

Hoover novel *It Ends With Us* is great start to new series
Page 6

The Quill

Thur., Dec. 1, 2022

Vol. 59, No. 2

Cooper fall athletes look back on successful 2022 season
Page 8



Robbinsdale Cooper High School

<https://chs.rdale.org/families/the-quill>

8230 47th Ave. N., New Hope, MN 55428

ALSO INSIDE

News



Club celebrates Asian culture

Under the guidance of Mr. Kek, Cooper's climate and culture specialist, the group has many plans for the remainder of the '22-'23 school year

Page 2

Opinion



Schedule change has drawbacks

The repercussions of later start, end times to the school day are affecting students in multiple ways, most of which are negative

Page 3

Opinion



School lunch key for many Hawks

Although people often complain about the quality and variety of school food, it is an affordable way to keep teens fed

Page 4

Variety

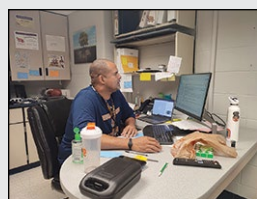


Gamers will like wonderful War

Middle Earth: Shadow of War, the follow-up to Monolith Studios' successful *Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor*, improves on its predecessor

Page 5

Sports



Howard named activities director

Former assistant principal and current head football coach Mr. Howard moves to the activities office after the 2022 retirement of Mr. Oelfke

Page 7

COOPER OPENS ITS DOORS TO COMMUNITY PROGRAM

The Full-Service Community School model helps support district students, families in need



Photo by SHENG VANG

The program is housed in room 140, where its leaders, Ms. Aguirre and Ms. Mogahee, meet with students during the day.

By **JESSE GARCIA**
Quill staff writer

Cooper has become a Full-Service Community School (FSCS) this year in order to help students and families in need. Through this model, the school aims to support the people of the surrounding community in the various ways they need help.

The program is led this year by Ms. Aguirre and Ms. Mogahee. They

are both located on the first floor in room 140, near the equipment room. They aim to supply students with everything from mental health support to food to hygiene items.

"We aim and strive to help the community at Cooper," Aguirre said.

Unlike other school-based programs, the FSCS model is entirely based on the needs of the students and people who show

up. As such, the services they provide are separate from a student's academic needs at school. If the two coordinators believe it would be beneficial to a student to have a certain resource, they said they'll do their best to make it happen. This is shown through the hygiene kits they prepare. Anyone can go down to their room and pick up a kit with the supplies needed to keep up their hygiene.

"In our room, students can come down to pick up supplies for basic hygiene," Aguirre said.

Upon entering room 140, visitors are greeted by the two coordinators. Aguirre said that they "care for the students and people that decide to enter their room." For example, if the person is in need of food, they can contact a partner program that is able to provide students and families with food for

outside of school.

Additionally, if the visitor requires a service not yet provided by them, Aguirre said they likely have the solution and can refer the person to other programs found through the community, whether that be inside or outside of Cooper.

Aguirre explained that they try to form bonds with students and achieve greater educational outcomes for said students. The FSCS model is made to help the community as a whole. Due to this, any family or person can contact them for help.

"Anyone can come in to collect a meal, whether that be a student or even that student's family. We offer our resources to them," Aguirre said.

Unlike other Cooper programs, FSCS is not coordinated by preexisting staff members in the building. As such, many students don't know Aguirre and Mogahee. Despite this, Mogahee said that many students are already going there every day "to talk and vent" to them. Both Aguirre and Mogahee stressed that they keep things on a private level so students who enter their room "don't need to worry about others finding out" what types of help the students are seeking in their office.

Warndahl retires from school after 22 years

Ms. Warndahl ran Cooper's College and Career Center for more than two decades, helping countless Hawks prepare for life after school



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Warndahl helps Julia Nordstrom (12) during a October 29 college application event.

By **DAMARIUS HAMILTON**
Quill staff writer

College and Career Center Coordinator Ms. Warndahl retired from Cooper at the start of November after working in the building for 22 years.

Before starting at Cooper, Warndahl had a background in education. She attended Hennepin Technical College for a degree in early childhood educa-

tion after graduating from high school. After that, she worked as a medical secretary before having her first child, at which point she started and ran her own in-home daycare facility for 12 years. Once her son reached high school age, Warndahl transitioned into her position at Cooper in 2000.

"We had a son in high school at the time I started and I was working with him through the process of looking at colleges, applying to colleges, applying for FAFSA, scholarships, etc.," she said.

During her time at Cooper, Warndahl had a number of primary responsibilities in the College and Career Center. She spent her days meeting with students and classes as a whole about college and career choices. She also planned college and military visits to the school. Additionally, Warndahl helped students learn about and apply for various college scholarships.

Outside of the College and Career Center, Warndahl also played a role in organizing and administering various standardized tests at Cooper, including the ACCESS, MCA and MAP tests.

"In the early years here, I also had hallway duties and worked in the copy room," she said.

One person who has witnessed the many duties Warndahl has overseen at Cooper is Head Principal Mr. Herman. Herman said Warndahl was instrumental in making the College and Career Center as helpful to students as it is.

"Her work in connecting with colleges as well as with military visits was instrumental in getting information to students," he said. "She kept a full set of resources for students to help with ACT prep, college applications and financial aid. Ms. Warndahl also was a valuable member of our Cooper community by helping with other various duties while building relationships

WARND AHL RETIRES continues on page 2

New health mentor helps Cooper students in multiple ways

Ms. Mohamed, who is located in room 144, comes to the school through a partnership with Annex Teen Clinic

By **LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM**
Quill staff writer

Cooper welcomed a new health mentor to the school this year from the Annex Teen Clinic, Ms. Mohamed. Located in room 144, Mohamed said they act as "a direct link to sexual health services for the youth here at Cooper."

"If you need help accessing birth control, STI testing, pregnancy tests and emergency contraception, I can help with that," Mohamed said. "I also do one-on-one meetings with students about anything related to sexual health, relationships and any other personal concerns. I mainly have access to services related to sexual health, so if you need help with anything outside my scope, I can always help direct you to someone or an organization that

may be able to help."

Mohamed said that no day is ever the same in their office at Cooper because most of their job is dependent on how many students come to see them and what support the students need.

"Some students come in for quick questions or check-ins, some students just come in to pick up condoms, lube or menstrual products. Some days I have more one-on-one meetings than others. I also have days where I am not at the school much, due to training workshops, clinic workdays, etc. I am still new to this role, so I am always learning how I can be a more consistent presence at Cooper," Mohamed said.

According to Mohamed, having a health mentor at Cooper can be of benefit to the students in many direct and indirect ways. For one, Mohamed said they follow the Minnesota Minor Consent Law, which

means students they work with "can receive sexual health services without parental consent." In addition, Mohamed can provide services that are low-to-no cost to students if finances are a concern.

"I also provide a plethora of information when it comes to anything sexual health, bodily functions [and] relationships, which includes friends and family," Mohamed said. "For example, if you had a question about whether you are ready for dating or wanting to know more about puberty and adolescent development, or even needing help in deciding what birth control you want to start, I can help with all these things."

Now that Cooper is well into the second quarter of the school year, Mohamed said the most frequent

NEW HEALTH MENTOR continues on page 6

Sweeps designed to get students to classrooms

Issues with tardiness, truancy led to the use of hall sweeps this year

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

Hall sweeps started at Cooper in September 2022 to provide a more professional work environment for both students and teachers.

Hall sweeps were designed by administrators to prevent incidents that occur in the halls when students are not in class after the five-minute passing time given between each class period.

“For most students, it is a non-issue as the majority of our Hawks are in class on time, but those that struggle to get to class. I am sure they are not liking the sweeps,” Head Principal Mr. Herman said.

One issue sweeps are designed to address is fights and conflicts that break out between or during class sessions, which can make the halls an uninviting environment.

“We have done them before but it was not that often. While I wish we did not have to take the time to do this, I do feel it is important to stress that we expect students to be in class on time,” Herman said.

While hall sweeps are seen as a way to encourage students to attend class on time and more frequently, they may also lead to complications as students rush to class. Administrators are considering ways to avoid possible queues in bathrooms and even in hallways.

“Possible cons are that some students that are usually on time may end up being late and caught up in the sweep, and it does take a lot of staff to ensure we do and maintain the sweeps,” Herman said.

The hall sweeps have various impacts on the people who get caught outside of class. Under these regulations, if you are late to class, you are not allowed to enter class until you go to the center of the Y between each circle’s entrance on all three floors in order to get a pass. Passes change colors daily. Students who are less than 10 minutes late are considered tardy, while those later than 10 minutes are considered absent.

Being caught up in a hall sweep multiple times will make you ineligible for purchasing tickets to sports events, taking part in game days and attending other school activities.

Hall sweeps are meant to create a safer and calmer environment for both students and teachers in order to improve productivity and promote wise decision making. For teachers and staff members, hall sweeps have largely impacted them in a positive way as they try to maintain a proper learning environment for students.

“I don’t like how students would repeatedly show up late to my class,” English teacher Ms. Major said.

Voicing a similar opinion is science teacher Ms. Fleming.

“I don’t want to interrupt class by opening the door, so [I like it when students] arrive on time,” Fleming said.

Asian American Club starts year strong

Under the guidance of Mr. Kek, Cooper's climate and culture specialist, the group has many plans for 2022-2023

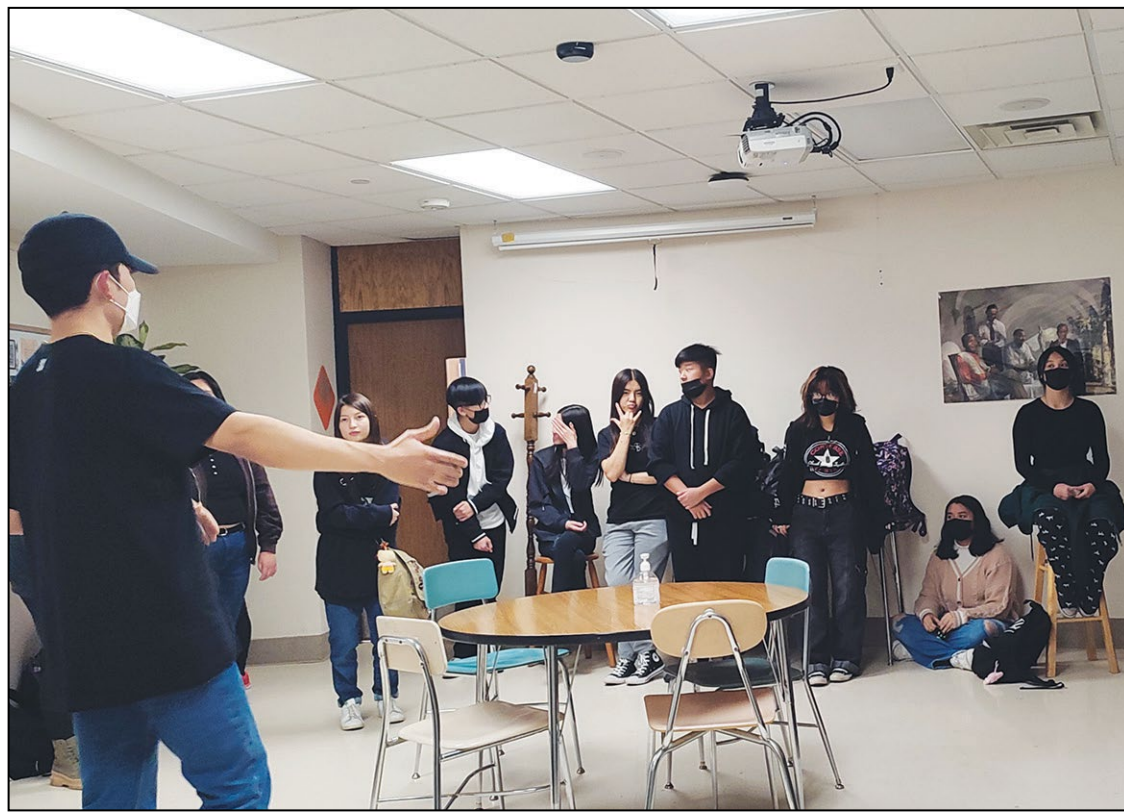


Photo by SHENG VANG

Members of the Asian American Club meet during HLL on Tuesdays and Fridays each week.

By SHENG VANG
Quill staff writer

The Asian American Club (AAC) is a place for students who identify as Asian American to come and share their experiences and stories during Hawk Lunch and Learn (HLL) on Tuesdays and Fridays.

According to Mr. Kek, the AAC advisor and one of Cooper’s climate and culture specialists, the “value behind an identity comes with purpose.” He mentioned how, when growing up, he

felt lost because he did not know his identity. He had always wanted an opportunity to join a club like this in order to find himself. Therefore, one of the main reasons he started this club was to give other students who are experiencing a similar situation a voice.

“This is my way of being a service to others and giving back to an experience that I relate to when I look at Asian students,” Kek said. “So often, historically and traditionally, we have been excluded. We experienced x-

nophobia and stereotypes, so I wanted this space of time during HLL for all aspects to be firm and validated.”

In addition, Kek hopes to make AAC students’ “ethnicity, culture and heritage seen, heard and valued.”

During the HLL meetings, Kek usually facilitates critical questions about identity for AAC members to ruminate over. According to Jasmine Lee (9), a member of the AAC, participants share their experiences regarding the question. She said that is her

favorite part of the club because it “gets [them] thinking on a deeper level and gives [them] a deeper sense of understanding and perspective on how [they] can view the world and how others perceive it.”

Likewise, another member of AAC, Tessa Lenocho (9), said that, even though the questions are mostly identity-oriented, it is not limited to just that.

“We talk about a lot of things, but not all of it is explicitly about race or ethnicity. [We often talk] about self-reflection or self-awareness too,” Lenocho said.

To many members, the club plays an important role in their high school life. Lee said the club makes her feel welcome and “comfortable.” When she is in the club, she does not have to worry about being judged, and at the same time, she gets to connect with others she would not typically talk to. As for Lenocho, she said the club is an important space for her to join and share experiences with her friends.

One big event hosted by the group annually is the Asian History Month Talent Show in May. The show is a big way for Asian students to share their culture with the Cooper community. Kek hopes to bring the show back big like how it was before COVID.

Overall, Kek said one of his biggest goals with the AAC is to inspire students to “stand up and have the courage to speak out, whenever they witness or observe social injustice.”

Student of the Month event honors excelling Hawks

Selected students are recognized based on their ongoing display of the IB Learner Profile attributes

By SHENG VANG
Quill staff writer

Cooper acknowledges the hard work of students through the monthly Student of the Month event.

The Student of the Month event is based on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile attributes, according to Ms. Meyer, IB administrative assistant. Each month is assigned an attribute and each department gets the opportunity to nominate a student per grade.

English teacher Ms. Kope said that, typically at the beginning of the month, the IB office will send teachers spreadsheets to fill out and nominate students.

“We are asked if we want to nominate a student, put their name on the spreadsheet and reasons why you want to nominate them,” Kope said. “The nominations are due at the end of the month.”

Kope said that, when nominating a student, most teachers

try to pick a student who fits the quality that is being awarded that month. For instance, a student who stood out as a hard worker or as being especially helpful are usually considered.

Christensen said the awards are a great way for students to “develop in each of the 10 attributes” as well as a way for them to “honor students in ways that are not necessarily attached to academics and GPA.”

they are a Student of the Month are the goods provided by the many community businesses that the school partners with.

“We partner with Hy-Vee. They provide donuts for our students’ Student of the Month celebration. We also have the district print shop print up certificates for the students,” Meyer said.

A student who has benefited from being Student of the Month was Alene Lor (9). She said she enjoyed the small celebration and getting her reward and donut. Lor also said that the photo display of Students of the Month in the front foyer can motivate students to do well in class.

“Student of the Month is designed to recognize a student’s hard work, and seeing that student’s picture get displayed, I feel like that can really motivate other people to do well, especially academically,” Lor said.

“Student of the Month is designed to recognize a student’s hard work, and seeing that student’s picture get displayed, I feel like that can really motivate other people to do well, especially academically,” Alene Lor (9), who has been recognized with this award in the past, said.

“We want to make sure that students are getting recognized for their good qualities besides just grades,” Kope said.

Likewise, IB coordinator Ms.

When students of the month are announced, there is a small celebration. Meyer and Christensen mentioned that something students can benefit from when

STUDENT
continues on page 3

WARDAHL RETIRES FROM SCHOOL AFTER 22 YEARS continued from page 1

with students and staff. She was always helpful in sending out scholarship information to seniors and posting jobs for local businesses.”

Another staff member who worked with Wardahl directly is student counselor Ms. Hough. Hough said she collaborated with Wardahl frequently due to the fact that they both help students with the college and career process.

“[Wardahl] had so much knowledge about opportunities after high school. If students or I had questions about college applications or various apprenticeships around town, she knew [the answers],” Hough said.

Wardahl said that her success in supporting Cooper students over the last two decades stems from her commitment to “making a difference one student

at a time.”

“What could be more rewarding than helping students find the perfect fit for them to continue with their education? So many students have kept in contact with me over the years and it always brings a smile to my face when I hear about what they have achieved after high school,” she said.

As she moves into retirement, Wardahl said she has two

immediate activities on her schedule. One is spending more time with her grandchildren, while the second is thru-hiking the more than 2,190 miles of the Appalachian Trail. In addition, Wardahl said she will continue with her various hobbies and interests, which include “hiking, running, road biking, sewing, knitting, crafts, working in the yard [and] boating.”

The Quill

Leadership Staff

Editor-in-Chief	Sheng Vang
News Editor	Jesse Garcia
Features Editor	Chimual Vang
Opinion Editor	Owen Sandlund
Variety Editor	Bright Deku
Sports Editor	Noah Plahn
Copy Editors	Sheng Vang Alexis Williams
Advertising	Chimual Vang
Circulation	Damarius Hamilton

Staff Writers

Isis Bridewell	Nemo Ponder
Llewellyn Bouthim	Owen Sandlund
Kyle Cox	Yuseff Shabazz
Bright Deku	La'Shaya Taylor
Jesse Garcia	Chimual Vang
Dylan Hajnasiewicz	Sheng Vang
Damarius Hamilton	Zachary Westling
Noah Plahn	Alexis Williams

Support Staff

Photographers	Bright Deku Sheng Vang
Advisor	Eric Zuccola
Principal	Frank Herman

Letters to the Editor

The Quill welcomes Letters to the Editor. If you would like to send The Quill your thoughts about a story that ran in the paper, or your thoughts about an issue affecting our school or community, please word process and email your letter to eric_zuccola@rdale.org as a text-only file. The Quill reserves the right to edit all Letters to the Editor for space.

Advertising

To advertise, please write to The Quill, Robbinsdale Cooper High School, 8230 47th Avenue North, New Hope, MN 55428; call at 763-504-8500; or email eric_zuccola@rdale.org.

Editorial Policy

The Quill is an open and public forum for the thoughts and opinions of all students at Robbinsdale Cooper High School. Editorials contained in the Opinion section of the newspaper are the views of their respective authors alone. They do not necessarily represent the views of Cooper High School or Robbinsdale School District 281.

Robbinsdale Cooper High School's The Quill is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association.



Schedule change has many drawbacks

The repercussions of later start, end times to the school day are affecting students in multiple ways, most of which are negative

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

A new start and end time was established this school year. Now, 8:35 a.m. marks the time when school officially starts and 3:25 p.m. is when school is officially over. This end time excludes the end times for school activities and extracurricular events, which are also pushed back accordingly.

With a new start and end time comes new adjustments for students so that the school can function. Some of these changes may be pros for people and some may be cons. Ultimately, the cons have outweighed the pros for most groups of students with no middle ground in between.

An earlier start time to the school day correlates to a much later time when school ends. This can cause disruptions to students who have to leave early due to the responsibilities that they may have after school, such as part-time jobs or taking care of relatives.

For anyone who has extracurricular activities after school such as athletes or coaches, a new start time to the day and a later end time means not being able to attend the last few periods of class on competition days. This can result in many absences that can eventually lead to issues with grades or organizational issues within classes for students.

Issues with traffic during the drive to and from school are also



Photo by SHENG VANG

The morning and afternoon buses now run into more rush-hour traffic due to the school day time changes.

increasing. With rush hour happening in the 7-8 a.m. and 4-5 p.m. range, the new start and end times are now aligned with other people's traveling and transportation schedules as well. This means people coming to Cooper and people going to other workspaces will be forced to travel at the same approximate time. Ever since a new start time has been implemented, a large percentage of students have been tardy to their first period due to the results

of rush hour traffic.

A new start and end time is also putting a burden on people outside of school. For example, at retail outlets that employ Cooper students, work schedules are now having to be re-written to match this new shift to the schooling schedule.

Overall, there are many pros and cons to this new change, but the cons outweigh the pros. A new start time causes a collision with the work start times of other

people outside of Cooper. It also causes disruptions to the way our school is organized. With more complicated scheduling, students may become less productive as they try to make their old schedule mesh with a new one, which can lead to more stress.

While students and staff members may be better rested and prepared for the day thanks to an extra hour of sleep, that may not be worth the negative trade-offs a new start time brings.

Heating issues make building uncomfortable

Students, staff find it difficult to concentrate when it is too hot, cold

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON
Quill staff writer

The temperature situation in Cooper classrooms has been uncomfortable and unpredictable once the weather started getting colder. I know teachers can't always control whether or not their class is hot or cold, but I definitely think they should do as much as they can to keep the room temperature as tolerable as possible. There have been a couple times this year when I would walk in a class and just get smacked by hot air, which is honestly bad for students and teachers alike. Overall, having a very hot or cold classroom can be bad because students can't focus when they are too cold or too hot.

Everyone concentrates better when they are comfortable in their environment. Obviously, it's hard to be comfortable when you are trying to work and it's cold or hot to the point where it's bothering or distracting you. Students, of course, can try to ignore it, but it's hard to work or stay focused in environments in which you are not comfortable. Making this even more challenging is that students do not know what to expect about the temperatures in the building because not every classroom is the same.

Another issue that comes with the bi-polar temperatures in the school is the fact that it's not fair to teachers who have to be in a consistently hot or cold room all day. While students get to move around to different classes throughout the day, not all teachers have that ability, which means they are stuck with the same room environment all day long. For the teachers who have two or three classrooms to teach in, they may experience big changes in temperatures as they move to those different locations.

As I mentioned before, the temperatures in the school are different all around the building and in every classroom. Therefore, it's not like students and teachers can know for sure how to dress on any given day. If they overdress, they will be too hot in the hot classrooms, but if they under-dress, they will be too cold in the cold classrooms. When it comes to clothes, I guess a good strategy would be to dress "in between" hot and cold. However, doing that is hard when you don't know how it will be in your class during a given period on a given day.

Overall, the school should help the students and teachers by fixing the heating system in the school so it is more consistent. I think it would make the teachers and students happier and more comfortable. Additionally, it will help students concentrate on their classwork instead of their body temperature. The building would definitely feel better without some classes feeling good and others being too hot or too cold, which is causing students and teachers to be uncomfortable.

STUDENT
continued from page 2

Similarly, Kope added that it is nice for students to get that "pat on the back" from their teacher and know that their hard work was noticed and appreciated. She said this helps build relationships between teachers and students when students receive the nomination message from their teacher.

Furthermore, Christensen said "students and families appreciate the honor" and that is what keeps the Student of the Month program going.

"We feel that our monthly celebrations are important to the Cooper community. Our celebration is one of many ways that we celebrate our Cooper students' successes," she said.

Sports rivalries are positive part of high school experience

Athletic competitions help students at both schools come together in a positive spirit of fun and unity

From the Editors

Rivalries are good for professional sports teams. Match-ups like the Minnesota Vikings and the Green Bay Packers or the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox are entertaining and well known. For Cooper students, the biggest sports rivalry of them all is between Cooper and Armstrong, which was most recently seen at the sections football game between the two schools. That is because one important part of high school sports is the rivalries that develop between schools. However, it is important to consider whether school rivalries are good or bad.

School rivalries can be good for business because when you have a big rivalry game, it tends to bring more people to the games. The more people you can get to the game, the more money your school gets from



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Cooper-Armstrong football games are a highlight of the year for both schools.

concessions and the front gate. This can be good for the school because those funds help support all of the athletic programs. This is also good for the players because college scouts will often come to the biggest games to see players, which can result in those players being given an

offer to play at the college level.

Rivalries can also be good for the school because they build community. Usually, there is a big pepfest before the game and the students and teachers take part in activities and have a lot of fun, which brings the school together. Likewise, there are of-

ten parties after the game where students can go to have fun and celebrate their big win against their rivals.

At the same time, rivalries can be bad because there can be a lot of tension between the schools. This tension can cause things like trash talking, rude chants from the crowds, dirty moves from the players and, the most common thing that happens in rivalry games, fights during or after the game between fans. In these ways, heightened tensions can cause players and fans to get hurt.

So are school rivalries good? That's up to every student to decide for themselves. However, generally speaking, school rivalries tend to be more beneficial than harmful for all of the reasons discussed. There is nothing bigger for a Hawk than the rivalry between Cooper and Armstrong. It is something we should all celebrate no matter what the outcome of the game might be.

Mental health resources are there for Hawks who choose to use them

Many students struggle with mental, emotional obstacles without taking advantage of the help they can get at school

By JESSE GARCIA
Quill staff writer

Many teens are currently struggling with their mental health, whether it's due to stress, home issues or social issues. A large number of these mental health issues are shown through a student's behavior and school performance. Given the rise in cases of teens with depression and other behavioral issues that are affecting them academically, schools have been attempting to make strides toward addressing mental health concerns. At Cooper, we have student counselors, social service workers and mental health professionals on staff who students can discuss their problems with.

After speaking with some of our counselors and therapists, it's clear to me that a number of students who come to them only do so because those students are already good at self-addressing their problems. As a result, it's fairly easy to assume that there are a great number of students who hold in their problems without seeking help and then struggle with mental health as a result. The

fact that it takes a student figuring out they have a problem before they get referred to the school therapist shows how much we need to be better aware of mental health issues so we can take action for ourselves and on behalf of those around us.

stress entirely because they just don't address it, so if you ever find yourself pent up or stressed out, you should think about who you could speak to in order to let out your frustrations. A key part to human emotions is our ability to express ourselves. When we hold

the student is currently a danger to themselves or others.

The school tries to supply students with mental health resources, but they're only useful if the student chooses to use them, so it's on us to take advantage of them. If a student is ever in a tough spot and seems to be spiraling down a tunnel, it's best to check in with either a staff member or one of the school therapists, as they'll likely be able to discuss and pinpoint, if not solve, the problem. As teenagers, it's expected that we take action on our own, but sometimes we need support from other people around us.

While we can point the blame at the school system for not doing enough when it comes to addressing mental health concerns, they can't keep taking the blame. A large number of students are on their way out into a bigger and wider world in which they won't have people to tell them when something about them is wrong. I strongly suggest that everyone visit their counselors at least once to discuss any problems they might have.

The school tries to supply students with mental health resources, but they're only useful if the student chooses to use them, so it's on us to take advantage of them. If a student is ever in a tough spot and seems to be spiraling down a tunnel, it's best to check in with a staff member.

Some of the most common cases brought to the therapists at Cooper relate to people needing someone to speak to about their troubles and hardships. While it may not be expected, a large number of kids struggle with

our feelings in, it continuously builds up before being let out in an unhealthy way. If a student goes to the staff therapists to get help, anything and everything they discuss will be kept on a private, one-on-one basis unless

School board election sends key messages

Voters seem to value substantive proposals over big endorsements

By OWEN SANDLUND
Quill staff writer

The midterm elections are a national event. The outcomes can help determine how much we pay in taxes and where those taxes go. The results also impact how the government at the state and national levels handles social issues such as abortion, immigration and policing. An often overlooked facet of the midterms is the school board elections held throughout the country, including the one in our very own District 281. The school board election determines policy and funding, and it serves to hold accountable the school district to the surrounding community.

Unlike races across the country, there was no real partisan divide in the District 281 school board election. All candidates were either DFL-endorsed or Independent. However, there were two main blocs of candidates. Aileen White, Kim Holmes and long-time local politician ReNae Bowman were one bloc. Since they lacked major endorsements, they can be looked at as the “outsider” bloc.

In opposition to them was a coalition of incumbents: Sharon Brooks Green, Sam Sant, Jonas George Coumeya and teacher-labor activist Caroline Long. The members of this bloc all enjoyed DFL endorsements or have been historically involved with local and state progressive organizations. These four can be considered the “establishment” bloc.

It should be noted that the incumbents were taking heavy fire for presiding over decisions such as the contracting of buses, the continual student population turnover in District 281 and encouraging a general atmosphere of disconnect between the board and the constituents of the surrounding communities. In fact, these factors led several board members to not seek re-election.

The outcome of the election was fairly interesting. The race has a relatively split vote, which is common in school board elections where voter information is lacking. The new school board now has two members from each bloc, with ReNae Bowman, Kim Holmes and Caroline Long joining incumbent Sharon Brooks Green. Overall, the “establishment” bloc fared poorly, with incumbent Sam Sant coming in fifth, 600 votes short of winning a spot, and endorsed candidate Jonas George Coumeya coming up dead last in seventh place. Finishing sixth was former teacher and member of the “outsider” bloc Aileen White.

One question to ask is how did the heavily endorsed incumbents Sam Sant and Jonas George Coumeya lose? In effect, Sant lost because he deserved to. Sant already attempted to run for Ann Rest’s state senate seat in the Democrat primaries earlier this year and he lost handily. Between his run for that seat and his run for school board, it seems as though Sant is using these elections as a political resume builder for future runs for office.

Also problematic was Sant’s time on the school board. At the League Of Women Voters Forum this fall, Sant said he was running for board based on his past record. However, under his watch, District 281 widely failed. For example, in 2021-2022, achievement in Robbinsdale Area School became so lacking that Wednesdays were made into “make-up” days to catch failing students up when more than 50 percent of Cooper students were failing at least one class.

Another example of his ineptitude can be seen in a *San Post* article written by Alaina Rooker in June of this year. In a discussion about trying to fix the busing issues plaguing our schools, many of the current school board members advocated for solutions such as fixing the existing bus fleet. In fact, Sant proposed purchasing a new electric bus fleet on an already strained budget. For these reasons, I believe he rightfully lost his seat. Sant was rejected because the district’s con-

SCHOOL BOARD
continues on page 7

School lunches are critical to hungry Hawks

Although people often complain about the quality of school food, it is an affordable way to keep teens fed



Photo by SHENG VANG

A complete lunch at Cooper costs considerably less than getting fast food during open lunch.

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON
Quill staff writer

School lunches are not usually something students want to eat. That is why so many older students enjoy having the open lunch privi-

lege. Leaving school for a full hour gives students so many more food options than they would have at school. While I personally believe that school lunch is nasty, it is still important to have it available and it is helpful for students who cannot

leave school.

On the positive side, school lunches can literally save lives. There are many students at public and private schools who qualify for free lunch. This can be critical for students who might not always have

enough or any food to eat at home. Most people would be surprised to know what some students actually are going through behind closed doors. Lunch at school can help these students stay healthy.

School lunch is also beneficial to those students who do not have enough money to constantly buy lunches at local restaurants. Eating out every day is expensive. In contrast, the school lunches prices are kept low, even for the students who do not qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Having affordable food available right here at school is important.

On the negative side, school lunches would be more appealing to students if there were more and different food options. I think schools should actually talk to students to get recommendations on what kind of lunches they would eat. I know some kids might go too far with their requests, but it would be great if the kitchen staff would at least hear them out on their ideas.

Overall, while school lunches could be better with the addition of different menu options, the fact that students can access food at school can make their lives just a little bit easier. While some students never seem happy about their school lunch options, it is better to have affordable or free food than nothing at all.

Ukraine conflict sheds light on political, media biases

Western leaders, news outlets have been quick to side with Ukraine at the expense of thinking critically about the war

By OWEN SANDLUND
Quill staff writer

Eastern Europe erupted into open conflict in February 2022 after months of escalations when Russia invaded Ukraine. The participants in this violent conflict for the most part have valid goals. However, American media and government action related to this conflict have been incredibly problematic.

Russia wants to continue to be a world power, leading to heavy military spending. The Stockholm International Peace Institute found in 2021 that Russia was a top-five spender in military growth and has an economy that ranks in the top 10 globally. However, that doesn’t account for the fact that this economy is heavily based on fossil fuels. The International Energy Agency finds that 45 percent of Russia’s federal revenue comes from fossil fuels. Currently, Europe is moving away from Russia’s biggest source of income by pivoting to clean energy and to the short-term alternative sources of fuel they can get from nations such as Ukraine. This means Russia is left with funding a massive and disproportionate military that it can barely afford now and will definitely not be able to afford going forward. The country’s solution is simple: use the massive investment in hard military power to absorb a historically Russian territory that will provide some economic leverage against the west and even more resources to boost its economy. In my opinion, Putin’s motive for the invasion is not diabolical, not moral, not historically motivated, but purely pragmatic.

Due to Russia’s heavy investment in the military, they need to get some return on it before that investment is completely dilapidated, especially if it wants to continue being a world power going forward. The reason for these objectives being less clear in Putin’s public appearances is the same reason politicians in America put social issues at the forefront on the campaign trail: you have to connect with people’s beliefs to make them invested, and some higher-level, geo-political calculation isn’t guaranteed to sell a war and fire up a populace to the same extent as the argument that they are eradicating a so-called Nazi stronghold and liberating fellow Russians. Western media does occasionally mention deeper objectives, especially as the conflict continues, but oftentimes, they espouse a generality that Putin is insane or the war has no real merit on any level.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict plods on to this day, with little end in sight. We have the hard power of Russia and her satellite allies against the defensive resolve of, and international support for, Ukraine. Recently, the two sides have engaged in back-and-forth offensives primarily in southern Ukraine. This has led to the Russian army being placed under General Sergei Surovikin, a war hawk general with a reputation for aggressively pursuing Russian interests and enemies in the Middle East.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict plods on to this day, with little end in sight. We have the hard power of Russia and her satellite allies against the defensive resolve of, and international support for, Ukraine. Recently, the two sides have engaged in back-and-forth offensives primarily in southern Ukraine.

This indicates that there is no end in sight for the conflict as western support continues to reinforce the Ukrainian military.

Although the exact picture is obscured, the conflict has been one of the bloodiest in modern history. From February 24 to October 24, Russia lost 68,000 soldiers according to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. There is limited data on the Ukrainian armed force’s losses, which is a symptom of the western media’s fixation on highlighting Russian flaws. However, in August, the Ukrainian government self-reported a casualty number in the thousands, which was likely underreported. While Russia generally disagrees with the Ukrainian army’s estimations, western media outlets have made a calculated decision to stay clear of publicizing or platforming perceived Russian-friendly perspectives due to potential political backlash, so research on the topic of casualties is often lacking.

The U.S. government has similarly glossed over Ukrainian casualties. In fact, a U.N. investigation in September estimated that more than 15,000 civilians have died in the conflict so far. These numbers will likely be found to be much higher in retrospect, as has happened with many past military conflicts. Regardless of the perspective, a great deal of death has occurred in a very visible conflict. This conflict, like any war, is muddy, cruel and something that needs to be thought about with respect to both sides involved.

When it comes to the news coverage, nearly every national station features favorable coverage of Ukraine in the conflict. CNN, ABC, NBC, Fox (in general) and a majority of corporate media outlets have circled around Ukraine, creating a very pro-Ukraine sentiment in the U.S. A Reuters poll conducted in early October found around three-fourths of Americans support continued U.S. aid to Ukraine to fight against the Russian threat. Even though many Americans are critical of our level of involvement in the conflict, the Quincy Institute found in September of this year that 47 percent of voters still want to supply aid along with encouraging a resolution to the conflict. Overall, bi-partisan public sentiment is squarely behind the continual support of Ukraine to at least some degree. This lean is likely due to two major factors: a historically negative perspective of Russia in the U.S. and the simple fact that wars sell. In the first four days of the war, for instance, an additional 2.4 million viewers tuned into Fox News to follow the conflict according to *U.S. News and World Report* and viewership went up across the board for cable news stations.

Not only does public opinion lay in Ukraine’s favor, but it lays strongly against anyone questioning Ukraine. Conservative Fox News political commentator Tucker

UKRAINE CONFLICT continues on page 5

Hall sweeps a necessary way to get students to class on time

Despite student concerns, hall sweeps have been helpful in curbing increasing issues with tardiness, truancy

By NEMO PONDER
Quill staff writer

Hall sweeps are something we are seeing several times a week this year at Cooper. During a hall sweep, teachers close their doors right when the final bell rings and students who are still in the halls get “swept up,” which means they have to go to the Y to get disciplined by a staff member and obtain a pass before they can go back to class. We were first introduced to occasional hall sweeps last year because nobody wanted to go to class on time after distance learning. The first time I saw a hall sweep was one day when I got to school late and they announced they were doing hall sweeps. I saw four people get sent to the office because they were in the hallway. With hall sweeps taking place

more often this year, it is fair to wonder if they are really necessary. Overall, I think the answer to that question is both no and yes.

On the one hand, there are reasons why I don’t think hall sweeps are really that necessary. First, we are all in high school and we should know how to get to class on time by ourselves. We shouldn’t need to go to the office and face consequences if we don’t go to class. Instead, we should be more responsible and get to class by ourselves.

Hall sweeps also have a negative impact on the people who do get to class on time. Students who are following the rules can’t be in the hallway at a certain time because hall sweeps are happening. If a hall sweep is going on, no one else can leave the classroom for any reason until it is over or you will be caught in the hall sweep. If a person

who is doing the right thing accidentally gets caught by the hall sweep, that person could get mad and throw a fit.

At the same time, I think hall sweeps can be necessary. Hall sweeps are really designed so the staff can get kids out of the hallway and into their classes on time. What is more, they can help staff determine if a student who is caught in the hallways doesn’t actually go to school at Cooper, which has happened this year. Just imagine if something bad happened at school due to someone who is trespassing. Both of these issues relate to safety and it is clear that the staff wants to keep students safe.

Another important aspect of hall sweeps relates to learning. The administrators do hall sweeps so kids get to class on time and the teachers do not have to worry about students coming in

late throughout the period and missing out on their learning. That is disruptive to not only the teachers, but the other students who arrived to class on time.

While the kids at Cooper feel like they are being controlled with the hall sweeps, they are clearly designed to keep everyone safe and help get students to class. For students who are not feeling the hall sweep rule, I get it. But if you would just get to class on time, the staff would not have to sweep you up. So that leads to a choice: are you going to get to class on time so the staff does not sweep you and you can stay in a happy mood all day, or are you going to still be in the halls after the bell rings and be mad at the staff when you are caught? We think you should stay in that happy mood by getting to class on time and avoiding the hall sweeps to begin with.

Sequel brings gamers back to Middle Earth

The follow-up to Monolith Studios' successful *Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor* improves on its predecessor



Photo by MONOLITH STUDIOS

The central character in *Shadow of War* is Talion, a ranger of the Black Gate who seeks vengeance.

By KYLE COX
Quill staff writer

When *Middle Earth: Shadow of War* was first announced at E3 2017 for Playstation 4, Xbox One and PC, fans of its predecessor, *Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor*, were hyped because it had been almost three years since *Shadow of Mordor* came out. However, when the release was pushed back from its original date of August 2017 to October 2017 in order to make sure the game's kinks were all fixed, people were concerned. Let me tell you, though, that the game designers definitely nailed it on the head with *Middle Earth: Shadow of War*.

The first game in the series, *Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor*, was amazing. In the story, Talion, a ranger of the Black Gate, seeks vengeance for the death of his family, which was caused by Sauron's Black Hand and his minions. Along with his family, Talion was sacrificed and used as a vessel to summon the legendary ringmaker, Celebrimbor. However, the ritual failed, leaving Talion and his family to die. Despite this, Celebrimbor was awakened and merged with Talion, resurrecting him as the Grave-Walker, a human who can enter the wraith world and use wraith-like abilities. They start to work together and use their newfound abilities to dominate the orcs of Mordor to fight back against Sauron and the people who killed Talion's family. With combat that is similar to the *Batman: Arkham* series, and a story that shows the link between *The Lord of The Rings* and *The Hobbit* series, the original game won Game of the Year in 2014.

The makers of the original game thought they could do even better with the inevitable sequel and they definitely accomplished that with *Shadow of War*. The story continues in the new game with Talion and Celebrimbor creating a new ring of power to combat Sauron's One Ring. As soon as the ring is complete, Celebrimbor and Talion are separated from one another and Talion must use the newly finished ring to keep himself alive. It turns out that it is Shelob, the Giant Spider who resides in the mountains of Cirith Ungol, that has taken Celebrimbor hostage. When Talion

goes to visit her, the spider proposes a deal: Talion will give her the ring in exchange for Celebrimbor. Talion reluctantly accepts and gives her the ring of power.

Meanwhile, Minas Ithil, the Gondorian city, is under attack by Sauron's overwhelming orc forces. Talion learns that the Palantir, an item that lets you see anywhere you wish, is there, which could possibly end the war against Sauron or give Sauron the edge over all of Middle Earth. Talion and Celebrimbor butt heads about what to do. Celebrimbor wants to get the Palantir, while Talion wants to help his people and keep the object where it is.

Before they leave, Shelob grants a vision of Talion's fate: Minas Ithil will not only be attacked by orcs, but by the Nazgul as well. The Nazgul are Sauron's evil Ring-wraiths, which were consumed by the rings of power forged by Celebrimbor. When they get there, they manage to fend off the orcs and drive them back. However, the Nazgul

Mordor. The map is larger than it ever has been. In the first game, you only had two places, Mordor and Nurn. Though both had tons of things to do inside the regions, people wanted more. Monolith listened and added more places to go. Instead of two regions, there are now five: Minas Ithil, Cirith Ungol, Nurn, Gorgoroth and Seregost. All of them have different climates, environments, people to interact with, side missions to work on and various creatures that you may encounter.

Though it is similar to the previous game's combat, the more you play the new game, the more you see the difference in how fluid and visceral the combat is. From brutal executions, to some very awesome battle sequences, the game's combat makes you feel awesome. They have also added brand new creatures like drakes, which are basically dragons, and dire caragors, a stronger version of the caragor from the previous game. You can even control these monsters by upgrading yourself to

The gameplay has definitely improved compared to *Shadow of Mordor*. The map is larger than it ever has been. In the first game, you only had two places, Mordor and Nurn. Monolith listened and added more places to go. Instead of two regions, there are now five.

are way too strong and they take over Minas Ithil. With the Palantir in Sauron's possession, he realizes that Shelob has the ring. Shelob decides to give Talion the ring to combat Sauron and his Ringwraiths, starting his journey to make Middle Earth a better place.

I like how the story of this game starts exactly where the first game ended. This allows there to be an overall flow to the story between the two games. There is not some useless time jump without an explanation as to what happened. The result is that there is continuity, which makes it feel like you are experiencing things along with Talion.

The gameplay has definitely improved compared to *Shadow of*

the point where any or all monsters submit to you. Once you have done this, you can ride around the vast regions of Middle Earth.

The original game had RPG aspects such as upgrades, skill trees and runes that could be used to alter your sword, dagger and bow. Now, the game's RPG aspect has been dramatically enhanced using the gear system. Instead of just gaining runes from fallen captains, you can now gain gear that ranges from Common to Legendary by taking down stronger captains, warchiefs and the brand new Overlords, who are in charge of the region you are in. The gear is not just a cosmetic item, either; it changes the stats of your character related to health,

damage and the ability to apply poison or fire. The gear you obtain can also be upgraded depending on the specific challenge you have to complete with that gear, making it stronger.

The skill tree also has been expanded with the addition of new categories to fit your play style. Combat features a more brute-force style of gameplay, while Predator features a more stealth approach in which you can chain your stealth kills based on how much focus you have. The third skill tree is Ranged, which offers more of a long-range arsenal to play around with, allowing you to shoot while in the middle of a jump, teleport straight to your enemy, or even have your enemy come to you. The fourth tree is Mounted, through which you can take control of beasts and use them against your enemies. Wraith is the next skill tree, which focuses on Celebrimbor's power and abilities, like being able to freeze enemies.

The new game also features the ability to gain story skills. You can obtain the Glaive, which allows for a sweeping, heavy attack that pushes back enemies in case you are overwhelmed; Elven Rage, which is a super move that allows Celebrimbor to make clones of himself and use his bow to kill multiple enemies at a time; and the Shadow Strider upgrade, which gives you a double jump that makes traversing the terrain and buildings in the region a lot easier. Each category follows a straight path, making you stronger as you go down the line. They also have upgrades that make a given ability more powerful, whether it be detonating fire from the ground to cause a sweeping Area of Effect that engulfs your enemies in flames, poisoning your enemy's drink supply from afar or calling your followers to back you up in battle. You can buy these abilities using the skill points you gain as you level up throughout the game. However, you can only use one ability at a time.

Another reason why this game deserves praise is because of its use of the Nemesis System. Through this system, every orc you encounter has a unique story and background. They also have weaknesses and strengths that you can counter. For instance, if an orc is mortally wounded by fire, then you have to find a way to burn him so he gets weaker, allowing you to go in for the kill or dominate him. This adds an element of strategy to how you approach the enemy. Additionally, the system allows you to dominate a captain, have him infiltrate the warchief as a bodyguard and have him betray the warchief. This makes it feel like you are changing the landscape of the game itself.

In conclusion, *Shadow of War* is awesome. The game is immersive, making you feel like you are back in Mordor kicking butt and taking names. It's also a long game, providing hours upon hours of gameplay. *Shadow of War* is a good way to end the Middle Earth series as a whole and wrap up the story of Talion and Celebrimbor. If you are a fan of *Lord of the Rings* or just a fan of the hack-and-slash genre, I would recommend playing the whole story to truly feel invested in the saga that is Middle Earth. I give this game 4.5 out of five stars.

Third Thor film is still the best in the ongoing series

Director Taiki Waititi injects unique humor, character development into the well-established MCU formula

By DYLAN HAJNASIEWICZ
Quill staff writer

Thor: Ragnarok is the third Thor movie in the Marvel cinematic universe (MCU). It was for this film that a new director took over the Thor franchise, Taiki Waititi. Fortunately, he created a Thor film that was different from and funnier than the first two movies in the Thor series. With the fourth Thor movie now on Disney+, it is a good time to revisit *Thor: Ragnarok* and appreciate what makes it the best installment of the ongoing Thor series.

The movie features a new and invigorating take on Thor.

In the past, the Thor films have been bland and emotionless, but Waititi takes an alternate route by creating a lot of new relationships for the God of Thunder.

The movie places Thor in the middle of the Norse god apocalypse, otherwise known as Ragnarok. Thor finds himself fighting the Goddess of Death as well as the demon Surtur. After many battles, and a lot of comic relief coming from not only supporting characters, but Thor as well, Thor finds himself on a planet called Sakaar.

As Ragnarok is nearing Asgard, Thor assembles a team of people throughout the movie

that features some familiar faces and some new characters as well. Waititi uses the preexisting characters from the MCU very well. For instance, he effectively brings the Hulk into the movie while also making the character new because Hulk can speak.

Waititi does not fall into the same trap as other directors in the MCU when it comes to the villain. While MCU villains are sometimes dull, Waititi actually makes a good villain. Hella is a new and interesting character who matches up against Thor and the Hulk very well. She is a much more effective villain than those seen in the first two Thor movies.

The movie has a great story as well as many twists. At the same time, the movie suffers in some parts from poor pacing. It clearly uses the Thor storyline to shoehorn a *Planet Hulk* movie into the MCU. While this works in some ways, it also takes away from the fact that it is a Thor movie.

Overall, I give the movie four out of five stars. It is funny and entertaining despite the problems with pacing. Although Thor is overshadowed at times throughout the movie by the large group of new characters, the movie still ranks among the strongest in the MCU.

UKRAINE CONFLICT
continued from page 4

Carlson questioned why Russia would bomb the Nordstream pipeline, which Russia facilitates to sell fossil fuels to Germany, when it would go directly against its interests. The result of this very valid question was condemnation from the media establishment. Dozens of articles, fact checks and news segments were dedicated to discrediting Carlson for spreading "misinformation."

Tucker Carlson is not alone; many pundits have been ostracized or somewhat de-platformed for refusing to blindly tow the pro-Ukrainian line. The Ukrainian conflict has become something that the American media establishment and the American people have become heavily invested in, with a strong bias favoring the Ukrainians. For a conflict that does not directly involve U.S. interests, the coverage is unacceptably unbalanced.

Luckily, unlike Europe, the U.S. has not yet devolved into banning the Russian perspective outright. In March, for example, the European Union took the Russian state media company RT off the airwaves and continues to aggressively pursue "disinformation," as European Commission Vice President Vera Jourova said earlier this year.

Ironically, many positions platformed by the mainstream media in the past have been abandoned. The Human Rights Watch organization released a report in 2018 that widely illustrated the fact that neo-Nazis are relatively socially accepted in Ukraine and even have their own open far-right army unit, the Azov regiment. These findings were highly covered at the time, including by prominent news outlets such as BBC. This does not mean Ukraine is run by Nazis, but it does mean that, in many ways, Ukraine's government and society aren't up to western standards. For example, nowhere in the west are blatant neo-Nazis allowed to run organizations training thousands of children in combat. However, according to the journalistic integrity organization FAIR, since the start of the conflict, these very facts have been deemed Russian "disinformation" by much of the media establishment.

Reading this today, I want you to question your opinions on the region before tensions rose in late 2021 and early 2022. Was Ukraine important to you in some way? What do you think Ukraine does for the U.S.? Is Ukraine even a fully formed democracy? For a majority of Americans, I feel an adequate answer to each of those questions is sorely lacking. Yet many people, myself included, were swept up in a wave of pro-Ukraine fervor at the outbreak of the conflict.

The news media is covering the conflict heavily and it's telling people how to feel. By and large, they are succeeding in pushing their message. But what are the implications of that message?

One implication is that our taxpayer dollars are fueling a foreign war in Ukraine. In response to the outpouring of public support toward the conflict, billions of dollars in taxpayer money have been sent to Ukraine. In fact, the Congressional Research Service reports that since the outbreak of hostilities this year, \$17.6 billion in security assistance has been sent to Ukraine as of October 14, 2022, including the hundreds of millions of additional aid to Ukraine passed by the U.S. Congress in October. As part of this aid are more than 40,000 anti-armor systems, 1,500 guided TOW missiles, 142 Howitzers with more than one million artillery rounds, and 200 M113 armored personnel carriers. Make no mistake: these are all weapons that have the capacity to kill people. What is more, in July of this year, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated his government estimated that the cost of reconstruction in Ukraine would be a figure north of \$750 billion. The U.S. is not alone in this outpouring of money; many western-aligned nations have sent significant financial and military aid to Ukraine and it is clear that at least a significant amount of money will be sent to Ukraine going forward, both to continue the war and recover from it.

The result of this conflict is a growing emphasis on international policy by our politicians at home. President Joe Biden's state of the union this year talked heavily about Ukraine, while the Republican Congressional leadership continually reassures Ukraine of ongoing U.S. support. While billions have been sent abroad to further democracy with relatively bipartisan support, the U.S. economy has entered a recession, recording

UKRAINE CONFLICT
continues on page 7

Premier Performers

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

Elizabeth Menges

By YUSEFF SHABAZZ
Quill staff writer

Elizabeth Menges (12) participates in theater and Bel Canto choir. Although she just started in choir this year, she has been involved with the theater department since freshman year.

"I started theater because I knew it would help me get out more and be involved in a community like theater," she said. "Now, I know that indeed is the case and it has been very fun."

In fact, Menges said her involvement in theater led to her interest in choir.

"I mostly started it because I wanted to be able to get bigger roles for the upcoming musical," she said.

Menges' participation in the arts has led to her taking on some leadership roles. In choir, she was just recently named a choir assistant. Meanwhile, in theater, she

was student director of the school's production of *Theory of Relativity*.

"Being student director required a lot of patience, note-taking, communication and mindfulness. It was a fun experience that I am glad to have done, but I prefer being on stage rather than being behind it," she said.

Even outside of school, Menges pursues her interest in the arts.

"Whenever I gain the motivation, I love to draw and have been experimenting with drawing digitally as well, specifically animations. I especially like to do creative writing and practicing short stories," she said.

Looking ahead to next fall, Menges will attend college.

"I plan on doing a dual degree program and majoring in creative writing or English. I also plan on taking Japanese and maybe even minoring in it," she said.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Ja'Corey Jazzmere

By YUSEFF SHABAZZ
Quill staff writer

Ja'Corey Jazzmere (12) is a part of Cooper's Concert Choir group. He has now been in choir for six years.

"I started because I wanted to see how it would improve my singing voice," he said.

According to Jazzmere, a highlight of choir is learning new material.

"The thing I enjoyed most is singing new and different songs," he said.

When it comes to his favorite choir memories, Jazzmere said he has enjoyed times when his choir groups have performed in different places outside of school.

While Jazzmere does not have an official leadership role in choir, he said he tries to set a good example as a senior singer.

"I have been looked at as a leader in the tenor section," he said.

In addition to enjoying his choir class, Jazzmere said that foods is another course he likes this year.

"I like to fry and cook new things," he said.

Outside of school, Jazzmere said he likes to listen to music, play basketball and play videogames.

Next fall, Jazzmere will attend college, where he hopes to get a degree in education. He also hopes to take part in college athletics.

"I will run track and field while I am in college," he said.

Additionally, Jazzmere hopes to stay involved with choir after high school.

"I think I will continue because this is something that I really enjoy doing," he said.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Logan Voigt

By YUSEFF SHABAZZ
Quill staff writer

Logan Voigt (12) is in orchestra and improv, and he is taking a drawing class. This is Voigt's ninth year playing the cello, having started in fourth grade.

"It was the first time I was introduced to orchestra and being a part of music creation in general so it seemed really fun," he said.

This is Voigt's fourth year doing improv at Cooper. He auditioned in ninth grade after seeing a show for the first time because it seemed like "a lot of fun."

Finally, he is taking drawing because he wanted to "enhance his art skills" for college.

Voigt said he has some favorite moments from his various arts activities. In orchestra, he has enjoyed going on a tour of the elementary schools and the

annual Halloween concert. His favorite memories from improv are all of the countless and "very hilarious" skits they have made over the years. Finally, his favorite memory from drawing is the upside-down portrait they created in class.

His long background in the arts has led to Voigt having a leadership role in improv. This is his second year as captain of the improv troupe. His role as captain is to teach everyone how to play the improv games, give them tips on how to enhance their performances and plan all the group's shows.

Not surprisingly, Voigt said his favorite classes are orchestra because he loves to make music and drawing because he enjoys expressing himself.

Next fall, Voigt plans to head east for college and major in fashion design and minor in fashion merchandising. He also plans to continue playing the cello.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Tsion Kebede

By YUSEFF SHABAZZ
Quill staff writer

Tsion Kebede (12) is currently a part of Concert Choir, Bella Voce and IB Theater. This is Kebede's second year of doing choir. She has been in school choirs since she was in sixth grade, which makes for a total of seven years. Her older brother, who is three grades ahead of her, was also in choir. She watched some of his concerts and decided to give it a try in middle school.

Kebede started in Bella Voce last year. She said she knew right away that it would be the right fit for her.

"Since it's so much smaller than a regular choir, it feels even more like a team," Kebede said.

Kebede joined IB Theater this year after taking acting last year. She said Ms. Wurzer was the one who inspired her to

take this class

"It's different than the acting side of the arts, but still gives me the chance to be creative, which I like," Kebede said.

Kebede said she has many favorite memories from her work in the arts. In Concert Choir, she liked getting to go to Gustavus Adolphus College last year. Meanwhile, in Bella Voce, she enjoyed going as a group to eat brunch. As for IB Theater, her favorite memory was seeing *Frankenstein* at Armstrong.

When it comes to school, Kebede said she likes anything English-related. She also enjoys AVID because of all the college-readiness opportunities she is able to take part in.

After high school, Kebede will attend the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is looking to do something in business or communications.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Death delves into idea of deja vu

Although it plays more like a thriller than a horror film, *Happy Death Day* still entertains



Photo by BLUMHOUSE PRODUCTIONS

The protagonist in *Happy Death Day* relives the day of her murder in hopes of avoiding that fate.

By ZACHARY WESTLING
Quill staff writer

Do you ever feel like you're living the same moment over and over again? Do you ever get a strong feeling of deja vu? *Happy Death Day* takes that to another level as one college student re-lives her death over and over again so she can find out who her murderer is and try to prevent her own death.

This is a good movie that is more of a thriller than a horror movie but has the best elements of both genres. While the sequel that came after the original movie's release in 2017 is fine, the original film is still the best and it is worth revisiting or watching for the first time.

Happy Death Day follows main character Tree, which is short for Theresa. Tree wakes up on her birthday in another student's dorm room and goes through her day like any other. However, as Tree is walking to a party that night, she ends up being murdered by a hooded figure wearing the mask of the school mascot.

After dying, Tree wakes up again in the same room on the

same day. She freaks out, but soon realizes that she is reliving her birthday. She goes through the same day again, but tries to find a way to avoid being killed in the way she was murdered before. Tree winds up having to restart the day over and over again in an effort to prevent her murder.

The part of the killer is played well by Rob Mello. Every time Tree goes through the day, he finds a way

played in the movie. The character always stays mysterious and his identity is always kept a secret.

Another effective character is Carter, who is the inhabitant of the dorm room that Tree wakes up in. Carter initially thinks Tree is crazy when she tells him she keeps restarting the same day after someone kills her. However, Carter soon comes to believe her as Tree walks through the campus and tells him

everything that is going to happen before it does. At one point, while eating breakfast, Carter suggests that Tree take advantage of the situation and try to lure her killer in to find out who he is and why he wants her dead. In this way, Carter is an effective addition to the plot of the film.

Overall, I thought the movie was fun to watch given all the interesting events that go on. I believe that there

were some things that could have been done differently, but the movie was well put together. I would give this movie a solid four out of five stars due to how much of a thriller it was. It would have been rated higher if it was more of a horror movie and if some of the acting was better.

In the film, Tree keeps trying to find a way around her death, but always ends up getting killed. The part of the mascot killer was well played in the movie. The character always stays mysterious and his identity is always kept a secret.

to take her out no matter what she does. Whether it is simply chasing Tree down, or finding another creative way to attack her, the killer always succeeds. Tree keeps trying to find a way around her death, but always ends up getting killed. The part of the mascot killer was well

Hoover's *Ends* is beginning of a great series

The 2016 novel *It Ends With Us* is a tragic love story that recently received a sequel

By LA'SHAYA TAYLOR
Quill staff writer

The book *It Ends With Us* by Colleen Hoover was published on August 2, 2016. Hoover has just recently published a second book in this series called *It Starts With Us*, which makes it a good time to revisit the first novel. *It Ends With Us* is a beautiful and tragic love story that will make you want to keep reading until you get to the end.

The story is about a girl named Lily Bloom, who recently moved from Maine to Boston, where she opens a flower shop. Eventually, Lily meets Ryle, a stuck-up guy with a soft spot for her. After she starts having a relationship with Ryle, he soon becomes more and more abusive.

While she is in Boston, Lily runs into her ex, Atlas, who was the only

guy that made Lily's heart skip. Lily and Atlas exchange numbers and keep in touch. Lily later sees a pattern in how her abusive father treated her and how Ryle is treating her, so she seeks help from Atlas. While staying with Atlas, Lily becomes more confused about her emotions for Ryle and Atlas.

In the novel, Hoover does a good job at showing the strong emotions that her characters have. She does this by using italics to show the thoughts in their heads. In the book, Lily says, "Do you have any siblings?" and Ryle replies, "We had a older brother. He passed away when we were kids." After that exchange, Hoover writes Lily's thought: "Such a great night ruined by such a simple question." This writing and formatting device really helps readers understand what Hoover's characters

are going through in the novel.

Hoover also does a great job of using flowers as a symbol. In the novel, Lily is constantly working with plants. At one point, Lily comments that "plants reward you based on the amount of love you show them." This realization is eventually applied by Lily to her romantic relationships. Given that Lily is still confused about her emotions for Ryle, she realizes that she has to be with the person who gives her the same amount of love she gives to her flowers.

If you've never read a romance novel, *It Ends With Us* would be the perfect book to read. I really enjoyed this novel because I feel it can help more women who are going through the same things Lily is experiencing realize that there are solutions to their problems. I give the book four out of five stars.

NEW HEALTH MENTOR SUPPORTS HAWKS continued from page 1

reasons why students have been accessing their help is for condoms, menstrual products and one-on-one meetings. Mohamed added that the main services they provide are always changing based on student demand. In fact, student demand is one of the main challenges Mohamed faces in their job at Cooper.

"The main challenge I face is timing. Many of the students here want to have one-on-one meetings, but my schedule is full, usually with obligations outside of Cooper or that I am fully booked out with students who have made appointments to meet with me. It can be

a little challenging to juggle it all," Mohamed said.

Prior to their position at Cooper, Mohamed said they had a background in health care and "a passion for sexual health and sexuality education as well as working with youth."

"Before I became a health mentor, I worked in health care for many years and eventually became extremely burnt out and needed a change," Mohamed said. "I was encouraged to apply for this position by someone in my life who also has the same shared interest for sexual health education, and now, here I

am." For students who are interested in meeting Mohamed and finding out more about the support they can provide but feel uncertain about taking the first step, Mohamed had some advice.

"Bring a friend or two to just come say hi. There is no need to feel unsure or anxious about coming to my office, but I also can understand why anyone would feel that way. Whenever you are comfortable, try coming alone. You can also email me at suad_mohamed@rdale.org or text me at 612-208-8312 with any questions you may have," Mohamed said.

Howard named activities director

Former assistant principal moves to activities office after the 2022 retirement of Mr. Oelfke

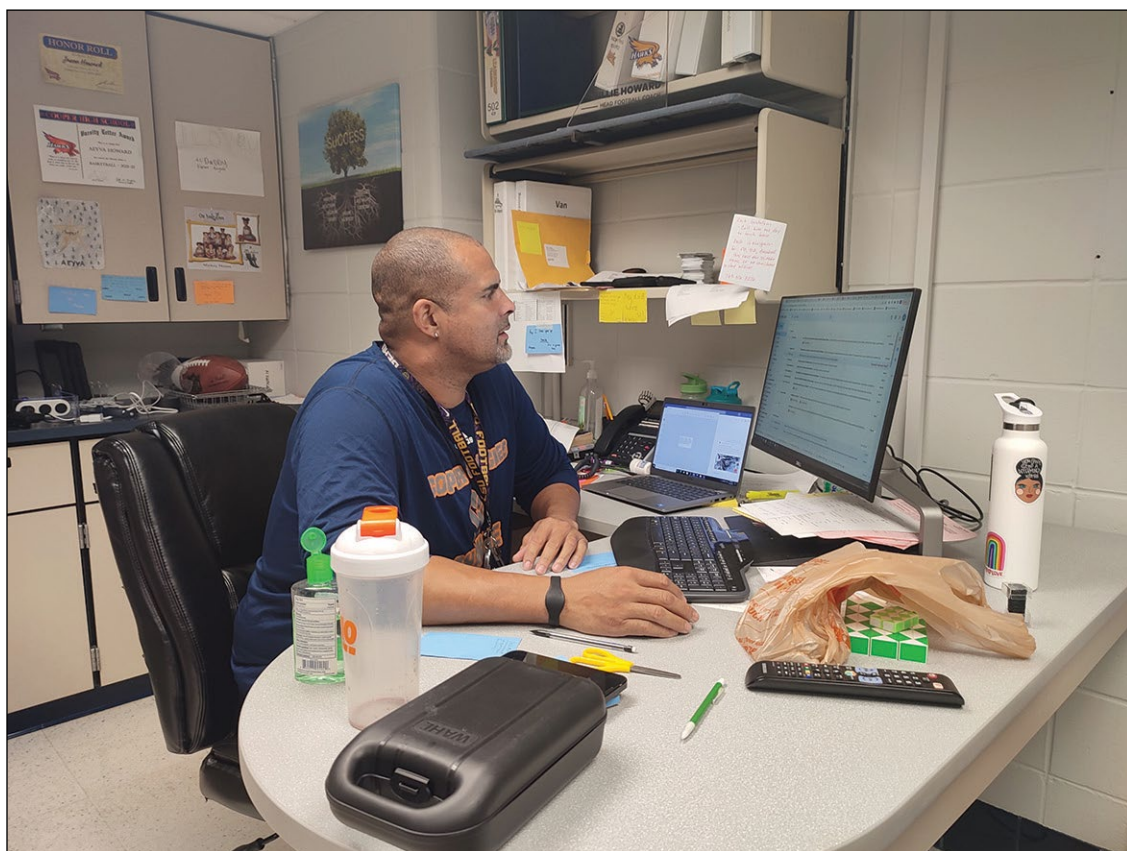


Photo by SHENG VANG

Howard said he wants to boost participation in activities and remove barriers that stop students from getting involved.

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM
Quill staff writer

Mr. Howard was named Cooper's new activities director this summer. He replaced Mr. Oelfke, who retired at the end of the 2021-2022 school year after serving as activities director for 20 years.

"Mr. Howard has been a strong advocate for the school's activities, fine arts and athletics and has always wanted the best for our students and offering opportunities for all to be involved," Head Principal Mr. Herman said. "His focus on building character, sportsmanship and participation will have positive implications both in and outside of the classroom."

Howard's new role in the activities office is the latest in a long line of positions he has held during his 13 years at Cooper.

"I have served as a college readiness coordinator, assistant athletic director, dean of students [and] assistant principal," Howard said.

According to Herman, it was Howard's history in the building that made him a good fit for the activities director position.

"Mr. Howard has been an integral part of Cooper for many years. His experience as a school administrator, coach and parent allowed him to be ready to take on this role. He has been supporting the activities office for years in working on behalf of

students and all of the other programs. In doing this, he knew the expectations and what areas he wants to see growth in," Howard said.

As the activities director, Howard said his primary role and responsibility is to provide support to all activities outside of the classroom at Cooper. His daily duties can range from scheduling games to hiring coaches to providing student support.

"I do a lot of scheduling and making sure that students are prepared for buses and following up at practices and providing support to coaches," Howard said. "[I monitor] student progress in classrooms as well."

Now that he is settling into the first semester in his new position, Howard said he has a pair of goals he is focused on.

"Some specific goals are increasing participation in all activities, arts, sports, clubs, etc. and making sure that students don't have hurdles that prevent them from participating," he said.

Helping Howard make these goals possible is Ms. Thurston, the administrative assistant who works in the activities office. Thurston said Howard's transition into his new role has been smooth.

"Mr. Howard has been in the building for quite some time and knows the students and how we work in the activities office. It doesn't feel like we have to start at square one

with getting to know the building, how the activities office operates and what we do on a daily basis," she said.

Prior to joining the staff at Cooper 13 years ago, Howard had a number of educational and professional experiences. He graduated from Stanford University with a degree in communications and spent his summers as "an elementary school teacher servicing urban students looking to advance academically."

After college, Howard played professional football with the Minnesota Vikings and worked for Hennepin Technical College. Additionally, Howard holds an insurance license, a contractor's license and a realtor's license.

While these many activities keep him busy, Howard said he has some time for hobbies, including coaching, ice fishing and community service. However, he said his number one priority is trying to be "an amazing father to [his] kids."

As he looks toward the second half of his first school year as activities director, Howard said he will remain focused on making his department successful moving into the future.

"I'm always a man that tries to leave something better than I found it, so my personal goal is to make sure that I retire one day and leave this place better than I found it," Howard said.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION SENDS KEY MESSAGES continued from page 4

stituents came to a similar, level-headed conclusion on his job performance.

Meanwhile, Jonas George Courneya lost because he was under-qualified. Courneya is a political science major and a former staffer of democrat senator Tina Smith. His campaign was DFL-supported and apparently had a significant amount of funding, as he was able to afford door hangers to spread throughout the district in the lead-up to the election. Courneya enjoyed multiple labor endorsements as well, being listed on the 2022 AFL-CIO endorsement list, which is likely responsible for the votes he did receive.

So why did this endorsed and seemingly competent candidate lose? Because he was running on an empty platform. The door hanger I found laying in my front yard served to do

nothing except to mention sociology buzzwords and vague terms such as viewing the world through other "lenses." My opinions on education policy are relatively progressive, but it's hard for me to like a candidate whose only platform can be described as sentence-long statements full of buzzwords.

Based on what I could best ascertain from the bare platform he ran on is that he planned on elevating marginalized voices. My issue with that is twofold. First, if you are not a marginalized voice and that is your priority, why are you running? Second, considering you have no experience in education, why would you be the best person to implement those perspectives in an educational setting? Similar to Sant, it seems Courneya was planning on using the school

board seat as a political resume builder. Luckily, the voters didn't fall for it.

Voters in District 281 sent a resounding message. You cannot just win seats with endorsements. Instead, you need to show real quantifiable progress or you need to show programs you are ready to implement. Those who won their races for the most part have experience in the education field or have a real platform. (I may disagree with ReNae Bowman immensely, but her website had lots of information on what she was planning on doing.) What is more, it is clear that voters agree that the District 281 school board is not just a political launching pad. The students of 281 are not a means to an end. Let's hope those who were elected take those lessons to heart and work toward bettering our schools.

UKRAINE CONFLICT SHEDS LIGHT ON BIASES continued from page 5

two consecutive quarters of negative Gross Domestic Product growth this year, while inflation has continued to soar, recording an 8 percent increase between September 2021 and September 2022 alone. A major factor in this inflation is the Biden administration's ban on Russian fuel, which has contributed to an increase in gas prices according to the administration itself earlier this year.

Not only is this aid to Ukraine expensive and costly at a time of national economic hardship, it also heightens international tensions between the U.S and Russia. This October, Russia's ambassador to America, Anatoly Antonov, stated that "protracted bloodshed and new casualties" would result from continued U.S. aid to Ukraine and Russia will have to consider the U.S. as a participant in the conflict. He has a point, especially

since no real attempt has been made by the U.S. government to push for a peace settlement. While this is an incredibly unlikely outcome, let's say that there's even a chance that U.S. aid can lead to a nuclear exchange. Let's say a mistake is made or that Russia gets desperate. Do we really want Russia and the U.S. posturing for a war that could cost millions of lives? Pumping billions into a foreign country is bad enough, but risking nuclear Armageddon is straight-up immoral and all of that is being allowed by a misinformed public.

Just like Tucker Carlson, the Progressive Caucus in the U.S House of Representatives seems to question the perception of Ukraine. This October, the *Washington Post* reported that 30 U.S. representatives advocated in a letter to Biden that progress needs to be made

with Russia and Ukraine toward ending the conflict. After condemnation from the wider Democratic party, their letter was withdrawn by caucus leader Rep. Pramila Jayapal days after it was sent.

In conclusion, anyone questioning the conflict in any way is deemed out of line on both ends of the political spectrum. This is incredibly unjust, as our actions in Ukraine are wholly irresponsible, dangerous and are being encouraged by a public that is being misled by biased media. As a country, let's take a moment and listen to the House Progressive Caucus, let's listen to Tucker Carlson, let's be open to the Russian perspective, let's ask questions, and let's work for resolutions to this nuanced and expensive conflict while we still can instead of blindly subsidizing one of the world's greatest meat grinders.

Cooper Competitors

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

Sam Massaquoi

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Sam Massaquoi (12) plays football in the fall and basketball in the winter. This was his first full year of playing football. He said he has always wanted to play because "it's a fun way to stay in shape and get stronger."

As he looks back on the season, Massaquoi said he enjoyed the atmosphere of the sport, especially during home games. Additionally, he said his favorite memory of the season was stopping Holy Angels in the fourth quarter, forcing them to punt and letting the offense get on the field to score the game-winning touchdown.

"I tell them all the time that you never know when you are going to play your last game, so just play every game like it's your last," he said.

With the arrival of winter, Massaquoi is now moving into basketball. He said last season went well, but they "fell short in the playoffs." However, he said he thinks the Hawks "definitely have a state-contending team this year."

During the school day, Massaquoi said he enjoys his current science class, Anatomy and Physiology.

"It's very interesting learning about your body and how it works and why some things happen to your body," he said.

Outside of school, Massaquoi enjoys going to the gym and working on his basketball skills. He also likes playing his gaming system with his friends.

For college, Massaquoi plans to study exercise science and sports medicine. He plans to go to any school that wants him for basketball.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Lucy Smit

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Lucy Smit (12) does cross country in the fall, Nordic skiing in the winter and track in the spring. She has been doing all three sports since seventh grade.

"I chose these sports because I love running. It was honestly the best choice," she said.

Smit said she has loved every part of her athletic experience, from the workouts to the coaches to her teammates. She said her favorite memory was making varsity in cross country in eighth grade.

"My coach told me I have to run a sub-26:00 5K. When I got to the last 200 meters, I was at 25:34. I ran my heart out and my final was 25:54. I was so happy," she said.

Smit was the cross country captain for the last two years and said it went well.

"Last year, I had one teammate and I started off this year with no one but me, so it was hard to be a captain with no team. But this year, we eventually got five girls and it was great," she said.

Smit is now moving into the Nordic season. She said last year went well until an ankle injury led to her missing half the season. After Nordic, she will begin track.

"Track season last year was amazing," she said. "I improved a lot."

When it comes to school, Smit said she enjoys her weight training and choir classes. Outside of school, she enjoys painting, skiing, running and listening to music.

Next fall, Smit will go to North Hennepin Community College and then Metro State University. She wants to get her teacher's license and become an elementary school teacher and coach.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Paige Fleming

By ALEXIS WILLIAMS
Quill staff writer

Paige Fleming (12) does swimming in the fall, cheer in the winter and track in the spring. She has only been swimming for one year. She said she picked this sport due to its lack of diversity and the cliché that "black girls can't swim."

"I joined because I love to swim and to prove people wrong," she said.

During the swim season, Fleming enjoyed meeting new people, being a part of "a very supportive team" and learning new skills. In fact, she said a highlight of the season was dropping 15 seconds in freestyle in just a week.

Since Fleming just transferred to Cooper this year, she hasn't played a winter sport for the school yet, but she plans on joining cheer for the basketball

season. Meanwhile, she said she ran track in spring at her old school and she enjoyed it a lot.

"I love that running clears your mind, so I plan on running this spring as well," she said.

Fleming said her favorite class in school is English because she loves that

when she reads, she can create her own visualizations in her head about what she is reading. Fleming's outside-of-school hobbies are shopping, working, baking, swimming and "being outside when it's warm."

Next fall, Fleming will attend a Historically Black College and University. She is still undecided about where she wants to go, but she plans on majoring in psychology with a minor in chemistry. After that, she plans on going to medical school to start her journey toward becoming a psychiatrist.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Julia Nordstrom

By ALEXIS WILLIAMS
Quill staff writer

Julia Nordstrom (12) plays volleyball in the fall. She is a right-side hitter on the varsity team.

Nordstrom has been playing volleyball since fall 2018. She started playing in eighth grade while attending Robbinsdale Middle School.

"I started playing volleyball because I had a lot of friends that played and I thought it would be fun to try something new," she said.

The friendships she made through volleyball are definitely what Nordstrom said she has enjoyed most about the sport. She added that she became close to these friends through the games and practices they shared together.

One of Nordstrom's favorite memories from playing volleyball came

from her junior year.

"It would have to be going to a dead-end hayride with my JV team and the varsity team along with my coaches during my junior year," she said.

Nordstrom said she does not play a winter sport but, in the past, she has supported the basketball and hockey teams by playing French horn in the pep band for some of their games. This spring, she is planning to become a manager for boys baseball.

Outside of school, Nordstrom likes to spend time with her friends, her boyfriend and her family. She also likes to shop, spend time outside and attend football games.

For college, Nordstrom is hoping to attend the University of Minnesota and study interior design and business. She would like to get her realtor's license during or after college as well.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Hawks athletes reflect on fall season success

Cooper competitors had their first chance to face the other schools in the recently expanded Tri-Metro Conference, which the Hawks joined this year

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

After an eventful fall sports season, we are all patiently waiting for winter sports to start. Before that happens, it is a good time to take a minute to look back on the experiences that fall sports players, coaches and teams went through over the past few months.

Adapted Soccer

Head coach Mr. DeMorett said that 2022 went well as the team headed into the last stretch of the adapted soccer season. As of October 20, they had a record of three wins, three losses and one tie.

According to DeMorett, the season's highlight was that all the players scored at least one goal. Among the standout athletes who contributed to the team this season were Kishore Subendran (11) and Demetric Scaife (12). DeMorett said both players have been leaders for the team.

With a strong record in the 2022 season, DeMorett said his outlook for the 2023 season is positive. With many players returning with another year of experience, DeMorett said he is confident about the future improvement of the team.

For those athletes considering joining this team in the future, DeMorett said there are many benefits to taking part in the sport.

"Students have benefited by being active, making new friends and competing in games that have built character in them," he said.

Boys Cross Country

Head coach Mr. Zuccola said the boys cross country team just capped off another great season by finishing seventh in the Tri-Metro Conference Championship Meet. In fact, runners Cole Athias Finn (9) and Malik Williams (10) just missed All-Conference Honorable Mention recognition at the meet.

Zuccola said there were two major highlights from the 2022



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

The Hawks football squad won its first playoff game before falling to Armstrong 42-7 in the section championship on November 4.

turning, younger runners, such as Andrew Brooks (10), Aiden DeGross (10) and Caleb Cummings (9)."

Looking ahead to the 2023 season, Zuccola said he feels confident about the team's future.

"As we enter year two in our new conference with a growing roster and young, competitive runners, we are hoping to see continued improvement in our finishing places at the conference meet and other cross-country invitationals," he said.

Zuccola added that student-athletes gain many things from taking part in cross country.

"Cross country athletes learn the elements of lifelong fitness in a fun and encouraging environment. They also experience the

As for the competition highlights of the season, Wetherall said he enjoyed when Lauren Jones (12) scored a goal within the first few minutes of their first game, that they fought hard in a 1-0 win against a highly ranked Holy Angels team, that they had a 3-0 win versus DeLaSalle and that they had a comeback 2-2 tie versus Osseo on senior night.

According to Wetherall, the standout players this season were Maddy Orstad (12), who had seven goals and nine assists; Jones, who had eight goals; Izzy Anderson (12), who "was a rock" in the mid-field; and Keira Snapko (11), who was "a shut-down center back."

After an all-around positive season for the team, Wetherall said he is looking forward to next year.

"There will be some rebuilding as we lose a number of outgoing seniors, but we have the numbers to have two levels and are looking forward to the growth of some of our younger players," he said.

According to Wetherall, the student athletes who join the squad in 2023 will benefit from taking part in girls soccer.

"It can sound cliché, but our aim is to build better citizens by focusing on respect, kindness and inclusion," he said.

Volleyball

Volleyball just wrapped up with their regular season with a record of four wins and six losses.

According to player Melissa Truong (12), the team enjoyed some definite highlights in the 2022 season.

"One highlight of the 2022 season was one of the first games that we won in three straight sets against Edison. The whole entire team was elated. Another highlight was our game versus Osseo. During the game, I was digging up the balls swung at me, which made me feel good. One last highlight was the team's pre-season pasta dinner at a captain's house," she said.

Truong said two standout athletes this season were Savannah Ballard (12) and Sharissa Ross (12). According to Truong, Ballard "always works hard and makes sure to lift team spirits," while Ross "improved so much this season as a player and with her confidence on the court."

Although Truong will not be playing volleyball next year because she is graduating, she said she has high hopes for the 2023 team.

"I believe that the girls on the team will work hard and deliver," Truong said.

Players who come out for

volleyball next year will enjoy many different benefits.

"I believe student athletes benefit from playing volleyball by learning how to effectively communicate and working with other people besides people they're comfortable with," Truong said. "Players also benefit from the new friendships they form throughout the season."

Dance

Dance ended its season as a program on the rise. Team member Brenda Nyabicha (11) said that, unlike other sports, the dance team does not have a win-loss record or a way to actually record how they did, but they did perform at events like home football games and pep fests at the school, which gave them the opportunity to show what they've been working on.

Nyabicha said one highlight of the season was halftimes at football games, which left her nervous considering she was "performing in front of a huge crowd of both peers from Cooper and another school."

Looking ahead to next season, Nyabicha said she is hoping to see a growth in the number of people on the team.

"This year, we had five people on the team, and right before COVID, we had 16 people on the team. Next year, I feel like, once we start, they will have enough time to think about joining and that should give us a chance to have a bigger team," she said.

Nyabicha encouraged new people to join the team so they can experience the same positive things she does as a team member.

"Dancing helps me cope with stress, but when I go dancing, my mood feels lifted and I'm less stressed. I think other people can

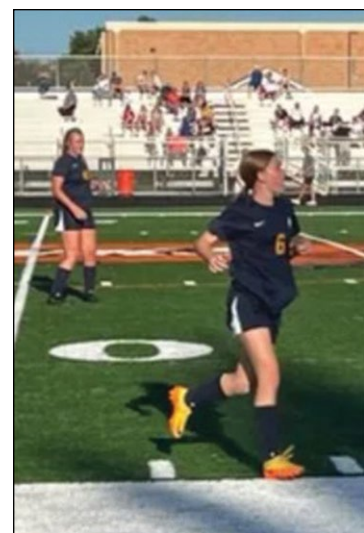


Photo by MR. WETHERALL

Girls soccer became a combined Cooper-Armstrong team this year.

also have that same feeling," she said.

Girls Swimming

While all other fall sports

are on land, girls swimming takes place under the water.

An experienced swimmer on the team this season was Natalie Karnick (12). She said the squad finished the year with one win and many highlights. Specifically, Karnick said her favorite part of the season was senior night when she got her senior blanket.

According to Karnick the standout athlete this season was her fellow captain, Livi Lauter (12). Although she ended up going out with an injury, Karnick said her leadership this year was essential.

Going into the 2023 season, Karnick said the team will be losing her and three other members due to graduation, which will "deeply hurt the team considering there are only 12 current members." To offset this, Karnick thinks people should join the team to "either learn how to swim or advance the skills they have already built."

Football

The football season wrapped up with the team having a regular-season record of two wins and six losses, and a playoff record of one win and one loss, which was to Armstrong in the section championship game.

Although the season did not end the way the players wanted it to, team members said it was still a season to look back at in a positive light. Corey DeLoach (12) said the highlight of the season was homecoming night, when they "got a huge win." He also said senior night was an experience he "will never forget."

According to DeLoach, the team's standout athlete was Jaxon Howard (12). Meanwhile, DaNari Connors (12) praised all of the team's linemen, who helped him break the Cooper rushing record.

"I couldn't have done any of this without them," he said.

Connors also complimented the play of Cameron Fox (11) this year.

"He adjusted to the system later in the season and we started winning games," Connors said.

Looking ahead to 2023, DeLoach said he feels like the team has an extremely young core that has huge potential "to put Cooper back on the winning side of things." He added that new players have a lot to gain from joining this sport.

"With any sport, you can learn leadership and team bonding. You can also gain friends from football, especially if you are a freshman coming into a new school and not knowing a lot of people. You should definitely do a sport and it'll be good for you," he said.



Photo by MS. OWENS

Cross country runners start their race at this year's Burnsville Invitational.

season.

"The first highlight was the growth in the team's size after battling low numbers due to COVID over the last two years. Of particular importance in this growth is the fact that all of the new team members were underclassmen, which bodes well for the team in the future. Another highlight was the steady improvement of all the runners over the course of the season," Zuccola said.

As in any other sport, a team is fueled by everyone, but sometimes there are standout athletes who impress. The top two athletes who consistently dropped their times throughout the season were Athias Finn and Williams. Zuccola said this pair will continue to be "tough competitors heading into next season."

Also, the trio of graduating senior captains, John Myron Owens (12), Hunter Olson (12) and Logan Voigt (12), provided great leadership throughout the season and will be missed by the team.

Finally, Zuccola said he saw "great growth in some of our re-

value of goal-setting and challenge themselves to go beyond what they think they are capable of physically and psychologically," he said.

Girls Soccer

The girls soccer team wrapped up its season with a record of seven wins, eight losses and one tie. Head coach Mr. Wetherall said there were several highlights of the 2022 season.

"The biggest highlight was the successful combination of two programs. Numbers were down at both Robbinsdale high schools the past few years, and it became obvious that creating a cooperative program was our best option to provide opportunity for both communities. I have to give credit to the players for coming together, working hard, supporting each other and really embracing ACFC, Armstrong Cooper Football Club, our name for the combined program. It was sort of cool to hear players, parents and PA announcers refer to them as ACFC," he said.