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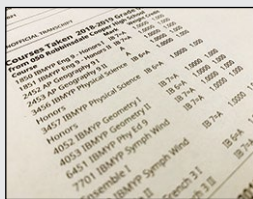


Health mentor has office at Cooper

Ms. Stevens, who works for Annex Teen Clinic, has office hours to meet with students about reproductive health

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Freshmen learn credits are key

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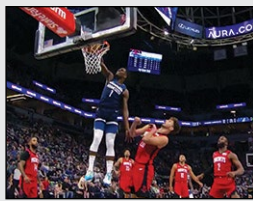


Daredevil is best MCU TV series

Although no longer in production, Daredevil is a streaming series that has something to offer Marvel fans both old and new

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Wolves season full of streaks

The Minnesota Timberwolves have been stringing together many consecutive wins and losses so far during their '21-'22 campaign

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IB CANDIDATES HONORED AT SILVER PLATTER EVENT



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Unlike the virtual format of last year's ceremony, this year's event was held in-person at the Cooper Media Center.

By KEN WARD
Quill staff writer

The annual Silver Platter Day ceremony took place in the Cooper Media Center on December 10, 2021. Silver Platter Day is when seniors who are full International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma candidates turn in their 3,500-4,000 word extended essays (EE).

"Our Silver Platter Day gives us the opportunity to celebrate our students'

achievement after 12 months of investigating, researching and writing," Cooper's IB coordinator Ms. Christensen said. "It's a big load off of their shoulders to officially hand over their final copy of their extended essay. Families and staff are able to participate, and the students appreciate this."

The extended essay is a part of the core for the full IB diploma program, which also includes Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) work and

the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class. Similar to the IB Middle Years Program personal project, the extended essay has students working with mentors to investigate a topic they are interested in. The research essay could be done under many categories ranging from literature to history to chemistry.

Around the middle of their junior year, IB diploma students started brainstorming ideas and eventually

picked their mentors, with whom the students shared their contact information before summer arrived.

"I encourage them to work on [the extended essay] over the summer because senior year is so busy," Christensen explained.

There are 10 seniors pursuing the IB diploma this year. One of them is Alyce Madson (12), whose EE research question was: "To what extent did language, culture and politics con-

Ceremony marks the students' successful completion of the IB extended essay

tribute to the downfall of Yugoslavia?"

"The thing I enjoyed most about the research process was learning about something we've never talked about in school. I also learned how to write a real, college-type paper," Madson said.

Serving as Madson's mentor on the paper was social studies teacher Mr. Gagnon. Madson said he helped her overcome some of the challenges involved with working on an essay of this kind.

"The biggest challenge I faced was narrowing down some of my sources," she said. "I also went over the word count so I had to trim it down a bit."

Emma Borisevich (12) is another student pursuing the IB diploma. Her extended essay explored the question: "How have composers been influenced by social and technological changes to cause the symphony to evolve?"

"I enjoyed finding sources at the University of Minnesota music library," she said. "It was very easy to find sources, as well as look at music for my own pleasure. I also found it very beneficial to learn more about a topic that has always fascinated me."

Borisevich said she worked with Cooper music

SILVER PLATTER continues on page 8

Hawks compete at state debate tournament

Andrew Tran (12) and Connor Brynteson (11) faced rivals from around Minnesota during the virtual event

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON
Quill staff writer

Andrew Tran (12) and Connor Brynteson (11) recently took part in the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) state debate tournament, which took place virtually on January 14 and 15. During the event, Brynteson emerged as the state champion in Congressional debate and Tran finished in tenth place.

"This is 18th consecutive year in a row that Robbinsdale Cooper has qualified to the state tournament in debate, matching the third longest streak," head coach Mr. Brynteson said. "The MSHSL state debate tournament is the oldest state tournament in Minnesota, first held in 1902."

The two debate categories that Cooper students compete in are Lincoln-Douglas and Congressional. While Lincoln-Douglas is a one-on-one, philosophy-based debate with broad topics, Congressional is set up to be similar to what happens at the United States Congress, during which students debate bills. The state event in which Tran and Connor Brynteson competed was for Congressional debate.

"The top 24 students in the state qualify to the tournament," Mr. Brynteson said.

The topics debated during the state tournament are selected by the competing students. This year's options included: eliminating coal use in the United States by 2025, approving the Build Back Better Plan, legalizing drugs and reforming the criminal justice system. Mr. Brynteson said that team members go through many steps to properly prepare for competition.

"Our first step is to fully understand the topics we are debating," he said. "There are always easy arguments that you can come up with. Where debate is fun is when you start to dig into a topic, really start to understand the implications of the topic. Once we really understand what we are debating, we need to go find supporting evidence for our positions, and once we have that, then we start practicing making the arguments and how to respond to other people and their arguments."

Connor Brynteson said that the research process was critical as he got ready

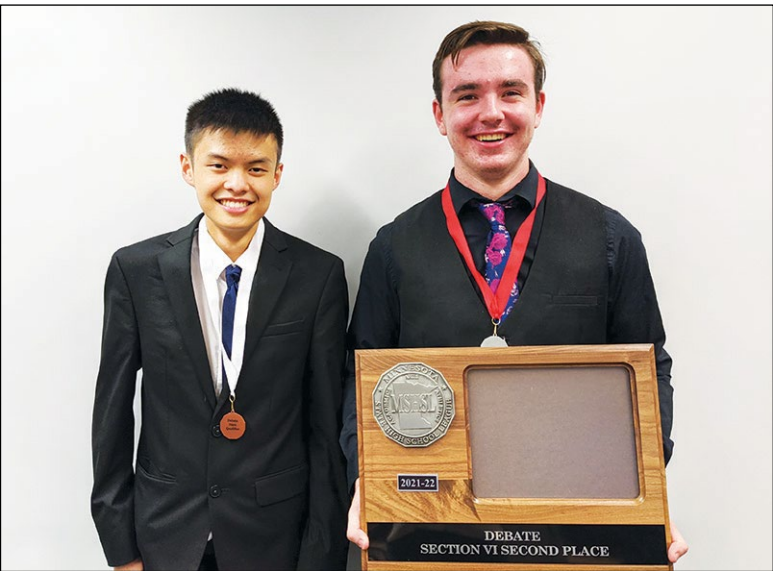


Photo by MR. BRYNTESON

Tran and Brynteson qualified for state at the section tournament in December.

for state, as was the repeated practice of speaking in front of an audience.

"I did a lot of reading on the issues and topics we were given and gave speeches to my fellow debaters," he said.

In addition to their hard work this year, Mr. Brynteson said that Cooper's state debaters were helped by their many years of experience on the team.

"This is Connor's third trip to the MSHSL state tournament. Last year, he took

STATE DEBATE continues on page 2

District returns to distance learning due to COVID

First semester came to an online conclusion after a spike in student, staff absences across the district

By NAIMA HUSSEN
Quill staff writer

Cooper was one of many Robbinsdale schools that moved to distance learning January 18 through January 28 due to an increasing number of student and staff absences caused by a recent spike in COVID infections. This move to distance learning followed a planned asynchronous distance learning day on January 14 that lead into the three-day weekend celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.

"We had hoped to continue with in-person learning without disruption, but many of our staff have tested positive or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19," Robbinsdale District Superintendent Mr. Engstrom said in a district press release.

"The number is rising daily within our district and in the community. We simply can't provide adequate in-person learning or services with our growing level of staff absences."

The decision to switch the entire district to online learning came nine days after the decision was made to move Armstrong High School and Sandburg Middle School to distance learning due to COVID numbers. Those two schools first made their shift to distance learning on January 6. Those schools remained in distance learning along with the rest of the newly affected district schools.

"We have an obligation to the safety of our students, staff and community to do everything we can to help slow the spread of the virus," Engstrom said.

During distance learning, Cooper students fol-

lowed their regular daily schedule, with class periods starting and ending at their regular times. They used their district-provided devices to access assignments and materials via Schoology, and teachers offered live instruction during the day.

Cooper Head Principal Mr. Herman acknowledged that the shift back into distance learning was tough for students and staff alike, especially because it fell during the last week of the first semester. He emphasized that it was important for everyone to remain flexible during this rapidly evolving situation.

"We all need to be mindful and flexible as we move forward," he said. "Self-care is important."

While classes moved online during the distance learning shift, after-school activities and sports at the high school level continued taking place.

Choosing a college can be stressful

The normal steps students go through when making post-high school decisions are now even tougher during the pandemic

From the Editors

Many Cooper juniors and seniors are currently in the process of figuring out what they’re going to do in the next phase of their lives after high school. It can be really scary for some people to not know where they want to go to college or what major they’re going to pursue once they get to school. Of the many aspects of this process that are stressful, perhaps the toughest is narrowing down one’s choice of colleges and then making the final decision.

Having to choose a college puts a lot of pressure on juniors and seniors. There are a lot of resources to guide them along the way, but when it actually comes down to picking what to do, it is a really big deal. We could choose a school that might seem like the best fit, but then a month in, figure out that we hate it.

For some people, it’s hard to leave home, so there’s always the option of doing two years at a community college close by before going away to a school. While this choice could save a student a ton of money, it may also lead to them missing out on two years of the whole “college experience” of moving away from home.

Sometimes, parents aren’t helpful when it comes to picking a college. Parents have their own opinions about schools, which could be different from what the students want. While it’s important to listen to one’s parents, it is also important to remember that it is the student who is going to college, so it should be their decision.

There are many things to consider when choosing a col-



Photo by DAVINA BELLINGER

Cooper’s Career Center is one place students can go if they are looking for help in choosing a college.

lege. Some of the key ones include cost, how far away from home it is, whether or not the school has the major one wants to go into, if there’s enough to do in the town in which the school is located, and whether or not the student will have friends who also attend the school in question. Any one of these issues may serve as the primary factor in a student’s college decision.

An additional struggle with picking a college is trying to find a roommate. Once a student decides on the college they want to attend, they have to fill out a housing application. Next, they must start the journey of picking out a roommate, which for some can be difficult. Depending on the typical process followed at the chosen school, a student may

need to reach out to new people and choose a roommate without actually meeting them in person in advance. Students also might be assigned a random roommate, which brings another set of possible concerns. Of course, another option is rooming alone, but that usually entails extra costs that some students cannot afford. Clearly, the list of concerns goes on and on.

Another thing students must do when making their college decisions is visit the schools they will potentially attend. While this process can be fun, it can also be time consuming and expensive. Additionally, in this time when COVID is making it risky to travel and be around large numbers of other people, going on college visits

in other cities and states may be a source of stress for high school students. Still, the campus visit is an important part of the decision-making process that should not be ignored.

While the list of issues juniors and seniors must address when making the transition from high school to college is long, it is important for students to remember that the end goal is worth it. Students should not let the stress get them down because, in the end, it will all work out. Going to college is not only an important part of figuring out what you want to do for the rest of your life, it is also an important part of learning to live independently and meeting new people who may become lifelong friends and supporters.

Fifth period freedoms are causing some behavior issues

While it is good to blow off some steam during HLL, students must be mindful about not getting in trouble

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON
Quill staff writer

Fifth period is a time when students let out their pent-up energy from the first four periods of the day. While the behavior one sees during the Hawk Lunch and Learn period can sometimes be extreme, I understand why students act the way they do. Clearly, students can’t act crazy in their classes because it would be distracting. However, in the lunchroom, there’s not actually anything to be distracted from and no one to distract. For students who act out during fifth period, it is important to strike a balance between being mature and blowing off some steam. As high school students, we know how to behave and how to act our ages.

One issue with fifth period is the pure volume of students in the cafeteria and other parts of the building. Although I do not eat at school every day, it is clear on the days I am here that it is loud at Cooper during fifth period. People tend to hang out with their friend groups in the cafeteria and elsewhere in the building, which leads to conversations and laughter. The good part of this is that students can



Photo by SHENG VANG

Students need to do a better job of cleaning up in the cafeteria.

choose who they hang out with and where they hang out without being told to stop talking by the adults. The bad side is that the volume can be a bit too much for students with anxiety or those who need some quiet time during fifth period.

Another factor with student behavior during fifth period relates to the rules. Sometimes the adults who are in the lunch room don’t always make it clear what students can and can’t do. I often notice certain groups of students doing stuff that they clearly shouldn’t be doing, but it seems

like they do not get in trouble for it. You would think these students should be mature enough to know better, but when they show you that they don’t, it is time for the grown ups to step in. Of course, it is not solely the fault of the adults because they can’t watch everyone at the same time. That means students should do their part by keeping their behavior in check and helping their friends do the same.

Fifth period can also be a problem due to the amount of trash that is produced during that period. It is clear that there should

be more trash cans around because of student behavior. When students see that a trash can is overflowing, instead of finding an empty one, they just throw their trash on top. Of course, there are times when all of the cans are filled because there are so many students eating in one space. When the cans are filled, students will be more inclined to leave a mess at their table instead of cleaning it up. With more cans placed strategically throughout the lunch areas, student behavior concerning trash clean up may improve, which would hopefully make life a bit easier for the school’s custodians.

While students enjoy fifth period for the freedoms it brings, we must be careful about not behaving in such a way that puts those freedoms in jeopardy. Some behaviors are issues of common sense, like sitting with your friends in a respectful way while eating and cleaning up after yourself when you are done, while others rely on help from the adults, such as reminding students about the rules and making more trash cans available. Ultimately, students need to take responsibility for their fifth period behavior before unintended problems arise.

Missing school causes issues in one's future

The temptation to stay home on a given day can lead to a ripple effect later in a student's life

By MYRA SINCHI
Quill staff writer

Students continuously skip school for many different reasons. Students often skip school due to being bored and unmotivated. Personally, skipping school has not benefited me in any way. Even if I take a sick day, all the missing work and lessons I missed out on will find a way back to my to-do list. As much as we all would like to, there is no way to avoid school. I believe skipping school does not help you and will only cause you to fall behind in the end.

The first reason I believe skipping school does not benefit you is because it will affect your grades and GPA. The impact missing school can have on students is that they will be unaware of all the information they need to know for an upcoming summative. Also, not going to school increases the possibility you will miss the summative itself. This is important because, in high school, tests and regular assignments make up your whole grade. It is important to arrive at school and stay on top of your work so you do not fall behind.

Another reason skipping school does not benefit you is truancy. Truancy refers to continuous unexcused absences by a student. This impacts students because it can involve phone calls to parents, letters home, or even getting sent to court. Speaking from experience, receiving a letter home stating that you missed too many days of school and have a chance of going to court is not worth it. Parents can get very concerned and upset. This reason is important because you can get in serious trouble for intentionally skipping school.

The final reason skipping school will not benefit you is because you will miss out on experiences at school. High school gives you opportunities to make memories you will remember for the rest of your life. You do not want to miss out on everything. Skipping school can impact students by limiting their social opportunities, causing them to miss fun events, and keeping them from having good relationships with teachers. This is important because students should experience high school and enjoy their final years of schooling.

Skipping school does not benefit students in any way. By not going to school, students will be affected by a decrease in grades and GPA, a chance of truancy, and missing out on the high school experience. It is important to arrive at school and stay on top of your work. Although it may get tough at times and you may lose motivation, in the end, the diploma will be worth everything you worked for. Not having a high school diploma can affect your future. If you decide to skip school, keep in mind all the consequences that come with it. The four years of high school will go by fast; try to enjoy your years up until the end. High school is a lot easier than college, so take advantage of it.

The Quill

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Cutting class is not worth short-term fun

Many Cooper students are in the hallways instead of their classrooms during the day

By PHILLIP ROBERT
Quill staff writer

A common sight at school this year is groups of students wandering in the hallways when they should be in class. To me, cutting classes isn't worth it. It messes with your grades, which can eventually mess with your graduation. Also, the teachers whose classes you are skipping will probably think of you as a dumb person. While students who cut class are largely doing so for social reasons, the number of downsides to this practice make it clear that everyone is better off going to class.

The first reason why I think you shouldn't cut class is that doing so is literally time-consuming. The time it takes for you to cut class could be used to do some work and earn your class credit. If you are already done with your work for the day in that class, you could just sit and chill out or do some work for another class. It is important to remember that attending school is not just a right, it is a

Some people do stuff like cutting class because they think it makes them look hard, but being hard isn't going to get you a high school diploma and all of the future options that come with it. You should be true to yourself and not follow other people who might be tempting you to hang out in the hallways.

privilege. You don't want to be wasting your time in the hallways if you actually made the effort to be at school.

The second reason to stay in class is that being in the halls is not going to make you look "cool." Some people do stuff like cutting class because they think it makes them look hard, but being hard isn't going to get you a high school diploma and all of the future options that come with it. You should be true to yourself and not follow other people who might be tempting you to hang out in the hallways. I understand the desire to get friends, but skipping class is not how you should do it.

The third reason to stay in class is that being an "in-school dropout" could lead to run-ins with the school administration or state truancy officials. If you miss enough class, eventually you will hear from Cooper's principals or personal learning coaches, who will likely be in contact with your parents as well. If the problem continues, you may get unenrolled from school and hear from the state of Minnesota. Having to deal with a judge may not be a good trade off for walking the hallways with your friends during class.

No disrespect to teachers, but sometimes classes can get boring for students. It is also sometimes the case that students have people in their classes that they don't want to be with. But neither of those facts justifies the disservice you do to yourself when you skip class. If you some day want to go to college, or at least get the benefits of a high school diploma, you have to stay in class.

Driver's ed classes are worth the expense

While the cost may make driver's training classes less appealing, they do provide critical lesson for hitting the road



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Learning how to parallel park a car is a helpful skill to have when you live in a bigger city.

By ERIN CHUNN
Quill staff writer

Driver's education is a short classroom course that goes over the driver's manual and discusses laws and emergency procedures. This course prepares you for your permit test. Passing means you can practice driving on the road legally with a licensed person over 18 years old. Since a driver's education class is not required after 18, some teens just wait. There are pros and cons to taking the driver's education class as soon as possible. Some

pros include more transportation options and being professionally taught the rules of the road. On the other hand, a con is the extreme price.

One pro of taking driver's education is that it gives you a head start so you can still get your license in high school. Driver's education makes the chances of passing the permit test much higher. Also, driver's education only lasts around two weeks. With the buses being very unpredictable this year, learning to drive gives you a chance to invest in different modes of transportation. What

is more, since taking driver's education includes a Behind the Wheel segment, which is one-on-one driving practice with a professional, it's a lot less stressful than practicing with dramatic parents.

Another pro of driver's education relates to weather. Minnesota weather can get extremely dangerous and unpredictable, so it makes sense to learn some extra defensive driving skills. The class takes you through driver precautions and how to go about emergency situations, which is helpful in Minnesota, where it seems that

everyone forgets how to drive in the winter each year. In addition, there are winter driving issues you wouldn't be aware of until you come across them, like black ice and hydroplaning. Having that extra knowledge and experience grants teens comfort when driving in the winter.

On the flip side, a major con of driver's education is the ridiculous price of the classes and the required Behind the Wheel sessions. Even going through A+ Driving School at Cooper, you're still paying roughly \$400. Many families don't have that type of money laying around, especially if there are multiple kids. Even though taking full advantage of the payment plan is suggested, you can't move forward until all of the money owed is paid. The price of ordinary things like safely learning the rules of the road definitely assist the increased need for teenagers to get a job.

In conclusion, taking driver's education has many pros, including help on the permit test and preparing for driving on the road. The class goes through the whole driver's manual and does activities to help you learn. Also, it helps you learn different driving methods. At the same time, a con is the terrible price. Overall, although it's very expensive, taking driver's education classes is worth it. Driver's education is only required if you are less than 18 years old, but if you can, it's a good idea to take the class.

Temperature issues at school are getting better

Major fluctuations in classroom comfort levels at the start of the school year have become less extreme

By DEVIN GRAY
Quill staff writer

It's common to see folks with blankets, hoodies or extra layers of clothes at Cooper because of how cold the school gets in certain places during the winter. I personally had to layer up in the downstairs elective circle at one point in the day before having to take off my coat on the third floor due to the temperature changes. I believe the school temperature problem started off really bad this year, but eventually got better in recent times.

In the early parts of the school year, the building was still struggling with heating issues from the previous year of school. As students were not in school for most of last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, heating the building wasn't exactly a priority. It also didn't help coming back to school this fall after the



Photo by SHENG VANG

Technicians were brought to Cooper to work on the ventilation system.

summer, a time during which there is no need to heat an already-hot building due to the weather at that time. As result, coming into the new school year, heating issues didn't get fixed immediately.

However, progress was made slowly during the early

fall season. As some classrooms were getting heat, other classrooms were still getting cooler temperatures. In my personal experience, the English circle classrooms like Ms. Kope's were getting heat, while classrooms in the science circle were getting less

heat, which is ironic considering heat rises. All in all, the heating at this point of the year was a big hiccup.

Fortunately, we returned from winter break with a pleasant surprise: classrooms in the science circles and even the downstairs community commons have been getting better with respect to heat circulation. It seems that the heating has improved drastically. While some may think there isn't a big difference, it is good to know that progress has been made just a little bit in the right direction.

At the end of the day, heating is essential to have in a school building. While the fall started with little-to-no heating at all, things have been steadily improving. Despite a mixture of good and bad heating early on, we seem to be destined for more improvements soon, which is critical during the winter months.

Michigan shooting shows once again that guns are a problem

America is way overdue for measures to cut back on and better regulate people's access to firearms

By NAIMA HUSSEN
Quill staff writer

A mass shooting occurred at Oxford High School in the Detroit suburb of Oxford Township, Michigan on November 30, 2021. This type of tragedy is all too familiar. The death of students in a place where they are supposed to be safe and learning has become commonplace. The 29th school shooting in the United States in 2021 took the lives of four students: 14-year-old Hana St. Juliana, 16-year-old Tate Myre, and graduating seniors Madisyn Baldwin and Justin Shilling. Additionally, seven people were injured, including a teacher.

At this point, it is safe to assume that atrocities like the Michigan shooting will never be enough for our elected officials in Congress, state legisla-

tures, and city councils to pass laws to prevent gun violence. The 1999 Columbine school shooting that took the lives of 13 people wasn't enough. The 2007 Virginia Tech shooting that led to the murder of 33 people wasn't enough. The 2012 school shooting that took the lives of 20 first graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary wasn't enough. The 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting that took the lives of 17 people wasn't enough.

There are three main things I blame for my fear of being in school during this age of gun violence in schools. The first group that deserves blame is the gun lobbyists in the United States Congress, who distribute more than \$3 million combined to influence gun control policy. Senator Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, had this to

say on the Senate floor after the Oxford tragedy: "...due to a country that has accepted gun violence, due to Republicans' fealty to the gun lobby. Do not lecture us about the sanctity, the importance of life when 100 people every single day are losing their lives to guns, when kids go to school fearful that they won't return home because a classmate will turn a gun on them."

The second group I blame is the National Rifle Association (NRA). The NRA isn't responsible for every shooting in this country; however, they do encourage the gun owners of America to maintain a status quo, where guns are stored sloppily. In fact, 72 percent of NRA members support universal background checks for anyone purchasing a firearm. Despite that, as an institution, the NRA does not.

A final group I blame consists of people like conservative commentator Alex Jones, who claims that the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre was a hoax. On December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, 20-year-old Adam Lanza fatally shot his mother in the face before heading to the school and killing 20 first graders and six educators. Jones portrayed the shooting on his show as a hoax involving actors aimed at increasing gun control. The families of the victims sued Alex Jones because they were subjected to harassment and death threats from Jones' followers.

A Texas judge recently found Alex Jones liable over the damages in defamation lawsuits brought by the parents of

MICHIGAN SHOOTING continues on page 7

New *Spider-Man* brings fan faves home

Spider-Man: No Way Home is mostly successful in juggling a large cast, bringing closure to many different storylines

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Spider-Man: No Way Home is directed by Jon Watts and written by Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers. It is the 27th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and the third installment in the MCU's film series centered around Spider-Man. Before I get into this review, I'd like to point out that this review will contain spoilers for the film since I do not believe I could properly discuss *No Way Home* without going into major plot points and details.

Spider-Man: No Way Home was released in theaters in mid-December of 2021 to glowing reviews from fans and critics alike. Although not as big in stakes as MCU films like *Avengers: Endgame*, the MCU's third Spider-Man film is, at least to me, the most hyped movie I've ever seen. This "hype" primarily stems from fans being excited about seeing characters from previous Spider-Man movies make their debuts in the blockbusting juggernaut that is the Marvel Cinematic Universe. That is because *No Way Home*'s plot revolves around Peter Parker accidentally breaking open the multiverse while attempting to cast a spell with Doctor Strange to make everybody forget that he is Spider-Man.

The first aspect of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* I'd like to go over is its characters. I think what most audiences will take away from *No Way Home* is its packed cast. Tom Holland, Zendaya and Jacob Batalon reprise their roles as Peter Parker/Spider-Man, Michelle Jones-Watson and Ned Leeds from the previous two MCU Spider-Man films. They are all just as good and, in some aspects, better than they have been in the previous films. Holland, in particular, gets better treatment of his character after the disappointing way *Far From Home* handled his character arc as a whole.

Meanwhile, Benedict Cumberbatch reprises his role as Doctor Strange from previous Marvel movies. Despite my gripes with Strange not necessarily abiding to the strict mandates he swore to uphold as the "Master of the Mystic Arts," I think Cumberbatch has cemented himself as the definitive Doctor Strange, much like Robert Downey, Jr. did with Iron Man.

Beyond these two actors, the main reason *No Way Home* became the biggest box office hit of 2021 is that audiences wanted to see the returning characters from other Spider-Man movies. Alfred Molina and Willem Dafoe as Doctor Octopus and the Green Goblin,



Photo courtesy of MARVEL STUDIOS

Peter Parker faces off against a gallery of former foes thanks to an opening in the multiverse.

respectively, from Sam Raimi's Spider-Man films are as great as they were in the early 2000s, especially Dafoe, who really steals the show toward the midpoint of the movie.

Additionally, Jamie Foxx and Rhys Ifans return from *The Amazing Spider-Man* movies as Electro and the Lizard, respectively. Despite feeling Foxx's character is improved from his treatment in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, these villains, along with the Sandman (also from Sam Raimi's trilogy) lack in depth. Of course, seeing that this movie has so much going on, and given the stand-out performances from Molina, Dafoe and many more cast members, I'll give it a pass.

Without a doubt, the best parts of this film come from the appearance of the actors from the two previous Spider-Man film franchises: Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield. Even though I dislike how they are introduced in the film, once Maguire and Garfield start hanging out and working with Holland's Spider-Man, I was hooked. Even though all of their portrayals of basically the same character are unique in their own ways, this Spider-Man trinity wowed me with how fun their interactions are with each other. Having not been given the best treatment in his previous two films, Garfield in particular seems amplified to the perfect degree, exhibiting the same qualities as he previously did and then some. I'd love to see these two versions of Spider-Man again, especially since both Maguire and Garfield seem stoked to be back in these roles.

The next aspect of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* I'll be going over is the story. Unfortunately, *No Way Home*'s narrative and its lack of concen-

tration on important elements is what falls flat in this film. The plot of this movie is that Spider-Man and friends want to "cure" the newly arrived supervillains before sending them back to their respective universes to prevent their eventual deaths due to their villainy. I think the concept of "curing" these characters is pretty ridiculous, as is the way Spider-Man and company just birth these antidotes out of thin air. While I like the idea that Spider-Man is doing everything he can to prevent these villains from meeting their demises, the solution to his predicament feels tacked on, as if the writers know that the selling point of the movie is just to see the three Spider-Men fight the five bad guys. Even though it's a comic book movie filled with elements that will likely never exist in real life, I think it's just my personal preference for these things to actually seem as logical as possible.

But to backtrack a bit, the whole reason why Spider-Man breaks open the multiverse comes from his attempt to make everybody forget Peter Parker is Spider-Man. While this may seem like a pretty selfish reason to cast a universal spell and invade people's minds, I think *No Way Home* properly establishes the reason why Parker is doing this: it's not just for him, but because his identity being leaked is affecting the lives of his friends and family.

As Parker and Doctor Strange work together on creating the spell to make everybody forget he is Spider-Man, Parker repeatedly requests alterations to try and let only his loved ones know, which causes the spell to somehow open the multiverse. How? I have no idea how a spell attempting to make everybody forget some-

one's identity causes people from alternate realities to appear. As far as I can remember, the movie doesn't explain how this actual spell works and, again, this feels like something the writers just didn't properly think about. It is as if they just figured, "Who cares?! Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield are gonna show up! Everybody loves them!"

You could also ask the question of why Parker doesn't just stop Strange as he begins to cast the spell and give him a list or at least a rundown of everybody he wants to retain their memories of him. Ultimately, I'm grasping at straws here. Logic has clearly been something the MCU doesn't like to properly address, so I've got to just start expecting things to not make total sense.

Story aside, I'd like to dedicate this part of my review to discussing just a few things about the movie that I think are worth mentioning. First off, I think *No Way Home*, and mostly every new MCU project, doesn't look as good as it likely could. Don't get me wrong: there are a few good shots in this movie, but I feel for movies on this massive scale, the cinematography could be touched on more. I think this would help make the movie-viewing experience much better and it would enhance the other elements (story beats, action sequences, etc.), making the movie even more memorable.

Another thing I'd like to mention is that the pacing of the movie is kind of whack. I think the first act goes back and forth from lightning fast to the speed of a tortoise. Then, the second act begins to feel a bit

SPIDER-MAN
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Great characters make *Tomatoes* worth reading

The 1987 novel still feels ahead of its time given the issues it astutely explores

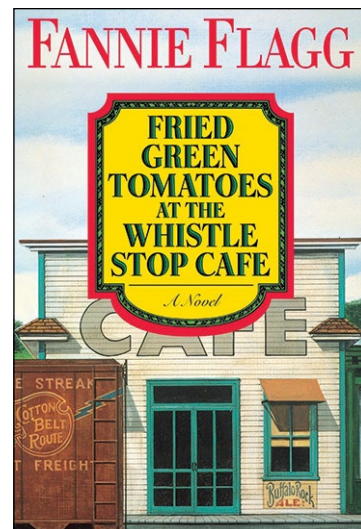


Photo courtesy of RANDOM HOUSE

Fried Green Tomatoes is a non-traditional love story that deals with issues of race, family and aging.

By KAPOsia KORICH
Quill staff writer

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe was written by Fannie Flagg and published on August 12, 1987. I chose this book because I think it has a very good plot. Additionally, I believe people should read this book because it is a feminist love story that was very different for the time period in which it came out. Not only does the book feature a love story between two female characters, it also deals with issues of race, family and aging. The result is an engaging read that should appeal to a very diverse audience.

The plot of this story revolves around the characters of Idgie and Ruth. Over the course of the novel, these two characters get a little too close, eventually opening a cafe and raising a baby together. Along the journey, they fight off Ruth's abusive husband, who tries to get the Ku Klux Klan to burn down their cafe. While they are defending themselves, Ruth's husband ends up getting murdered, which results in them going through a trial for the murder. These events build up to a memorable conclusion that brings closure to the many different storylines in the novel.

The writing style in this book is very unique. It takes you through many points of view on the various plot events that take place. In fact, it even includes a news article overview of what's going on in the town. The author makes a point of not overdoing a certain character; instead, she provides equal insight into everyone in the story. As a result, you get to know a bunch of characters over the course of reading the novel.

Also interesting is the fact that the story switches between different years. For instance, there are sequences in which the old Idgie tells the story of when she was young. The author's decision to switch between Idgie being in a nursing home telling a story about this young rebellious girl, and then transforming into the perspective of that young girl, is really cool. This approach to the narrative of the novel keeps things engaging for the reader.

Another element in the book I enjoy is its characterization of Idgie. The novel effectively shows what happens to a young girl who is growing up in a time when she has to look and act a certain way that does not fit who she really is. Idgie is stuck in the body of a girl, but she would rather be a boy. Given that she chooses to act like one and dress like one, her life is hard and complicated. Not only does Idgie have trouble being accepted by people in the community, her mom tries to set her up with every man in the universe. Instead, she truly is in love with Ruth, who is a family friend. Idgie's strength as a character and willingness to stick to her principles is inspiring to the reader.

Whether it is the interesting storyline, the compelling issues dealt with in the plot, the entertaining characters, or the unusual approach to the narrative, there are many things to like about *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*. No matter what your beliefs are, I think everyone should read this book, which deserves five out of five stars. It's very comical and definitely diverse for its time. If you read and enjoy the book, I definitely encourage you to watch the excellent movie adaptation as well.

Retro Bowl provides old-school gaming fun

The primitive graphics are part of the appeal of this addictive football video game for your phone

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Retro Bowl is an American football video game developed by New Star Games for the iOS and Android operating systems. The game was released in January 2020. I chose this game because I have been playing it lately and I really like it. *Retro Bowl* is a simple game that is fun at the same time. I think this game is one everybody should check out mainly because of the fact that it is easy to play.

When you first start playing the game, you have to pick your favorite team. Using that team, you can then unlock new characters such as receivers, defensive linemen and linebackers. There aren't any characters other than the team you pick. Your goal in the game is to win the Retro Bowl, which is like the Super Bowl.

I think the graphics in *Retro*

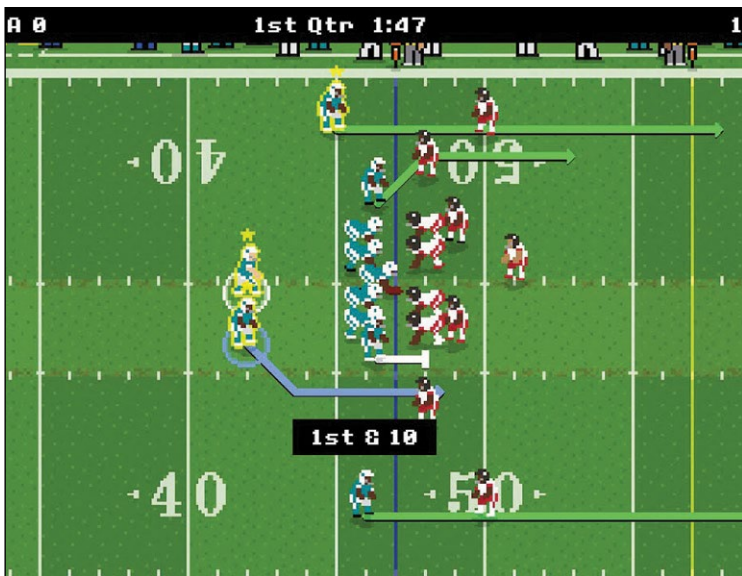


Photo courtesy of NEW STAR GAMES

The simplicity of the game does not render it boring after multiple plays.

Bowl are good. Players should keep in mind that the graphics aren't supposed to be really high quality. Instead, they're supposed to give the feel of an old-time arcade game. I believe

Retro Bowl totally does that in an effective way.

I also like the speed of the game. *Retro Bowl* is not really fast. It is not a game that you will get bored with after a week

or two. You can take your time and progress in the game every time you play. Eventually, you will get to the Retro Bowl and win. At that point, you can create a different team with another story line, which keeps the game fresh.

One thing I don't like in the game is the passing feature. Despite playing many times, I am still really bad at passing the ball. Whenever I follow the line, I think the ball will go to the receiver, but it goes somewhere else instead. It always gets intercepted, which makes me mad. However, if you're good and you can pay attention, you should have it after a while.

Retro Bowl is really fun and simple to play. I recommend that you play it because it is worth the time it takes to win. You will definitely have fun as you strive for the championship. I give *Retro Bowl* 4.3 out of five stars.

Persona sequel is good addition to ongoing series

Persona 5 is the sixth installment in the *Shin Megami Tensei: Persona* franchise



Photo courtesy of ATLUS

Persona 5 is a role-playing game that follows its central character through an adventure in The Metaverse.

By DEVIN GRAY
Quill staff writer

Persona 5 is the sixth game developed by Atlus (or SEGA) in the *Shin Megami Tensei: Persona* series, which features lead producer Katsura Hashino. Released originally for the Playstation 3 on September 15, 2016, *Persona 5* is also available on Playstation 4 and Playstation 5 systems. I believe people should play this game because it has an interesting story and it provides a unique gameplay experience. *Persona 5* is a great game because of the combination of its soundtrack, its visual style, its gameplay and its story.

Persona 5 is a game that is set in Shinjuku, Japan. It follows the troubled life of the main character, whom the player gets to name. This character is staying with a family friend for a year as a result of his probation. Eventually, this character enters a mysterious castle in a realm called The Metaverse, which is the source of the mental cognition of the general public in real life. While this game falls in the genre of a traditional Japanese role-playing game (JRPG), something that makes it unique is that it has social simulation aspects that makes the game have a slice-of-life, anime type of feel.

The battle system in *Persona 5* works similarly to other turn-based battle games like *Final Fantasy 7* and *Pokemon*. Your team of four people, along with other members of the story, all take turns attacking the opposition with mental manifestations of themselves, also known as personas. Each of the personas have different elemental abilities and special moves as you go through the story. However, what makes the main character unique is the ability to use multiple personas. This makes him the wild card of the group and gives everyone a sense of hope in battle.

The graphics in *Persona 5* are a little outdated in terms of current gaming standards. However, for the time and state of technology when it was released, *Persona 5* has very smooth graphics for the JRPG genre. The style of the game's art is anime-inspired. In fact, a few years after the game came out, they even released an anime dedicated to the main story of the game. While the cutscenes are a little long, the art elements are always a treat to watch.

The soundtrack for *Persona 5* is a musical masterpiece. Overall, the music has a mostly jazzy, piano feel. Personal favorite songs include the upbeat battle theme and the after-school study theme at the cafe. The music creates a perfect environment and setting for all the situations players encounter in the game.

Last but not least, we have the social simulation portion of the game. For those who don't know, this refers to the slice-of-life segments of the game, during which you can get jobs, go to school, hang out with friends or discover side missions. These activities are required if you want to make it far in the game. As you unlock and upgrade social stats, it will help you in The Metaverse. The social simulations are always engaging and make repeated playing of the game more interesting.

All in all, *Persona 5*, and its extension, *Persona 5 Royal*, is a great game and I believe you should play it. While it may be a little long, it makes up for it with entertaining gameplay, a stellar soundtrack and a unique gaming experience. I rate *Persona 5* 4.5 out of five stars.

Daredevil is the MCU's best TV series

Although no longer in production, *Daredevil* has something to offer Marvel fans both old and new

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Daredevil is a television series created by Drew Goddard for the streaming service Netflix based off of the Marvel Comics character of the same name. It is set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and, apart from a few references to other films, the show stays largely separated from any of the MCU's primary storylines and characters. The series follows Matt Murdock, a lawyer who was blinded in a chemical accident as a boy that gave him heightened senses, which he uses to wage a one-man war on crime as the masked vigilante known as Daredevil.

Ever since the first season was released on Netflix on April 10, 2015, fans and critics alike have praised *Daredevil* for its narrative, performances, cinematography, fight choreography and more. Unlike many live-action superhero films or TV shows released in the 2010s, *Daredevil* takes a very gritty approach to the comic book genre. It is an intelligent crime drama that honors its source material. In this review, I'll be going over several aspects that have made *Daredevil* my favorite comic book television series.

The first element of *Daredevil* I'll be discussing is its storylines and themes. Similar to stories revolving around the DC Comics hero Batman, *Daredevil*'s story dives into themes involving conflicting ideologies, morality and what justice truly means. Unlike other comic book stories, *Daredevil* also puts a focus on several themes untouched by the comic book genre, such as religious guilt, faith and abandonment.

The first season explores the conflicting ideologies between Matt Murdock and the show's primary antagonist, Wilson Fisk. While both Murdock and Fisk's goals may be to make Hell's Kitchen, New York into a safer place, they go about it in opposite ways. Murdock works at his own law firm by day to help the citizens of Hell's Kitchen improve their livelihood. However, by night, Murdock keeps those he helps safe by protecting them from crime, which leads to him unraveling a conspiracy organized by Fisk to destroy and rebuild parts of Hell's Kitchen, not caring who he endangers or kills in the process. Even though Fisk's plans to "save" Hell's Kitchen aren't presented as morally right, the writers make the audience understand why he is doing this, as they properly develop Fisk by exploring his childhood and creating parallels between him and Murdock.



Photo courtesy of MARVEL STUDIOS

Daredevil is focused on Matt Murdock, a lawyer who was blinded during a childhood accident.

The second season builds off of Murdock's moral beliefs and the ways he goes about ensuring justice is served. Part of this includes the introduction of the Punisher, who opposes Murdock's rule of not killing criminals, and an exploration of Murdock's thoughts about redemption. Much like Fisk, even though the Punisher's actions aren't presented as justified, his perspective is properly explored to make the audience understand his worldview and even sympathize with him.

Finally, season three of the show primarily dives into Murdock's religious guilt and his struggle to keep his faith as a Catholic. He blames God for continuously causing him to be beaten down and lose people. Season three also explores the trauma that comes from being abandoned and left alone at a young age, which is exhibited by both Murdock and the season's newest antagonist, FBI Agent Benjamin "Dex" Poinexter. At its core, *Daredevil* is a show that successfully explores what justice truly means in a society rife with injustice.

The next element I'll be discussing is *Daredevil*'s characters and performances. Charlie Cox plays the role of Matt Murdock, and he does an excellent job of portraying an angry, arrogant and self-righteous New Yorker, which is what the character of Daredevil is supposed to be.

Then, there is Deborah Ann Woll, who plays Karen Page. She is one of the most complicated and tragic characters from the show and the MCU as a whole. The complexity of this character can be attributed to Woll's incredible performance.

Coming next is Elden Hen-

son, who plays Foggy Nelson, Murdock's goofy best friend and law partner. Despite the fact that he has not faced any real tragedies in his life, Nelson proves to be one of the show's best characters. He has a realistic personality and his own character arc as a lawyer.

The next key actor is Vincent D'Onofrio, who plays Wilson Fisk, the show's overarching antagonist. Fisk has cemented himself as my personal favorite villain of the MCU, primarily due to the depth D'Onofrio provides to this haunted character.

Another one of my favorite characters is The Punisher, played by Jon Bernthal. I feel The Punisher consistently improves into a better character over the course of the show. In fact, this eventually led to his own spin-off Netflix series, *The Punisher*.

However, my favorite later addition to the series is Benjamin "Dex" Poinexter, played by Wilson Bethel. This character serves as a reflection of what Murdock could have become if his friends and faith did not properly guide him into being the person he is. While I could spend many more paragraphs going in-depth about the other characters in *Daredevil* and the performances by their respective actors, suffice it to say that *Daredevil* includes some of the best-written characters and well-cast actors in recent years.

Story and characters aside, from the first episode to its 39th, *Daredevil* is one of the best-looking TV shows I've ever seen. *Daredevil*'s cinematography shines, especially during action sequences, which absolutely elevates the already amazing and impressive fight choreography. *Daredevil* presents the grounded reality

that if a man, even one that was trained to be a ninja, went toe-to-toe with eight guys in a hallway, he would get winded and even beaten down a couple of times before emerging victorious. It may be fun to watch a robot-man or a demigod just demolish an army of CGI monsters, but I vastly prefer the more grounded and realistic approach to action sequences, especially when watching MCU flicks.

Even though *Daredevil* may have some of my favorite filmmaking elements of any comic book movie or series, it does have its fair share of problems, primarily in its second season. The first four episodes are promising, focusing on the discovery that the Punisher is not just a remorseless killing machine, but a tragic war veteran. However, everything starts to fall apart when the season gets into its second storyline, involving a cult known as The Hand. The season begins shifting back-and-forth from the storyline with the Punisher to Daredevil battling The Hand alongside his ex-girlfriend. If it were up to me, the Punisher storyline should be the main focus, since the character of Frank Castle/The Punisher is another perfect contrast to Matt Murdock, and his involvement also sparks tension between Murdock and his co-workers, especially since one of them, Karen Page, is sympathetic toward his case.

Also, I do not find the storyline about The Hand to be engaging. It really detracts from what *Daredevil* originally was: a grounded and realistic crime drama. Due to this storyline, the

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Happier Than Ever proves Eilish has more to offer

Fans of her phenomenally successful debut album will definitely like Billie Eilish's sophomore release

By AALIYAH HALL
Quill staff writer

Internationally famous American singer Billie Eilish recently released a new album named *Happier Than Ever*. *Happier Than Ever* is the second studio album by Eilish. After it's release on July 30, 2021, the album sold nearly 250,000 copies and had nine songs chart on the Billboard Hot 100 in one week. These results are not surprising given the fact that *Happier Than Ever* is Eilish's best album so far.

Eilish, who recently turned 20 years old, was first discovered by music listeners when she released the song "Ocean Eyes" in 2016. Since then, she has progressed in fame over time and hit number one on Billboard charts worldwide. Eilish's music choices blend different genres like pop, EDM, industrial, trap and even jazz. Her music comes off as emotional and her fans are largely, but not only, teenage girls.

Eilish is known for her style



Photo courtesy of INTERSCOPE RECORDS

Happier Than Ever retains Eilish's knack for writing catchy melodies.

of wearing very long pieces of clothing and working with expensive designers. Recently, Eilish has dealt with a lot of criticism related to her changes in clothing styles, comments she has made on social media platforms and changes to her musical approach. Despite all those things, Eilish continues to achieve great things

and her latest album is continued evidence of that.

The album *Happier Than Ever* represents Eilish's confidence and vulnerability. This new album shows her ability to artfully deal with past traumas in her life. This can definitely be heard on the title song "Happier Than Ever." The start of this song talks about

her past relationship troubles with her ex-boyfriend, Brandon Adams. She states how badly she was treated and how much he put her through during their time together. At one point, she sings, "You ruined everything good. Always said you were misunderstood." This eventually builds into the chorus, in which she sings, "When I'm away from you, I'm happier than ever." The combination of her lyrics and the music in this song successfully communicates how being away from him gives her relief and happiness.

The title track from this album, along with the release's 15 other songs, reinforce the fact that Billie Eilish is an icon and inspiration for many teens. *Happier Than Ever* is filled with mind-blowing music that will definitely appeal to her main audience. As a musician, her new album shows her newfound confidence. *Happier Than Ever* shows Eilish getting through her trauma and getting to know herself. This album deserves five out of five stars.

BioShock brings great story

The game's narrative sets *BioShock Infinite* apart from other first-person shooter titles



Photo courtesy of 2K GAMES

The 2013 release has received many accolades, including Action Game of the Year from the D.I.C.E. Awards.

By CECELIA NICHOLS
Quill staff writer

Some games have a story that you forget about after a few months when you've moved onto other titles, but *BioShock Infinite* isn't one of those games. *BioShock Infinite* is a first-person shooter video game that was developed by Irrational Games and published by 2K Games. The title was released on March 26, 2013 for Windows, PS3, Xbox 360 and OS X platforms. The game has received various awards, including Action Game of the Year at the D.I.C.E. Awards and the BAFTA games award for original score. If you ask me, the game deserves these praises and much more.

The game's protagonist, Booker DeWitt, was once a part of the U.S. Cavalry. Now, he is a hired gun who has one chance to clear his slate when he becomes indebted to the wrong people. A phrase that is repeated frequently throughout the game captures its central focus: Bring us the girl and wipe away the debt. It's now Booker's job to rescue a girl named Elizabeth, who has been locked away her whole life within a tower in the flying city of Columbia. As they are forced to trust each other, the two form a powerful bond during their journey, which sees them surviving the threats Columbia offers and uncovering its dark secret.

The story is engaging and keeps the player guessing. Both characters have their own secrets that are unveiled over the course of the story. Additionally, the game doesn't rely too heavily upon knowing the events of the previous titles. You could play this game while having little-to-no knowledge of the first two *BioShock* installments. However, I'd still recommend playing the past titles for further insight if you have the time.

The combat of *BioShock*

Infinite is unique and gives the player fun challenges throughout. There are various ways the player can tackle combat situations. For instance, the Sky-Hook can be used as a melee weapon to bludgeon enemies. Along with this, the player can carry up to two firearms, so it's important for the player to choose what weapons they possess wisely.

There are eight Vigors in the game as well. Vigors are powers that Booker obtains throughout the game that can be used in many different scenarios. These Vigors are powered by salt, a chemical substance that can be commonly found in blue bottles. However, you can receive them in the form of salt machines and

come easier to melee execute. It truly is up to the player to decide what pieces of gear are the most useful to them. Overall, the combat is fun and exciting for anyone who picks up the game.

Other small gameplay elements include Elizabeth's ability to pick locks for the player. Throughout the main story, Booker will come across many doors that are locked. These doors require the use of lockpicks, which the player can find in various areas. Elizabeth can use these lockpicks in order to open the door for Booker. These rooms can hold valuables such as currency or weapons, so it's worthwhile to keep an eye out for lockpicks.

Additionally, the game offers a few choices for the player at specific points in the story. However, there are no multiple endings so the choices don't have a significant impact. They cause small gameplay differences but that's about it. An example of this is a choice the player has with regards to the broach on Elizabeth's choker. Elizabeth is offered two different broaches, a bird or a cage, and Booker is able to

The game's protagonist, Booker DeWitt, was once a part of the U.S. Cavalry. Now, he is a hired gun who has one chance to clear his slate when he becomes indebted to the wrong people. A phrase that is repeated frequently throughout the game captures its central focus: Bring us the girl and wipe away the debt.

certain food items as well.

Elizabeth's tears are also extremely useful. With this ability, Elizabeth can bring in items from another world such as health kits or allies to fight for Booker. Another perk about Elizabeth in regard to combat is that she doesn't need to be protected by the player, so there's no need to worry about her getting injured or killed during a firefight.

There are also clothing items known as "gear" that the player can find throughout Columbia. Players can have any four gear upgrades at any given time, which take the form of a hat, shirt, pants and boots. The gear adds small perks for Booker in combat, such as the Coat of Arms, which makes enemies be-

give his opinion on which one he likes more. Whichever one he chooses is the one Elizabeth will wear. However, the choice is purely cosmetic, and it doesn't affect the story in any way.

The voice cast does an excellent job portraying their respective characters, making the characters in the game exceptionally memorable in the process. Booker DeWitt is voiced by Troy Baker, who you may know from games such as *The Last of Us* and *Arkham City*. Meanwhile, Elizabeth is portrayed by Courtney Draper. The two leads do a fantastic job in voicing each of their respective characters, pro-

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show takes a weird turn into more mystical territory, a turn that I wish was either axed completely or saved for the Marvel-Netflix crossover event The Defenders, which did feature The Hand as the main antagonist. Overall, if the Hand storyline was shelved completely and season two would fully focus on the Punisher storyline, it would be great or, at the

very least, exceptionally good.

In conclusion, despite having clear issues, *Daredevil* is not only my favorite TV show based on a comic book character, it is one of my favorite TV shows of all time. Due to the flaws of the show's second season, *Daredevil* deserves 4.5 out of five stars. Additionally, I am hoping for a fourth season or for the char-

acters of *Daredevil* to appear in either future MCU films or TV series. With Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige confirming in an interview for Spider-Man: No Way Home that Daredevil will appear in a future MCU project, my hope is that the show will continue on where it left off and bring a proper conclusion to this amazing TV series.

MICHIGAN SHOOTING continued from page 2

two children killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre. These families have been victimized twice, once by the coward who killed their loved ones and again by Alex Jones and his followers. I believe people like Alex Jones

shouldn't have a platform to say such things about families that have lost loved ones in mass shootings in this country.

I hope one day, every kid in this country doesn't have to worry about the possibility of being killed at school or never

seeing their classmates again. This mass shooting epidemic will continue to happen until Congress does something about it. Is our "freedom" to own guns really more important than the lives of children in this country?

Premier Performers

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

Zay'Vontay Scott

By SHENG VANG
Quill staff writer

Zay'Vontay Scott (12) has been in theater, art and improv for as long as he can remember. Since fifth grade, Scott has been auditioning for things like talent shows, which led to his involvement in Cooper's theater, art and improv programs.

Scott started auditioning for plays during his freshman year and has been involved in theater since then. He said in theater class, he enjoys making others laugh and learning to become a better actor. One of his favorite works in theater was his role in the fall 2021 play *Clue*.

"That was pretty much my first huge role and I was very proud of myself and how we all did. It was amazing to be a part of something so awesome," he said. As for art, Scott sees it as more than

just drawing and painting.

"Art I like because I can learn so much from it," he said. "Art is just not a picture; art is music or whatever someone would see fit."

Scott has also done sculpting before and is most proud of a piece he made in middle school that his mother still has now.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Outside of school, Scott has a TikTok account on which he runs a one-man show encouraging laughter and others to follow what they believe in. He also enjoys spending time with his younger siblings, training his dog and attending the Treehouse program.

In the future, Scott plans to attend North Hennepin Community College or the University of Minnesota to major in theater. He said he one day wants to become a famous actor and playwright like Tyler Perry, who is one of his biggest inspirations.

Rachel Omoke

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM
Quill staff writer

Rachel Omoke (12) is currently in Concert Choir. She has now been in choir since seventh grade.

"I started doing choir at first because my friends were doing it, but also because I've always been singing my whole life at church and at home, so I wanted to continue that in choir class," she said.

Omoke said she enjoys the music elements of being in choir.

"I've enjoyed the different varieties of concerts that we've had and learning all sorts of different music and styles in music," she said.

Omoke cited several concerts as her favorite memories of being in choir. "I liked the Fall Festival concert we had in 2019 at Orchestra Hall," she

said. "It was cool singing in such a big place like that in front of a big crowd and singing together with Armstrong. I also love the Cultural Concert we have yearly around March because we are able to showcase our cultures and it's very nice seeing the different performances."

Outside of choir, Omoke said her favorite class is AVID.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

"Especially in senior year, they are able to guide and assist me more in my college journey and the teachers are always there for me," she said.

In her free time, Omoke enjoys playing volleyball and seeing her friends and family. Next fall, she hopes to begin her college experience.

"I'm not 100 percent sure at the moment where I'll be going to college, but somewhere most likely in Minnesota," she said. "I'm going to major in nursing."

Kylie Scott

By PHILIP ROBERT
Quill staff writer

Kylie Scott (12) has been involved with drawing, acting and choir at Cooper. This year, she added on participation in dance and in a small choir group called Bella Voce. According to Scott, there have been many aspects of her arts activities that she has enjoyed over the years.

"My favorite part of drawing was being creative. For acting, it was learning new experiences and having supportive classmates. For dance, it was making up dances and learning about them as a team. And, lastly, for choir, it was always about the harmonizing and team effort everyone gives into making a beautiful sound," she said.

Scott has many favorite memories from her various arts activities. In her

drawing class, she said she liked learning how to draw people and hands. As for acting, she enjoyed when the seniors would perform because "it was funny." When it comes to dance, she enjoyed meeting new friends. Finally, she liked the opportunity in choir to meet and perform with younger students.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Given her love for the arts, it is not surprising that Scott's favorite classes this year have been choir and dance. She also said she enjoys English.

Outside of school, some hobbies Scott enjoys are singing, cooking, cleaning and working.

Next fall, Scott will attend college and major in education. She also hopes to join a choir in college.

"I will most likely sign up for choir in college because I really enjoy choir class," she said.

Aaliyah Ruhland

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

Aaliyah Ruhland (12) is a performer who takes part in Concert Choir, Bella Voce and band.

"I started choir because I like to sing and it gave me opportunities to sing and learn with other people. I joined band because I wanted to learn how to play an instrument," she said.

Being in choir and band has allowed Ruhland the chance to make music with others, which she said is a personal highlight of being in music. As for her favorite moments in these activities, Ruhland pointed out two specific ones.

"My favorite memory in choir is performing in the fall festival at Orchestra Hall. My favorite memory in band is playing at pep fests," she said.

With the winter concerts wrapping up before the holiday break, Ruhland said she is now looking forward to the band's spring concert on May 10 and the choir's spring concert on May 17.

During the school day, Ruhland said her favorite classes are choir and band. However, she added that she enjoys psychology "because it's interesting to learn about how complex the brain is." In her free time, Ruhland said she enjoys "watching and playing sports, specifically basketball and softball."

Next fall, Ruhland will attend college with the long-term goal of working in physical therapy. She said she hopes to stay involved with music while attending school.

"I hope to continue with the arts after high school because I've enjoyed the experience" she said.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Lynx has solid, not stellar end to 2021 season

The basketball squad fell short of its quest for another WNBA title



Photo courtesy of MICHAEL BARERA

The Minnesota Lynx did not make it past the second round in the playoffs this year.

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

The Lynx lost in the second round of the playoffs during the 2021 season, cutting short their quest for a fifth WNBA title. They were led by Napheesa Collier, Sylvia Fowles and Kayla McBride. Fowles is a returning veteran who has been on the team since 2015 and helped bring home the 2017 championship. Behind her leadership and some lesser-known players, the Lynx had another winning season overall.

Although the Lynx went 22-10 in the regular season, and ended up with a first round bye in the playoffs, the team battled many injuries along the way. Offsetting those obstacles were great performances from the team's leaders. Topping the charts on the team with most points per game was Collier, who averaged 16.2. Fowles was close behind with 16 per game. However, Fowles led in rebounds, steals and blocks per game on the court. Collier also reigned in just over three assists a game, the best on the team. Meanwhile, Aerial Powers, McBride and Fowles were all among the top 10 in points during the postseason.

As a way to celebrate the 25th season of the WNBA, the league in-

The Chicago Sky forced the Lynx to play hard, but the Lynx couldn't keep up with the six-seeded Sky, who sent them home with an 89-76 loss in the second round of the playoffs.

roduced an extra tournament outside of the playoffs that had a \$500,000 prize for the winning team. The top team in each conference after the cup games then played each other for the grand prize and title. The Lynx lost their first three games in the contest, but battled back to win the last seven straight. Of their first three losses, two of those were to the Seattle Storm. The Storm only lost two of their cup games to the Lynx's three, which left the Lynx in second and sent the Storm on to play the eastern conference winner, the 9-1 Connecticut Sun. Seattle won by a margin of 22 points to take the title and the prize with the Lynx looking in from the outside. While the Lynx did not play in the finals, this tournament was a definite highlight of the 2021 WNBA season.

Moving onto the official WNBA postseason, the Lynx managed to stay on top in their conference and earned the third seed in the league. The Chicago Sky forced the Lynx to play hard, but the Lynx couldn't keep up with the six-seeded Sky, who sent them home with an 89-76 loss in the second round of the playoffs. The Sky eventually would go on to win the 2021 season playoffs.

Even with their early playoff exit in 2021, the Lynx look set to come back stronger during the 2022 season. Key returning players and the development of the younger competitors on the roster are likely to give the Lynx another chance at the finals and a WNBA title.

Robins win ninth state soccer title

After the cancellation of the '20-'21 season due to COVID, the Robbinsdale team came back strong in '21-'22



Photo by MR. ONSUM

The Robbinsdale Robins led their rivals from Dakota United throughout the match, eventually earning a 7-5 victory.

By ERIN CHUNN
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale Robins beat Dakota United 7-5 on November 20, 2021 to win the Minnesota state adapted soccer title in the PI division. Cooper student and Robins team member Nicholas Johnson (10) said this victory was a result of the team's hard work throughout the season.

"It was pretty exciting," Johnson said. "This was my first time winning the state tournament with my team."

The Robins' victory marks the team's first state title since 2014 and their ninth title overall. The Robins have also tallied seven runner-up finishes at the state level.

"This group was extremely focused and determined to do well, even more so than usual," head coach Mr. Onsum said. "We had some very talented players, which obviously helped too."

Leading the scoring for the team was Cooper student Jose Leon Estrada (10). He had one goal and one assist in the first half, which contributed to the Robins' 4-1 lead. After the midpoint, Dakota United scored twice to get within one goal of the Robins, but Leon Estrada added two more goals to extend the lead to 6-3. An

additional goal by the Robins put the game out of reach despite Dakota United scoring an additional pair of goals. The final score was 7-5.

The Robins' victory comes after the 2020-2021 season was canceled due to the pandemic. Onsum said the missing season motivated this year's roster to play as hard as they could.

"I truly believe that missing a full season due to COVID last year really had this group focused and working harder than ever, es-

pecially our group of five seniors," he said. "There just seemed to be a feeling of unfinished business among our kids and they really didn't want this season to pass without accomplishing something special."

Heading into the state tournament, the Robins enjoyed an undefeated season, which earned them a first-round bye in the postseason. Onsum said the team's success in the regular season and the postseason can be attributed to the players' commitment to hard work during practice.

"As simple as it may seem, a little rusty when we have more than a week or so between games, and with us having almost three weeks between our last regular season game and the state tournament, it was a huge challenge," Onsum said. "We spent a significant amount of time simply scrimmaging against anyone that we could get to come join us, friends, family, alumni, etc. We had some really great scrimmage games, which I think helped keep everyone on top of their game."

According to Onsum, the tradition of success enjoyed by the Robins program can be attribut-

ed to the ongoing commitment of the players, their families and the coaching staff. However, he noted that this year's team had a special chemistry that made the state win possible.

"I have had more talented teams that never achieved the level of success this group did," Onsum said. "After not getting to have any sort of competition last year, and very limited time together for a short training season, I truly loved being able to work with these kids on a regular basis, watch them grow and do something great. This championship really stands out among all the others I have been a part of and is one that will not be forgotten any time soon."

The Robins team is part of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) varsity level adapted athletics program for students with disabilities. The Robins is made up of students in grades 7-12 from the Robbinsdale, Hopkins, Mound-Webster, and St. Louis Park school districts. The Robins have two programs, a PI team for students who have physical or functional health impairments that practices at Armstrong, and a CI team for students that have cognitive or developmental disabilities that is based at Cooper.

IB CANDIDATES HONORED AT SILVER PLATTER EVENT continued from page 1

teacher Mr. Hahn, who was on paternity leave for part of the time she was working on the project. Despite this, she was able to overcome some obstacles presented by her work on the essay.

"My biggest challenge during the EE process was probably the time-management aspect. Planning days to work on my essay was hard, but it made the challenge easy to overcome," she said. "I also really struggled with the word count. It was very easy for me to go over the word count, 1,300 words over to be exact, and that was a definitely a challenge I had to overcome."

Celebrating the fact that students overcome obstacles of this sort is a big reason why Christensen said the Silver Platter Day ceremony is important. During the event, the Media Center is set up similar

to an auditorium with chairs for the audience and a podium for the speakers. One by one, the diploma candidates go up to the podium, where they state their research question, place their final essay on a silver platter and hand the essay to their mentor along with a candy bar and a thank you note to show their gratitude.

Robes are worn by the diploma students throughout the ceremony to reinforce the fact that it is a formal event. Afterward, group photos are taken and refreshments are served to all of the guests, which this year included families, Cooper staff members and administrators such as Head Principal Mr. Herman and Superintendent Mr. Engstrom.

Christensen said pulling off an event of this sort takes a lot of planning.

"We have several conversations with students and their supervisors prior to the event to ensure that they know what the celebration looks like and feels like," she said. "We [also] work with our amazing Media Center staff to clean and arrange the celebration area."

Making the Silver Platter Day event even more special this year was that it could be held in person at Cooper. Last year's event took place virtually via a Zoom meeting during distance learning thanks to the pandemic. Christensen said she thinks everyone enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate the diploma candidates in a group setting.

"We got a lot of compliments from everyone this year," she said. "The students particularly enjoyed taking selfies and small group pictures with our 'IB Done' frames.

I think having the superintendent there and wanting to be sure he got a selfie with the students made them feel especially honored."

Agreeing with Christensen is Borisevich, who said the importance of the ceremony really did not hit her until it was taking place.

"To be completely honest, I thought at first that Silver Platter Day didn't seem that important. I thought it was going to be kind of corny and, honestly, a waste of my time. But when we put the robes on, started taking pictures and the ceremony began, I realized that I accomplished something really big that was meant to be celebrated. I really enjoyed Silver Platter Day and I enjoyed being able to celebrate with people that had very similar experiences as I did," she said.

BIOSHOCK BRINGS GREAT STORY continued from page 7

viding powerful emotion and giving their characters their own unique personalities. Other significant voice actors include Kiff VandenHeuvel as Zachary Hale Comstock, the main antagonist of the story, and Oliver Vaquer and Jennifer Hale as Robert and

Rosalind Lutece, respectively. These two are a set of mysterious twins who follow Booker during the story. All in all, the voice actors do a fantastic job at giving their characters unique and in-depth personalities.

Overall, *BioShock Infinite*

is a great game for anyone who loves first-person shooters and fantastic storytelling. The game offers an immersive experience while also giving the player something to think about when the story comes to a close. I give *BioShock Infinite* five out

of five stars. It is must play for anyone who loves a good story and intense combat. If you find yourself enjoying this title, I'd also recommend playing the follow-up DLC, *Burial At Sea*. I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Wolves season full of streaks

Minnesota has been stringing together many wins, losses in a row during the '21-'22 campaign



Photo courtesy of MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES

Since the start of the new year, the Minnesota Timberwolves have had more winning than losing streaks.

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

The Minnesota Timberwolves pounded out an aggressive, 122-104 win over the Los Angeles Clippers on January 3. During the game, the team went on multiple runs of three pointers, which led to the victory. This game is a good example of what the Wolves' season has looked like so far. When they have their key players, the team looks in sync and they have the ability to devastate any other team. However, when key players are missing, the team is losing games they could win.

A big issue for the Wolves and other NBA teams is COVID, which is throwing a wrench into everything. Keeping players like Karl-Anthony Towns, Anthony Edwards and D'Angelo Russell free of COVID and on the court is key to the team. Without them playing, the Wolves are forced to put together a scrappy bench team that gets close to winning but can't seem to edge out their opponents.

This fact was on full display before the new year. The team was without KAT and Edwards, which led to some losses. Eventually, both of them came back together soon after the holidays and they went to work against the Lakers on January 2. It was a close-but-not-quite bout that the Lakers won 108-103. The Wolves even had to sign a 10-day contract with Greg Monroe to help fill empty spots. Although COVID

is taking its toll on the team, the team is beginning to take things back to the court.

Although the team's record is 16-20 as of January 7, the Timberwolves started out the season strong, taking three out of their first four games. Then began the ups and downs as they eventually lost their next seven out of eight games. However, even as they struggled to get a win, they still were putting in the effort on the court behind their on-the-fly lineup.

What's been most notice-

Whether it's winning or losing, the Wolves tend to stick to one or the other of those for a while. At the beginning of the new year, the streak has been largely in the winning column. After losing with their scrappy playbook to the Lakers by only five, they turned that around immediately the next day by beating the Clippers by a solid 18 points.

able is how much the team goes on streaks. Whether it's winning or losing, the Wolves tend to stick to one or the other of those for a while. Since the beginning of the new year, the streak has been largely in the winning column. After losing with their scrappy playbook to the Lakers by only five, they turned that around immediately the next day by beating the Clippers by a solid 18 points. It's a very impressive score line considering how they just got most of their big name starters back like KAT and

Edwards. Edwards powered ahead by putting up 28 points with four assists. Two days later, and looking to continue an upward swing, they shot past the Oklahoma City Thunder in a 98-90 showing. Patrick Beverly, Towns and Edwards led the team as they came back to a full-strength lineup.

Among many Timberwolves stories to have happened recently, organization changes may be the most noteworthy. Baseball star Alex Rodriguez has purchased the team with his business partner Marc Lore, and they will split the ownership 50/50. The current owner, Glen Taylor, will continue to run the team for two more years as Lore and Rodriguez will assume operational roles. Taylor wants the team to stay here in Minnesota and believes they will. Currently, there has been no talk about moving the team, but who knows what the future will bring to the Wolves from a management perspective.

As we move into the second half of the season, there are some key storylines to pay attention to. First, Edwards is continuing to look strong this season and he seems likely to lead the team in points as he usually does. Also, we have KAT and Russell backing Edwards up when it comes to talent. What the Wolves have lacked in the past seems to be here this season. Now, all they need is some leadership, which hopefully the new ownership can take care of as they try to improve the squad.

NEW SPIDER-MAN BRINGS FAN FAVES HOME continued from page 5

more balanced. Eventually, the film culminates in a solid and pretty satisfying third act and conclusion.

Speaking of the end of the film, the resolution has everybody forgetting Peter Parker exists in order to bring all of the people from the multiverse back to their respective universes. I think this promises a bright future for Spider-Man. It might just be my bias for what I saw first, but I've always viewed Tobey Maguire as the definitive on-screen Spider-Man. However, I think Holland is really making his version his own, which I respect. I'd also love to see Andrew Garfield return as Spider-Man, whether it be in another Sony-helmed movie, such as the upcoming Morbius film, or continuing where he left off in a hypothetical *The Amazing Spider-Man 3* film.

One of the biggest aspects of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* doesn't come from the movie itself, but from the hype around it.

Whether it be on Twitter, Instagram or Strava, it feels like there are always people talking about this movie and sharing their wild theories. Leaks from the film also played a major part in amping up the hype for *No Way Home*. For example, there were popular-yet-unconfirmed leaks about Maguire and Garfield returning to their roles and about Charlie Cox appearing as Matt Murdock from the Netflix television series *Daredevil*. Of course, Marvel refused to acknowledge their appearances, wanting them to be kept a surprise.

For these reasons, *No Way Home* really soured for me in advance. It felt more like a burden to see, rather than something to actually be excited about. I think if somebody just used a modicum of their intelligence, they could properly deduce what this movie is really all about. Of course, with the COVID-19 pandemic causing a massive decline in box office numbers in 2020-21, I do understand why Mar-

vel Studios would want to milk this movie until it was released, since they're producing more than double the Marvel movies and TV shows than they did a few years ago.

In conclusion, no matter what I say about it, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is undoubtedly the biggest film to the majority of moviegoers in 2021. *No Way Home* is everything that it has to be and just about what I expected: a tailor-made MCU movie driven by nostalgia. Even though *No Way Home* didn't blow me away, I don't think it's a bad movie by any means. At the same time, it really doesn't feel that special, and I doubt it's a movie I'll re-watch anytime soon. I give *Spider-Man: No Way Home* three stars out of five. It's definitely not as good as the first film in the MCU's Spider-Man trilogy, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, but it is also definitely an improvement over its predecessor, *Spider-Man: Far From Home*.

Cooper Competitors

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

Amya Simmons

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM
Quill staff writer

Amya Simmons (12) plays basketball in the winter and softball in the spring. Simmons has been playing basketball her whole life.

"What made me play basketball was my dad. He inspired me to play basketball and to have him as a coach at Cooper is quite amazing," Simmons said.

The coaches and her teammates are two elements Simmons likes about Hawks basketball.

"At practice and games, the energy we have for our teammates makes it fun," she said. "I enjoy laughing and getting hype on the bench. Also, I enjoy the celebrations when my team makes the basket."

Simmons said she has been work-

ing as a mentor for other girls on her basketball team this season.

"We got assigned a younger player out of our three teams to assist to make sure their grades are going good and making sure if they have questions on their homework we can help them," she said.

Once Simmons is done with her winter sport, softball starts up in the spring.

"I think things will go good with the new players that are joining," she said.

When it comes to school, Simmons said she enjoys her U.S. History class. As for hobbies, she likes being with her friends, painting and going outside.

Next fall, Simmons plans to attend a community college.

"After that, I want to move out of state and go to college to play basketball and softball. Then, hopefully, I want to become a physical therapist," she said.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Emma Launderville

By SHENG VANG
Quill staff writer

Emma Launderville (12) is an athlete who plays for the Cooper's hockey and swimming teams.

Launderville has been playing for the Cooper teams for two years. She joined hockey during her junior year. Joining the hockey team was not easy, according to Launderville, as she had little experience in playing the sport. However, with the support of her teammates and coaches, Launderville was able to make improvements and, at the same time, make new friends.

"My favorite memory from my work in hockey is that, no matter how hard the drill is and how hard I struggle, my teammates and

coaches are able to push me to be better," she said.

Besides being on the hockey team, Launderville is also part of the swimming team during the fall.

"In the fall, the swim season went well. Our team was strong this year and we had a very strong and fun community," she said.

Aside from sports, Launderville said two of her favorite classes are Anatomy and Spanish. During Launderville's free time, she enjoys reading and playing slow-pitch softball.

After high school, Launderville will major in athletic training or exercise training to become an athletic trainer, physical therapist or chiropractor. She also plans to continue with swimming in the future.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Ethan DeGroot

By NOLAN ANDLER
Quill staff writer

Ethan DeGroot (12) is a fall and winter athlete. In the fall, he plays soccer, and in the winter, he is on the swim team. DeGroot said he played golf last year but he doesn't plan on doing it this year.

DeGroot has been on the swim team all four years he has been at Cooper.

"I joined the team my freshman year in 2018. I started swimming when I was seven, so once I gained more confidence in my ability, I decided to join the team," he said.

DeGroot is a captain on the team.

"I really enjoy messing around with my teammates and getting to know them more," he said.

DeGroot's favorite memory of his time on the swim team goes back to the

2019-2020 season.

"My favorite memory is when I got into section finals for the first time my sophomore year," he said.

While he considers swimming his main sport, DeGroot also plays soccer.

"I do soccer as cross-training. It is a fun sport to do," he said.

During the school day, DeGroot said he is equally interested in all his classes. However, he does have a pair of favorite subjects.

"My favorite classes are probably math and any science class I take," he said.

In his free time, DeGroot's hobbies are snowboarding and playing video games.

DeGroot's plans for college are to attend University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh and get a major in mechanical engineering technology. He also is going to be on the swim team for college.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Prince Appiah

By KAPOSIA KORICH
Quill staff writer

Prince Appiah (12) is involved with basketball in the winter and track in the spring for Cooper. Because of how committed he is to his main sport of basketball, which he has been playing since fifth grade, Appiah said he has been named captain.

"I am one of the captains of the basketball team and my role is to make sure I hold my teammates accountable and give them the right directions. This role has been good. I can't complain about it," Appiah said.

Even though he will participate in track, Appiah said he also occupies himself in his off seasons from basketball by working out in the weight room and in the gym because he wants to continue to get better.

Appiah said he plans on continu-

ing with basketball when he leaves high school, but currently doesn't have a planned college he will attend.

"I want to major in something that has to do with business. I plan on continuing my basketball journey throughout college. Also, I will be getting into real estate and starting a clothing brand," he said.

Appiah said he has had plenty of time to think about his dream to pursue a career in business.

"My favorite class would be Introduction to Marketing because I get to learn a lot about how business works and how they market their products," Appiah said.

Appiah has many hobbies outside of school. He said he spends time shopping for clothes and sneakers, playing video games and hanging out with friends.



Photo by R. BULLOCK