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The Quill

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Robbinsdale Cooper High School

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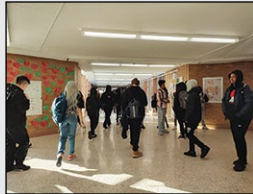


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DR. HERMAN RETIRING AS COOPER PRINCIPAL



Photo by SHENG VANG

According to IB Coordinator Ms. Christensen, Herman is a leader who values "collaboration, problem-solving and shared ownership."

By JESSE GARCIA
Quill staff writer

Dr. Herman is retiring on February 28 after working as Cooper's head principal for more than nine years.

Herman first came to Cooper with a lengthy background in education. He taught Social Studies classes at the junior high school level and served as an administrator in alternative education and

high school settings before eventually getting his head principal position at Cooper. Herman has a bachelor's degree in Social Studies, a master's degree in education and, most recently, a doctorate in education, which he got from St. Cloud State University.

Although Herman became head principal of Cooper in 2015, he first started at Cooper in 2011 as an assistant principal under Head Principal Mr. Favor.

Herman said he is happy to bring his professional career to a close at the high school he has been connected to for so long.

"Ending my educational career here has really been a joy," he said.

Herman said he holds amazing memories of his time at Cooper. He said he has enjoyed everything he has experienced with the students, the staff and the greater community.

"I've enjoyed seeing

everyone progress and develop," he said.

According to a variety of Cooper staff members, Herman has been a friendly leader and role model who has helped them grow as teachers and educators.

"Dr. Herman is the best principal I have ever worked for," MYPIB Coordinator Ms. Christensen said. "Dr. Herman's approach to leadership is one of collaboration, problem-solving and shared ownership."

February 28 marks the end of Papa Hawk's long career as a teacher and administrator

Another staff member who praised Herman for his work as head principal is Activities Director Mr. Howard. Howard said he believes Herman made him "a better person" and "a better leader" because he always put "others before himself."

"[I knew] every day when I came to work he had my back," Howard said. "[I knew] every day that he would find ways to ensure our students are getting an opportunity for excellence every single day and try to think outside the box to ensure that this happens."

Having many of the same sentiments was Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson, who said that Herman "brought out the best in everybody." Nelson said that Herman instituted many changes to the school during his time at Cooper to benefit students and staff.

"Dr. Herman is a reflective leader who has fought for equity and inclusion at Cooper High School. From providing an all-gender bathroom for students, to adding extra planning time into the teachers' work day, to implementing meaningful opportunities for students so they can relearn materials they may have misunderstood or missed altogether, Cooper has truly benefited

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Catch Up event aided students at semester's end

During Catch Up and Relish, students who were receiving a C or better in a given class had the chance to take part in leisure activities



Photo by SHENG VANG

One area students could visit to work in a quiet setting was the media center.

By SHENG VANG
Quill staff writer

Catch Up and Relish was an opportunity for students to get caught up in class work on January 12-13 as the first semester came to an end.

According to Mr. Nelson, tenth grade assistant principal, last year's Catch Up and Relish was a "significant success with students that were on

the verge of earning their credit." Thus, this year, Catch Up and Relish took place again on the Thursday and Friday of the second-to-last week of the semester.

On Thursday, class subjects that took part in Catch Up and Relish were English, Physical Education, Health, Business, Family and Consumer Science, Science, Music, Performance and EL. On Friday, the classes participating were Social Studies, Global Language, Special Education, Math, AVID and ABC Lab.

During the given teacher's subject area, no new curriculum was to be introduced in class. Instead, students who were getting less than a C in class, who were missing work or who needed to retake tests could use that time to work on those missing assignments.

As for students who were earning at least a C in class, they got the opportunity to participate in activities available in four areas of the school: media center, cafeteria, auditorium and gym. Students could also choose to stay in their classroom if they preferred.

For those students who wanted to study or relax, the media center and cafeteria were two places in which they could spend their time. In the media center, students could work in the quiet study area or in the group area. Similarly, in the cafeteria, students could have some relaxing time by themselves or with friends.

One student who enjoyed the media center was Mandy Wu (9). She said every time she gets the chance to participate in an activity, she chooses the media center because it is a "good place to work on missing work or other classwork."

On the other hand, for students who wanted to release some of their en-

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Hawk's Nest provides students with homework help

Leamers from all four grades are able to visit the after-school program in the Media Center without needing to make an appointment

By LA'SHAYA TAYLOR
Quill staff writer

Do you need a little help extra help in a class? Do you need help studying for a test? If your answer is yes to those or any related questions, Cooper is offering an after-school tutoring program for all ages and grades.

The program, which is called Hawk's Nest, takes place in the media center every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:35-4:30 p.m. with the exception of non-school days, conference days and days impacted by inclement weather.

"Students who attend tutoring must sign in and be with a teacher for the entire hour. No student will be admitted for tutoring without a

pass from their teacher past 3:35," administrative intern Mr. Mahan said.

Overseeing the Hawk's Nest program are Cooper science teachers Mr. Balika and Ms. Diamond. Balika said Hawk's Nest serves an important purpose.

"The purpose of Hawk's Nest is to give students a space after school to get extra help with assignments and time to catch up on missing work," Balika said.

Students who are interested in making use of the Hawk's Nest program merely have to show up at the media center after school.

"Students just come to the media center, sign in and get right to work. They can get help from any of the teachers that are available that day," Balika said.

While Balika and Diamond teach science, students can get help and support with any of their classes.

"Currently, we are trying to cater to all subjects. We offer help with organizing materials and helping students figure out what to prioritize. While Ms. Diamond and I specialize in science, students are welcome to get help with other subjects," Balika said.

Balika added that additional teachers from other departments also come to Hawk's Nest periodically to provide additional support.

"Currently, it is just me and Ms. Diamond that are present at each session. However, we

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Academic tips can help Hawks improve grades

A poor semester one report card prompts many students to try new strategies



Photo by SHENG VANG

Taking notes on one's Chromebook or by writing things in a notebook can help with information retention.

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM
Quill staff writer

Many students have questions about how to improve their performance in the classroom as they review their first semester report card. No matter what grade you're in, there are many ways to help yourself be ready for class as you embark on the second half of the school year.

1. Build good relationships

The first thing that can benefit your classroom performance is building a good relationship with your teachers. Learning why your teachers are doing something in class is a good way of understanding where they are coming from. A helpful thing that you can do to build that relationship is tell your teachers what you want to accomplish by the end of the school year in their class. You should also tell them what challenges you are facing in class and what you've had a hard time with in the past.

2. Try to be a good communicator

Communication is key when it comes to developing a student-teacher relationship. When you communicate with your teachers, they can learn more about your interests and spin their lessons in a way that will make it more interesting for you. Also, this can help you avoid any potential for a negative teacher-student relationship, which can cause distrust that can prevent quality teaching and learning from happening. Finally, by fostering open communication with your teachers, you will be much more likely to try harder on assignments because you know your teachers care about you as an individual.

3. Don't be afraid to ask questions

Another strategy that will help you in class is asking questions. For some students, that may be a struggle due to the fact that they might be embarrassed. However, it's important to reach out to your teachers because they are there to help you and your education. When in class, make sure to take notes so after the class is done, you have questions to ask. This process helps you better understand what you are learning.

4. Keep yourself organized

Some students have a huge problem staying organized. One of the best ways to stay organized

ACADEMIC TIPS

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Seniors tackle tasks needed for graduation

From earning required credits to making sure that fines are paid, there are many things the Class of 2023 needs to do before June



Photo by SHENG VANG

Joshua Vang (12) discusses his credits with senior guidance counselor Ms. Hough in preparation for graduation.

By SHENG VANG
Quill staff writer

There are many important things seniors must do before June to ensure they receive their diploma and walk across the stage at the graduation ceremony. These tasks range from completion of credits to turning in materials to buying caps and gowns.

"It is important for seniors to know their credit situation. In order to graduate, students need all

the required credits such as English, Math, Science and Social Studies, which adds up to a total of 43 semester credits," senior guidance counselor Ms. Hough said.

Hough emphasized how important credit completion is as missing credits could result in students not receiving a diploma and not being able to walk across the commencement stage.

"If a student is missing two credits, they don't get their diploma and they don't get to walk

at the graduation ceremony," Hough said.

Therefore, Hough advises students to know what they need to do next and use their time wisely and not procrastinate because "second semester will be over soon and you do not want to run out of time."

In addition to credits, ordering caps and gowns is another thing seniors should know about. In order to ensure a correct size and a successful cap and gown delivery, seniors needed to buy

Three AVID students recognized in BestPrep contest

The competition asked participants to create an artistic work depicting what a more equitable future might look like

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM
Quill staff writer

Cooper AVID students Brailyn Billups (10), Michelle Hernandez (10) and Valeria Pina Ortiz (10) placed in the top 20 of this year's BestPrep Student Spotlight Competition. The students were honored for their work at an education forum held at the Minneapolis Convention Center on January 25.

"Cooper AVID has been involved with BestPrep for the last 10 years," AVID coordinator Ms. Lieser said. "With our history, BestPrep often reaches out with information about different opportunities or programming they are offering to make sure we know about it. We've enjoyed working with them in the past and like how we can expose our students to different opportunities and learning through BestPrep."

This year's contest revolved around the book *Until the End of Time* by Brian Greene, a professor of physics and mathematics at Columbia University. Students were asked to use an art form like writing, sculpture, music or theater to respond creatively to the following prompt related to that author's book: "If you had the opportunity to reimagine and create a more equitable society, what would that look like in your world? What can we do now to get closer to the world you imagine?"

Greene then made an appearance at the January 25 event recognizing the winners.



Photo by MS. LIESER

Pina Ortiz, Hernandez and Billups (left to right) all placed in the top 20.

"I think the prompt allowed students to look beyond themselves at what we could change in our world to make it better and then make them think what they could do to create that change," Lieser said.

The three Hawks finishing in the top 20 each had different approaches to the project. Billups created a drawing depicting different obstacles she sees in the world and how she thinks they "could change or get better" in the future. Billups said she was surprised her work was selected for the top 20.

"I didn't think it was going to get picked," she said. "I feel like if I knew people were going to see and find it good, I would have tried to do better and make it more creative."

Meanwhile, Hernandez decided to use poetry as the artistic medium for her work since she had spent some time in her Honors English 10 class this year learning about poetry.

"I enjoyed the flexibility and freedom we had in the project and that we didn't have a criteria on it where we would be graded," Hernandez said. "I knew my work was good but wasn't expecting it to win anything because it didn't feel like I committed myself to creating what I wanted from the poem."

Also expressing herself through writing was Pina Ortiz. Instead of a poem, however, she decided to write an essay because she said she is "best at expressing [her] ideas and opinions through writing."

them before the February 10 deadline. Hough said a couple days before the deadline, she and data processing specialist Ms. Olson set up tables in the front foyer for students to pay for caps and gowns if they preferred paying by cash or check. The caps and gowns will be delivered to Cooper the week prior to the graduation date, June 5. Students can pick them up during the last three days of school for seniors: May 31, June 1 or June 2.

Along with having the items needed for commencement, saving materials from your school Google Drive is also important for seniors. Materials students may need to access after high school should be transferred from their school drive to a personal drive because "[they] will lose them eventually," according to Hough. During advisory in May, there will be lessons presented to students teaching them how to transfer materials, so Hough said seniors should be on the lookout for that.

Last but not least, Hough said seniors should make sure any materials they need to turn in, such as library books and Chromebooks, and any other tasks students may need to complete, such as paying fees or fines, are taken care of before graduation.

Overall, some important, upcoming dates seniors should remember are the last day of school for seniors, which is June 2, and the graduation ceremony date, which is June 5.

"I enjoyed being able to write about something that matters to me," she said. "I also enjoyed that the prompt could be interpreted in many ways because I was left with lots of room to be creative."

Prior to this year, the BestPrep competition was something that occurred every other year. Lieser said that Cooper's sophomore and junior AVID students have been taking part in the event because it "fits well with [their] curriculum and goals of learning."

However, this year, BestPrep changed the competition to be an annual event, so Lieser said they specifically had Cooper's 10th grade AVID classes participate.

"We used class time for some pre-work brainstorming and also a few days to work on their competition submissions," Lieser said.

Although the competition aspect of this BestPrep program was important, Lieser said even more significant is the learning opportunity it provides to students.

"I love how opportunities like this allow our students to experience new things," she said.

Agreeing with Lieser was Hernandez, who pointed out the impact this project had on her view of the world.

"I think this project is useful to students because it allows them to see what they care about in the world, whether it's themselves in it or something else," she said.

The Quill

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Staff reminds students of open lunch policies

Many Hawks do not leave the building for open lunch during cold winter weather, but there are some rules that still must be followed



Photo by SHENG VANG

Exiting and entering through the main foyer is one expectation of students making use of open lunch.

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

Cooper administrators are using the start of the new semester to remind students about the rules related to open lunch and the responsibilities that go along with having that privilege.

Students in grades 11 and 12 are allowed to use open lunch to leave the school building to attend outside food establishments during fifth period. Mean-

while, students in grades nine and 10 are expected to remain in the cafeteria.

Juniors and seniors leaving school for open lunch must pass through the front foyer, where student IDs will be checked for verification in order to leave the building.

“Students are expected to have their IDs with them under all circumstances,” Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson said.

Students using open lunch

can do so for the entirety of fifth period, which runs between 11:55 a.m. and 12:55 p.m. During this time span, students are allowed to leave the school building and return via the main entrance.

Nelson said it is important students remember that open lunch is a privilege. Students within the upper two grades can lose this privilege by being suspended or breaking school policies.

“Getting into fights and other behaviors can remove your ability to attend open lunch, although there are ways you can regain that privilege depending on your actions,” Nelson said.

While many juniors and seniors take advantage of open lunch, not attending open lunch is completely viable as well since it is an optional choice. Anyone who is qualified for open lunch but chooses not to use it is expected to remain in the cafeteria during their lunch time.

“Students are responsible for staying in the cafeteria when it is their lunch time if they do not attend open lunch. They should not be wandering around the school building during their lunch time,” Nelson said.

One issue about leaving for open lunch is making it back in time. Nelson said the expectations about being punctual are clear.

“Students are expected to be back on time for sixth period and not have outside food with them,” he said.

Students who use open lunch agree that it is an enjoyable experience during the day since they are allowed to leave the school for an hour without restrictions.

“I like being able to get good food from outside of the school on my own or with friends,” Kaveon Bohanon (12) said.

Hawks face off against area foes on Math Team

Academic competition group is looking for new members to add to its ongoing success

By OWEN SANDLUND
Quill staff writer

The Cooper Math Team is wrapping up the 2022-2023 season with a small but dedicated team. Going forward, the team hopes to continue offering this academic and social opportunity for years to come through the recruitment of new participants.

The staff advisor for the team is Mr. Kind, who teaches math. He has coached the math team for the past four years. After three members of the team graduated in 2022, this year’s roster consisted of Remi Desalu (10) and Manuel Panora (12).

The team meets once a week in order to practice for competitions, which are held on weekends throughout the season.

Practices are an opportunity for students to complete drills and prepare for upcoming meets. A usual practice starts with snacks and ends with learned concepts.

“Practice includes doing previous packets and working together as a group to learn new concepts,” Panora said.

Team events include both online and in-person competitions, Panora said. These tournaments involve both individual and team competitions as students complete math problems in a timed manner. The season starts in the fall and ends in February.

The 2022-2023 season was a transitional period for the team. Desalu mentioned that there were “a lot of opportunities” for students available due to the smaller number of participants.

As they wrapped up the current season, the team’s short-term goal was to do well at the final competition held at Wayzata High School by scoring some points, which are awarded to teams for answering questions completely and doing well in events.

Desalu said that one benefit of taking part in this team is that what they learn about math transitions well to the classroom. This aspect of the Math Team experience is significant. In fact, the educational group Peninsula Academy has found that there is a strong correlation between participation in math teams such as the one at Cooper and improved high school and college grades. In addition, for students interested in pursuing STEM majors at college, Math Team is a good activity to have on one’s resume. As an added benefit, both Desalu and Panora agreed that the snacks provided at Math Team practices are “very good.”

Going forward, Kind’s biggest goal for the program is to “get more team members.” Even if you feel like you may not currently be good at math, Kind said you should join the team because “you might like it.”

Agreeing with Kind is Mr. Darsow, who also teaches math at Cooper. Darsow said “everyone” should do Math Team to improve their mathematical ability. Darsow added that anyone can be a math person because all it takes to be one is to try.

Those students who are interested in participating on the team next year are encouraged to contact Kind in room 347 for more information.

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have also had occasional support brought in by Mr. Bruce and Mr. Day,” Balika said.

Overall, Balika said it can be really beneficial for students to take a part in the Hawk’s Nest program, no matter how much or how little help they need.

“Students get a quiet place to work on assignments after school. They also get time to work with friends that they would not normally see during the day,” Balika said.

Stepping away from social media can be of benefit

Although it can be difficult to break an ingrained habit, there are some straightforward ways to stay off of your phone

By LA'SHAYA TAYLOR
Quill staff writer

Common Sense Media reports that the average teenager spends 4.5 hours a day on social media. That’s 1,620 hours a year that is wasted on social media. Multiple studies have shown that heavy use of social media can lead to more mental health problems like sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety and even self-harm. If you or a loved one needs help taking a break from social media, try these five tips to detox from your socials.



Photo by SHENG VANG

Checking social media during class is something most students have done.

1. Set a time limit on your apps

The first tip is to set a time limit on your social apps. Most people don’t know this, but you can actually set a limit for how long you want to be in each app. If you feel like you should only spend 40 minutes on Instagram, you can set a limit on your phone that makes sure you will only spend 40 minutes. Likewise, if you only want to be on TikTok for one hour, you can set a time limit for only one hour on TikTok. You can establish these time limits by going to “Settings” then selecting “Screen Time.” You must make sure that you have turned your “Screen Time” setting on if you haven’t done so already. You will then press “Add Limit” and choose which apps you want to limit and for how long.

2. Turn off your notifications

The second tip is to turn off the notifications you receive on your phone from your social media apps. When you are trying to quit something, it will always be hard, especially if you are constantly reminded of it. Say you’re on a diet and you know you shouldn’t be eating cupcakes. Unfortunately, when you’re on your daily walk to your job, you pass a cupcake shop. Seeing the shop every day can be tempting and it will make you want to make a quick stop inside. To avoid this, you switch up your routine so you don’t pass the cupcake shop. That way, you are not constantly reminded of the food you shouldn’t

be eating. This is the same situation with your social media apps. By turning your social media notifications off, you will not be reminded to check your social media apps, which will help you to stick with the detox.

3. Develop a screen-free hobby

The third tip is to spend one hour a day doing a screen-free hobby. The most common activity to do when you are bored is scrolling on social media or sitting in front of the TV. Instead of mindlessly looking at a screen, you can try to find a new interest. There are many activities that can keep you away from screens while also helping your brain and

keeping you occupied. Instead of scrolling through social media or watching TV, try crafting. You could make a necklace while listening to a fun podcast. If that doesn’t sound like something you’re into, there is also painting, drawing, reading, puzzles or thrift flipping. The more time you spend off screens, the more you can get used to not mindlessly scrolling on Instagram.

4. Put away your phone while eating

The fourth tip is to try to go through your meals without having your phone out. Commonly, when we eat in contemporary times, we tend to go on our phones. Instead of scrolling on Twitter while eating your dinner, try to keep your phone out of reach. That way, you can enjoy your meal and have a friendly conversation while eating instead of being stuck on a screen.

5. Detox with a friend

The fifth tip is to try detoxing with a friend. Switching up a routine can be hard, especially if you are doing so alone. By doing these social media detox tips with a friend, you can support each other during the process. Studies have shown that you’re more likely to commit and complete an activity if you have a friend working with you. Detoxing together will allow you and your friend to support and lift each other up.

ACADEMIC TIPS CAN HELP HAWKS IMPROVE GRADES continued from page 2

is by having a planner. This type of organizational method will allow you to write down all of your assignments throughout the day and make a list of things you have to complete by the end of the night. There are also many apps that you can download on your phone that serve the same purpose if you prefer not writing down your agenda.

5. Develop good study habits

Developing good study habits is an important skill to lock down in high school. Many people have different methods for studying or memorizing their lessons. For instance, some people are audible learners, which means they learn better when listening to things. Meanwhile, other students are visual learners, which means they learn better by reading or watching videos of some sort. Figuring

out what kind of learner you are can help you create the correct studying habits.

6. Find a good studying environment

One’s studying environment is actually crucial for academic success. Make sure that it is a clean work space in a closed environment where you only have access to your work. You will want to make sure you have all the materials you need for studying around your workplace so you don’t have to make trips to get what you are missing. You will also want to make sure you are comfortable with the chair you’re sitting in so you eliminate the temptation to keep getting up.

7. Eliminate distractions

One of a student’s worst enemies is distractions, whether it’s

noise in public places like school or access to the technology that surrounds us. Of course, the primary distraction students face is social media, which has impacted everyone’s lives and affected the way students learn in school. You get one notification on your phone and you find yourself on Instagram for hours; before you know it, you are tired and it’s too late to do homework. One thing that can help with that type of distraction is setting a screen time function on your phone. Doing this will give you a limit on time that you allow yourself to be on your phone. If that doesn’t work, try using the “Do Not Disturb” option on your phone so you don’t receive any unwanted notifications.

8. Avoid multitasking

Lots of high school and col-

lege students multitask, which is the process of doing multiple things at the same time in order to get them all done. However, it has been scientifically proven that multitasking is not an effective or beneficial method for completing work. Each time you switch between the tasks you are working on, you lose the sequence of thought you had been giving to that initial task.

9. Take care of your health

Staying healthy is a very important part of doing well in school. Make sure you are eating healthy foods and getting at least eight hours of sleep every night. Your mental and physical health is a priority because you will be less able to improve your classroom performance if you are lacking in these areas of health.

Concerns about U.S. elections do have merit

The country would benefit from more standardized approach to voting systems

By OWEN SANDLUND
Quill staff writer

With the January 6th Committee’s final report recently being released, and it being around that time of the calendar year again, the January 6, 2021 storming of the nation’s capital is once again on people’s minds. To be honest, January 6th is something I am tired of hearing about and even thinking of. To me, it is a complete non-starter; its scope deserves to be limited to that day, not applied to the valid concerns and beliefs of millions of Americans. Yes, then President Donald J. Trump was a sore loser, but he had cause to be given the fact that 2020 was the most flawed election in recent history. According to a 2022 Axios-Momentive poll, more than 40 percent of Americans believe Trump had indeed won the election even months after the events of January 6, 2021. I remember watching speakers on the Congress floor from both parties admit the less-than-ideal conditions of the 2020 election during the certification process.

Regardless of the merit of their claims, this level of criticism following an election is completely unprecedented and deserves to be taken seriously, something which many Americans fail to understand. While the events of January 6th deserve to be condemned, their occurrence does not take away the widespread issues with recent elections, which I think are important to acknowledge and address so all Americans of different backgrounds can once again have confidence in our elections.

Not everything that’s unfair is necessarily illegal. However, that doesn’t mean we should not work to correct it, particularly when it comes to the biased media environment in this country surrounding the 2020 elections. According to an October 2020 article by The Hill, the 2020 campaign of current President Joe Biden had secured some 119 major newspaper endorsements, compared to only three for the Trump campaign. Television did not fare much better, with a majority of “independent” or non-partisan media outlets such as ABC or NBC generally offering unflattering perspectives of Trump at a higher rate throughout his presidency than other presidents according to Pew Research Center in 2022.

Turning on the television during the lead-up to the 2020 election, I often saw the media criticize Trump’s every move and exploit every gaffe during the national emergency of the COVID epidemic. As a result of this coverage, Gallup polls taken that year found 86 percent of Americans believed the media to be biased. In my personal experience, I know picking a nightly news program was likely to provoke an argument, with each person wanting to watch a show that covered their perspective. Clearly, the large national news outlets were on completely different pages depending on which candidates they favored.

When anyone who is not a moderate Democrat campaigns in this country, the establishment seems to go against them. Everyone should acknowledge that the media is biased, and people have a right to be upset when biased media helps sway the outcome of elections. This issue in particular is why I am deeply dissatisfied with the 2020 election cycle. How can an election be fair if only one side has the ability to get its platform out to a majority of Americans?

Something everyone can do to combat structural forces in elections and to expand their perspective is listening to different voices. An app I love to use and

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Passing time sufficient to get to class

Adding an additional minute or two to transition between periods would merely lead to students wasting more time



Photo by SHENG VANG

The second-floor Y is a spot that is often cited for slowing students down as they attempt to get to class on time.

Many students feel that passing time is too short. For students who need to travel from the top floor to the bottom floor of school while going through the clutter of all the other students in the hallways, five minutes may not be enough. Of course, students often use up their passing time by socializing. If you walk around the school, you can see a lot of people standing in the halls, chilling with their friends. Given the fact that students can get a tad distracted by their friends, they end up being tardy to class. This raises the question of whether the problem with passing time is more about the

amount of time available or how students are using that time.

Passing time is too short for some people for one main reason: friends. Most people talk to their friends during passing time because they feel that they don’t have time to chit-chat during other parts of the school day. However, in reality, five minutes is enough time to socialize and get to class. The main way to accomplish this is by walking and talking instead of standing and chatting.

If we were to extend the pass-

ing time merely to accommodate socializing, students would obviously use the extra time to socialize even more. In addition, adding extra passing time to accommodate seeing friends would cut into our learning time by leading to shorter classes. Let’s say you extend passing time to eight minutes: that would mean that there would be about 56 minutes of passing time a day. That’s nearly an hour of wasted time that we could use for learning or studying.

Let us not forget that a lot

From the Editors

Students should have more freedom to bring food to class

While the policies prohibiting eating in class make sense, there are times when teachers should allow students to have food

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON
Quill staff writer

It is not unusual to look around the room during class and see students with food and drinks. This is especially the case during first period when people are just getting to school for the day and during sixth period when people are getting to class after lunch. Although this is technically against school policy, I feel like food and drinks should be allowed because sometimes people can’t eat at home or don’t get a chance to eat so they have to bring food with them wherever they go. In cases like that, students should be allowed to eat so their bodies don’t shut down. Not having food or liquid in your body while you are walking around the school all day and trying to do your work isn’t good because you won’t be able to focus.

The school provides breakfast for students, but some students can’t make it on time for breakfast due to personal issues or bus issues. When students get to school late and haven’t eaten at home, they will be hungry until lunch if they do not have something with them first period. Sometimes, these students don’t have the chance to eat lunch as well, which means they will be hungry leading into the next day if they have no food at home. It’s the



Photo by SHENG VANG

One drawback to allowing food is the trash it can leave behind in classrooms.

school’s responsibility to give these students a chance to eat, which sometimes means they might need to bring food to class.

At the same time, I understand why teachers don’t like food and drinks in their classrooms. First, it is a school rule. Second, even though you are helping yourself by eating food, you are stressing the teacher out because they have to sit in the room all day with the food waste. Also, if you drop any food and don’t pick it up, bugs come to eat it. That means the teacher has to clean it up or kill the bugs running around the classroom. Finally, students don’t always pay attention when they or

their neighbors are eating, so while the teacher is explaining what to do, students are distracted, which means the teacher has to explain the directions again.

While eating food in the classroom is one thing, drinking beverages is something else. Overall, drinking isn’t too bad compared to eating, but it can still be a distraction. Also, if the drink spills, everything gets wet and sometimes sticky if the drink isn’t water. It is true that you should always keep water flowing through your body, which means it makes sense to keep it with you throughout the school day. However, you should always know

when it’s the right time to drink water and when it’s not. Unlike eating, drinking water doesn’t make the teacher’s job hard unless you spill it and don’t clean it up. In my personal experience, the students who I have seen spill any sort of liquid have been good about cleaning it up themselves. Of course, the worst thing about beverages in the classroom is that if it’s a sticky drink that is spilled and not properly cleaned up, everyone’s shoes will end up sticky, and when those students walk around the school with sticky feet, it makes the floor sticky in the hallways and other classrooms.

Ultimately, both eating and drinking in the classroom can be bad, but they do have their beneficial sides as well. I think students should try to cut back on drinking or eating in their classes. Avoiding these behaviors would make the teacher’s job less stressful and it would help you pay more attention in class. At the same time, I understand that some students lose focus because they are hungry. If that is the case for you, I would suggest you try to get food from a classmate when it’s work time so you are not interrupting the teacher, and then you can ask for permission to leave the class and eat or drink whatever you have in the hallway quickly so you can get back in class and start working.

Healthier eating now can pay big dividends later in life

While it is easy to ignore the future when you are in your teens, making changes to your diet and exercise habits now can be critical

By JESSE GARCIA
Quill staff writer

The topic of eating habits is always one of heavy contention amongst people. Some people insist they eat “healthy,” while others say that there’s nothing wrong with an “unhealthy” diet. While everyone is inclined to handle their body in their own way, the benefits of eating “healthy” are usually not mentioned enough. Ultimately, the science of nutrition makes it clear that people gain many benefits from eating the recommended way compared to eating in an unhealthy way.

The most immediate benefit of following recommended eat-

ing habits is that people tend to feel much more energetic. Healthy eaters typically feel as if they can do many things a lot longer and better than before, such as exercise. The largest effect of healthy eating comes in your lifespan. It’s apparent that eating healthy will help a person maintain proper organ condition, which will allow those organs to last longer. This leads to fewer health problems later in life and provides a longer life expectancy overall. Everything from one’s muscles to one’s teeth to one’s bones do much better when a person is a healthy eater compared to those people who haven’t maintained a proper diet.

Many people say they don’t care

about the positives of healthy eating, but it’s definitely hard to deny the negatives that come with unhealthy eating. Many effects stack on top of each other, leading to a downward spiral in one’s lifespan. The biggest and most glaring downside of poor eating habits is weight gain. A massive reason for this is one’s diet. While lack of physical activity or a slow metabolism might hinder someone’s ability to stay at a healthy weight, a large contribution to weight gain is made by one’s diet. Besides weight, there are many internal problems that are caused by a poor diet. A few examples of these are high cholesterol, high blood pressure, tooth decay and even some cancers.

Many people assume that eating healthy requires you to spend lots of money, eat only vegetables, count every calorie and consume little-to-no food overall. All of this is incorrect. Eating healthy is largely up to the person. While some choose to eat mostly vegetables, it’s more about eating in a reasonable way. You can enjoy snacks, desserts and things of that nature as long as you manage your food intake. For some people, that may mean eating less in general, while for others, it means cutting down on a certain nutrient. Eating healthy may not require you to count calories; in-

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Spirited Away still casts a spell on viewers

More than two decades after its release, Hayao Miyazaki's award-winning animated film remains a captivating masterpiece



Photo by STUDIO GHIBLI

The film follows the quest of Chihiro, a young girl who must save her parents and escape the spirit world.

By MEILING VASQUEZ
Quill staff writer

Spirited Away is a film directed by Hayao Miyazaki that was released in 2001. Despite being more than 20 years old, it is currently my favorite movie. Additionally, because of all the detail poured into this film, there’s always something new to be found, which gives this movie a lot of value when re-watching it. The message of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away* is that change doesn’t have to be scary, which is shown to the audience with the help of great costume design and music.

Spirited Away is the story of Chihiro, a 10-year-old girl who is moving with her parents to a new city. On the trip to their new home, they take a shortcut that leads them to what the parents

think is an abandoned amusement park but which turns out to be the spirit world. After her parents are turned into pigs, Chihiro must enter the spirit world, where she eventually gets a job working in the bathhouse of a witch named Yubaba. That starts Chihiro’s quest to find a way to free herself and rescue her parents in order to return to the human world.

One highlight of the film is its costume design. The characters’ costumes look incredibly interesting throughout the film. An example of a scene that shows a great use of costume design is when Chihiro first meets Kamaji, the boiler man. As Chihiro watches him work, the audience picks up on the fact that he resembles a spider because of his eight limbs, mostly black clothes and dark glasses. The costume design in this scene

reveals information about Kamaji’s character. He is dressed like a spider because the way Chihiro views him at first is parallel to how many humans view real spiders, which is with fear and caution. Also, even though spiders are usually harmless, a lot of people are still scared of them, which is similar to how Kamaji ends up being harmless to Chihiro despite her bring nervous around him in the beginning. Kamaji’s costume design makes the audience relate to how nervous Chihiro is feeling about Kamaji at the start. However, this is also one of the film’s first signs to the audience about the idea that things that look scary often end up being alright, which later ties to the theme of the movie.

The use of music is another filmmaking element that stands out in *Spirited Away*. Studio Ghibli

films are known for having beautiful, impactful music. A good example of a scene demonstrating the use of musical score and soundtracks in *Spirited Away* is when Chihiro and some of her friends are walking through the woods to the house of Zeniba, a good witch. After a little bit of walking through the woods, they are led the rest of the way to the house by a hopping lantern. The element of musical score and soundtracks is shown through the distinct lack of music during this scene until Chihiro and her friends finally reach Zeniba’s house. Once they do reach the house, a peaceful song starts playing. The lack of music before they arrive at Zeniba’s house helps the audience feel some of the anxiety Chihiro’s feeling about meeting Zeniba. Furthermore, when music eventually does creep into the background, it’s calm, which foreshadows to the audience that Zeniba isn’t as frightening as she appears to be.

This scene fits well with the overall theme of this movie: while change may seem daunting, it doesn’t need to be. At the end of the movie, Chihiro’s father sympathizes with her situation by stating that moving to a new home and school can be a little scary, and Chihiro responds by saying, “I think I can handle it.” Even though this dialogue is present in the English dubbed version of the movie and not in the Japanese dubbed version, I still think it’s really important to consider when thinking about the theme. At the start of the movie, Chihiro was really upset about moving to a new area, but now, Chihiro’s alright with it. Learning to be okay with change is the theme of this movie because it is only

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Your Name takes unique approach to romance genre

Animated film follows two lovers who first meet when switching lives in their dreams

By JASON PHA
Quill staff writer



Photo by COMIX WAVE FILMS

One of the highlights of the animated film is the excellent character design and renderings of backgrounds.

The movie *Your Name* was directed by Makoto Shinkai and released in Japan on August 26, 2016. Later, it was released in the United States on April 7, 2017. I love animated films and *Your Name* is one of my favorites. Prior to watching the film, I heard it was sad, which appealed to me because I like to watch movies that can make me emotional. I would say *Your Name* did get me emotional. It is a romantic film with beautiful animation. Overall, the Makoto Shinkai movie *Your Name* uses music and cinematography to teach the audience the importance of love and taking chances.

Your Name focuses on a girl named Mitsuha and a boy named Taki, two complete strangers living two separate lives. While Mitsuha is a high school student living in a small mountain village in Japan, Taki is a high school student living in Tokyo. One day, Mitsuha has a dream in which she wakes up in Taki’s body, and he has the same experience in reverse. Over time, they build a connection by leaving notes for one another until they decide to finally meet in person.

One element that is used well in *Your Name* is music. There is a scene in which Mitsuha is at a festival as Taki is trying to call her. The music used in this sequence has an emotional feeling to it. You can tell the music is supposed to draw a connection between the two characters even though they are apart during the scene.

As she is enjoying the festival with her friends, Mitsuha goes off to watch a comet fly through the sky. As the comet gets closer, it breaks off into two pieces and hits the land where the festival is being held, killing everyone there, including Mitsuha. The music that plays in this sequence features melodic piano with singing. As the scene builds up into the big crash of the comet, the music builds up and releases with a huge climax of sound. At the end of the scene, Taki stops trying to contact Mitsuha and the music fades away with it.

The music in this scene creates a sense of awe and sorrow in the audience. Even though you can’t tell what the lyrics are saying, you can feel the emotion behind the voice. It makes the viewer feel connected to Taki, who doesn’t know about the passing of his love.

Another key filmmaking element in *Your Name* is its great use of cinematography. In the scene where Mitsuha and Taki meet up on the top of the crater, the cinematography helps show the audience their love for one another. As they talk about how to save the town from the comet, we see them try to write their names on one another’s hands so they do not forget each other, but that does not happen because a cloud moves in and the dim light is gone.

Cinematography has many things to do with this scene. For example, when they first meet up, the shot is at the waist level and you can see their different perspectives as characters. Taki is in the present and Mitsuha is in the past. As they walk past each other, the camera shifts into the sky where dim light is shown. When the two finally see each other, the camera shows the

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Fincher's *Fight Club* earns its cult film status

Between its skewed structure, twisted storyline and great performances by Pitt and Norton, *Fight Club* is a must-see movie

By HUNTER OLSON
Quill staff writer

Fight Club was directed by David Fincher and released on September 10, 1999. I enjoy this film because of its high critical ratings and the anticipation of having a chance to watch it with my friends. It is also a movie that involves Brad Pitt and I am a big fan Brad Pitt’s acting. The final reason I wanted to see it is because *Fight Club* remains a popular cult movie. *Fight Club* by David Fincher uses outstanding costumes and special effects to show awareness of the effects of mental illness.

Fight Club is based on a 1996 novel of the same name by famous author Chuck Palahniuk. In the film, Edward Norton plays an unnamed narrator who is feeling discontented from his white-collar job and consumption-focused life. Eventually, he forms an underground fight club with soap salesman Tyler Durden (Pitt) in order to feel something real in his life.

One interesting filmmaking element in *Fight Club* is costume design and its correlation to each character. Early in the movie, the narrator sits in his seat on a plane. The camera then slowly pans to Tyler Durden, who is sitting in the next seat. The two get to talking about the safety exits and the oxygen mask when suddenly the narrator asks, “What do you do?” Durden replies that he makes soap and sells it. In response, the narrator tells him he is the most interesting single-serving friend he has ever met. As the narrator interacts with Durden, we see the



Photo by 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS

Pitt and Norton play two men who start an underground fight club.

narrator wearing a normal suit and tie while Durden is wearing an outlandish red leather jacket and fancy, button-down shirt. This not only makes Durden stand out more, it also shows he is a unique character who will be important in the upcoming story. The clothes Durden wears makes us think, “Wow, this guy got some swag,” but it also makes us feel wary. Durden is clearly different from all the characters we’ve seen in the film so far, so it’s normal that we take caution.

The second filmmaking element that is important to the movie is special effects makeup. There is one specific scene that features a funny use of fake blood. In this scene, the narrator goes into his boss’ office, demanding that he pay him to not spill the beans about the company’s actions. When the boss refuses, the narrator starts to beat himself up and trash the of-

fice. His self-inflicted injuries start with a bloody nose and finish with a gruesome cut on the narrator’s hand from the broken glass in the room. The self-inflicted gore in this scene really shows how far the narrator will go. The narrator has pushed himself to the limits and sees this as the best way to move on from his job. When the boss sees the blood from the narrator’s nose, he knows he’s dealing with a strange man. Meanwhile, the cut on the hand shows that the narrator has no care for his surroundings, even if it were to hurt him. When watching this bloody scene, the audience is disturbed to see a man gushing blood as he crawls along the office floor. We know the narrator’s reasons for doing it, but this scene is still a curve ball for the audience and serves as a turning point for the character. Putting the gore aside, we can see the comedic nature of this scene as the nar-

rator picks himself up and tosses himself into the glass almost like there’s a ghost controlling him.

This scene ties into one of the main morals of the movie, which involves the narrator’s mental illness and how it is ignored. One scene that shows this issue is the scene where the narrator goes to see a doctor about his insomnia. The doctor tells the narrator that he can’t help him and that he just needs to sleep it off. The narrator asks for help one more time, saying he’s in pain. In response, the doctor says that, if he wants to see real pain, he needs to meet with the guys who have testicular cancer. This scene is what really sends the narrator down the rabbit hole. He does not get the actual help he needs from the doctor, who does not seem to check anything. The doctor also just gets up and walks away, which is definitely unprofessional. It is interesting to see mental illness represented in a movie as not a lot of movies focus on it. Additionally, this film is effective at showing what happens when mental illness is ignored.

The movie *Fight Club* by David Fincher uses outstanding costumes and special effects to show an awareness of the impact of untreated mental illness. I love this movie and would put it in my personal top five. What really stuck out to me was how I liked every single character. I also loved the costume designs, especially Tyler Durden’s outfits. David Fincher is a great director whose films I would watch again. *Fight Club* earns five out of five stars.

CATCH UP EVENT AIDED STUDENTS AT SEMESTER'S END continued from page 1

ergy or have some entertainment, the gym and the auditorium were the best places to go. In the auditorium, students got to enjoy movies, and in the gym, students could play sports.

Overall, people had different opinions about the Catch Up and

Relish experience. Kendall Carscadden (9) said she found Catch Up and Relish week to be especially helpful at the end of the semester “to work on assignments and get a break from classes.”

Likewise, Celicia Nguyen (9) said she enjoyed the flexibility of

the days.

“It’s a fun day to catch up with work that you need help with and a fun day to play around with friends,” Nguyen said.

However, Social Studies teacher Mr. Gagnon said that, although some students do “take advantage

of catching up on some work, for a lot of students, it is a free day.” He also mentioned that, because teachers were not supposed to introduce any new learning on the Catch Up and Relish days, a day of content was lost, which meant it “essentially became a work day.”

Premier Performers

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

Manuel Panora

By ALEXIS WILLIAMS
Quill staff writer

Manuel Panora (12) is in Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Ensemble. He has been playing in school orchestras since fourth grade.

Panora first joined the Chamber Ensemble during his freshman year. Later, he joined Symphony Orchestra in his senior year.

“What I have enjoyed most about being a part of the Symphony Orchestra is having the opportunity to play with other talented students and create music with them,” he said. “For the Chamber Ensemble, I have enjoyed playing for the community most.”

It was a chance to play in the public at Orchestra Hall that serves as Panora’s favorite music memory.

“The entire event was so fun and

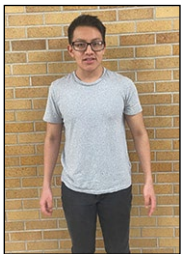


Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

being on stage made me feel important,” he said. “It was also fun to play with Armstrong’s Symphony Orchestra and get to know their orchestra’s members.”

Panora is currently the leader of the orchestra’s cello section.

“I have to pay attention to the conductor and know what they are doing to support the cello section,” he said.

Outside of his music classes, Panora said he enjoys physics and math.

“In both classes, I feel like I am genuinely challenged by the work that is presented to me,” he said.

Panora said his plan for college is to go to a private school outside of Minnesota to pursue an engineering degree.

“I want a career that is math and physics intensive in which I can apply all that I have learned to real-world problems,” he said.

Boots sequel grants audience's wishes

Puss in Boots: The Last Wish finds new ways to keep the Shrek franchise fresh



Photo by UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Antonio Banderas once again provides the voice of Puss in Boots in the film, which came out in December 2022.

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Puss in Boots: The Last Wish is a 2022 animated film directed by Joel Crawford and produced by DreamWorks Animation. I chose to review this movie because it is the latest installment in the popular Puss in Boots franchise and I wanted to see how it compares to the previous films. I believe that people should see this movie because it is a fun and entertaining adventure that appeals to both children and adults. Overall, I found that *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* is a mixed movie, with some strong elements but also some shortcomings.

The central plot of the movie follows Puss in Boots, voiced by Antonio Banderas. As the movie begins, he discovers that he has used up eight of his nine lives, which causes him to launch an epic journey to restore them by finding the mythical Wishing Star. Of course, Puss in Boots must face many adversaries on

this quest, including the unstoppable bounty hunter known as The Wolf, played by Wagner Moura, and other characters who also want the mythical star. Fortunately, Puss in Boots has several allies on his side, including Kitty Softpaws, voiced by Salma Hayek, and Perrito, played by Harvey Guillen. The story takes place in a fantastical version of Spain and is filled with action, humor and heart.

One aspect of the movie that I thought was good was the animation itself. The visuals are vibrant and creative, with a variety of different environments and characters that are all beautifully rendered. The animation really brings the world of the movie to life and makes it easy to get lost in the story.

Another aspect of the movie that I thought was good was the character development of Puss in Boots. He is a charming and likable hero who is easy to root for. Throughout the movie, we see him grow and change as a person and it’s clear that the filmmakers

put a lot of thought into his character arc.

However, one aspect of the movie that I thought was bad was the pacing. The movie feels rushed in certain parts and it makes the story feel like it is moving too quickly. This pacing problem also makes the audience feel as if some important details are being left out.

A second aspect of the movie that I thought was bad was the villain, The Wolf. He is not a well-developed character. Instead, he comes across as one-dimensional, which makes him and his actions uninteresting to the viewer.

Despite these criticisms, *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* is a movie that has some great animation and satisfying development of the main character. At the same time, the film suffers from pacing issues and a weak villain. While it’s not the best installment in the Puss in Boots franchise, it’s still a fun and entertaining adventure that is worth watching. I give the movie three out of five stars.

Donovan Johnson

By ALEXIS WILLIAMS
Quill staff writer

Donovan Johnson (12) is a singer who performs with Concert Choir, Drop the Octave and Honor Choir.

“I have been doing choir since ninth grade,” he said. “I started singing as an outlet to boost my confidence and mood during school.”

During his time in choir, Johnson said he has enjoyed the ability to perform with people who share a similar interest in music, especially in his smaller Drop the Octave group.

“I have enjoyed being able to get close to a select few people instead of an entire classroom and I enjoy singing songs more attuned to my vocal range,” he said.

Of the many memories he has made during his time in choir, Johnson cit-



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

ed the fall music festival at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis as a particular highlight.

“I liked singing at Orchestra Hall in front of a big audience and walking to grab food in the city with a large group of friends who are in choir,” he said.

In addition to his work in the arts at Cooper, Johnson said he is enjoying his current English and social studies classes.

“My favorite classes in school are IB English and IB History of Africa and the Middle East because they give me a challenge and help me to improve myself when it comes to learning,” he said.

As he looks toward the future, Johnson said he is considering a career in the electrical trades.

“I plan to apply for an apprenticeship as an electrician so I can move up from journeyman sooner than later and so I’ll have more years of experience at a young age,” he said.

Cameron Ruddy

By ALEXIS WILLIAMS
Quill staff writer

Involved in multiple music groups at Cooper is Cameron Ruddy (12). Ruddy currently takes part in choir and band. Within choir, he is a member of Concert Choir, Drop the Octave and Chamber Singers.

“I’ve been doing band since fifth grade because I always liked playing the drums,” he said. “I started choir in middle school and the reason I started was because of my aunt.”

Ruddy said his time in music has provided him with a good chance to meet people and develop as a performer.

“One thing I enjoyed with these activities is how many new friends I have made and seeing how much growth I have had over my four years



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

of high school,” he said.

Although he has been involved in music for many years, it was this year’s Orchestra Hall concert that Ruddy cites as his favorite arts experience.

“I went there when my aunt performed when I was younger and I thought it was cool that I was performing there,” he said.

Not surprisingly, Ruddy said his music classes are among his favorite parts of the school day. He added that economics and math are two additional subjects he also enjoys this year. Outside of the school day, Ruddy said he likes playing a variety of sports.

As for his post-graduation plans, Ruddy said he intends on going to college as an education major.

“I want to go there to be a history teacher because I really like history,” he said.

Economics provides solid if predictable laughs

The ABC sitcom is now in its third season after debuting on the network in 2021

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Home Economics is a TV show on ABC that is directed by Michael Mullen and produced by Lionsgate Television. The show, which is now in its third season, was first released in 2021. I chose to watch this show because I was bored and needed something to pass by time. I believe that people should see this show because it provides a fresh perspective on the modern-day class divide and the challenges it brings to families. In my opinion, it’s an entertaining TV show that has its creative ups and downs.

The central plot of the show revolves around three siblings: Tom, a successful novelist; Sarah, a single mother struggling financially; and Connor, who is living off of his trust fund. The story takes place in present-day Los Angeles and the main characters’ goal is to navigate their unique financial situations and maintain their relationships with each other.

One of the good aspects of the show is the acting. All the actors consistently deliver great performances, especially the lead actor, Topher Grace, who plays Tom. He perfectly portrays his character’s emotional turmoil and his struggle to balance his success



Photo by LIONSGATE ENTERTAINMENT

The acting of Topher Grace (center) is a definite highlight of the show.

with his family responsibilities.

While the acting is good, one aspect of the show that could be better is the writing. While the concept of the show is unique and intriguing, the scripts could be more polished. With fewer predictable jokes and more insightful commentary on the class divide, I would enjoy the show much more than I do.

Likewise, the cinematography and soundtrack of the show are average and do not particularly stand out. The show looks like a traditional, one-camera sitcom and the music does a decent job of backing up the action. However,

er, the show’s special effects are used effectively to enhance certain scenes and add to the overall experience.

In conclusion, *Home Economics* is largely successful in providing a fresh perspective on the modern-day class divide and the challenges it brings to families. While the acting makes it worth watching, the writing could be more polished and hopefully will be in future seasons. I recommend giving this show a watch, but do so with the expectation of it being a mixed experience. I rate *Home Economics* 3.5 out of five stars.

By ALEXIS WILLIAMS
Quill staff writer

Jack Voorhees (12) is a member of Cooper’s orchestra program. He has now been taking part in orchestra since fourth grade.

“I started because of my parents but quit at the end of fourth grade,” he said. “I later started a different instrument in sixth grade because I liked the sound of the cello.”

Over the last seven years, Voorhees has developed an appreciation for studying and performing music.

“I enjoy the feeling of learning songs and playing them for others,” he said.

In fact, it was a recent performance that has become Voorhees’ most cherished music memory.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

“My favorite memory was playing Orchestra Hall this year,” he said.

Given his long history in the activity, Voorhees said orchestra is one of his favorite subjects in school, while the other is math.

“I enjoy orchestra and math-related classes the most because they are both subjects I can learn a lot from and I find them both interesting,” he said.

Outside of school, Voorhees enjoys spending his free time playing video games.

Next fall, Voorhees plans on attending college for a degree in computer science, but he has not yet selected the school he will attend. He said he will continue with music in college whether it be through joining a group or playing on his own.

SPIRITED AWAY CASTS A SPELL ON VIEWERS continued from page 5

after Chihiro has her adventure that she has this change in her mindset. Personally, I agree with the moral of this film because while change can be stressful and overwhelming, things seem to usually work out in the end.

In conclusion, costume design and music are used in *Spirited Away* to convey the idea that, de-

spite how terrifying change can be, there’s no need to be afraid of it because everything will turn out okay in the end. After watching this movie again, I can still say that this is my favorite movie. The animation is breathtaking and fun with whimsical music to match, and that’s all complemented by a fantastic story and incredible

worldbuilding. I think Hayao Miyazaki is a good director because he puts a lot of effort into his movies. I have indeed ended up watching some of his other movies because of his reputation and how much I enjoyed this film, and I’m happy to say that I enjoyed them. *Spirited Away* deserves five out of five stars.

Bowlers roll into second place

After winning the conference crown, the Hawks bowling squad fell just short of taking the state title



Photo by JOSH HODNEY

Cooper bowlers fell to Spring Lake Park during the championship match at Concord Lanes on December 4, 2022.

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

The Hawks bowling team took second place in Minnesota during the Class AA Varsity State Tournament hosted by Concord Lanes in St. Paul on December 4, 2022. Among the Cooper bowlers contributing to this finish were Jayden Critelli (11), Blake Hansen (11), Wilson Johnson (10) and Michael Skinner (10).

The team started off its state championship run in the qualifying round, where the bowlers landed in the eighth overall spot. Once they started in bracket play, Hansen said the team caught on fire, winning its matches to get into the top four.

The Hawks won in the semi-finals, moving on to be one of the last two teams in the finals. During the first match of the finals, they lost by 40 pins, so they needed to win the next game by 41 to take the state title. Unfortunately, Hansen said the opposing team from Spring Lake Park ended the match with a strike and a spare, which put them on top of the Hawks by two pins overall.

Being so close to winning the title was unfortunate, but Hansen said it was an overall stellar season and second place was “an

amazing accomplishment.”

Hansen’s teammate Johnson was also proud of their state performance. Much like Hansen, Johnson wished for a slightly different result.

“We should have come out on top, but not everything goes the way you want,” Johnson said.

Meanwhile, Skinner said that state was a fun experience but he wished his individual bowling had been better.

“I liked playing in the state championship game, though I could’ve personally done better,” Skinner said.

The state tournament success followed a strong regular season for the Hawks bowlers.

“The regular season was good,” Hansen said. “We finished 15-1 and won the regular season in our conference. Our confidence was pretty high going into the season, and at the end, the confidence level was much higher.”

The team’s regular season success was reflected in the individual standings of several bowlers. In fact four members of the Cooper team received all-conference recognition with Critelli finishing in fourth place overall in the conference, Hansen finishing in sixth place and Johnson finishing in 10th place. Additionally,

Zoe Skinner (8) from Robbinsdale Middle School took ninth place in the conference.

“Most of our goals during the regular season were to win the conference and, halfway through, it was switched to winning state,” Hansen said. “Overall, it was a wonderful year and a wonderful state performance.”

After such a successful season, Hansen said he is confident headed into next year, which will be his last season of high school bowling.

“Our entire team is looking forward to next season. Many of the top teams have good seniors that are leaving this year and we are going to have the same team as last year. That being said, we will have easier competition, which will give us a better chance at winning state. Since it’ll be my last year, all I can do is hope for the best outcome so that I can leave feeling accomplished,” Hansen said.

Also looking forward to next year is Skinner. Although he said that he has some work he needs to do to improve, Skinner’s “outlook for next season is very positive.”

“I strongly believe that we will win state next year if the people we currently have stay on the team,” he said.

we started in November,” he said.

As for team goals, he said he would like to see them win a dual meet and do well at all their competitions.

“We have done exceptionally well as a team considering our small, nine-person roster,” he said.

According to Valek, a typical swim practice starts with stretching and team updates. Next, they take part in a 20-30 minute warmup. After that, they work on endurance, sprinting, swimming techniques and one-on-one training.

Valek said he enjoys swimming because it teaches important life lessons.

“[Swimming] teaches mental toughness and teaches balance. Getting through tough sets and supporting others on the team is a valuable skill to have. Swimming also teaches us balance. The amount of time swimmers spend in the pool and the physical and mental strength needed to swim, paired with trying to balance the sport with academics and other extracurriculars, is a significant skill to have after high school,” he said.

Outside of coaching, Valek does seasonal jobs in natural resources, including a job at a fish hatchery in Wyoming and serving as a technician with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Valek said he loves the outdoors and his hobbies include hiking, skiing, birdwatching and fishing.

“My other hobbies include cooking, baking, reading and traveling,” he said.

Head coach change helps Hawks swimmers

Mr. Valek brings 10 years of competitive swimming experience to his new post at Cooper

By YUSEFF SHABAZZ
Quill staff writer

The Cooper swim team welcomed new head coach Mr. Valek at the start of the 2022-2023 season.

Valek swam competitively for 10 years before taking the job.

“I started swimming in seventh grade and swam through 12th grade for Sauk Rapids-Rice High School. After high school, I swam collegiately for Saint John’s University, where I graduated in 2020,” he said.

Valek was assistant coach for Cooper’s swim team last year and had the opportunity to step up once the former head coach left.

“It was my first experience with coaching and I enjoyed getting to share my love and knowledge of the sport with the team,” he said.

Valek said his goals are to recruit new swimmers, help his swimmers improve their skills and have fun.

“I feel like a successful coach when my swimmers are happy with their improvement,” he said.

When it comes to the individual swimmers, Valek said he has several things he would like to see them accomplish.

“My goals for the swimmers are to have them all get at least one personal best this season and help them reach their personal goals, which I had them brainstorm and write down at the beginning of the season. I am also hopeful for some individuals and relays to qualify for the state meet in March. Overall, I want to see improvement from when

Cooper Competitors

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

Kam Barton

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Kam Barton (12) plays Hawks basketball in the winter. He has been playing the sport since he was three.

“I chose basketball because of Kobe Bryant, who inspired me to have a good mentality for basketball,” he said.

Barton said he enjoys everything about the sport, from the sound of the ball bouncing on the court to the sound of the swish of the net when it goes in.

“I love winning especially,” he said.

Barton said his favorite basketball memory is when he got two game-winning shots in one season when he was 16 years old.

As a senior on the Cooper team, Barton said he tries to be a leader. Helping make this possible is his hard work

in the sport beyond the winter months. During the fall, Barton takes part in AAU basketball.

“The season went good for me,” he said. “Coming into the winter season, I’m way more confident.”

When spring arrives, Barton will resume playing with the AAU program.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

Off the court, Barton said his favorite subject is science, which “just clicks” for him. Meanwhile, outside of school, he loves playing video games like “NBA 2K and Madden.”

“Other than that, I’m a ladies man, so I am spending time with the ladies,” he said.

Next fall, Barton hopes to attend the University of Minnesota, where he will play basketball.

“I love basketball too much. Also, I have a bright future with my talents,” Barton said.

Pader Xiong

By BRIGHT DEKU
Quill staff writer

Pader Xiong (12) is a basketball cheerleader in the winter and a soccer player in the fall. Additionally, she is thinking about joining golf this spring.

“This is my first year in basketball cheer. I wanted to do something out of my comfort zone, and since I have dance experience, I thought, ‘Why not try out for cheer?’” she said.

As a member of the cheer squad, Xiong said she enjoys weight room practices and the chance to meet new girls. Though the season just started, she said she already has a fun memory.

“My favorite memory is my friend Laura and I practicing how to be louder while cheering as we were walking to my car after practice,” she said.

In the fall, Xiong played her final season of Hawks soccer.

“I didn’t get the attention I wanted as a senior, but it’s all good. I loved my teammates and the times we had,” she said.

As for school, Xiong said her favorite class is U.S. Government because she is learning about her rights and ways to protect her beliefs.

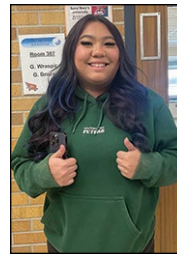


Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

“The information I’ve learned will be very important for my future,” she said.

Some of Xiong’s hobbies outside of school are painting and playing video games. She also has a part-time job in order to make money.

After high school, Xiong plans to go to a community college to take her general classes before transferring to university to get her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business.

Michael Cooper

By NEMO PONDER
Quill staff writer

Michael Cooper (12) plays basketball during the winter.

“I play varsity basketball and then, in the spring, I continue playing basketball, but I play AAU,” he said.

Cooper has been playing basketball for eight years.

“I started playing basketball in fourth grade,” he said. “I played with my brothers outside ever since I was little and just fell in love with it.”

Cooper said he enjoys Hawks basketball for three main reasons.

“I like getting better every day, bonding with my teammates and being a leader on the team,” he said.

A fond memory from Cooper’s time in basketball involves a game he played against Andover High School.

“My favorite memory so far is when I played against Andover and had 26 points, 11 rebounds and four assists.

Cooper’s basketball experience has led to him being named co-captain of the Hawks basketball team.

“I help by guiding the young guys when I can and need to,” he said.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

In addition to being an athlete, Cooper is also a student. His favorite subject this year is math.

“I enjoy algebra, statistics, functions and trigonometry. I enjoy it because it challenges me and makes me think outside the box,” he said.

After graduating this spring, Cooper plans on going to college, where he wants to continue playing basketball.

“I will be trying to play college ball at the highest level I can because I love playing basketball,” he said.

Ari Logan

By NEMO PONDER
Quill staff writer

Ari Logan (12) is a year-round cheerleader for Cooper. She has been cheerleading since her junior year.

“I started cheering in the summer before my junior year. I’ve always wanted to be a cheerleader, but COVID initially stopped me from having that chance to,” Logan said.

Logan said there are several things she has enjoyed about her time with the cheer squad.

“I like being able to create family bonds with the other cheerleaders. Also, being captain gives me the ability to teach and give advice. They look up to me like a role model,” she said.

As she looks back on the last two years, Logan said she has one favorite memory from her cheerleading experi-

ence that stands out.

“One of my favorite memories from last year’s winter season was walking my close friend to the court on her senior night,” Logan said.

Outside of cheerleading, Logan puts an emphasis on her academics. One subject she is enjoying this year is art.



Photo by BRIGHT DEKU

“My favorite class is drawing because I have the freedom to draw whatever interests me and let my drawing speak for me,” she said.

When she is not at school, Logan has many interests that take up her time.

“I tend to hang out with my friends and draw and paint. I also work a lot,” she said.

Next fall, Logan will go to college to further her education.

“I plan on going to a two-year community college to focus on nursing and then transfer to a four-year college,” she said.

YOUR NAME

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face of only one character at a time before panning out to show both of them at once.

The cinematography in this scene shows the audience the beauty of the scenery. Not only do we see the characters, we get to see the lake in the background of the characters. This makes us feel like we are part of the film and we wish we could help them prevent the comet’s arrival.

I think the main message of this movie is the importance of taking chances. In the scene where Mitsuha is desperately trying to save the town, she goes up to face her father in an attempt to receive help from him. At first, he says no and Mitsuha lashes out at him, but at the end of the scene, before the comet eventually hits, her dad says yes and evacuates everybody to safety. At the end of the movie, this moral connects to the main characters because they take chances to meet each other again. The scene starts when they see each other on a train. Eventually, they are able to catch up to one other, at which point they confirm their identities. The importance of taking chances appears throughout the whole film.

Ultimately, the Makoto Shinkai movie *Your Name* uses music and cinematography to teach the audience the importance of love and taking chances. I really enjoyed this movie because the plot is amazing even though it is confusing at first. It portrays the romance genre well and it made me feel attached to the characters. When they find each other at the end, I felt relief as if it was happening to me. *Your Name* is sad but enjoyable and it deserves five out of five stars.

HERMAN

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from the principalship of Dr. Herman,” Nelson said.

According to Herman, his time at Cooper was marked by “great highs and lows.” One particular challenge of his job was dealing with situations where students would get into trouble. Herman said the experience of watching a student make a mistake and then getting some form of punishment never was easy for him. As a result, he said he tried his hardest to “push for better systems for students to grow and learn in a much more efficient way and setting.”

As he brings his time in the school and the district to a close, Herman said he is hopeful Cooper and Robbinsdale Area Schools will continue to develop after his retirement. One change Herman would like to see is that officials “re-establish the connection between the school, the district and, most importantly, the community.” Herman added that the community’s voice is the most valuable one. While the district can make analytical choices, “nothing speaks for a person better than the person themselves.”

As he heads into his retirement, Herman said he will enjoy having more of a chance to relax. Some activities he hopes to have time for include hiking, going for walks and traveling. He also expressed a love for being outdoors.

Although Cooper’s students and staff will go through a period of adjustment without him, Herman said he has one final piece of advice to everyone at the school: “Have a Hawk-tastic time.”

HEALTHIER EATING

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stead, it’s recommended that you take note of factors such as fats, trans fats, sugars, carbohydrates or cooking processes like frying foods.

Overall, when you consider the positives of healthy eating along with the negatives of unhealthy eating, the choice to eat well seems obvious. Poor eating results in irreversible health damage fairly early in life that then results in even more prominent problems later in life. While it may not be as important to keep up the “perfect diet,” it is important to keep up a balanced diet. I encourage anyone who values their body and themselves to take note of what they eat and evaluate if they’re okay with how they’re eating and its effects on their body.

Robins P.I. squad takes second in state

The adapted soccer team's second-place finish follows its first-place victory in state during the 2021-2022 season



Photo by MARCUS ONSUM

Cooper student Jose Leon Estrada (11) was responsible for three of the team's goals during the championship match.

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale Robins P.I. adapted soccer squad made it all the way to the state championship match this year, where they fell 4-3 to Dakota United.

The Robins P.I. and C.I. adapted athletics teams are Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) varsity-level athletics for students with disabilities. The P.I., or physically impaired, program is for students who have physical or functional health impairments.

While the team is based at Armstrong High School, it also has students from Cooper, Hopkins, Mound Westonka and St. Louis Park high schools.

The 2022 state title game was a rematch of the 2021 championship game, during which the Robins faced off against Dakota United and took the victory with a score of 7-5. A bright moment of this year’s game was the performance of Jose Leon Estrada (11), who scored two goals in the first half to put the Robins up 2-1 heading into halftime. Then, midway through the second half, the Robins went up 3-1 with a goal by Anthony Dockter, Jr. (11). However, Fiona Sitzmann (12) from Dakota United scored three straight goals, giving the Robins a 4-3 loss in the end.

Although the game ended in a loss, Leon Estrada said he had an amazing season and is proud of scoring three goals in the state championship.

“Playing in the game made me feel brave and strong,” Leon Estrada said.

Leon Estrada added that he hopes more people attend the Robins games in the future.

“Personally, I would like more people to go to the games and cheer us on,” he said.

Nick Johnson (11) is another Cooper athlete who played with the Robins this year. Johnson said the team did “really good” this season and he is happy with their performance.

With respect to the state championship game, Johnson said he was happy and disappointed at the same time.

“I was happy the team made it that far, but I wish we would’ve won the game in the end,” he said.

Johnson said he takes pride in his playing this year and felt as if he improved a lot. He recommended that other P.I. students join the team in the future “even if they’re unsure or nervous.”

Coaching the team to its successful season was Mr. Onsum, who has been a part of the P.I. coaching staff since 1995. Onsum said the post-season success started with a strong regular season.

“I would characterize our reg-

ular season as incredibly successful. We graduated five key athletes from last year’s soccer team and knew there would be a lot of work to be done in order to maintain that momentum. We ended up with a relatively small team with a handful of new players, many of whom had never played soccer of any kind prior to joining us. The group really worked hard all season and became a very tight-knit group. They had high expectations for themselves and expected to be competitive,” Onsum said.

Although the team made it to the state championship for the second year in a row, Onsum said he knew the game would be difficult.

“We ended up being short two players at state, including our starting goalkeeper, so we knew another state championship was going to be very tough. We were able to adjust our strategy and starting lineup enough in the first two games of the tournament and didn’t seem to be too rattled by not having our regular goalkeeper in the net. We ran out to an early lead in the championship game and really felt like we were in control. Dakota United slowly chipped away at our lead, scoring goals on plays we almost certainly would have stopped in the regular season and I could see our confidence start to slip away. They played hard until the final whistle, but Dakota’s pressure was too much for our

adjusted lineup and inexperienced substitute goalkeeper,” he said.

Onsum had a big influence on the development of the players over the course of the season.

“Aside from usual coaching things [like] teaching strategy, working on skills, conditioning, etc., I really try to focus on keeping the kids positive and playing with an open mind. Many of our athletes have little or no experience playing team sports prior to joining us, and often have a reduced level of self-confidence, especially those athletes with more significant disabilities. I want the kids to be willing to try new things, sometimes meaning they attempt a particular skill in a way that seems odd or uncomfortable to them, but they tend to realize pretty quickly that we are working on finding out what works best for them as an individual and helping them overcome the challenges they face,” Onsum said.

One aspect Onsum enjoys about coaching the Robins is the opportunity that P.I. students have to join a sports team.

“The Robins are a great experience for everyone. This extends beyond the athletes and includes parents, friends, other relatives and anyone else that gets the opportunity to see how our program works and how awesome our athletes really are. In most cases, the Robins end up being a life-changing, or at least a life-enhancing, experience for our athletes and families and is something they hold on to far beyond their playing days. Students and parents that might think the Robins are a possibility for them should always feel welcome to reach out to our coaches to discuss participation with our program,” he said.

As they look toward next season, Onsum is optimistic about the Robins squad.

“Our team is pretty small these days [with] 9-12 athletes. Historically, we average about 15-16 kids per season, so we have a lot of work to do to get more students connected to our program. With that being said, we have a great core group of kids that are always willing to put in the work to become a better athlete and a better teammate. With athletes having an attitude like this and a desire to be a part of a really great team, it’s pretty easy as a coach to be optimistic about each upcoming season,” he said.

CONCERNS ABOUT U.S. ELECTIONS DO HAVE MERIT continued from page 4

can wholeheartedly recommend is Ground News, which allows me to ensure I have a balanced and nuanced understanding of issues across the political spectrum. On a wider level, it’s important to remember your viewership counts. When divisive or rhetoric-heavy networks like Fox or CNN get low ratings, they tend to change their strategies, often moving to a more balanced approach.

Something that is also biased and likely illegal were the voting laws and practices in many states during the 2020 cycle. Due to the abnormal conditions of the 2020 election, many progressive state governments took unprecedented action to run their elections. This included things like expanding early voting periods, allowing wider mail-in voting or adding more employees to polling places. Some of these moves were taken unconstitutionally in light of existing state laws, as many states require legislative body approval to change voting procedures. Making these voting changes possible in some states were decisions made by judges, which was the case in our own state of Minnesota. Oftentimes, when people question the 2020 election, they are questioning the process of the election, not the results. Personally, I am most upset with that aspect as many states did alter their voting parameters, which could have served to change the outcome.

While I feel that changes to voting procedures may be illegal, I can’t fully say they were immoral, as more people were allowed to

participate in the election leading to very high voter turnout, which is great in a democracy. Still, it is an issue that deserves real attention. Under what conditions can voting laws be changed and could these same actions be applied in a harmful manner? Many people have valid concerns about restrictive voting laws in some conservative states. It’s important we ensure checks and balances are respected. That’s exactly why the state constitutions need to be followed in these instances, and I sympathize with many conservatives who are upset with the actions taken in 2020 by voting officials and judges. Something that must be done is ensuring limits on emergency power and passing state-level legislation that ensures there can be no loopholes in future elections. This will prevent confusion going forward and safeguard our election processes.

Another major issue that should be considered is the efficiency of elections. Due to an increase in mail-in and absentee voting in many states, election results can take days or even close to a week. In the 2022 midterms, we saw a similar trend, with a grueling week of speculation and conspiracies resulting from the poorly run Arizona elections. I don’t have any issue with expanding voting access if it is done through the correct channels; however, it does need to be administered in an efficient manner. According to the Public Interest Legal Foundation, for example, more than 10.8 million mail-in ballots were unaccounted

for in 2022, although it is likely they were just unused and discarded.

This is a great representation of all the added effort needed to effectively run a post-COVID election. States like Florida and New York have large populations, and yet they consistently manage to have results within hours or a day at the most. When we see elections in smaller swing states drag on for days, it is easy for frustration on both sides to mount. I think Arizona Governor candidate Kari Lake put it best when she said elections should be a “day” not a “week.” A similar story happened in 2020 with many states taking days to declare a winner. Investments need to be made into ensuring fast and effective elections, and adequate time and regulations need to be enacted to ensure mail-in ballots are quickly accounted for.

A related issue is the involvement of private companies in the election process. It is often private companies that create things like voting machines and vote counters. Ideally, the U.S. government should work toward producing its own infrastructure to hold elections without private sector involvement.

What is more, the politicization of state secretaries who oversee the election process by both sides before and after the 2020 election needs to be ended. Something we can all do is support fair and accountable candidates for offices that help administer our elections. Minnesota’s current secretary of state, Steve Simon, is a perfect example of that as he continually strives for

more accessible elections (Minnesota is number one in voter turnout in the nation) without interfering with their efficiency. Because of efforts from our state government in Minnesota, we do have fast and efficient elections, but it’s important to understand that is not the reality in other states when it comes to federal-level elections.

These are the many factors that have contributed most to the loss in confidence of our elections as of late. I don’t really think it’s a political issue. Fixing all of these shortcomings would be objectively better for our society. While you don’t have to agree with concerns or disagree with outcomes, it is important to understand why people feel the way they do when they contest elections because there are real issues with them that do make sense.

In order to prevent further political unrest and violence in the future, we all need to do a better job of listening to our opponents and working toward a better country. I hope that as a country we can come together and build back trust in democracy itself, and the first step is understanding the other side. January 6th could have been prevented if Trump was less fiery in his speeches and if the capitol police were more competent at their jobs. However, it would have been prevented if we had run iron-clad elections nationwide, which we have shown the ability to do in the past. Hopefully, we will be able to correct this going forward if we address these many concerns.