subway" came next. This song was a new song that she had yet to release. The crowd was silent as she sang. "Subway" was about not being able to get over someone, going from lovers to mere strangers despite all that they shared before. It was a very relatable song, and resembled the message she conveyed in "Casual."

The last four songs were well known, and the venue once again exploded into sound as everyone joined in for "Red Wine Supernova," "Good Luck Babel!," "My Kink is Karma," and "California."



Arisa Lattison | The Register

Then, she disappeared off stage, and people started piling out, most likely to beat the rush. My friends and I got closer to the fence as people left and we talked about how short the show had ran. It was only 10:45 p.m.; she had barely performed for over an hour.

Just when we were about to leave, the stage lit up again and Roan came on a final time for "Pink Pony Club." We sang our hearts out as we knew this would probably be the last song, and a disco ball illuminated where Roan stood.

Roan's concert was an event that I will remember forever. Originally, I had thought I wouldn't even be able to get tickets due to the price, but it was a last second miracle. She had skipped over "Guilty Pleasure" and "Kaleidoscope," but overall, it was a phenomenal experience. Exiting the parking lot, however, was not. That day, I secured a special memory, a Chappell Roan tour t-shirt and the ability to be an assertive driver.



## Tale as old as time...



Central performing arts students displayed their talents Nov. 1 and 2 during the fall musical, "Beauty and the Beast." The story followed Belle as she falls in love with a cursed prince. There were three performances, one on Nov. 1 and two on Nov. 2. All photos were by Adriana Aguilar of the O-Book.

# Strongest fighting game characters of all time

Isaac Percival-Aizenburg

staff writer

## 10. Ultra Instinct Goku - "Dragon Ball FighterZ"

To start off our list we have Ultra Instinct Goku, or UI Goku for short, who has some amazing tools that allow him to execute his gameplan extremely well. However, it was not always like this. Before the August 2024 patch, UI Goku was considered a weaker character. The developers saw this and decided to improve every aspect of the character, making him one of, if not the strongest characters in a game full of contenders.

## 9. Chun-Li - "Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike"

Chun-Li was the best character in 3rd Strike by far. In terms of Oki, damage, mix ups and neutral, she was on top and there was no close second. As a result, she possesses no losing matchups, or how good a character is at fighting another character and cemented herself in fighting game history.

## 8. Testament - "Guilty Gear XX Accent Core Plus R"

Having access to some of the largest and fastest buttons in the game, Testament can keep you at a distance and use his nets to trap you on approach, making him by far the best zoner (long range character) in the game. His nets not only allow him to play safe, but use them to access his infinite in corner, instantly securing the round win.

## 7. J.P. Polnareff - "JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Heritage for the Future"

In HFTF, the top-of-the-tier list completely top-pled anyone under them because of their insane strength and mixes, making the opponent guess between a high or low attack. Polnareff is no exception.

## 6. Sol Badguy - "Guilty Gear Strive"

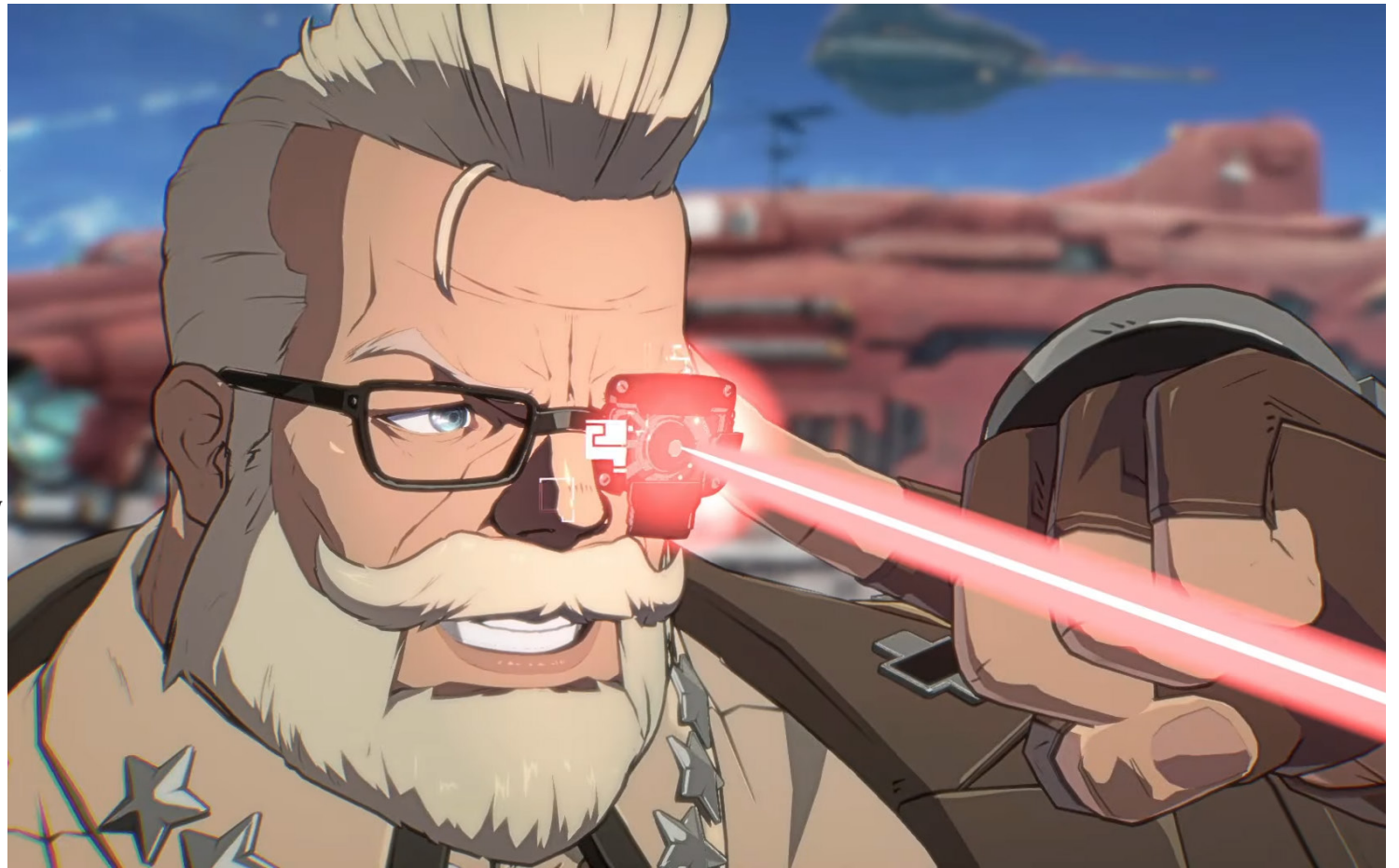
Sol is a Strike/Throw (a mix up where you make the opponent guess between a hit or a grab) character possessing incredible damage and unreadable mixups. Sol has sat in the upper echelons of the cast ever since the game debuted. Recent optimization from players like Gauro, the best Italian player, have successfully secured his spot in the top five.

## 5. Goldlewis Dickinson - "Guilty Gear Strive"

Guilty Gear is a series known for its fast and aggressive top tier characters. Goldlewis has a slow and methodical game plan, cashing in on massive damage when he spots a gap. To avoid being put back into this slower style of play, he has access to one of the most insane Oki (short for Okizeme, which means using a move while your opponent is knocked down to reset your pressure) moves in the game. Thunderbird is a small slow moving drone projectile that will approach the opponent and hit multiple times before disappearing, allowing him to reset his forceful pressure game and repeat this cycle.

## 4. Akuma - "Tekken 7"

Akuma is traditionally a streetfighter character, however, he makes a guest appearance in Tekken 7 and completely steals the show. The main aspects of why he rules this roster is the fact that he has access to a traditional streetfighter super bar and has access to overdrives and supers, something that Tekken characters traditionally lack, meaning he has the strongest kit in the game by far and has no losing matchups.



Goldlewis from the game "Guilty Gear: Strive" makes the author's list of top 10 fighting game characters. Photo Courtesy of ARC SYSTEM WORKS

## 3. Steve - "Super Smash Bros. Ultimate"

Steve can build his own platforms in a platform fighter. Letting him turtle with walls or render recoveries useless for free by building a ceiling. He can upgrade his tools allowing higher damage and earlier kills. His powered rail minercart kills can grab and set up for an unblockable kill confirm. His powered rail minercart kills incredibly early, he has insane ledge guard, insane damage (iron and above), can get his resources quickly and can defend in a way that other characters can't get in. His smash attacks kill early. Anvil is a great kill at ledge. All of these contribute to solidifying his spot as the king of SSBU.

## 2. Johnny - "Guilty Gear Xrd REV 2"

The main aspect of GGXRD people remember to this day is simply Johnny. This character is busted in so many ways that he is the centerpiece of the entire game. Many people argue that Johnny's mist finer combo tool is the best move in a fighting game, no exceptions. He has access to unblockables and extremely ambiguous 50/50 mixes that make it impossible to keep him outside of your defenses.

## 1. Noriaki Kakyoin - "JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Heritage for the Future"

Kakyoin possesses some of the grimmest disjoints and incredible Oki in fighting game history. Possessing cross map mix-ups, unblockables and the crown jewel of his kit: Kak nets. Kak nets allow him to freeze the opponent in place and get a full combo which will often lead to a TOD – which stands for touch of death, meaning knocking out your opponent from full health to zero health without dropping your combo – making it essentially impossible to beat Kakyoin in any scenarios and solidifying his spot at the top of my list as the best fighting game character in history.

# 'Hogwarts Legacy' not worth the controversy

Charli Tobin

staff writer

Avalanche Software's "Hogwarts Legacy" was a controversial game that came out on staggered release dates. "Hogwarts Legacy" is based on the popular book series "Harry Potter" and takes place in 1890 in the United Kingdom.

This comes with the baggage of also being related to the controversial author J.K. Rowling, which made many people hesitant to buy the game, as Rowling has made many transphobic comments. This also led to the game getting "review bombed" and being unfairly criticized due to J.K. Rowling, despite attempts from Avalanche Software to distance themselves from Rowling.

But to give it a fair chance, The Register wanted to separate the politics from the game and revisit the game itself.

The game is graphically beautiful. The landscape and Hogwarts Castle are breathtaking sights Harry Potter fans will adore. Hogwarts truly embodies the magic of the game. The score is jaw-dropping, and hearing the music immerses you in certain moments, making you feel like a part of the world. The moment when you first walk into the castle and hear the iconic theme by John Williams is magical.

The voice acting for the main character, though, sounds robotic and almost AI-generated. Even after being out for a year, this problem has not been fixed. This should have been fixed after several updates, and it alienates the player from the story.

The story itself is boring, as nothing happens until the very end. The tutorial takes forever to get through before you can finally explore the full world. The side quests don't work; they are each meant to expand a different part of the game—you work with teachers to get spells, collaborate with classmates to get curses, or partner with house elves to get decorations for your hub—but they feel disconnected and don't affect the story at all.

The story itself is filled with flaws and political issues. The main villains are goblins who are rebelling against wizards because they are discriminated against and are seen as lesser than by wizards. They are the bad guys we are supposed to kill without thought.

Speaking of combat, the gameplay in combat is fast-paced and action-packed in the beginning. By the end of the game,

and even the middle, you have access to spells that can easily win fights on harder difficulties. The puzzles are very repetitive and don't take much thought to finish. The puzzles also slow the game down at times because of how tedious and slow they are.

Overall, the game is fine at best. The story is clunky, caring about the characters is hard, and the gameplay is repetitive and boring. The game is heavily carried by being the first open world "Harry Potter" game and the fantasy of Hogwarts Castle. But beyond that, it falls short to better games in its genre, such as "Elden Ring," "Baldur's Gate 3," and "Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic."



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## MITCHELL TAKES OVER

### New head Eagle moves into role after two seasons as assistant; team eyes return to state tournament

Katie Besancon  
digital editor

Born and raised in Omaha, Central's new girls' basketball head coach Nicole Mitchell is ready to take to the court.

After two seasons with the Eagles as assistant coach, Mitchell has officially moved up to head coach after Mike Kroupa left the position following last season. She believes she is ready to take the team back to the state tournament in Lincoln and hopes they can win it all.

Mitchell grew up in the sport, playing basketball in both middle and high school. She didn't begin coaching until fresh out of college when the Boys and Girls Club asked if she needed a job and challenged her with the task of creating a basketball program.

She knew nothing about coaching basketball, only knowing how to play it at the time. Mitchell created the Lady Jaguars program and began her coaching career.

Mitchell proceeded to coach at the club level, then moving to Omaha Public Schools where she would coach at King Science and Technology Middle School. She also held positions coaching at Benson and Northwest, and later took the position of head coach at Bryan. She joined Central's coaching staff in 2022 at the request of Kroupa.

"I think Mitchell moving up to head coach is going to be good because it's another perspective from someone who played basketball," senior Assata Lytle said.

With a new coach comes new goals for the Eagles. Mitchell's plan is plain and simple: "Make sure that we are preparing young ladies and develop them not only on the court but off the court, being disciplined in the classroom, and outside the classroom and to go to Lincoln and win state," she said.

The goals for the team not only resonate with Mitchell but with the players and what they are hoping to see for this upcoming season. "We want to play together as one and keep a positive attitude, we are a very small team and playing through that adversity and getting through anything is important," Lytle said.

"But if nothing else I always tell the girls everybody is not



Nicole Mitchell stands outside Central in May 2024.

Photo Courtesy of CENTRAL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

going to play at the next level, but you will walk out with some sort of plan for life out of high school," Mitchell said.

The Eagles made it to the state tournament last year as the eighth seed in Class A, losing in the first round to eventual state champions Millard West.

After the successful season the Eagles had last season and the goal to reach the state tournament in Lincoln again, there is lingering pressure not only on the players but on Mitchell as her first year as head coach.

With a new coach also means a change of dynamic on the team.

"She's a coach that is going to discipline you the way that you need to be and make you accountable," Lytle said. "She is also going to let us play, she has known us longer than we have been in high school so she will help and guide us more

individually."

There has been a fire lit underneath the girls' basketball team because of some circulating doubts around if their season will be like the last, and if they are going to be taking it all at the end of the season.

"Anytime you have a transition and coaching change, and you lose some of your top players, there is always going to be that doubt, but I know what I am doing," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said there is always work that can be done to get better and the team knows that well. They have been conditioning for the last 12 weeks to ensure they are in peak shape to start this season off strong on Nov. 18.

Mitchell hopes that the girls on her team take away with is they know who they are, they know to be themselves, and that it is okay to be different.

## Carina Hernandez becomes first Central girls golfer since 2019 to qualify for state tournament

Hattie Moeller  
news editor

Senior Carina Hernandez made history this season as the first girls' golfer from Central to qualify for the state tournament since 2019.

Competing in a two-day tournament, Hernandez represented Central at the NSAA Class A tournament, held at Riverside Golf Club in Grand Island, Nebraska. She qualified in the "Individual Differential" category, with a score of 31.23. She was seeded sixth out of eight in this category.

Not only was she the single representative of Central, but she was one of just two golfers to represent Omaha Public Schools. The other was Faith Koranda of Westview High School.

At the Riverside golf course, Hernandez played 18 competitive holes, through tree-lined fairways, and manicured greens "that challenge amateur and professional golfers alike," according to the golf club.

Facing a new course, and a high competition field, Her-

andez finished 58th out of 75 golfers in the state competition.

For Hernandez, the state tournament was a combination of excitement, nerves, and a chance to compete against the best girls' golfers in Nebraska. The morning of her first day, she was overcome with pride and pressure. She wanted to compete well and be a good representative of the Central golf program.

After stepping onto the green, Hernandez recalls, "the realization hit that it was me as the single representative."

State qualification was the culmination of hundreds of hours at driving ranges, clinics, Central practices, and high school tournaments. Over the course of her high school career, Hernandez devoted off-seasons to improving the mechanics of her swing, distance of the ball off the tee and putting.

"It was really the work she put in for herself," Coach Brent Larson said. "And it wasn't just this year, she has had a strong work ethic for all four years at Central."

She entered her senior year telling herself, "I want to go to state. I got to go to state. I'll do whatever it takes," which

motivated her to work harder. It was that mental push, and the assistance of coaches Larson and Assistant Coach Hannah Monson, that helped her achieve a four-year goal.

Hernandez's golf career began alongside her father. He was considered the golfer of the family and encouraged Carina to join him as he played simple par-3 courses.

Then, the summer before her freshman year, she enrolled in the PGA Jr. League, which offers clinics to young golfers across Omaha.

In the beginning she was frustrated, and annoyed, as advanced golf skills would take more practice than she had previously thought. However, she enjoyed that the sport was individualized.

"You do better for yourself," Hernandez said.

As high school tryouts approached Hernandez had developed focus and determination, qualities that would define her high school career.

Throughout the 2024 season, Hernandez recorded three second-place finishes at the Central-Westview dual, the Bryan High Invitational, and the Lincoln Northeast Invitational.

#### Big changes could come to the NSAA p. 14

Central AD Rob Locken was one of many to submit a legislative proposal to the NSAA, aiming to change scheduling in Class A football.

#### Central student starts pickleball club p. 14

Senior Marcus Kane started the club to encourage more students to play the fast-growing sport.

#### Hockey is the new spot of growth for women in sports p. 15

Hockey is experiencing a period of growth for women in sports, as the NHL gets its first female assistant coach and the first professional women's hockey league starts.

#### Volleyball team loses 10 seniors and looks toward future p. 16

After this season, Central volleyball will lose almost their entire starting lineup, as coach Gass looks to underclassmen to fill next season's varsity roles.

# Vast changes could come to NSAA transfer rules for high school

Steven Dickerson  
sports editor

Adjustments may be coming to Nebraska's high school sports after years of calls for change. The changes could come in the midst of a chaotic time.

Benson cancelled its final two football games versus Lincoln Southeast and Millard South, Lincoln High forfeited the second half of its Oct. 10 football game against Millard South after being outscored in the first half 63-0, and Grand Island Senior High won't have a varsity girls basketball team this season. The turmoil has created a perfect environment for legislative proposals brewing in the Nebraska School Activities Association.

One legislative proposal, authored by Central's Athletic Director Rob Locken, would change the way scheduling for football in the NSAA's Omaha-based district two works and will get a first hearing at the Nov. 13 district two meeting.

Currently, Class A is divided into six districts, four of which have five teams and two of which have six teams. They are based on a two-year power point system, which averages the number of wins and points a team had over the previous two years.

"My rationale is to create a schedule that is balanced and equitable," Locken said.

His proposal would shift the number of Class A districts from the current six to four, keeping them based off the two-year power point system, and the winner of each district would automatically go to the playoffs. The top 12 teams out of the current 32 would also go to playoffs.

Teams will play seven assigned games, and two games based on their priority list of rivalries or out-of-state games, down from the limit of five priority games they can have now.

Each team would play two division one teams – teams that win more than 77% of their games – two division two teams (win between 55% and 77%), three division three teams (between 33% and 55%), and two division four teams (less than 33% of games).

Locken's proposal is rivaled by fellow district two Athletic Director Scott Anderson of Fremont's scheduling proposal.

Anderson's proposal would instead split Class A into two districts from the current six: A-1 and A-2, with the top 16 teams of Class A heading to A-1 and the bottom 16 teams heading to A-2, adjusting as necessary when Class A expands. The playoffs would be expanded to 24 teams and all teams in A-1 would automatically qualify. The remaining eight spots would be filled by the top A-2 teams.

It would cut one regular season game in week nine and instead use week nine to start playoffs and add bowl games for teams who don't make playoffs. Like Locken's proposal, it only allows schools to receive two priority games.

The NSAA identified limited flexibility of priority games and future growth concerns as disadvantages of Locken's plan but said it would create a more equitable and balanced schedule for all schools. They did not comment on Anderson's proposal; however, it faces similar disadvantages. NSAA remains unbiased on all proposals but does provide information and facts at district meetings.

"We do not endorse, we enforce," NSAA Assistant Director Jeffrey Stauss said of the numer-

ous legislative proposals. He said no matter the outcome of whether a proposal passes or not, the role of the NSAA is solely to ensure fair enforcement of rules and regulations and help solve athletic problems in Nebraska schools.

In the Lincoln-based district one, a proposal from Lincoln Northeast Athletic Director Matthew Uher would shake up the way transfers in Nebraska work and discourage increasingly common "super teams." Currently, students are given a 90-day exclusion from varsity sport eligibility if they change schools without a change in residence or if they do not verbalize a transfer by May 1 of the previous school year.

Uher's proposal would increase the 90-day exclusion to a 180-day exclusion, drastically impacting students' ability to freely transfer with no athletic repercussion while still allowing players plenty of time to transfer before May 1. It would hurt football out of all the sports the most, as it's played in the fall season.

Central has both struggled and benefitted from increasing transfers, losing many star players to other schools. Jaylen Lloyd transferred from Central to Westside in 2022 and is now playing wide receiver at Nebraska for Matt Rhule. DaShawn Prince, a key wide receiver and basketball player for Central in the 2023-24 school year, transferred to a dominant Millard South this year. "The transfers disenfranchise our [OPS] schools," Locken said of the transfer proposal. "There used to be a time when transferring meant you lost a year of [varsity] eligibility." Locken is open to the idea of switching the transfer rules, but he won't get a direct say unless it passes out of Lincoln's district one and then heads to the whole state.

Locken also understands that none of the proposed solutions will fix all the issues plaguing high school sports, rather just help to mediate the situation. He said the efforts being made currently won't necessarily benefit the bottom teams of Class A but will hope to improve support for middle-of-the-road teams in being competitive versus top teams.

It's unclear if Locken, Anderson, or Uher's proposals will advance out of their districts and then survive multiple votes at the state level in February and April. Regardless, Locken believes his proposal will spark needed attention to the many problems that need proactive solutions.

"I've had proposals fail in the past and some representatives aren't super receptive, but it at least draws conversation about bringing some form of change to the table," Locken said.

Locken's proposal has a real shot at passing this time, with the support of athletic directors from Kearney, Papillion-LaVista and Lincoln East. "The schedules are not well distributed, and I think all of us athletic directors agree on that."

The proposals will get their first hearings at the November NSAA district meetings, followed by further discussion and a district vote in January. The results of the meetings were not available at the time of print. If proposals advance past January, they will head to the Legislative Commission for review in February, followed by a statewide vote at the representative assembly in April. If a proposal passes in April, it will be adopted by the NSAA and then be ratified by schools if necessary.

Scheduling proposals notably have more urgency this year, as failure to pass this year means the schedule in district two will be made under the same system. If scheduling proposals pass, then they will be implemented in time for the two-year schedule that will be set next fall.



From left to right, seniors Marcus Kane, Juan Rodriguez, Mason Sandenand Sam Parker are some of the members of the pickleball club. MAGGIE LOUGHRAN | The O-Book

## New club hits the Nest to bring opportunity to play popular sport

Becca Rock  
chief copy editor

Pickleball has become increasingly popular throughout the last few years, and Central students are hopping on the bandwagon by creating a new pickleball club.

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) stated that pickleball has been the fastest growing sport in the United States, with a growth percentage of 51.8% from 2022 to 2023.

Senior Marcus Kane began the club with a couple of his friends out of, according to Kane, a "want to allow more people to come play the sport. It is really easy to play and is a fun outside activity where you can meet new people."

For Kane, pickleball has been a hobby for the past two to three years. It has generated fun memories for him that he wants more people to experience.

The club graciously gained funding through assistant principal Jodi Dierks and athletic director Robert Locken. The club was able to rent pickleball courts and provide equipment.

Typically meeting every week on Tuesday and Thursday, the club is open to beginners.

"All you have to do is show up, we have paddles provided. If you are willing to play, it is a great time," Kane said.

Club sponsor Branden Smith has been the sponsor for many clubs in the past, including the gaming club – which ended because of the transition to eSports – and Beats by Eagles, which is a music production club, which has seen dwindling attendance since its creation. "The

kinds of kids that were engaged with the club [Beats by Eagles] like to leave at 3:05," Smith said of the dwindling.

Smith was looking for a way to still be involved in clubs at Central. When Kane came to him last spring asking him to sponsor pickleball club, Smith had never even held a paddle, but was willing to take a leap of faith and sponsor the club.

"There is a reason that people at the YMCA have old people leagues and that pickleball is growing fast," Smith said, referring to the amount of fun and easiness the sport presents.

Smith also wanted to commend Kane's leadership with the formation of the club. "He went and talked with the City of Omaha Parks and Recreation people and got us a permit to practice on courts, he also reached out to Mr. Robert Tucker (Central's Boys Tennis coach) to use one of their courts at Gifford Park."

The pickleball club has started off strong, Smith stated, and he encourages more underclassmen to join so that the club can continue strong through the next few years. "Central has a really bad problem with club starting with upperclassmen, and then as soon as those upperclassmen graduate, the club kind of flounders because people didn't recruit," Smith said.

This winter, they plan to continue meeting by reserving indoor courts and in the spring, "you can bet your bottom dollar that we're going to start up again outside," Smith said.

To stay updated with the club events and meetings, as well as get any questions answered, contact the club @omahacentralpickleball on Instagram.

## Women make history in hockey as Campbell joins NHL coaching staff and women see first professional hockey league

Katie Besancon  
digital editor

Seeing a female coach in a male sport is quite rare, but in the National Hockey League, that changed on Oct. 8 when Jessica Campbell, a former Canadian international player, made her debut as the Seattle Krakens new assistant coach, while also making the debut as the first women assistant coach within the NHL.

Campbell had her fair share of success before joining the coaching world. During her time playing at the international level, Campbell won four Nations Cups? in 2014 and was a part of Canada's silver medal winning side at the Women's 2015 World Championships.

Campbell has been coaching since 2017, where she started with youth leagues in her home country of Canada, before moving internationally to countries like Sweden and Germany. In 2022, Campbell moved to the American Hockey League, where she joined the Krakens top minor league affiliate - the Coachella Valley Firebirds, to who she would be an assistant coach for the following two seasons.

While the Kraken fell to the Saint Louis Blues in their first game of the season, it was still a historic moment that will go down in the books for everyone in the league.

This comes after the Professional Women's Hockey League was established in August of 2023, allowing for female hockey players to take their skills to the next level without having to go international to play.

The PWHL consists of six charter franchises, with three teams in the United States and

three teams in Canada: Boston, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York City, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. These teams play in regular season games to grant themselves one of four spots in a postseason tournament that determines who wins the Walter Cup.

"You saw the dream of the Stanley Cup, not having that feeling when your brothers and dad were talking about it. Now that there's a women's league, it changes the perspective of I can lift a trophy and I want win national championships in the sport that I love on the professional level," junior Lucy Puls said.

This is not only a momentous time for those affiliated with the NHL, but also for those who just play hockey, whether male or female, and for those who dream of being in Campbell's shoes one day.

Those like Puls, who plays hockey for the Kansas City Storm, has never had a female role model or female presence during the time she has played other than those playing in the Olympics. "Now that there is a professional league and there is a female professional coach it changes the overall perspective" Puls said.

With the formation of the PWHL and the female addition to the NHL coaching staff, it is encouraging to little girls who want to give hockey a try. It is motivating to those who play the sport and allows them to have a future in the sport that doesn't have to stop after college.

"Now that there is someone to look up to there is a standard that there is a place for them in the sport," Puls said.

## 2024-25 college basketball preview: freshmen stars, top title contenders and championship dark horses

Boe DiLorenzo  
staff writer

The 2024-25 College Basketball season promises to be an exciting one, filled with one of the most talented freshman classes ever, standout preseason All-Americans and several teams looking seriously dangerous to possibly hold up the Waterford Crystal National Championship trophy in early April.

Looking at the incoming freshman class first, all eyes will be on Duke Forward Cooper Flagg. He is set to make a big impact on the Blue Devils' season, as Flagg was one of the top recruits in the nation. His journey to Duke was marked by standout performances at the high school and AAU levels, where he dominated on both ends of the court.

Another freshman with high expectations is Baylor shooting guard VJ Edgecombe. He is known for his shooting ability and defensive tenacity. He has all the tools to be successful at the collegiate level. His path to Baylor started with impressive performances in high school and on the AAU circuit, where he consistently showed his ability to take over games.

Last but not least, a freshman duo to look out for is Dylan Harper and Ace Bailey at Rutgers University. Both of them are known for their scoring ability. Harper is a versatile guard who can score from anywhere on the court, while Bailey is a dynamic forward with a strong inside-outside game. Their ability to put points on the board will be crucial for Rutgers' offensive strategy.

This season, there are several college basketball teams to keep an eye on as strong contenders for the national championship.

The traditional powerhouses like Duke, Kentucky, and Kansas are always in the mix, thanks to top tier talent always looking to be recruited. The returning national champions, the

University of Connecticut Huskies, are planning to three-peat as they are ranked fourth in the preseason top 25.

Gonzaga continues to be a force with their well-rounded and experienced senior guard Ryan Nembhard. Baylor from the Big 12 has shown in the past years that they can compete at the highest level, as they won a national championship in 2021. Also, watch out for programs on the rise, like Rutgers, with the incoming freshman expected to make a significant impact, which helped them sneak into the preseason top 25.

A surprise to many, Iowa State is starting the year ranked fifth after they have consistently made it to the second weekend of March Madness in the past few years.

There are also some sleeper teams - for example, 15th-ranked Creighton, as they have been improving and shown they can compete with the best, blowing out the number one team ranked in the nation, then being back-to-back national champions UConn in the 2023-24 season. With a strong starting lineup returning, including back-to-back Big East Defensive Player of the Year Ryan Kalkbrenner, and gaining transfers like former Texas Tech guard Pop Isaacs, they have a very good chance of making a deep run in the tournament and possibly getting to the program's first ever national championship. Keep a look out for Creighton, as they could very well be a dark horse.

The Preseason All-American First Team is full of players from prestigious schools. The list includes Kansas center Hunter Dickinson, UNC point guard RJ Davis, Arizona guard Caleb Love, Alabama guard Mark Sears, Auburn forward Johni Broome. These players are all experienced and playing for a championship-contending team.

## Photo gallery: Eagle football goes to playoffs for first time since '15



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## Central volleyball, losing 10 varsity seniors, looks to rebuild

Steven Dickerson  
sports editor

Central's varsity volleyball team will lose 10 seniors after this year, all of whom have been critical players for the team in recent years. As the team wraps up a 16-17 campaign, the team will have to prepare for next season with an almost entirely new starting lineup.

"Experience is something we're going to lose next year," Head Coach Ariel Gass said. Among those departing will be Scout Vacek, who has played libero on varsity for all four years of her high school career and had 303 digs this season.

"It will be tough without an experienced and confident player like Scout," Gass said.

Another player departing is middle blocker Tayah Perkins. Perkins has had a few years of varsity experience and led the team in blocks, with 46 this season. Tyra Jenkins, Central's dynamic outside hitter who can play all six rotations, is also preparing to leave, having achieved 202 kills this season.

Senior defensive specialist Evalina Sain remarked that Jenkins has been a team leader. "She tries to make us more organized on the court, making sure we're communicating," Sain said. Gass said it will be hard to fill Jenkins' role.

Gass is looking for next season's varsity players to come in with confidence and take the lead. "This year the girls were really responsible with taking over how we fundraise and run events, which takes things off of my plate and allows me to help them get better," she said.

As for upcoming players to watch for, Gass and Sain both mentioned freshman Scout Grummons, who is looking to succeed outgoing senior Maya Rodgers as the team's setter. Grummons has practiced with varsity this year but hasn't seen much time on the court.

"We've created an

inclusive atmosphere where freshmen like her are engaging in varsity practices; it really adds to the team dynamic," Sain said.

Getting Grummons in with the team and helping her build the feel of what varsity is like is critical to potential success, Gass said. It's unclear if she will become the team's setter, as Gass has yet to decide if she's going to run a 6-2 or a 5-1 system next year, which depends on the number of hitters and setters.

Other players to look out for include freshmen Presley Vacek, a potential libero, and Eliza Stockman, as well as sophomore hitters Aibreann Conn and Renita Krajicek.

Krajicek says she's excited about the future team.

"We will evolve a lot, but that's fine because we're like a family," she said. She thinks she and her fellow underclassmen are ready to lead and are highly motivated to do so with the thought of being on varsity going through their minds. She also thinks they're prepared to tackle the change in pace and length of the varsity game compared to lower levels.

As for all of the upcoming players, Sain believes they have a mutual passion for the game that will lead to cohesion in the future. She hopes they communicate and collaborate more than the current team has, and that they try and align their goals for further success.

Gass says the team will be doing extensive work in the offseason to prepare for the large changes. "We have to train our hitters to hit on the varsity level, we have to work on reac-



Senior outside hitter Tyra Jenkins spikes a ball.

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tion times, we have to work on footwork." Despite the actions that need to be taken, Gass says she's been impressed with the skills already presented in the players.

"They have shown great commitment and willingness to learn, which is exactly what we need coming in with a new team," Gass said. She even says that despite next year being a rebuilding year, the team will gain for two to three years after by already covering necessary skills and getting the players varsity experience.

"Next season will be tough, but we will see benefits for years to come from that," Gass said.

## Unified Bowling season begins

Charli Tobin  
staff writer

Central's Unified Bowling team is preparing to begin its season.

"Unified bowling is a wonderful sport that allows Central students to connect and mentor ACP students," Head Coach Jerry Kreber said. The Unified Bowling program helps students build relationships into friendships that promote increased self-esteem, sportsmanship, and being a good teammate.

Kreber says what fulfills him as a coach is "Unified bowling is a sport that allows coaches to share in the joy of competition, practice, and development. Most of these athletes are participating in sports for the first time so it is wonderful to watch them grow!"

Unified bowling is a Special Olympics program that pairs people with and without disabilities on sports teams for competition and training. A usual event would split teams in groups of three to five players for events, each group bowls six games per event.

Unified bowling has been a part of the NSAA since 2013 and Central's team first made it to state in 2022. The season is currently underway and you can catch a game at Maplewood Lanes.



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