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SEMESTER TWO STARTS WITH DISTANCE LEARNING



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Although Head Principal Mr. Herman misses seeing students, he said we all must avoid "spreading the virus to others."

By SANDY VUE
Quill staff writer

Cooper students will remain in the Distance Learning Plus model along with the other Robbinsdale School District secondary students as the new semester gets underway. Secondary students are sticking with the current model for health and safety reasons.

"A model shift at this time does not align with the goals outlined in the Safe

Learning Plan," Robbinsdale Interim Superintendent Dr. Burrage said.

Even though middle and high school students will remain in Distance Learning Plus, the district has been welcoming pre-kindergarten and elementary school students back to in-person learning five days a week. In-person learning for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade and special education elementary students started on January 19. Meanwhile, third,

fourth and fifth grade students will be starting on February 1.

The reason for the difference between secondary and elementary students is because each level is being held to different guidelines by the state for returning to schools. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz announced on December 16, 2020 that districts needed to prioritize the return of elementary students to in-person learning. In order to support that, he said districts no longer have to connect the

decision to bring those students back to the COVID-19 infection rates in their area due to virus mitigation efforts that schools can put in place for younger students. This allowed districts around the state to start bringing back elementary students in January.

Meanwhile, at the secondary level, the return to in-person learning is still dictated by the Minnesota Safe Learning Model Guidance. In the communities that make up the Robbinsdale School

While elementary students are headed back to buildings, secondary schools will remain online

District, the infection rates are still too high for students to return to buildings.

"A transition in learning models is dependent on several factors, including COVID-19 infection rates within our community and county. In order to transition secondary students to hybrid learning, the case rate per 10,000 must be 29 or under; for in-person learning, the number must be below nine," Burrage said.

To put those guidelines into context, the 14-day case rate for Hennepin County on January 18 was 35.6 per 10,000.

With elementary students starting in-person learning on January 19, parents had the option to still keep their children at home and use the 281 Distance Learning School. Elementary parents also had the option to opt-out their student from riding the school bus. This means that parents must provide their own transportation for their student to and from school, thereby limiting contact with people on the bus. These same options will be available to secondary students if and when a shift to in-person learning happens at some point in the future.

Given the uncertain timetable for the return of secondary students, the registration deadline for 281 Distance

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Local cities welcome their new leaders

While the national elections took the spotlight in November 2020, Minnesotans also voted on area mayors, council members

By MAX REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Change is going to be brought to local cities in Hennepin County as new and existing people will take up leadership roles in their cities' respective offices following the November 3, 2020 elections.

In the town of Robbinsdale, Bill Blonigan defeated Wally Langfellow in the mayoral race. Blonigan has served on Robbinsdale's city council for 40 years and is entering his first term as mayor. According to an interview with CCX Media, Blonigan said he will, "continue supporting great city services and heighten [Robbinsdale's] environmental leadership, inclusionary practices and improve city council's already excellent listening practices."

In New Hope, incumbent candidate Kathi Hemken defeated Jonathan D. London in the town's mayoral race. Hemken has been mayor of New Hope for 12 years. In an interview with CCX Media, Hemken said she wants to upgrade New Hope's housing stock.

"If elected, I want to continue upgrading our housing stock through the scattered site program. I will work to attract more new businesses to [New Hope], thus increasing our tax base," Hemken told CCX Media.

As for Crystal, the incumbent mayor, Jim Adams, defeated Steve Adams. Adams has represented Crystal in the mayor's chair for two terms now. In an interview with CCX Media, Adams said he wants to continue to make the city of Crystal "an inclusive community," "a debt-free community" and "a transparent community."

Finally, in Plymouth, incumbent candidate Jim Willis defeated Paul



Photo by MAX REKELA-JASPER

Candidate Bill Blonigan emerged victorious in the race for Robbinsdale mayor.

Hillen in the Council Member at Large race. Willis has lived in Plymouth since 1971 and is an advocate for parks in Plymouth. In an interview with CCX Media, Willis stated that his first priority is, "maintaining the highest quality of public safety services for the benefits of all residents."

College Possible still supporting students during online school

Representatives of the college preparation program have adjusted their services to guide Hawks to future success

By YORDANOSE MULAT
Quill staff writer

Cooper's College Possible group has been adjusting to distance learning in order to continue working with students who want guidance on the process of getting into college.

Ms. Mack, Cooper's high school program coordinator, said that College Possible is "a national college access and success organization" that provides students from low-income family backgrounds with support on their route to earning a college degree. College Possible coaches work with high school juniors and seniors to get necessary prep for college. In addition, coaches work with students after getting into college by guiding them through their college journey.

For high school juniors, College Possible helps students prepare for the ACT, college essay writing and finding a best-fit college.

"College Possible has helped me in multiple

forms," Darius Watt (12) said. "When I first joined College Possible as a junior, I was close to clueless on what I needed to do next. We got straight into work. They taught me everything I needed to know for the ACT and then practiced a handful of strategies with us to be used on these tests."

Moreover, for high school seniors, College Possible supports students with all of the various applications and forms that need to be completed.

"College Possible has helped me and many other people with financial aid advice, college applications and giving guidance throughout the college application process," Fatima Arba (12) said.

Another important form during senior year is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). College Possible helps with the process of filling out this document.

"My coaches around College Possible have helped me with filling out college applications and the dreadful FAFSA form," Watt said.

After coaching students through their journey of get-

ting into college, College Possible also supports students throughout their time in college. They continue offering financial aid coaching, helping students register for classes and guiding students as they navigate college.

One current obstacle to the support College Possible provides has been the pandemic. However, College Possible has continued to support students virtually.

"I have monthly Google Meets with my coach and my coach also sends us emails with helpful information. In my opinion, yes, it is still effective," Maryfer Garcia (12) said.

Although college visits have not been feasible during the pandemic, College Possible still offers virtual college tours. Moreover, Mack said that one-on-one conversations with coaches, online ACT practice tests and two monthly newsletters are still being delivered virtually.

The requirements to become part of College Possible

COLLEGE POSSIBLE continues on page 2

Culture specialists keep their focus on equity issues

Three staff members are tasked with supporting students, engaging families

By CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN
Quill staff writer

Cooper has three school culture and climate specialists who work with students and staff to promote equity, support student performance and engage families. Working with ninth graders and EL students is Ms. Calvillo, working with 10th and 12th graders is Ms. Chiinze and working with 11th and 12th graders is Mr. Patterson.

According to Calvillo, she and her colleagues are important figures when it comes to serving as a bridge between school staff, students, families and administrators. They work with all those groups to help improve student performance in different ways.

“We collaborate with teachers to provide equity-based or culturally responsive classroom resources [and] we provide professional development and training to the school,” Calvillo said.

During a regular work day, the activities of the equity team can be varied. Each of the specialists will attend team meetings, have meetings with students, plan for student group meetings, plan for classroom or staff professional development presentations, work on recruiting students for various field trips, work on school newsletters, connect with families about student needs, and support other district events and initiatives. “It sometimes feels like our role is best described as ‘all else,’” Chiinze said.

Although they do a wide assortment of things, Chiinze said their activities are always grounded in issues of equity.

“We have a purpose and sometimes that purpose is misunderstood and/or disvalued as many times we are tasked with asking difficult questions about our education system,” she said. “Our positions are largely held by staff of color and most times we are the ones tasked with the huge responsibility to end all racism.”

Now that the school year has moved into the second semester, the equity team is getting involved in activities related to the college search and summer programs. Chiinze said they help set up college and career readiness programs for students. Additionally, they help students seek out summer PSEO college classes. Additionally, for students who intend on taking college entrance exams, they help students find ACT classes.

Calvillo, Chiinze and Patterson are available by appointment as needed between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday during the school year.

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sible include a minimum GPA of 2.0, eligibility for free-and-reduced lunch or a Pell Grant, and a desire to attend a four-year institution for a bachelor’s degree. U.S. citizenship is not required to take part in the program. According to Mack, recruitment for College Possible begins “spring semester sophomore year or fall of junior year.”

The many Cooper students who have joined the program said they have benefited from College Possible.

“What I enjoy most is the help my coach gives me when we do our Google Meets and I enjoy being able to talk about my plan and get helpful tips and a lot of support,” Garcia said.

Agreeing with Maryfer was Arba, who cited her relationships with the mentors as being important.

“The thing I most enjoy about College Possible is how flexible the mentors are with the students and the amount of tips and advice I learned that I didn’t know beforehand,” she said.

According to Watt, another benefit of College Possible has been the positive impact it has had on his last two years of high school.

“I am certain that if I did not join College Possible, this transition between high school and college may have been much harder,” Watt said.

AVID program adjusts to online school

AVID students, staff continue to work toward developing academic skills, preparing for life in college



Photo by MS. LIESER

Prior to the pandemic, AVID students would take many field trips to visit area colleges in person.

By SANDY VUE
Quill staff writer

Cooper’s AVID program continues guiding students toward success in the classroom and preparation for college despite the challenges of distance learning during the 2020-2021 school year.

AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. It is a program that helps first-generation students get ready for college.

“We work on organizational skills to help kids be prepared students,” AVID teacher Ms. Schaffer said. “We work together to ask questions and solve problems. We go on college tours and bring in guest speakers from various careers. We work on life skills and money management. There is so much that we do that can translate into a work environment.”

The coordinator of AVID at Cooper is Ms. Lieser, who works alongside AVID teachers Schaffer, Ms. Wineberg, Mr. Darso and Mr. Simpson as they support students. One reason this program is special to the students and teachers in AVID is because the students and teachers get to stay together for all four years in high school, hence “they are able to build a really strong bond together,” Lieser said. In fact, AVID is now available to students in middle school

However, Lieser added that students can be removed from AVID if they do not follow expectations of the AVID Agreement. Among the requirements in this agreement is that AVID students keep a 2.5 GPA, attend classes and be quality human beings.

One of the tasks that students have to do weekly in AVID is complete their structured notes.

“AVID promotes Focused Notes, in which students complete multiple steps, allowing them to review the notes and help students actually learn the information,” Lieser said.

An additional task in AVID is that students show they have filled out their planners.

“Planners are just a good tool for anyone to utilize in order to make sure all of the information you need is in one place,” Schaffer said.

Students in AVID also spend time hearing from guest speakers, which has continued this year despite the challenges of distance learning. An example of guest speakers that senior AVID students had during fall 2020 is when representatives of the Act Six Program took part in class. Act Six is a leadership scholarship program that looks for promising students who want to work for justice and equity, and who show passion for learning and risk-taking skills. Act Six will be rewarding 45 student leaders full

scholarships to six partner colleges and universities.

Access to opportunities like Act Six is one reason why Schaffer said she likes being part of AVID. She said she also enjoys learning more about her students through specific units from ninth and 10th grade. For example, in ninth grade, students are given an assignment called “The Alphabetical Autobiography,” and through each student’s presentation, Schaffer is able to learn more about them. Then, in 10th grade, the class does a Race and Culture unit that features a “culminating ‘Where I’m From’ poem that is often very moving,” Schaffer said.

When it comes to junior year, Schaffer said students spend a lot of time on ACT preparation. While she said it can get long for both the students and teachers, Schaffer added that it is good to see students get a higher score each round.

As for senior year, Schaffer said students focus on life after high school.

“Senior year has some of the best lessons on how to be an independent adult in the real world. I love having those authentic conversations with kids,” she said.

Beyond the academic support that is provided in AVID, Lieser said an important part of the program is providing support to the students as people.

“Moving together through their high school career, students know that I am there for them when they need a cheerleader or a parent-type figure to remind them to do their work and be successful,” Lieser said. “Growing up can be super challenging, and I’m so happy to be able to help my students in any way I can, from taking them on college field trips, talking with them to another teacher or even helping their family fill out the FAFSA.”

Having formerly taught in Cooper’s social studies department, Lieser said her transition into running the AVID program has allowed her to connect to her students even more.

“When I talk about my AVID students, I refer to them as my kids because I truly care about them and will push and support them to reach their goals,” she said.

Echoing that thought is Schaffer, who mentioned that she makes sure her students are doing well mentally inside and outside of school.

“In normal times, I check in through a variety of measures,” she said. “I sometimes catch kids in the hall or in between other classes. I always pull kids up to my desk or out into the hallway for one-on-one conversations.”

However, since distance learning started, Schaffer said she has been working hard to connect to individuals through breakout rooms, Google Meets and emails.

“Maintaining a balance in life and checking in on mental health are very important to me. I always tell my kids that it is so important to do self-care,” she said.

The benefits of AVID are readily apparent to the students in the program. AVID student Doua Vue (12) said that the program has given her opportunities to explore colleges and learn from real people in different industries and places. She has also gotten the time to work on creating her first resume and studying for the ACT.

However, Vue mentioned that if she could change anything about AVID, it would be the tutorial sessions. Vue said she doesn’t see them as being helpful because she can normally just find answers to her questions by herself or from the teacher.

Nevertheless, Vue said her time as an AVID student will help her graduate from Cooper in June and attend college next fall. Vue said she plans to major in computer science at a four-year university or college. She said she still has yet to decide which school she will attend.

HAWK tickets system shifts to virtual format

Cooper’s program for recognizing, reinforcing positive behaviors is revamped to work while students attend school from home

By JACK ATKINSON
Quill staff writer

Distance learning has caused Cooper to change the ways the school provides different types of support and acknowledgment to students. One area in which this can be seen is in the school’s use of HAWK tickets. HAWK tickets have been used at Cooper as part of the school’s initiative to provide positive recognition to students. In December 2020, this form of recognition moved to a digital format due to Cooper’s distance learning model.

“There were over 130 students nominated by teachers for the month of December, which is awesome,” Assistant Principal Ms. Smith said. “December was the first month of this weird school year that teachers were able to nominate students for displaying traits of being a HAWK. We look to continuing to find ways to support and recognize our students.”

HAWK tickets are designed to support the concepts represented by the HAWK acronym: honesty, accountability, work ethic and kindness. When teachers see students behaving in a way that connects to any of these four areas, they are encouraged to give those students a ticket. According to Smith,

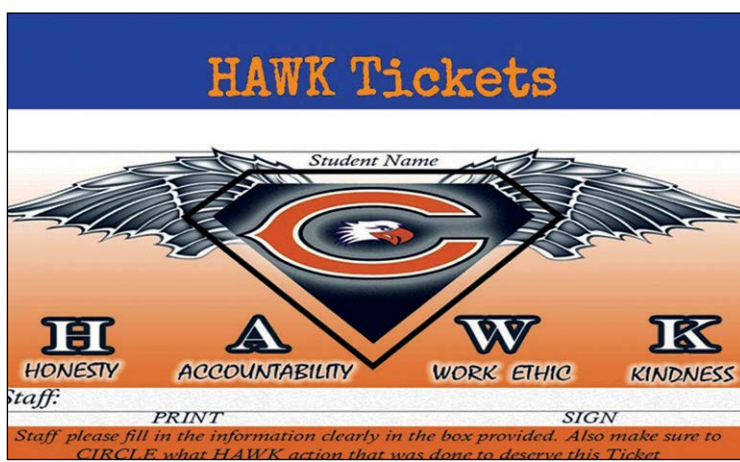


Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Students are still eligible for monthly prize drawings when they get a ticket.

HAWK tickets provide students with specific feedback for positive behaviors. The tickets also remind staff members to acknowledge students, thereby improving relationships.

“They reinforce desired behaviors and increase the likelihood that students will meet our expectations,” Smith said.

In order for students to receive a HAWK ticket, staff members must notice them demonstrating one of the HAWK behaviors. For example, the “honesty” trait might be demonstrated by a student who does their own work despite the temptation to copy from a

classmate. “Accountability” might be shown by a student who shows up on time to class with the proper materials. “Work ethic” might take the form of a student staying engaged throughout the entire class period. Finally, “kindness” might be embodied by a student who helps a classmate understand that day’s lesson.

When staff members witness any of these behaviors, Smith encourages them to praise the student’s action either verbally or through an electronic message. After that, staff are asked to fill out an online form on which they indicate the student’s name, their action and the

HAWK behavior that action connects with. Once the form is filled out, the staff member informs the student that they have been given a ticket.

The names of every student who has received a HAWK ticket are placed into a monthly drawing for prizes. The winners are also announced in advisory.

“We’re creative in finding prizes for our student winners such as Cooper gear, gift cards and other treats,” Smith said.

Teachers who have given students HAWK tickets said the system helps support positive behaviors. English teacher Ms. Prillwitz said she has used the tickets to recognize students who work hard during class.

“This year I have mostly given HAWK tickets for students who demonstrate hard work,” Prillwitz said. “These are students who engage in class and work well during small group projects. I think recognizing students’ hard work in this way is even more important during distance learning since we’re not in a physical classroom together, which makes engaging and working together more challenging for most students. I hope those who earn the HAWK tickets will be encouraged to keep up the good work.”

SEMESTER TWO STARTS WITH DISTANCE LEARNING continued from page 1

Learning School will be extended for secondary school students. If an in-person learning model transition date is determined, registration and opt-out forms for 281 Distance Learning School will be available for secondary students and a new deadline will be announced.

Although it is unclear when students will be going back to Cooper,

Head Principal Mr. Herman said the health and safety of students and staff is the primary concern.

“There is no doubt that we miss our Hawks by not being able to see everyone in person, but we also do not want to rush into starting something where we have the potential of spreading the virus to others,” Herman said.

The decision to stick with the current learning model has prompted different reactions among students. One student, Melody Vue (9), said she has been struggling in some of her classes due to distance learning.

“Obviously, I would love to go back to school because I would have so much more help and I would be able to

learn things better...and that would definitely bring up my grades.”

At the same time, Vue said she understands why distance learning needs to continue.

“It is unfortunate that this is how things are going, but I know it is for the best for my safety as well as others,” she said.

Good habits can help curb all illnesses

Although everyone's attention is on avoiding COVID-19, common colds and flus are still an issue during the winter months

By MAJAY MURPHY
Quill staff writer

Winter in Minnesota can be harsh. The cold and snow make it more difficult to get outside. Additionally, this is the time of year when common colds and the regular flu are easy to get. When you add to that the even bigger dangers posed this year by the coronavirus, it is important that everyone takes steps to remain healthy. Fortunately, there are simple things all students can do to avoid getting the common cold and flu over the winter months.

1. Get a flu shot

The flu is a respiratory disease caused by a virus that attacks the nose, throat and lungs. Flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness and body aches. The Minnesota Department of Health recommends that people six months of age and older should get the flu vaccine every year to “protect you from getting the flu and prevent you from passing it to people who could get very sick.”

2. Wash your hands

Washing your hands is the best way to kill bacteria. Washing your hands can not only prevent you from getting sick, but also reduces the risk of infecting others around you. This is important because, according to WebMD, people can still pass along germs without getting sick themselves. If you are in a situation where you do not have access to a sink to wash your hands, you can also use hand sanitizer to help keep your hands clean.

3. Be careful when you sneeze, cough

Even when we are not in school



Photo by LOU VANG

The simple act of covering one's nose while sneezing can cut down on disease transmission.

or congregating in big groups due to COVID-19, it is still important to be aware of your behavior when you sneeze or cough. The Minnesota Department of Health suggests that people “cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.” Not following these guidelines can lead to germs floating in the air or landing on surfaces, which could lead to someone else getting sick.

4. Exercise

Exercise during the winter can help keep your immune system strong, making you more able to fight off the germs

that spread around the community. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, exercising also can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease while strengthening your bones and muscles. An additional benefit is that exercise can keep your metabolism up, which can help people avoid putting on extra weight during the winter.

5. Eat healthy foods

Much like getting proper exercise, eating more fruit and vegetables can help create a person's immune system strong. In addition, the Mayo Clinic reports that proper diet will reduce the risk of heart

disease, obesity and cancer. Having good nutrition can lower high cholesterol, improve your well being and make you less likely to be sick during the winter months.

6. Get enough sleep

According to the American Medical Association, a well-rested body is one that is less likely to fall victim to cold-weather illnesses. In fact, when you sleep, your body is busy at work repairing tissue and growing muscle. Getting plenty of rest can help protect not only your physical health, but your mental health as well.

BARR helps ninth graders through high school transition

Teachers, administrators in program use data to guide freshmen as they develop academic skills, earn class credits

By MAKAYLA HOTT
Quill staff writer

BARR is a Cooper program that provides ninth grade students with a comprehensive approach to meeting their academic, social and emotional needs during the first year of high school. BARR, which stands for Building Assets, Reducing Risks, works to harness the power of relationships and classroom data to remove both academic and non-academic barriers to learning that freshmen sometimes feel. “The BARR model allows teachers to work together to develop a deeper understanding of how to better support each individual student,” Cooper BARR Coordinator Mr. Haasch said. “By focusing on building relationships and tracking real-time student data, we are able to provide supports and interventions that help students be more successful. One crucial aspect of the BARR approach is to build on student strengths. Teachers use these strengths as leverage to help students find success within their classes.”

To meet the goals of the BARR program, ninth graders are arranged into four groups. Each group of students has the same combination of an English, a social studies and a science teacher. The teacher team for each group then meets throughout the week to monitor each student's progress and discuss how far they have come. Also meeting weekly are the ninth grade counselor, an assistant principal, a personal learning coach and the BARR coordinator, who offer each teacher team additional support.

“By meeting twice a week, teachers and support staff are able to truly get



Photo by LOU VANG

I-Time lessons are a central part of the support offered through BARR.

to know the individual strengths, assets and barriers for students. The teams use their shared knowledge to provide in-class support, as well as connect with other interventions and resources. Teachers spend time talking about strategies that work with students so that other teachers can build on that within their own classrooms,” Haasch said.

Another central part of the BARR program is the weekly I-Time lesson. I-Time is designed to help strengthen student-to-student relationships, staff-to-student relationships and build a classroom community. During the I-Time lesson, teachers will work with students on issues such as stress management, bullying, building community and substance use awareness.

“I-Times can serve two purposes. First, they can be community-building activities in which students learn more about their peers by engaging in small group conversations. This helps

students build trust with each other so that they can feel more comfortable taking academic risks in the classroom. I-Times can also serve as mini-character lessons, such as the dangers of enabling friends' risky behaviors and the importance of setting goals. This encourages them to make better decisions while at school so that they can have better academic experiences,” social studies teacher Mr. DiSalvi said.

In addition to focusing on the students, the BARR program has elements in place to support the staff members who work within the program. The BARR program provides professional development to teachers, counselors and administrators so that they have the tools they need to focus on their students. The staff is trained to use strength-based techniques to build positive relationships and support each student's success inside and outside of the classroom. The BARR staff also

has time to work on interdisciplinary planning.

“BARR has helped me understand the importance of identifying students' strengths and students' connections to the school. Whenever I meet with other teachers and we discuss common students that concern us, we always start by trying to identify their positive traits and ways they fit into the school. By doing that, we can try to naturally start conversations with students about their strengths and connections to the school so that we can build a positive relationship with them in order to help them improve academically,” DiSalvi said.

Although it has only been at Cooper for three years, the BARR program has now been around for 20 years. During that time, the schools using the BARR model have tracked student success to measure the impact of the program. The data that has been collected indicates that the program helps improve a school's climate measures, leads to an increase in the course credits earned by freshmen, results in a higher grade point average for students and boosts scores on standardized tests. Additionally, it has been shown to narrow opportunity gaps, decrease suspensions and reduce absenteeism from school.

From the student perspective, the BARR program helps ninth graders succeed in the difficult transition from middle school to high school. It is also a framework that provides students the opportunity to get to know their teachers on a personal level.

“I loved BARR. I like the activities we did and the teachers. It felt like they really got to know me,” Saief Dahdal (11) said.

Teacher promotes mindfulness skills to students, staff

Ms. Dodd hosts mindfulness-focused Lunch and Learn session

By ANDREA TRIBBLE
Quill staff writer

Last year made it difficult for many Americans to see the good in the world due to the pandemic, racial unrest and political conflicts. In response, some people became more interested in mindfulness as a way to deal with their day-to-day stress. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of MBSR Mindfulness, mindfulness meditation is the “awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non judgmentally.”

One of Cooper's business teachers, Ms. Dodd, is also a trained mindfulness instructor. Dodd said she believes mindfulness is a life saver.

“It keeps me balanced, it helps me to stay focused on what I want to focus on and it helps me to better see the good in each day,” Dodd said.

There are a number of ways students can practice mindfulness, including mindful walking, mindful eating, mindful breathing and gratitude journaling. Dodd said it is important to find a method that works for you and allows you to reflect and simply exist in the present moment.

“People can practice mindfulness by bringing attention to their breath or to one of their five senses. You can also do a gratitude practice or a loving kindness practice,” she said.

Mindfulness has many benefits, both emotionally and spiritually. The higher-level thinking portion of our brains, the prefrontal cortex, is strengthened by mindfulness. This can be especially helpful for students in light of how much they are asked to learn while in school. Dodd equates practicing mindfulness to doing “push ups for our brains.”

“Mindfulness helps your brain be ready for the learning by strengthening the prefrontal cortex,” Dodd said. “It also helps regulate emotions.”

Dodd acknowledged how she has personally benefited from practicing mindfulness.

“I used to have anxiety and now I have a much more balanced relationship with the things that worry me,” she said.

Given the amount of isolation people have been subjected to over the last year, Dodd said it is good to include other people in one's mindfulness practices.

“You can practice with others in so many different ways, from walking outside with someone and keeping your attention on the conversation you are having, to doing a formal seated practice with a small group of people,” Dodd said.

While practicing mindfulness may sound appealing, many people may have no idea where to start. If that's the case for you, Dodd encourages you to make the time to do something good for yourself by joining her Hawk Lunch and Learn mindfulness class during fifth period on Thursdays. During these sessions, Dodd guides students through various mindfulness practices. For those students who are unable to attend, Dodd said that it is possible to find many videos of mindfulness practices online.

“Self care is important,” Dodd said.

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Sticking with online learning is best option

The district's choice to continue with distance learning in second semester will keep us safe

By YORDANOSE MULAT
Quill staff writer

District 281 has been proceeding with a distance learning model since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the safety of all students. However, recently, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz announced that elementary schools can shift to fully in-person learning. Therefore, pre-kindergarten, first and second grade students returned to school on January 19, while third, fourth and fifth graders are supposed to be returning to buildings on February 1.

District 281 had been working hard to make it possible for secondary school students to return to in-person learning as well. However, secondary students must still follow the Minnesota Safe Learning Plan. Therefore, although there were plans to shift secondary school back to in-person learning on January 26, secondary schools will stay in Distance Learning Plus.

Since elementary school students only have contact with one class and do not have to constantly switch classes, returning might not cause the spreading of the virus. However, I believe returning back before everyone has access to the vaccine is a risk factor for rising COVID cases.

Meanwhile, the decision to keep secondary schools in distance learning is a great one as it ensures the safety of students. Given the large amount of contact that occurs between students in secondary schools, keeping everyone at home is important. Also, returning to an in-person learning model halfway through the year would have been a big change after secondary students have gotten used to distance learning during first semester. As for the decision to move elementary students back into buildings, a big concern is that staff members have not had a chance to get vaccinated. This will also be a long-term concern when and if secondary students eventually return to their buildings this year.

Since elementary students do not have to switch from class to class as much as secondary students, the contact between students is minimal. This is an important factor in the decision to return to in-person learning at that grade level. In effect, the virus has a lower chance of spreading widely if a couple students have it. Despite this, it is still a risk for young students and the elementary school staff to return before the coronavirus vaccine has become accessible to the general public. Waiting until everyone has access to the vaccine would have been a better decision before letting elementary students go back in person. This would have ensured the safety of students and allowed time for the COVID cases to decrease to a greater extent.

When it comes to secondary students, the decision to delay in-person learning is a wise one. Unlike elementary school students, older students have wide contact with each other as they switch from class to class. In addition, there are more chances of students in secondary schools to be infected by the coronavirus considering the fact that many students have jobs and may go out into public more than elementary school students. Therefore, secondary students returning in person right now would have presented an extreme risk of rising COVID cases.

Another important aspect to consider about keeping second-

ONLINE LEARNING
continues on page 5

Attendance is key to school success

The realities of distance learning make it important for all students to sign in to their scheduled classes and stay engaged

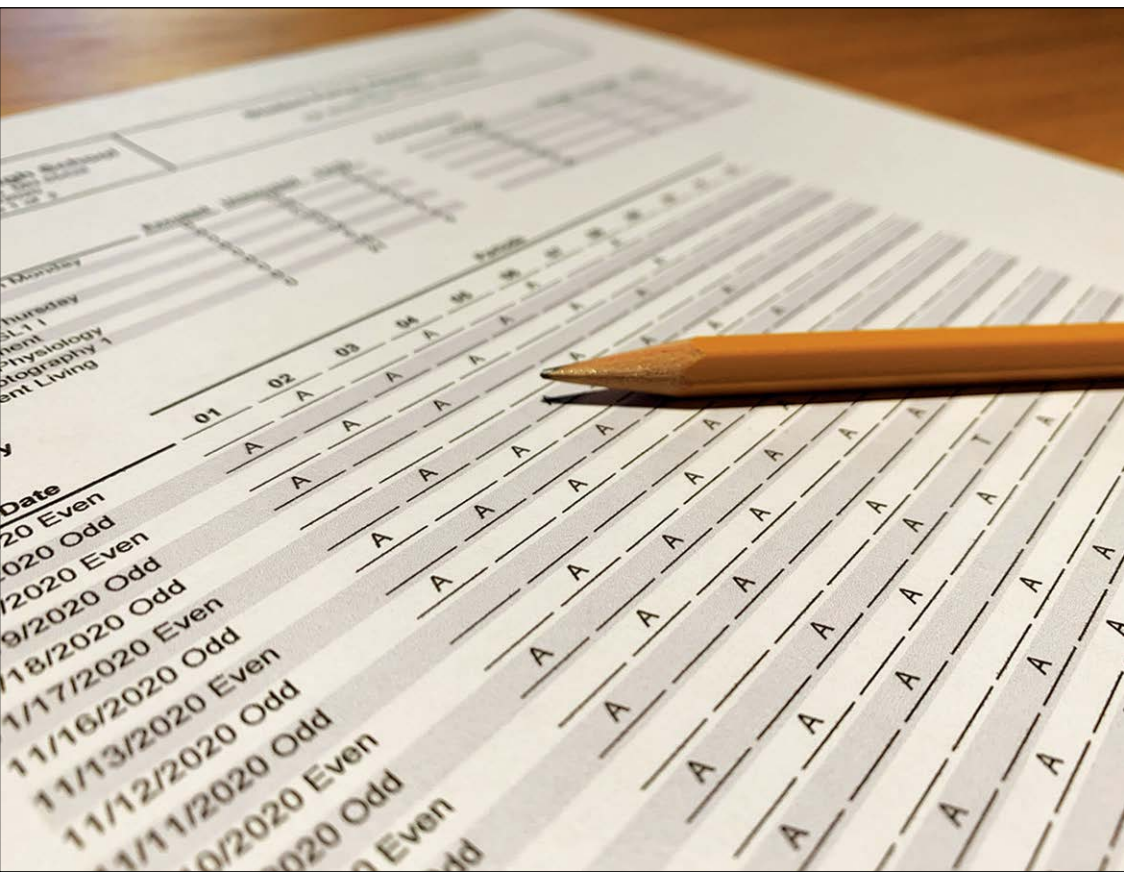


Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

The temptation to skip class is even more prevalent when every student is learning at home.

From the Editors

One of the most important things students can do to reach their goal of having a successful school year is simply attending school every day. This is especially important in a school year like this one when “attending school” does not involve physically going to a building.

By attending class every day, students are more likely to keep up with daily lessons and assignments and take quizzes and tests on time. Most students who have poor attendance are likely to be behind in classes and could possibly end

up failing.

It is important to remember that attendance is more than just showing up physically or dialing in to a Google Meet. Instead, attendance is about getting to class on time and being engaged in the daily work that is being done in your classes. This process of being present can help students learn basic skills such as being punctual and being accountable, which is critical to future success in the real world.

Whether it is during in-person learning or distance learning, students may have really good reasons for being absent and this is where com-

munication plays a big role. A student’s absence may fall under two categories: excused or unexcused. An excused absence is normally when the student has a doctor’s appointment or a family emergency. In order to get the absence excused, students need to call in to the Cooper attendance office, even during distance learning.

When a student chooses to skip school merely because they didn’t feel like being at school that day, the absence will be unexcused and will go on the student’s attendance record. When students miss multiple days of school each week and month, and these absences

are all unexcused, the parent or guardian are usually contacted and the student could face problems with truancy laws.

During distance learning, it is important for students to monitor these attendance issues, especially if they think attendance was improperly recorded. Contacting your teacher, your guidance counselor or the attendance clerk can be key in fixing these issues.

Whether the absence is excused or not, missing class can make school more challenging because absent students are still required to make up any missing assignments. When students miss class, they have to make up these assignments on their own and they will not necessarily have all the teacher support they would normally get during class time to understand what they need to do. This is why it is important to make sure you are at school and on time so that you won’t have to worry about missing any work.

School attendance is an important factor for any student who is trying to reach the goal of having a successful school year. Students should try their best to be at school and in class as the lessons start every day. Additionally, students should show up ready to work, because what’s the purpose of going to school if you aren’t going to do any work? If you are ever absent, make sure you are communicating with your teachers and getting your work done. Also, make sure you are contacting the school about your absence like you would during in-person learning.

Gym classes provide benefits to all types of students

Even though we are still learning at home, physical education courses can help Hawks stay healthy

By TIONA EDWARDS-WALKER
Quill staff writer

During sixth grade, I started to struggle in school. It put a lot of stress on me, especially considering the fact that I also was dealing with issues outside of the classroom. It wasn’t that I wasn’t getting smarter; instead, it just started to get harder for me to focus in school. One class that always felt like a nice chance to get a mental break from these struggles and participate in activities with friends was gym. I believe physical education classes are important throughout our years in school, including at the high school level.

Doing physical activity in a gym class during the school day can have an impact on your academic performance in other classes. Studies show that physical activity during school actually boosts brain functions. Exercise can help eliminate toxins and negative thoughts in your brain and help your brain produce endorphins, which can also have a positive effect on aca-



Photo by DAVINA BELLINGER

The group activities in the gym are on pause during distance learning.

demical success. Taking a physical education class can help students think more clearly and maintain focus during the day.

Another reason why physical education classes are important in school is because it is good to learn about your health. Learning how to eat right and stay in shape are important skills to gain early in life. According to the CDC, only 26 percent of high school

students get the recommended 60 minutes of exercise a day. Obesity and bad health are some of the main killers in America today. Not eating right and not exercising regularly is something that everyone should at least be aware of and that is one aspect of the teaching that happens in physical education classes.

Physical education classes are also a good way to improve

one’s sportsmanship and social skills. In physical education classes, the teachers make it important to socialize with people during class. Additionally, by focusing on team activities, students can develop conflict resolution skills, learn how to cooperate with their peers and develop leadership abilities. For example, if you are the leader of your team in a game, you have to learn how to make decisions that benefit everyone on your team. Situations like this can be related to experiences in adult life, such as parenting. When you are a parent, you have to make decisions that are not just the best for you, but for your child as well.

In conclusion, physical education classes should be part of every student’s schedule during school. Taking gym classes can help improve your brain functions, it can help you learn to stay healthy throughout your life, and it gives you good life skills that will make you a more mature adult. I feel as if all students should take physical education classes.

January 6 insurrection is a new low point in U.S. history

Members of right-wing extremist groups and their Republican political enablers pose a clear and present danger to our nation

By DAVIS RUPPERT-KAN
Quill staff writer

Yikes. Where do I even begin with the events of January 6?

I was going to write about the rise of the American and global right wing, its startlingly hasty radicalization and the stark contrast between the state’s complacency and outright rhetorical support of these fascists and that very same establishment’s vilification and vehement curtailing of the left. But even this seems trivial, considering what happened on January 6.

For those of you living under rocks or in blissfully ignorant echo chambers, on that day, countless far-right extremists stormed the Capitol in an overt coup attempt. Fallaciously believing the neo-

liberal Democratic party to be some sort of Stalinistic Trojan horse of the “radical left,” which had allegedly hacked and cheated throughout the presidential election, these rioters took over the Capitol in an outright insurrectionist, but luckily unsuccessful, coup attempt in an effort to keep Trump in power, or whatever else they were trying to accomplish.

Surely, by now we’ve all heard of the five deaths to come from Wednesday’s assault, notably the woman reportedly brandishing the Gadsden flag (the “Don’t Tread on Me,” right-wing libertarian one) who was trampled to death, and the vehement Trumpist and military veteran who was shot in the neck by a security officer.

There are a host of other

things I could talk about concerning this incident. The blatant hypocrisy of right-wing pundits having claimed Biden supporters would’ve done this very same rioting in the weeks leading up to the election, the contrast between the borderline eulogies channels like Fox News have been airing for the Trump supporters who were killed, take your pick. However, there is one take I keep seeing being circulated through social media that is especially problematic. This involves the comparison that is being made between the state’s reaction to the coup attempt, a planned riot that had been publicly discussed days beforehand, and the reaction to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests only a few months ago.

Many posts across social media I’ve seen regarding the matter seem to be buying into a sort of “horseshoe theory” fallacy, equating the far-right insurrectionists with the egalitarian BLM protesters and making the claim that the police should have treated the rioters on January 6 as they had the BLM protesters, inherently justifying said treatment of the BLM protests. While it’s important to make such a comparison for rhetorical and optical reasons, do not make the mistake of equating the two movements.

Instead, I’d advocate for the framing to instead be geared around the faults of the state, both the

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continues on page 5

Everyone can do something to help society

Having a positive impact on your community can come from volunteering or creating your own initiative to help others



Photo by ANDREA TRIBBLE

Thanks to more than \$200 in donations, Andrea Tribble (12) was able to make 104 "Blessing Bags" for homeless people.

By ANDREA TRIBBLE
Quill staff writer

A study taken before the pandemic found that nearly 200,000 Minnesotans experience homelessness at any given time. Within the past

year, those numbers have only increased as the COVID-19 outbreak has led to many people being evicted and facing homelessness.

One night, as I watched FOX 9, the camera filmed Minnehaha Park, one of the

many encampment hotspots for the homeless. There were so many tents spread across the park that questions started running through my head: "How do they access resources during this pandemic?" "How do they get through the harsh winter months?" I took my curiosity to the internet and found out ways to give a little bit of assistance to those experiencing homelessness.

I decided to round up some money from friends and anyone else who would donate to put together "Blessing Bags." These bags included items to meet a homeless person's basic needs, such as toiletries, menstrual items for women, hand and feet warmers, socks, snacks and first-aid supplies. As soon as I took my efforts to social media to look for anyone who would be willing to donate, an outpouring of support happened. I never expected so many people to donate to the cause. It was very inspiring to witness.

I started with the naive goal of making 30 complete bags. After more than \$200 in donations, I was able to put together 104 total bags. Among the many people who donated were members of the Cooper community. In addition, Ms. Kubista helped distribute the bags and put together a resource list that had locations of

shelters and food pantries that would be easily accessible for those receiving the Blessing Bags. The support of everyone who donated and shared the post led to this effort being a success.

Oftentimes, people experiencing homelessness are portrayed as people who you should avoid making eye contact with, people who deserve their circumstances, and people who should be left alone to fend for themselves and make something out of nothing. However, this isn't true. Poverty shouldn't be a life sentence and those who do fall victim to poverty deserve support and a community that will rally behind them.

The "unity" aspect of the word community is one that is easily overlooked. As we step into this new year, I challenge everyone to take a step back from their life's bubble and take a look around. There is so much work that needs to be done to make our community better, from supporting mental health initiatives, to addressing the achievement gap in our school systems, to protecting and honoring indigenous land, to raising awareness of LGBTQ issues. While no one can do everything, everyone can do something to make everyone else feel like accepted and valued members of society.

College choice tough to make on one's own

Seniors, juniors have many issues to weigh when picking a school

By MAKAYLA HOTT
Quill staff writer

Choosing the perfect college is hard if you don't know what you want to major in and you aren't sure what you're looking for in a college experience. At this point, I still haven't chosen my perfect college. I know I want to go to a technical college first and then move to a four-year university after that. I want to go to a technical college before a four-year school because I don't want to waste time and money as I try to get my generals done. I have been doing research on colleges for a few months now and I still haven't come to the conclusion about which college is the perfect one for me. Picking a school is definitely a big decision to make, which is why it is not an easy process to choose the perfect college for yourself.

Choosing the perfect college is hard for a lot of people because it is the biggest decision most teens have made so far in their lives. For many young people, it is tough to make decisions on their own. They need help when it comes to deciding things that will have a long-lasting impact on their lives.

Another challenge is that teens have many other things to worry about on top of picking a school. In addition to looking for a school, I have to worry about high school and working at my job, which is putting me under a lot of pressure.

Added to that is the pressure of not wanting to make the wrong decision about college, which could keep me from being as successful as I want to be. Much like other high school students, I just want to make myself proud by making my college choice without the help of anyone around me, including my family members.

Making the college decision for myself means that I am no longer a kid. I am the only person who can choose what college is best for me. No one else can decide for me what school I should attend because I have to do what makes me happy and choose the right path for myself. I go by the old saying that "good things come to those who wait." If you wait for something, it means you deserve and have earned the thing you have been waiting for. I believe I will feel this way about college once I make my school choice.

One thing I am trying to remember as I make this really big decision about school is to prioritize myself. I used to always think about everybody else's feelings and how my decisions would affect them. As I have matured in high school, I now try to worry less about how my choices will affect other people around me because it is my life. At the end of the day, I am in this alone, and if something is not making me happy, then it has to go. That is a good guideline for everyone to follow as they try to pick a college.

In conclusion, picking the right college by yourself is hard. In fact, some people don't go to college because they can't figure out what their perfect school might be. However, it is important to remember that it really doesn't matter where you go as long as it has a major you might want to pursue and it gives you a chance to get your degree. College is for everyone; you just need to make the best school choice that you can.

Clothing industry poses a threat to the environment

People's desire for affordable attire is adding to carbon emissions, the depletion of natural resources and growing landfills

By REYNA HERNANDEZ
Quill contributing writer

How we dress is one of the things that defines us. Whether you cover your body with a loincloth like our ancestors in the prehistoric era or with the latest styles from Old Navy, the clothes we wear are important. However, given all the new styles of clothing that emerge every year, and what happens to the old clothing we no longer want to wear, it is important to think about how much clothing we consume and its impact on the environment.

The average amount of clothing we consume each year has been growing. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 40 pieces of clothing were bought per person every year in the 1990s. Currently, the average ranges from 34-65 pieces of clothing. When we no longer wear those formerly new outfits, we each get rid of an average of 30 pounds of clothing each year. While about 20 percent of this discarded clothing is either recycled, donated or given to a sibling or cousin who it fits, the rest ends up in the trash, which is causing a growing environmental concern.

Another environmental concern comes from the actual production of clothing. When we think of industries that harm the environment, we think of manu-



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Studies show that it takes 7,500 liters of water to produce jeans.

facturing, energy, transportation and even food. However, according to UNCTAD, the fashion industry is the second highest cause of pollution in the world. First, the fashion industry produces more carbon emissions than all international flights and maritime shipments combined. In fact, the production of clothing and footwear produces 8 percent of the world's greenhouse gases.

The production of clothing also has an impact on water usage. The clothing sector uses 93 billion cubic meters of water each year, which is enough to support the water consumption needs of five million people. It is also estimated that the clothing industry is

responsible for 20 percent of total water waste globally. When you consider that it takes 7,500 liters of water just to produce jeans, it is clear we have a problem.

The disposal of materials related to clothing also connects to the issue of water. UNCTAD has found that half a million tons of microfiber has been thrown into the sea, which is equivalent to three million barrels of oil. When it comes to land disposal, the organization estimates that a quantity of textiles the size of a garbage truck is buried or burned somewhere in the world every second. With clothing production doubling between 2000 and 2014, one can see that these disposal issues will

be increasing in noticeable ways.

Fortunately, there are things we can do to prevent these problems. The first is to buy less clothing and wear it more. It does not matter if the clothing item is out of fashion or if newer clothes came out, the important thing is that you fully use what you already have.

Another tip is to buy second-hand clothes. There are many stores that specialize in carrying beautiful clothes that were in the hands of a person who decided to donate them. In addition to the importance of reusing clothing, buying second-hand is also not so expensive.

If you are inclined to buy new clothing, consider options that have a smaller impact on the environment. You should try to buy clothes made of natural materials such as organic cotton and hemp.

Perhaps the most important tip is to set yourself a limit when it comes to buying clothes. I bet that some people reading this have clothes at home that still have the price tag on them and have never been worn. That is why it is important to not buy excessively and unnecessarily.

Overall, it is important to be careful, observant and attentive to the clothing you buy and how that clothing was produced. Remember that we have to take care of our planet and one way to do so is by making better decisions about clothing.

STICKING WITH ONLINE LEARNING IS BEST OPTION continued from page 4

ary students at home is consistency. Most secondary students have a wider variety of more difficult work to do in school. As a result, they had a hard time adjusting to distance learning in the first place, especially high school students who take AP, IB and honors classes. Now that older students have spent half of the school year at home, they have gotten

used to the distance learning model. Having students switch once again to in-person learning would be another difficult transition at this point. On the other hand, it must be remembered that some students have been looking forward to returning in person to get involved in campus life. Although staying home is good for consistency, it is tough for those

students who want to return to their buildings.

Ultimately, the learning model decisions are having both good and bad impacts. The return of elementary students to their classrooms is good because there will not be as much contact between these students, which will decrease the risk of them spreading COVID-19. At the same time,

it would be better if these younger students returned after the staff had access to the vaccine. Meanwhile, secondary school students' safety has been ensured with the decision to stay in distance learning. While this has a negative impact on the students who desire to get back in the building, it helps keep the school year consistent and everyone healthy.

JANUARY 6 INSURRECTION IS A NEW LOW POINT IN U.S. HISTORY continued from page 4

indefensible actions of the Trump administration and the complacent, if not complicit, aspects of the very system itself, present regardless of which party rules over the presidency or how many "bad actors" there are in Congress.

Since nothing similarly horrendous happened on inauguration day, the Democrats are now

in control of the presidency and have a very slim majority in both branches of Congress, mirroring President Obama's administration from 2008-2010. In the eyes of the public at that time, Obama was viewed by some as the most "leftist" and progressive person in politics. Nowadays, the "Overton window" has shifted to include far

more progressive ideas, and there are quite a few progressive (progressive by American standards, at least) political figures in Congress to push Biden forward.

After January 6, I just hope this new progressive power is actually utilized, as not to recreate the material conditions that led to Trump and the existential rise

of bigoted, fascistic, right-wing populism. But, then again, the ever-radicalizing right wing, teamed with the rampant vilification of anything to the left of Nordic-style social democracy by Democrats, doesn't seem all that promising when it comes to what tangible progress can be made through electoral means.

Premier Performers

The story of the musicians and artists who bring their talents to Cooper

Zoey Morris

By JACK ATKINSON
Quill staff writer

Zoey Morris (12) has gotten involved in a range of Cooper arts activities, including theater, choir and art classes.

"I've been in theater since freshman year and choir I've always been doing since elementary school," she said. "My drawing class I started up just this year."

Morris said her decision to get involved in theater came from her desire to take a risk. Meanwhile, her interest in choir comes from it being "a wonderful escape."

After four years in these activities, Morris said she has developed important relationships with her peers.

"With theater and choir both, I've enjoyed being part of a community with people who I genuinely view to be my school family and it's something I really

will miss once I graduate," she said.

Morris has taken part in numerous shows through her time in the arts. In addition to *The Addams Family*, she was in *Hairspray* and *Ragtime*, and even developed her own one act show. On the choir side, she has taken part in the annual Orchestra Hall shows.

Although the arts have been a big part of Morris' life at school, so have the sciences.

"My favorite class in school is probably HL Chemistry because science has always been a big subject I enjoy and understand," Morris said.

Outside of the school day, Morris said she enjoys watching anime and making soap and earrings.

After graduating, Morris plans on going into the medical field to become a pharmacist. She also hopes to stay connected to the arts.



Photo by LIFETOUGH

Tabitha Bergeson

By JAWENAH FREEMAN
Quill staff writer

Tabitha Bergeson (12) is a singer in Cooper's choir program.

"I took Freshman Choir, Bel Cantor for two years and now I am in Concert Choir my senior year," Bergeson said.

Bergeson first joined choir during sixth grade.

"I started taking choir because I have had a love for singing since I was little. When I was younger, I would always be singing no matter where I was and no matter what I was doing," she said.

During her time in choir, Bergeson has enjoyed forming friendships with her classmates. As for her favorite choir memory, she said she has enjoyed taking part in the annual Orchestra Hall concerts.

Although distance learning has

had an impact on how choir operates, Bergeson said she has had leadership roles in this activity in the past.

"I have been a section leader, a robe director and a social director," she said.

In addition to enjoying Concert Choir, Bergeson said her favorite class during the school day is AVID because of the "relationships [she] has gained with all of [her] peers and [her] teachers."

Outside of school, Bergeson enjoys spending time with friends and family.

"I also have a hobby farm so I love taking care of my animals," she said.

For college, Bergeson will go to North Hennepin Community College for her generals until she decides what she wants to do in the future.

"I am currently deciding between being a youth pastor or a veterinary technician," she said.



Photo by T. BERGESON

Ava Lindstrom

By ERIN CHUNN
Quill staff writer

Ava Lindstrom (12) has taken part in many arts-related activities at Cooper. Over her four years of high school, she has been part of choir, Marching Band, theater and art.

When it comes to choir, Lindstrom said she has had a "love for music" since elementary school.

"[Choir] has just been a great way to start the day," she said. "[I like] being allowed to stand and move around rather than starting the day in a desk."

In addition to choir, Lindstrom has taken part in Marching Band as part of the color guard. Although color guard looked different this year due to COVID, she said they were still able to have a season.

"We were able to still have the

majority of football performances while social distancing and wearing masks," Lindstrom said.

Lindstrom has also taken part in theater. She said she started acting in sixth grade and continued with this activity throughout her time at Cooper.

"My parents like to say that I am very dramatic and a big character, so they encouraged me to join the school productions," she said.

Another creative outlet for Lindstrom has been her art classes. She said her participation in Project Greenway was a highlight of her time in art because she got to use her "knowledge of theater and lighting designs to light the modeling portions of the show."

Next fall, Lindstrom will go to college as an elementary education or special education major. She also wants music to be a part of her life in the future.



Photo by AVALINDSTROM

Aaliyah Hassan

By ERIN CHUNN
Quill staff writer

Aaliyah Hassan (12) is an actress in Cooper's theater program.

What started as a junior year class she didn't want to be part of at first has become a big creative outlet for Hassan. In fact, she said her theater teacher, Ms. Wurzer, helped inspire her to audition for the fall show.

"Once I started actually acting, it changed my whole perspective," she said.

Of the many aspects of theater she enjoys, Hassan cited the supportive attitude of her peers as her favorite.

"Everyone is truly so kind and sweet, especially when I was new and confused about everything. They really made me feel like I was part of their community," she said.

According to Hassan, an important

memory of her time in theater took place during the fall show.

"We did a rehearsal the night before, but it looked kind of messy. Everyone thought we were going to mess up on opening night, but we ended up doing so well," she said.

Another creative outlet for Hassan is her favorite class: English. Hassan said that writing essays comes naturally to her.

"If I am writing a paper, it doesn't really feel like a task I have to get done. It just kind of gives me a way to express my opinions on whatever topics which I enjoy," she said.

Outside of school, Hassan likes to relax her mind by knitting, working on coloring books, walking and watching TV.

Although Hassan has not decided on a set career path, she is currently interested in becoming a registered nurse.



Photo by AALIYAH HASSAN

MCU gets closure in flawed *Endgame*

After the excellent *Infinity War*, *Endgame* has problems with characters, plot



Photo courtesy of MARVEL STUDIOS

Seeing all of the Marvel heroes in one story is a definite highlight of a movie that has some shortcomings.

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Avengers: Endgame is the 23rd installment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and was released in theaters on April 26, 2019 to immediate commercial and critical success. The film, which rates at a 94 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, made \$2.798 billion, making it the highest-grossing movie of all time. While I think the prior film to *Endgame*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, which was also directed by Joe and Anthony Russo and written by Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, provided a mysterious and haunting start to this two-part epic, *Endgame* fails to be a satisfying final adventure to the many characters in the MCU. While *Avengers: Endgame* is a bad movie, there still are some positives elements in the film.

If you are unfamiliar with the MCU, it is an interconnecting universe of films and TV shows based on characters from Marvel Comics that all take place in the same universe. *Avengers: Infinity War*, released on April 27, 2018, ended on a massive cliffhanger that had Thanos, the main antagonist of the film, defeating the Avengers by collecting all six Infinity Stones, which allowed him to literally "snap" half of all life out of existence because of his fear of overpopulation. The "snap" killed off many iconic Avengers, in addition to newer characters such as Spider-Man and Doctor Strange, leaving heroes such as Iron Man, the Hulk and Thor alive. This set up *Endgame*, in which we see the surviving characters trying to fight against Thanos and reverse the "snap" from *Infinity War*.

The first element that makes *Avengers: Endgame* a bad film to me is how they use time travel. Much like *Back to the Future*, *Endgame* presents its own logic for time travel. While I'm fine with their time travel premise, I do not

like how they use it in the story. The positive aspect to the time travel device is that it allows the main characters to travel back in time to previous films, which allows characters like Iron Man and Captain America to get closure with figures from their past. Of course, if the main purpose of collecting the Infinity Stones from the past is to reverse the "snap," then all of the characters could have just traveled to one timeline where Thanos had all of the stones instead of splitting up into different time lines. Sure, it would have been a difficult fight, but Thor proved at the end of *Infinity War* by throwing his magical axe into Thanos' stomach that he could be beaten. Moreover, with the help of the powerful Captain Marvel, the Avengers could have easily defeat-

Thanos is a sort of protagonist in *Infinity War*. He is the character the audience follows for the largest amount of time and he has to make some of the most difficult choices in the film, even sacrificing his own daughter to retrieve one of the six Infinity Stones. Unfortunately, when we get to *Endgame*, the interesting aspects of the Thanos character seem ignored.

ed an Infinity Stone-powered Thanos without having to visit multiple time lines. I understand that this is not the route that the writers decided to take in order to help with character development in *Endgame*, but it is just too stupid of a plot hole to ignore.

A second element that makes *Avengers: Endgame* a bad film is the antagonist, Thanos. In *Infinity War*, the Thanos character has a legitimate if misguided reason for wanting to kill half of all creatures in the galaxy: he is fearful of overpopulation and the suffering that would cause. In a way, this makes Thanos a sort of protagonist in *Infinity War*. He is the character the audience follows for the largest amount

of time and he has to make some of the most difficult choices in the film, even sacrificing his own daughter to retrieve one of the six Infinity Stones. Unfortunately, when we get to *Endgame*, the interesting aspects of the Thanos character from *Infinity War* are ignored. For instance, one of the first main plot points in the film is when the Avengers find Thanos on his farm. They discover that he has destroyed the Infinity Stones to prevent their further use, which I think totally makes sense. Suddenly, though, Thor decides to "go for the head" and kills Thanos. As a result, instead of the compelling *Infinity War* Thanos, the bad guy for the rest of *Endgame* is actually an alternate time line Thanos from 2014, who has not yet met the Avengers and does not have any of the Infinity Stones.

The alternate time line Thanos is not as interesting or threatening as the Thanos from *Infinity War*. For example, there is a scene in *Endgame* during which Scarlet Witch confronts alternate time line Thanos about killing her partner, Vision. Thanos' reply to her is that he doesn't even know who she is. This is kind of an awkward moment, if you ask me. If the writers really wanted Thanos to return and continue on as the main bad guy, then maybe he should have been resurrected, so it would have been the original Thanos who fights the Avengers in *Infinity War*, instead of this cheap, younger and less interesting version of the character.

On the positive side, *Endgame* does a great job of providing a satisfying conclusion to some of the main MCU characters. While I may strongly dislike the time travel and the main antagonist of *Endgame*, the endings given to Iron Man and Captain America are almost perfectly done. When the MCU began with the first Iron Man film, Tony Stark was a selfish person who only made

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Quill Comics Corner

Uhhh...Working Title

By Davis Ruppert-Kan



Focus on young Batman helps *Arkham* shine

Arkham Origins deals with an untested Batman who must deal with his inner rage while facing an army of foes



Photo courtesy of WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

One interesting decision the developers of *Arkham Origins* made was to set the action of the game on the night of Christmas Eve.

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Batman is undeniably one of the most iconic fictional characters ever created. He is especially beloved for having one of the most well-known codes out of all comic book characters: he does not kill. While that mentality might not always be for the good, it makes the character an interesting one that can always be approached in different ways. For instance, the excellent 2013 video game *Batman: Arkham Origins* focuses on the inner rage within a younger and angrier Batman, whose one rule of not killing his foes is tested by a newly emerged threat: the Joker.

One of the main highlights of *Arkham Origins* is its compelling use of setting. Specifically, the story is set on Christmas Eve night. While the ideal place to be during the Christmas season is inside a warm house next to a cozy fire surrounded by loved ones, Batman finds himself alone

out in the cold winter night. Batman's isolation connects to one of the main themes of *Arkham Origins*: Batman must learn to accept help from allies, such as James Gordon, to stop the Joker. At this point, the younger, angrier Batman is not willing to work with others due to the PTSD he has suffered after losing his parents as a child. His need to learn the value of teamwork is underscored in the final gameplay section when Batman must team up with James Gordon to fight a group of criminals. This sequence is the icing on the cake when it comes to the development of the setting and the theme of the game.

A second element I love about *Arkham Origins* is the characterization of the Joker, voiced by Troy Baker. While I may not agree with the game developers' decision to make the Joker's ultimate reveal be that he has been masquerading as Black Mask, it is a brilliant twist and cutscene in the game. Even before he

is unmasked, the Joker's goal at first is to simply kill Batman by placing a \$50 million bounty on his head. But as the night progresses, Batman does something that shocks even the Joker: he saves the Joker's life. As the Joker is taken into custody after being saved by Batman from falling to death, the Joker develops an obsession with Batman, fascinated by his no-killing rule, which would be so easy to manipulate, as the Joker eventually does in the years to come. While Mark Hamill may be my favorite voice actor for the Joker, Baker delivers a brilliant performance as the Clown Prince of Crime within the game.

A final effective element in *Arkham Origins* is the variety of villains featured in the story. While I may prefer the more common Batman villain such as Mr. Freeze in my Batman stories, *Arkham Origins* includes a variety of lesser-known villains, such as Firefly and Electrocutioner. All of their interactions

with Batman are unique and interesting, especially when Batman engages with them in boss fights. Out of all of the villains in this game besides the Joker, I think the best one has to be Bane, who is a brutal and intimidating adversary to the Dark Knight in *Arkham Origins*.

Overall, I think what makes *Arkham Origins* one of the better recent Batman games is the relationship that develops between Batman and the Joker. Toward the middle of the game, after the Joker is captured, his origin story is revealed, which is immediately followed by Batman's origin story. This allows players to see the parallels between the two characters and how they have taken similar journeys into becoming who they are. While some gameplay glitches and questionable story elements prevent me from giving the game a perfect rating, *Batman: Arkham Origins* deserves four out of five stars due to its amazing story and characters.

Fallen Order turns players into Jedi Knights

Classic video game is one of many great installments in the *Star Wars* universe



Photo courtesy of ELECTRONIC ARTS

While not technically an open-world game, *Jedi: Fallen Order* has the engaging feel of one.

By ZACARI WATSON
Quill staff writer

Disney's December 2020 announcements about new media offerings in the *Star Wars* universe make this a good time to revisit the second-most-recent video game in the *Star Wars* franchise, *Jedi: Fallen Order*. This game was produced by Respawn Entertainment and released on November 15, 2019. *Jedi: Fallen Order* represents another excellent installment in a current string of great *Star Wars* video games.

The game starts on Bracca, which is a scrapyard planet. The main character, Cal Kestis, is a survivor of Order 66, which mandated the assassination of all Jedi. Since escaping with his life, Cal Kestis has been living anonymously as a scrapper.

One day, Cal Kestis is forced to use the force (there's a little pun for you), which results in him getting tracked down by the empire. However, he is rescued by Cere, a former Jedi, and Greez, a pilot. Cere tells Cal that they need to find a Jedi Holocron (basically, a box of information) that has the names of force-sensitive children so they can train them and restore the Jedi Order.

One interesting thing about

The game features free roam, so when you complete the story of the game, you can still go to the different planets throughout the game and explore.

Final season of *Titan* is a satisfying end to series

The post-apocalyptic show benefits from excellent source material, state-of-the-art animation and an engaging musical score

By CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN
Quill staff writer

Wit Studio is an animation company well known for shows in the dark fantasy, post-apocalypse and action genres. Some of their hit shows include *Seraph of the End* and *Kabaneri of the Iron Fortress*. However, their best show may be *Attack on Titan*. In this series, Wit Studio does not disappoint thanks to action-packed fighting scenes and a creative, dystopian concept. The animation quality in *Attack on Titan* is also incredible and Wit Studio is very consistent in making that a centerpiece of the show. Now that the fourth and final season of the show got underway in December 2020, it is the perfect time to check out this excellent series.

Attack on Titan takes place in a world where humanity is forced to live inside cities that are surrounded by walls that protect them from giant, man-eating humanoids known as "Titans." The story follows our main protagonist, Eren Yeager, whose hometown is destroyed by the Colossal Titan, an event that leads to the death of Eren's mother. Eren eventually comes to terms with this loss and decides he will



Photo courtesy of PRODUCTION I.G.

The plot presents many challenges to the show's central heroes.

kill all the titans. Years later, Eren, alongside his friends Armin Arlet and Mikasa Ackerman, joins the Survey Corps, a foundation that focuses on protecting civilians living within the walls of the city and exterminating the titans.

The anime series is based on the manga series of the same name by Hakime Isayama. This has led to some instances when viewers have questioned the pacing of the *Attack on Titan* anime. For instance, some critics claim that the second and third seasons of the show were a bit rushed. However, this decision was made by Isayama,

who asked his scriptwriter, Hiroshi Seko, and director, Tetsuro Araki, to speed up the anime since it was trailing the manga at a very slow rate.

In my opinion, I think the anime does a great job showing the important parts of the existing volumes of the manga and keeping it largely up to date. While there may be instances of "missing content" that is in the manga but not the anime, it is not enough to alter the story or disappoint viewers. In fact, viewers who are concerned about that can always read the manga. Ultimately, the structure of the

anime series works and helps it stand alone despite its connections to the manga.

Another noteworthy aspect of *Attack on Titan* is the incredible music. During the first 13 episodes of the show, the opening theme is "Crimson Bow and Arrow" by Linked Horizon and the ending theme is "This Beautiful Cruel World" by Yoko Hikasa. Later, in episodes 14–25, the opening theme is "Wings of Freedom" by Linked Horizon and the ending theme is "Great Escape" by Cinema Staff. At one point, both opening songs were released as singles, selling more than 100,000 copies in one week. Meanwhile, the soundtrack music to the series, which is composed by Hiroyuki Sawano, consistently adds intensity to the show as you are watching the action unfold.

In conclusion, I think *Attack on Titan* is a must-watch series that deserves four out of five stars. The animation quality still stands tall in 2021, the pacing of the show isn't rushed, and the music is always engaging. If you're into dark, post-apocalyptic fantasies with a lot of action, I think *Attack on Titan* is for you. You can watch all the seasons of *Attack on Titan* on Hulu and Crunchyroll.

Jedi: Fallen Order is that, while it's not necessarily an open-world game, it's still similar to one. The game features free roam, so when you complete the story of the game, you can still go to the different planets throughout the game and find things that you missed or couldn't access before. You can also get new upgrades, unlock new force powers and customize your lightsaber.

Another appealing thing about *Jedi: Fallen Order* is that there is a log that keeps track of all the creatures, monsters and enemies you fight. It also keeps track of the things you discover on different planets, whether that be plants, old structures or force echoes.

Throughout the game, you can find different customization features. You can unlock different outfit colors, colors for the ship, colors for your droid companion and, of course, lightsaber colors. On each planet, there are at least five workbenches that allow you to customize your lightsaber, whether that be the color of the hilt, different hilt designs or the color of the blade.

These are just a few of the great features of *Jedi: Fallen Order*. Even if you don't like *Star Wars*, it's still fun to explore and solve the different puzzles in this release. The force is definitely with this four-star game. May the force be with you.

Classic game drops players in 1940s L.A.

L.A. Noire allows gamers to be a police officer solving a complicated mystery



Photo courtesy of ROCKSTAR GAMES

The graphics of *L.A. Noire* embrace the look and feel of famous Hollywood Film Noir movies.

By CECELIA NICHOLS
Quill staff writer

Rockstar Games has a couple of popular series under their belt, including the *Grand Theft Auto* and *Red Dead* franchises. However, one game that seems to slide under most people's radar is *L.A. Noire*. Most likely, that is because the game was published by them, but not developed by them. The game was released on May 17, 2011 for Playstation 3 and Xbox 360. It was later released for Microsoft Windows on November 8, 2011. Additionally, there was a worldwide re-release on Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One on November 14, 2017.

Despite all these releases, *L.A. Noire* is rarely brought up when titles from Rockstar Games are mentioned. However, I believe the game is one that should be played by anyone who enjoys the detective genre. Potential players of the game should be warned, though: some of the cases deal with very graphic deaths and players will come across crime scenes where badly beaten or mutilated corpses are subject to investigation.

The game is set after the end of World War II. The protagonist, Cole Phelps, is a decorated USMC veteran of the Pacific campaign. He returns to Los Angeles, California to live with his family while working as a patrol officer for the LAPD.

In L.A., corruption is rampant, the drug trade is exploding and murder rates in the city are at an all-time high. In his fight to climb the ranks of the LAPD and do what's right, it's Phelps' job to unravel the truth behind a string of arson attacks, racketeering conspiracies and brutal murders. He must search for clues, chase down suspects and interrogate witnesses as he struggles to find the truth in a city where everyone has something to hide.

The game is set in Los Angeles, California in 1947, drawing influence from movies and real-life crimes from that time period. For example, the "A Marriage Made in Heaven" desk case is inspired by a real crime that occurred in the mid-1940s in L.A. The game is also heavily influenced by films such as *Chinatown*, *The Naked City* and *L.A. Confidential*.

The game has the player go through various ranks of the LAPD, from patrol officer to homicide and more. Patrol desk is basically the tutorial section of the game. However, each ranking has the same form of gameplay elements. The player is introduced to the case before going to the crime scene. Once there, you start by investigating clues around the crime scene. While investigating clues, music will be playing in the background. Once you have found all the useful clues, the music will stop. I found this to be helpful since there are some items lying around that don't particularly relate to the case.

Next, you talk to people at the crime scene to gather more information for the case. Once you have enough information, you go to various locations to talk to people who had some relation to the victim. You can drive to these places

L.A. NOIRE

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Hate provides a powerful take on society's ills

Based on the 2017 novel of the same name by Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give* is a sobering snapshot of contemporary America

By ARIEL CHRISTENSEN
Quill staff writer

The Hate U Give is a drama that was released in theaters on September 7, 2018. The film is based on the book of the same name, which was published on February 28, 2017. As you can see, the movie came quickly to theaters after the book was published, which is testimony to the success of the novel. Much like the book, *The Hate U Give* is a powerful movie with a strong message that every person should watch. This film is even more relevant in recent months after the protests and riots that were going last summer. *The Hate U Give* effectively shows the way society uses stereotypes about black people to justify racism and violence against them.

In the movie, the main character is Starr, played by Amandla Stenberg. She has grown up in the Garden Heights neighborhood, which is considered the rough part of town. Even though she lives in an all-black neighborhood, she attends an all-white private school. The uneasy balance between her two worlds is shattered when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend at the hands of a police officer. Facing pressure from all sides of the community, Starr must find her voice and decide to stand up for what's right.

One of the best acting scenes in the movie is when Starr's best friend, Khalil (Algee Smith), gets shot by the police, who mistake the hairbrush he is holding for a gun. When this happens, Starr is in shock and is extremely emo-



Photo courtesy of FOX 2000 PICTURES

The Hate U Give remains timely due to its focus on issues of race and the actions of the police.

tional. You feel as if you are in the car with Starr and feeling the pain she is feeling. The officer is also in shock, as he thinks to himself, "What did I just do?!" No one could have expected for Khalil to die over a hairbrush. It starts to make the audience think about how this type of thing actually happens in our country and how it could all be based on stereotypes and racism.

Another powerful scene occurs later in the week after Khalil's death. During the scene, Starr is at school when her friend, Hailey, starts acting racist. Hailey then justifies Khalil's killing by saying he was "threatening" and a "gang

member" who would just get killed eventually. Starr reacts by pointing her hairbrush at Hailey, acting as if it was a gun. This is another scene that effectively connects to the movie's main themes.

A third important scene is when Starr and her brother decide to go to their father's store while protests and riots are going on. Once they get in the store, some gang members who have problems with Starr's dad set the store on fire. While Starr and her brother eventually get out of the building, a gang member pulls out a gun on Starr's dad. However, Starr's nine-year-old brother gets in front of the gun. It's a re-

ally powerful moment because it shows the way hateful moments can quickly get out of hand.

The Hate U Give is a five-star movie that everyone needs to see. It will help any viewer look at the world differently and understand that what is going on with racism in America is wrong. The movie is successful in making viewers feel as if they are in each character's shoes, especially Starr, who stands up for what's right regardless of what others think of her. The film ultimately delivers the message that you must stand up for what you believe in and find your voice even though it may be hard at first.

Mandalorian reaches new heights in great second season

In addition to exploring the relationship between the title character and Baby Yoda, many new characters join the show

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

The first season of the highly praised series *The Mandalorian* ended on a high note. There were many questions about what was going to happen in season two and viewers were anxious to see more of Baby Yoda. More Baby Yoda is exactly what we get in the second season of this action-packed show, which is now available to watch in its entirety on Disney+. In fact, the second season *The Mandalorian* is even better than the first.

Season two revolves around the Mandalorian's quest to deliver Baby Yoda to a Jedi so that he can receive the proper training. During his first mission, the Mandalorian seeks out another Mandalorian who may be able to guide him to a Jedi. However, the Mandalorian discovers that the other Mandalorian he seeks is not, in fact, a Mandalorian, but someone who just has Mandalorian armor. Our hero soon bargains with the imposter Mandalorian to get this culturally important armor back. It later turns out that this is the armor of famous *Star Wars* character Boba Fett.

After learning no information from the imposter Mandalorian about where to go next, the Mandalorian must transport a passenger with valuable cargo in exchange for the information he is seeking. Along the way, he crashes due to a skirmish with some X-wings flown by the New Republic.

Eventually, the Mandalorian



Photo courtesy of WALT DISNEY STUDIOS

Season two finally reveals the real name of Baby Yoda: Grogu.

gets to where he needs to go. Not only does he drop off his passenger and cargo, he also finds some true Mandalorians. Together, they hijack an Imperial, Gozanti-class cruiser. Once the Mandalorian has gained their trust, the true Mandalorians give him information about where to find an old Jedi friend of theirs. Along with the adorable Baby Yoda, the Mandalorian sets off to find this so-called friend.

After being hired to kill a Jedi by the leader of a small, Imperial-owned town, the Mandalorian soon finds the Jedi he is seeking, which happens to be the famous *Star Wars* character Ahsoka Tano. She has a chat with Baby Yoda through The Force and finds out his name is Grogu and his age is 50 years old. Although that seems really old, for his species, it means

Grogu is still in the infant stage of development. Ahsoka eventually sends Grogu and the Mandalorian away so Grogu can determine his own path.

The Mandalorian and Grogu next go to the planet of Tython, where Grogu goes into a meditative state to call out to any remaining Jedi for guidance. As this takes place, Grogu is kidnapped by the main foe of the series, Moff Gideon, who wants Grogu for his own evil plans. This prompts the Mandalorian to assemble a team to rescue Grogu, which sets up the exciting conclusion of season two.

One thing that the show has done a great job of is hiding the identity of new characters from being leaked before each episode airs. Of course, the main character they hid during season one was Grogu,

who was kept from the public until he was found by the Mandalorian. While this did delay the release of Grogu toys and plushies, it did benefit the viewer, who never knew what would happen, or who would show up, next. This approach continues during season two with the appearance of several *Star Wars* fan favorites, including a major character that is seen at the end of the season's final episode.

Another highlight of the show has been the excellent special effects. The quality of the CGI has been similar to that in the *Star Wars* films, which makes the show feel that much more cinematic. However, there are a few sequences in season two when the visuals and the audio used while CGI characters are speaking do not quite match up. This is slightly disappointing given the largely effective nature of the show's CGI.

One element I found interesting about season two is its ending. In many ways, the central story of the first two seasons is wrapped up in the final episode. As a result, audiences are left wondering what might happen in season three. The Mandalorian could go back to join up with one of his past friends or he could move on to work for an as-yet-unknown mystery character.

Overall, season two of *The Mandalorian* was more action packed and filled with fun than the first season. This is a consistently five-star show that will leave all viewers excited to see what will happen in season three.

Talking Dreams finds Echosmith at their creative peak

The 2013 album produced multiple singles that moved around on the *Billboard* charts for nearly two years

By ZACARI WATSON
Quill staff writer

Echosmith is a band that formed in 2009. The main genres of music they make are indie, pop and rock. The band's members are Sydney Sierota and her brothers, Noah and Graham. Their oldest brother, Jamie, was also in the band before leaving it in 2016. Their most popular album is called *Talking Dreams*, which was released on October 1, 2013. I chose to revisit this

older release for this review because the album features some of the best music I've ever heard. It really makes you feel when you listen to it, which is important in these difficult times.

When you listen to Echosmith's songs, they each have a different feel to them. Perhaps this is most noticeable with the most famous song from this album, "Cool Kids." Originally released on May 31, 2013 before the whole album came out, the song eventually got airplay throughout 2013 and 2014,

peaking at number 13 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 charts. This is an upbeat song with lyrics that deal with a boy and girl who both want to be noticed. This is definitely one of the album's best songs.

Echosmith's songs on *Talking Dreams* have a way of bringing out different emotions, such as happiness, excitement, love, inspiration and a sense of wholeness. One great example of this is the song "Bright," which seems to have all of those emotions in one package. This was the band's second big

single from the album and it eventually got to number 40 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 charts. While a little less rock than "Cool Kids," this song has a great melody that pulls the listener in.

If you are interested in the indie, pop or rock genres of music, and are looking for something to connect to, I recommend Echosmith's *Talking Dreams*. This five-star album still holds up more than half a decade after its first release. As a whole, Echosmith's music is incredible.

Fitness still possible at home

Many means exist for students to stay in shape while distance learning continues



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Mr. Nelson is running a virtual version of his after-school weight room program to keep students active at home.

By MAX REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Staying in shape can be a struggle for students. This is especially the case this school year when we are all stuck at home due to distance learning as the winter months arrive. Here are some tips to help students stay in shape while at home.

1. Attend Cooper's virtual weight room

Administrative Intern Mr. Nelson has been hosting the Cooper virtual weight room on a Google Meet session.

The virtual weight room, which runs Mondays through Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:45 p.m., gives students the opportunity to socialize and exercise with fitness-minded people.

"The virtual weight room gives students a place to discuss fitness and how to use their surroundings to improve themselves," Nelson said.

In the virtual weight room, body weight workouts are the primary focus, as each student's resources at their home are different.

According to Nelson, attendance in the virtual weight room has been "slow" so far, as only one or two students a week are attending.

"We have been a little slow so far," Nelson said. "However, I would really like to start conversations on the Schoology course that has been created for the virtual weight room."

All interested students can attend the virtual weight room using the code: chsweightroom.

2. Do chores and take movement breaks throughout the day

Believe it or not, simply doing chores and moving around can help one get exercise. For example, outdoor activities in the winter such as shoveling, building a snow fort or sledding can be great forms of exercise. If students do these types of activities, they are able to get out of the house and work up a sweat while doing so.

However, in frigid temperatures, doing chores or moving around inside the house may be better options. Taking movement breaks throughout the day is critical. Walking around the house in between classes can relieve the stress of distance learning and will relax your body.

According to physical education teacher Ms. Schaffer, students can incorporate fitness into their routine as long as they are "intentional about it." Schaffer said that students could mix in a set of push-ups, planks, squats or crunches during class since most students do not have their cameras turned on.

3. Do different types of workouts at home

It does not take a lot of equipment to stay in shape while at home. One could simply use household items weighing various amounts to substitute for dumbbells in traditional workouts. Some examples of these items are milk jugs, soup cans or a stack of books.

"If [students] do not have access to workout equipment, YouTube is a valuable tool to find workouts to complete without any equipment needed," physical education teacher Ms. Rademacher

said. "You can still use your body weight and still get very good strength gains."

One good workout to do is an aerobic workout. There are many types of aerobic exercises you can do at home, including jumping jacks, burpees, mountain climbers and high knees. Doing these activities will definitely help you sweat and, best of all, anybody can do them since they do not require equipment.

Overall, a mix of cardio exercises with some strength training will help students maintain a healthy body during distance learning.

4. Use weights if you have them at home

Lifting weights is the best way to stay in shape while indoors and when it isn't safe to go to a traditional gym. If you have free weights lying around your house, the winter season is a good time to use them. There are many different types of exercises you can do with free weights, such as bicep curls, incline press and shoulder press. If you have light weights at home, doing multiple reps and sets will help you feel the burn.

Free weights strengthen the muscles much more than the traditional resistance machines many people use at the gym. However, you have to be careful with free weights, as there is a higher chance of injuring yourself while using them. A suggestion to combat this potential disaster is to find a video online of someone showing you the proper way to do your desired exercise and start with lighter weights to practice good form.

able to get the season restarted by playing in a bubble at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. This move went well for the NBA and the league was able to get the rest of the season in without having one coronavirus case.

The 2019-2020 NBA playoffs eventually got off to a bang in the first round when both No. 1 seeds, the Milwaukee Bucks, featuring league MVP

Clippers, led by Kawhi Leonard and Paul George, had trouble with the Dallas Mavericks before eventually pulling away from them, and the Denver Nuggets, led by Jamal Murray and Nikola Jokić, came back from a 3-1 deficit to beat the Utah Jazz.

In the western conference semifinals, the Houston Rockets, led by James Harden and Russell Westbrook, put pressure on the Lakers by winning the first game, but that wasn't enough as James and Davis led their team to a 4-1 series win. In contrast, the Clippers got out to a 3-1 lead against the Nuggets before the Nuggets came back and beat the Clippers. In this series, the Clippers' Paul George saw his nickname go from Playoff P to Pandemic P as the team fell apart. Also unable to help was Clippers star Kawhi Leonard.

In the eastern conference semis, the Milwaukee Bucks couldn't do anything against the red hot Miami Heat. Led by Jimmy Butler, Tyler Herro, Duncan Robinson and Jae Crowder, the Heat were on a mission and cruised by the Bucks in a 4-1 series win. The Heat then cruised by the Celtics in the

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Giannis Antetokounmpo, and the Los Angeles Lakers, featuring star duo LeBron James and Anthony Davis, both fell in their first games against the Orlando Magic and the Portland Trail Blazers, respectively. However, both of the top seeds were able to regain their footing and advance to the next round.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles

The 2019-2020 season was a normal one for the NBA until two infamous days changed everything. The first was January 26, 2020, a tragic day on which Kobe Bryant and his daughter, Gigi, were killed in a helicopter crash. The second was March 11, 2020, when Utah Jazz forward Rudy Gobert was the first player to test positive for the coronavirus.

As time went on, the NBA was

Cooper Competitors

The story of the athletes who strive for success in Cooper sports

Cyrus Jarjay

By FAITH KING
Quill staff writer

Cyrus Jarjay (12) plays soccer in the fall at Cooper. Jarjay has been playing soccer since he was five years old.

"I chose to play soccer at Cooper because of its environment. All of the players made me feel like I was a part of a family of underdogs. I felt the dedication," he said.

What he enjoys most about soccer at Cooper is the loving and passionate community that the team creates.

"Every player was humble with their abilities and we all had the common goal to change the way other soccer programs in the state view us," he said.

Jarjay's favorite soccer memories include the countless bus rides, specifically the ones to Duluth.

"The trip and game over there was always a great way for the team to bond," he said.

During the 2020 season, Jarjay had a leadership role as a captain on the team. He said he served as a role model for younger players on the team.

"The boys really looked up to me either way, but the label increased the level of respect for me and authority I had," Jarjay said.



Photo by LIFETOUGH

Jarjay's favorite classes in school include Psychology, AVID and Yearbook.

"Yearbook is my favorite because it further ignited my school spirit," he said.

Outside of school, Jarjay's interests include photography, writing poetry and drawing.

Next fall, Jarjay will attend an academically challenging school like Duke, Howard or Southern Methodist to major in finance, psychology or chemistry.

Jayla Reliford

By FAITH KING
Quill staff writer

Jayla Reliford (12) plays soccer in the fall and basketball in the winter at Cooper.

Reliford has played both sports her whole life, but as she entered high school, the schedules of the two sports began to conflict.

"My parents made me decide on a main sport for high school, so I chose basketball. I started to play soccer again my senior year because I committed for basketball and missed the sport," she said.

Reliford said the best parts of soccer during the 2020 season were making new friends and getting the opportunity to get back out on the field. At the end of the season, Reliford was recognized with the award for most improved player on varsity.

During the winter, Reliford plays basketball.

"We achieved a lot of things last season under the circumstances, but I believe we will even achieve more this upcoming season," she said.

During the school day, Reliford's favorite classes involve science.



Photo by J. RELIFORD

"Unfortunately, I'm not taking any right now, but science is my favorite subject. There's a lot to learn and discover. Also, it is a very challenging subject and I love challenges," she said.

Outside of school, Reliford enjoys working out and training for sports.

"Those are my hobbies. I love to do them even when I don't have to," she said.

Next fall, Reliford will be attending Jamestown University on a basketball scholarship. She plans on majoring in science.

Ayden Davison

By FAITH KING
Quill staff writer

Ayden Davison (12) plays football in the fall and runs track and field in the spring at Cooper.

Davison has been playing football since he was in the second grade.

"My dad took me to a practice and I fell in love since then," he said.

Davison said he enjoys the teamwork that comes along with playing football.

"I like being a part of a family and being able to give my all for something I love," Davison said.

According to Davison, his favorite football memories were his "first time running the ball" and his "senior year with Cooper football."

Davison said he tried to be a leader for the football team this season.

"I tried my best to be a leader

amongst my teammates and take a role as a senior," he said.

In the winter time, Davison said he focuses on lifting and training to get "stronger and faster," while in the spring, Davison runs track. He said he is looking forward to track this season after last season was canceled due to the pandemic.



Photo by A. DAVISON

Davison's favorite school subjects include English and economics. In his free time, Davison said he enjoys training and hanging out with friends and family.

As for his plans after high school, Davison will study engineering in college. He also plans on continuing his football career in college.

"I was blessed with the opportunity to continue playing and I want to play for as long as I can along with the benefit of being able to further my education," Davison said.

Nico Easley

By FAITH KING
Quill staff writer

Nico Easley (12) plays football at Cooper in the fall. Easley first started playing football at the age of 10. Easley said he enjoys football because of the opportunity it provides to make new friendships.

"They end up becoming family in the end," Easley said.

Easley's favorite football memory is from his freshman season at Cooper.

"The last day of summer practices, we got to play kickball and dodgeball. It was just a blast," he said.

Easley was a senior captain for the team this year. He said he tried to be a strong leader for his team both on and off the field.

During the winter, Easley said he tries to be consistent about going to the

weight room.

"[I try] to get better for the next coming season," he said.

Easley said he hopes to take part in track and field this spring after the 2020 season was canceled due to COVID-19.

When he is not competing, Easley said his favorite subjects in school are science and math.

"I love everything that has to do with chemistry and different elements," he said.

Outside of school, Easley enjoys taking on do-it-yourself projects.

"Whether it be taking something apart and fixing it, or just building an entertainment stand, it's all fun to me," Easley said.

Next fall, Easley will be attending college at Bemidji State University.

"I want to go to school for sports management and business or some type of engineering," he said.



Photo by NICO EASLEY

L.A. NOIRE
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yourself or have your partner drive there for you. Driving to these places yourself allows the player to get more of a glimpse of what L.A. was like in the late 1940s.

Once you reach your location, you'll normally have people to question. While questioning people, you are given a series of options: truth, doubt, lie and view your notebook. In order to decide which to choose, you have to carefully inspect the person's facial expressions and go through your clues to see if there's anything you can use against them.

The facial animation in the game uses MotionScan technology. Thirty-two different cameras were used to capture the facial expressions on the actors' faces in order for the player to be able to tell if the character is being truthful or not. This is both a curse and a blessing. It's a unique game feature that makes the game that much more immersive. Yet, the actors performing can overdo it a bit, making it a little too obvious that their character is lying. This can make for some pretty ridiculous moments.

Some cases can have different endings. These are some of the moments that make you feel like a real detective. You may not always catch the right guy and save the day. In these cases, it will result in you receiving a lower ranking and some disdain from your fellow detectives. For example, I got the last interrogation question wrong in a case and it gained me some harsh criticism from the captain. When I went back and got it right, he sang a completely different, much happier tune.

Once you're done with a case, you'll see an end screen showing your results. You receive stars at the end of each case, ranging from one to five stars. These rankings correspond to unbecoming, routine, meritorious, distinguished and valorous. The rating is determined by other information in the results, including the case report, which tells the player how many clues they found and how many questions they got correct. In addition, there is the conduct, which includes vehicle damage, injuries and city damage. Finally, there is case notes, which is a brief message on the case itself.

Overall, *L.A. Noire* is a great game for those players who have longed for the detective experience, despite some of the facial expressions of the characters at times getting a little too silly. This is a minor flaw in an otherwise great game. I give the game five out five stars. It is a worthwhile experience for anyone who enjoys the crime and detective genre.

ENDGAME
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decisions that benefited himself. It is fitting, therefore, that Stark finally becomes selfless in *Endgame* and sacrifices himself to kill 2014 Thanos and his army.

Meanwhile, *Endgame* shows the reverse journey with Captain America. When Steve Rogers was initially introduced in the MCU in *Captain America: The First Avenger*, he was a selfless guy who wanted to serve his country in World War II. However, his physique restrained him, which prompted him to give up his normal body and a normal life to serve his country. In light of this, it is fitting that Rogers is finally able in *Endgame* to live out his life in the past with Peggy Carter. He is finally able to accept being a little selfish in order to enjoy what he deserves in life. Ultimately, *Endgame* succeeds at ending the stories of Iron Man and Captain America on a high note.

In conclusion, *Avengers: Endgame* may not have been as much of a thrilling ride for me as *Infinity War*, but it definitely provided a satisfying ending to its legacy characters. At the same time, most of the plot does not make any sense if you truly think about it. As a result, I score *Avengers: Endgame* at two out of five stars. Unfortunately, the film's lows trump its highs, making it a disappointing finale for Phase Three of the MCU.

Swim team excited to get back in water

After a delayed start to the season, the Hawks are ready to compete through the challenges of COVID-19



Photo by JULIE BOSWELL

Cooper boys swimmers have made appearances on the victory stand at conference, section and state meets in recent years.

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

The 2020-2021 boys swim team was sidelined like all other winter sports at the start of the season.

The first hurdle the Hawks experienced was not being able to meet in person until January 4 after Minnesota Governor Tim Walz paused all youth athletic activities due to an increase in state COVID cases.

New college basketball season off to entertaining start

The abrupt end to the 2019-2020 campaign had players and fans anticipating the tip off to 2020-2021 games

By NOLAN ANDLER
Quill staff writer

The start of the new college basketball season comes with a lot of hype and a lot of uncertainty related to COVID. After the unusual end to the 2019-2020 basketball season and the many pandemic-related issues experienced during the fall college football season, it will be interesting to see how the 2020-2021 college basketball season unfolds.

The new college basketball season comes on the heels of the 2019-2020 college basketball season, which was easily the craziest season to ever happen thanks to the unexpected performances by top teams and the eventual emergence of COVID-19. Last year, four teams ranked at number one all fell in the first two months of the season. Perhaps the biggest upsets were when No. 1 Kentucky fell 67-64 to Evansville and No. 1 Duke lost 85-83 to Stephen F. Austin. Additional underdogs that thrived last season included Gonzaga and Dayton. Only one team ranked in the pre-season top five last year, the Kansas Jayhawks, was consistently in it all season long.

Last season also saw three-way ties in two major conferences. The Big East had a three-way tie for the regular season title between Villanova, Creighton and Seton Hall. Meanwhile, the Big Ten had a three-way tie between Wisconsin, Michigan State and Maryland.

Given all of these unexpected performances during the regular season last year, it was gearing up to be one heck of a tournament during March Madness. However,

as it got to that time of the season, the COVID-19 pandemic started in the U.S., resulting in the cancellation of the college basketball postseason.

After having the 2019-2020 season come to such an abrupt end, there has been a lot of excitement and hype heading into the new season. In the Big Ten, seven teams were ranked in the pre-season top 25, including No. 5 Iowa, No. 7 Wisconsin, No. 8 Illinois, No. 13 Michigan State, No. 23 Ohio State, No. 24 Rutgers and No. 25 Michigan. The Big Ten had the most rankings in the top 25 out of any conference.

Outside of the Big Ten, the No.

ell (Seton Hall).

Once the 2020-2021 season actually got underway, there were immediately some interesting developments. The No. 1 Gonzaga Bulldogs, led by freshman Suggs, dominated No. 6 Kansas and Auburn at the Fort Myers Tipoff Classic over Thanksgiving weekend. Then, one week later, the Bulldogs knocked off the No. 11 West Virginia Mountaineers. All of these performances had fans excited for the Bulldogs' biggest test against No. 2 Baylor, but that game got called off due to a COVID outbreak within the Gonzaga team.

Another team that has been

return of most of their key players from last season. Despite this, both teams have taken some tough losses early in the season. First, Wisconsin, which got all the way up to No. 4 in the rankings, lost to rival Marquette. Then, Illinois, which was ranked No. 6 at the time, lost to Missouri on the road. While these losses were tough, Wisconsin and Illinois should be fine as the season goes forward.

Much like last season, the upsets and great finishes haven't slowed down in 2020-2021. In fact, the beginning of the current season saw a number of surprises: No. 4 Virginia lost to mid-major San Francisco; No. 3 Villanova lost to Virginia Tech; No. 10 Kentucky lost to Richmond; and No. 17 Texas beat No. 14 North Carolina in the Maui Invitational Tournament championship game.

Another surprising thing about this season is that two schools that are known for their basketball teams, Kentucky and Duke, have not been good.

Kentucky had a loss to Richmond that was followed by a loss to No. 7 Kansas, which ultimately took Kentucky out of the rankings. Meanwhile, Duke, which got all the way up to No. 6, got destroyed at home against No. 8 Michigan State, after which they also lost to No. 6 Illinois.

While things have not been good for Kentucky and Duke, it has made the start of the 2020-2021 college basketball season an interesting one to follow. After the unfortunate ending to the 2019-2020 season, it is fun to have the new season off to a great start. Fans of college basketball are hoping that the 2020-2021 season will not slow down anytime soon.

NBA PUSHES THROUGH TWO WILD SEASONS continued from page 9

western conference finals, while the Lakers won their series against the Nuggets 4-1.

This set up an interesting match-up in the finals between the Heat and the Lakers, a team that was playing with pride for Kobe and the city of L.A. After the Lakers quickly went up 3-1 in the series, it looked like game five was going to be the end of the road for the Heat. The Lakers were wearing their Black Mamba jerseys in honor of Kobe during this game, but a valiant effort by Jimmy Butler and Duncan Robinson kept the Heat alive as they escaped with a 111-108 win. However, in game six, the Lakers closed out the finals with a 106-93 win.

This victory was a special one for a team that has gone through some tough times, ranging from losing seasons to the death of Kobe. The

Lakers' win also gave LeBron James his fourth ring in an illustrious career and the first ring for Anthony Davis, who had already put together a great career when he was at New Orleans.

Between the end of the finals in October 2020 and the start of the new season in December 2020 came a short but interesting offseason. For example, the Minnesota Timberwolves got Anthony Edwards with their first-round draft pick and they also acquired former team member Ricky Rubio. Some additional teams making big pickups were the Lakers, who got a pair of great players, Montrezl Harrell from the Clippers and Marc Gasol from the Raptors. There was also a big trade between the Washington Wizards and the Houston Rockets for John Wall and Russell Westbrook. What is more, the Oklahoma City Thunder

traded Chris Paul to the Phoenix Suns. With all of these teams so loaded, it's really anyone's season at this point.

Over the first few weeks of the 2020-2021 campaign, it has been the Phoenix Suns at the top of the western conference standings, lead by Chris Paul, Deandre Ayton, Devin Booker and Mikal Bridges. Meanwhile, the two favorites in the west, the Lakers and the Clippers, have had a shaky start. Both the Lakers and the Clippers got rocked with some early season losses before regaining their footing to close in on the Suns.

In the east, the Philadelphia 76ers, led by duo Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, have been at the top of the standings. Also in the east, the New York Knicks have been surprising, accumulating a winning record that includes a big victory over the Mil-

waukee Bucks, who have gotten off to a rough start. Another team that has had a rough start is the Miami Heat. After getting into the finals last season, they went 3-4 in the opening weeks of the new season.

Also struggling this year are two teams that had a lot of hype going into 2020-2021, the Golden State Warriors and the Brooklyn Nets. While the Warriors have been dealing with the loss of Klay Thompson, the Nets have been struggling to stay above .500 despite the duo of Kyrie Irving and Kevin Durant.

Clearly, it has been an interesting last 12 months in basketball. With a new season off to a start despite the continuing threat of COVID-19, it will be fascinating to watch what happens in the NBA as this season continues to move on to its finish.