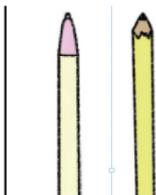




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Purple Press

Volume #24, Issue #2

December 1st, 2023

New class: LGBTQ+ comics

The first ever SPPS class focused on celebrating queer diversity in media

Nick Christopherson
Staff Writer

OWL has made a name for itself in recent years by being very openly supportive of the LGBTQ+ community, and it's continuing that trend with a brand new class that is being offered this year. That class is an LGBTQ+ Comics and Cartoons class, which is taught by English teacher Preston

West.

The roots of this class were established last year, when Preston read *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen, which was the Read Brave book for 2022. "It was my favorite book from that year, and the first graphic novel that really 'clicked' with me," he praised. "I decided that I wanted to run an interim class called

'Queerness in Comics and Cartoons,' and from there it developed into a full elective." In other schools in the district, there are classes that focus on works of writing from specific communities, but this is the first one to strictly focus on works from the LGBTQ+ community.

Preston said that his main goal for this class is to give

LGBTQ+ students a place to see themselves in their curriculum, citing the fact that in 2023 alone over 500 laws targeting the queer community have been proposed. "Books with LGBTQ+ characters (especially graphic novels) have been banned from schools in many states. This is my small way of trying to create a welcoming space for students

to see they are welcome. I also think it's a great opportunity to teach about queer history, which often doesn't come up in many classes."

While the class did read *The Magic Fish* as a group, most of the time students are given a choice over what they want to read. "Students spend about half of each class exploring a library of comics and graphic

novels I've built over the past two years," Preston explained. "These range from books that have achieved mainstream popularity like *Heartstopper* and *Nimona*, to books published by indie-presses that most people haven't heard of."

Over the whole semester, students are required to read

Comics class, 3

Students take on staff in volleyball



Purple Press Staff Photo



Purple Press Staff Photo

10th grader Olivia Fiebich serves for the student's team (left), staff and students shake hands after the game (right).

Heated last set came down to the final point, students took a 2-1 win over staff

Wyatt Kessler
Staff Writer

It's the last minute of the students-staff volleyball match, and with a tied score, a decider needs to happen immediately. The volleyball falls to the students, who receive it and keep the game alive. Senior Annika Lofgren sets a great floaty ball for Senior Sora

Walker, and he spikes it to win the game for the students. Everyone is yelling and the buzzer in the gym is going off.

This last quarter, principal Dave Gundale made a promise regarding the annual sports game between staff and students. The goal for the students was to reach a total passing rate in their classes

of above 85% in return for a volleyball match between the staff students. Students were able to meet the goal and the game was scheduled for the first Friday of quarter two.

The match was very intense, and the atmosphere was great -- with cheers after every single point. There were ups and downs for each team,

however the students came out on top.

The match itself was a best of three with two games to 25 points, and a third game if needed. The game took place in the Humboldt gym with a hard end time of 2:50pm.

The first game was rough for the students, as some less experienced players played

a majority of the match. The game ended with a score of 25-4, with the staff taking the win. However, the students played slightly more experienced and tighter lines in the second game, bringing on some players from both varsity girls/boys teams. The staff played

Volleyball game, 3

Feminist club has arrived

Maisy Wall
Staff Writer

Do you hate women? Well we don't! Join OWL's Feminist Club; No Misogynists Welcome!!

How's that for a slogan? Anyway, for those of you thinking "we have a Feminist Club?? I had no idea!", and I'm sure there's a few of you, keep reading to get to know a bit more about the club, its many founders, and the requirements to join—spoiler alert: there aren't any.

To give a bit of context, I suppose I should explain what exactly feminism is. The definition of feminism is "the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes." As for the feminist movement, specifically speaking, it "refers to a series of social movements and political campaigns for radical and liberal reforms on women's issues created by the inequality between men and women."

The official beginning of the feminist movement in the U.S. was at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Seneca Falls Convention was essentially a large meeting open to the public where attendants discussed the gender inequality that women faced, and Elizabeth read the Declaration of Sentiments, a book she wrote that was pretty much the Declaration of Independence except referring to women's rights. It was pretty lit.

Another example, as well as the one Evelyn claimed to find most inspirational, is the #metoo movement, because,

Feminism, 3

Design crew essential to OWL plays

Work done behind the scenes of the theater requires both dedication and support

Kate Houle
Staff Writer

A hush falls over the crowd as the curtain rises for the big opening number, and approximately 20 people immediately start running around backstage to prepare for the next scene before the actors return.

This is OWL's design crew. A force of workers who are in charge of designing, producing, and getting everything that

appears on stage ready for a play or musical. The workers are split up into departments of sets, props, costumes, lights, sound, makeup/hair, and stage managers. Each department is led by one or two 'heads', who are usually older students with more experience, a handful of 'lead artists', who are in charge of specific designs or tasks, and a few 'techies', who are students that do small jobs to support the department and are newer to OWL theater.

Each department meets a couple days a week after school, at the same time the actors are rehearsing. In OWL's current production of *A Murder is Announced*, there's about 35 designers working to get everything ready. "I usually work on construction of the sets. So like, right now I'm fixing up a chair. We had a build day [in early November] and during



Purple Press Staff Photo

Lead makeup artist Cal Schmid applies makeup to Hajaara Sakuri

Design crew, 3



The Purple Press

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Leo Bickelhaupt

Editor-in-Chief
Willia Campion

Writers
George Abelson
Atticus Brooks-Babcock
Charley Cheatham
Nick Christopherson
Beatrice Cosgrove
Benjamin Diaz
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Kate Houle
Amelia Keenan
Wyatt Kessler
Olli Liimatta
Jae Lind
Amos Lucken Hills
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Maisy Wall

Champions League underway in Europe

Soccer fans from around the world are tuning in

Olli Liimatta
Staff Writer

It is an exciting time for football (soccer) fans around the globe. The Union of European Football Association (UEFA) Champions League is underway. The champion is decided after a double round-robin group stage where the top two teams from each of the eight groups get put into a bracket to determine the winner.

The Champions League is the second most important trophy in world football after only the World Cup. It is the most important soccer tournament in Europe with all the best clubs in the whole country.

The teams that have won the Champions League in the past 20 years are Real Madrid who have won five titles, and Barcelona who have won four. Liverpool, Chelsea, Bayern Munich and AC Milan have won two titles each. The teams that have won one title are Manchester United, Manchester City, FC Porto and Inter Milan.

The leagues that have won the Champions League in the past 20 years are the Serie A from Italy who have won three titles, La Liga from Spain who have won nine titles, The Premier League from England who have won six titles and the Bundesliga from Germany who have won two titles. Probably the biggest underdog to win the title in the past twenty years was FC Porto from the Liga Portugal.

The group stage has one game away and one game at home against every team in their group. There are four teams in each group, and the

eight groups are chosen in a random draw. Teams are chosen from four pots based on their UEFA ranking. Another way groups are chosen is by making sure two teams from the same league are not in the same group.

The team that gets the most points by winning games (which earns a team three points) or tying games (which earns them one point). The knockout stages take place with a rule of scoring called aggregate. Aggregate is a system of scoring which is unique to soccer.

Aggregate is when the teams play two games, and whoever scores the most goals wins. If the aggregate is tied after both matches, it goes into two periods of extra time. If nobody scores, or if both teams score the same amount of goals in added time, the match will go into penalties.

Penalties happen when the game is tied at the end of extra time, so it is impossible to draw. The first set of penalties has five penalties, and if the teams score the same amount of goals in that round, it goes

to sudden death. In sudden death, the first team to score when the other team misses, wins. An example of this is the 2022 World Cup final when Argentina beat France.

The teams that get chosen for the Champions League are Manchester City (who is currently the reigning Champions League winner), the Europa League champion, which is the tournament below the Champions League, and last year the champion was Sevilla.

Another way to get into the Champions League is by placing in the top four in a league. The leagues that get four spots are Bundesliga (Germany), La Liga (Spain), Serie A (Italy), and Premier League (England). Two leagues have three qualification spots. They are Eredivisie (Netherlands) and Ligue 1 (France). The champions of the 6th-ranked through 10th-ranked teams, like the Portuguese league, are put into the tournament without having to play in the playoffs.

The rest of the qualification spots are put into a bracket where the champions of all the countries who don't have prominent leagues get into a tournament with 31 other clubs who play one game. For example, if you won the league in Norway, you would have to play a game against another league winner. The winner would move on to the next round of the play-ins. In the next round, the 16 teams that won in the last round face off against the UEFA-ranked 15-22 league champions.

After the first round of play in the tournament there



Jae Lind

Champions League, 5



Subaru

'Tis the season for winter tires

Icy roads require legit wheels

Atticus Brooks-Babcock
Staff Writer

Picture this. It's the middle of winter, and you're breaking while going down Humboldt Avenue when all of a sudden you hear "klunk klunk klunk"—the sound of your anti-lock brakes trying their hardest to stop you as you slide down towards the intersection.

This is a typical scene on Minnesota roadways during the winter and it may be prevented with the use of proper winter tires.

From the factory, all modern day cars come with all-season tires, but what does that mean? All season tires are tires designed to perform decently in all four seasons, hence the name. They are made to last with firmer rubber and are made to be quiet and something you don't think about. In the snow, all-season stopping power from 40 mph takes 184 feet, according to cjponyparts.com -- a Ford/Chevy enthusiast website.

Now what's a winter tire? Winter tires are made with softer rubber because when it's cold outside all seasons rubber gets really hard, affecting

performance, while winter tires stay soft and grippy. Winter tires are made to hold as much snow as possible, which may sound counter intuitive. However, snow on snow contact produces the most grip. In the snow winter tires stop at 156 feet from 40 mph. Now that might not sound that much better to justify the cost, but if you think about it the 28-foot difference is about two or three car lengths. This means that you are able to prevent a lot of dangerous situations.

The main reason people don't get winter tires is the cost. The cost on average is about \$500-\$1000, and they don't last as long as all-seasons. There is also the inconvenience of having to swap out tires at the end of winter, which can be an additional \$180 and a day or two without a car. On average all seasons last 55,000 miles compared to the 15,000 miles of winter tires. The reason for this is the softer rubber, which is why you can't drive winter tires without snow.

There are budget options, like the Yokohama ICEGUARD IG53 coming in at around \$100

Winter tires, 5

8th grade athletes are serious about sports

Two athletes ready for high school competition

Charley Cheatham
Staff Writer

When you think of OWL, the first thing you think of isn't usually sports. However, many OWL athletes aspire to push themselves and compete at the highest level. Amelia Keenan and Zinabu Peterson are two great examples of that.

Amelia and Zinabu are both 8th graders at OWL who participate on two of OWL's most popular sports teams. Amelia is a swimmer on the HUMWOW swim and dive team and Zinabu is part of the OWL mountain biking team. While the two of them may do different sports, they share a common goal: to do the best they can.

Amelia has been on the HUMWOW team since 2022 and is currently the third-fastest swimmer on the team. She began swimming in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. "I started swimming in 2020 because it was the only sport that was

available and my mom wanted me and my sister to do sports," she said. She participated on the STAR Swim Team in St. Paul until 7th grade when she could join HUMWOW.

"I did [STAR] until 7th grade when I could join the school team, which I learned about from someone in my crew," said Amelia. Since then she has consistently worked harder to do the best she can on the team. This year Amelia set a team record for the 500m freestyle with a time of six minutes and 27 seconds. "I didn't even realize I did something until people told me that I did," she said "but it feels really nice. I'm really happy with my PR right now."

One big thing that motivates Amelia to do so well is the HUMWOW community. "What motivates me most is probably other swimmers," she said. "My team has a really great community. Overall, we all just support each other really nicely."

Senior on the team, Avery

Erb, said about Amelia, "As an eighth grader she has a lot of endurance that is very admirable and I think that she could potentially go to state in her upcoming years."

Zinabu is a rider on the OWL Mountain Biking team and has been a part of the team since 6th grade. "My dad had been doing it a little bit

and then he just like took me on some trails and I had fun," said Zinabu, "but once I joined the team, I started to get more serious about it and started to try more and actually get better."

He already has a series of promising race results on his resume. Just this year, he finished top ten in two races: Gamehaven and Spirit Mountain. He also finished

top 15 at state, placing at 14th. At practice, Zinabu trains with the high school riders.

Zinabu says he plans to continue on the mountain biking team through high school. "I want to be able to make varsity eventually," he said "and then next year, I think I want to try and get top ten."

Mountain biking coach and OWL English teacher Leo Bickelhaupt said, "He is consistently one of the top riders in his age group," and, "he seems pretty serious and intense when he's on his bike."

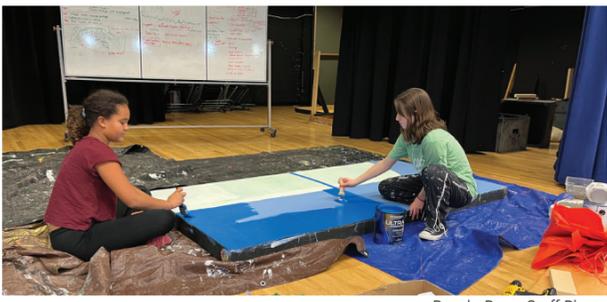
Like Amelia, Zinabu says the team is a big reason for his drive to do well in mountain biking. "Everyone's really encouraging and that kind of pushes me to want to get better," he said. "Everyone's just really nice and passionate about biking there, and it's just nice to do something that everybody there enjoys with your friends."

Another thing that both Amelia and Zinabu have in common is that their teams are combined with other schools.



Purple Press Staff Photo

Amelia Keenan and Zinabu Peterson are coming off successful fall sports seasons.



Purple Press Staff Photo

Bahati Stalheim and Abby Horton paint sets for the play.

Design crew, 3

that we painted the flats and worked on the doorframe for one of the doors that is going to be used in the production,” said junior Mikko Liimatta, who’s a co-head of sets. 8th grade assistant stage manager Charley Cheatham said “I do a lot of just making sure that the actors are on track to do well. I write a lot of blocking. I do a lot of errands for Rebekah. I keep everything on schedule.”

During normal rehearsals, designers will work on their specific projects separate from the actors, like altering clothing items or paper-macheing props. Every department is allotted a certain amount of money for purchasing items they don’t already have in the extensive collection of materials and items used in past shows. These are stored in the theater’s elevator room, which is off the side of the stage, or in the greenroom, which is hidden away down the stairs in the Humboldt wing. This is where most of the magic happens. Sets, props, and costumes have free reign of the greenroom space to work and help each other learn how to do the things that need to get done.

All of this work leads up to tech week, or the week before the play, where designers start fully incorporating everything they’ve done into the rehearsal. Light and sound cues are played, sets and props are added to the stage, and the actors start wearing costumes. Tech week and the following dress rehearsals, where everything is supposed to be figured out, is the most stressful time for design crew, as they have to make sure everything runs smoothly before the actual show.

“If you’re there, you’re prepared to, like, cry, stress out, freak out and yell at people and then hold in the yelling.

Volleyball game, 1

well in this game and put up a great fight, but in the end the students took the game 25-17.

These first two games took up a lot of time, and the deciding game would have to be determined on time. The students and staff kept the scoreline very close the whole time, with one team never really breaking away from the other without the other coming back quickly. However, at 2:49pm, the score was equal yet again at 12-12. And as Sora hit that spike, the buzzer went off signaling the end of the game, meaning the students won 13-12. After a rough first game, the students were the ones who came out on top, 2-1.

The two teams played a few points for fun after, with OWL Math teacher and seasoned volleyball player Damon

And it’s just a lot of emotions running around,” explained 8th grader Leo Scoggins, who’s a lead artist in costumes. During the performances designers are hidden behind the curtains, waiting to move scenery or quickly change a costume.

“This play it’s gonna be mostly just setting up before the play as we don’t have many transitions sets-wise. Previous plays, though, we had to transition a lot more in between scenes and just make sure the set looks good for people, for the actors, and for the audience,” explained Mikko. Leo’s role is similar. “I go behind the scenes and change [people’s costumes] very quickly and push them back onto the stage,” he explained.

While things can get hectic before and during shows, the support of the community in design crew is a big aspect of the culture. The structure and hierarchy of the departments lets people learn and grow into the space and connect with others. “It’s very positive. That’s why I joined design crew actually, it’s because everyone there is super nice,” commented Mikko. Eighth grader costumes techie Cecilia Mason said, “the best part is the community. It’s just a lot of fun. You get to hang out with people that you enjoy talking to and just have a good time.” Charley agreed. “My favorite part is learning from the other stage managers who have done it before (unlike me), and watching the play come together.”

It takes a lot of work and stress to get everything ready on time, but no matter what, design crew supports each other and makes sure the show can go on, even though they’re not the ones in the spotlight.

Liberatore joining the teachers after refereeing the game. These points still ended in a win (15-13) for the students.

Overall, the game was great and very much worth all the hard work put in by all of the students. The staff put up a great fight compared to how people were thinking, and it made for a great game.

“It was very loud, said senior Annika Lofgren, who coached and played on the student side. “It was kind of a rough coaching experience for the first set. The second set felt pretty cohesive, even though we were playing with boys and girls together for the first time. I think the staff did better than I expected. There was a lot of scrappy play.”

“My goal was to have a fun time, and wow, I sure had a fun time,” said art teacher Kent Miller.

Comics class, 1

and analyze at least ten books across a variety of categories. Some categories are books focusing on gender diverse characters, books written in non-western traditions, and many more.

While Preston’s students read a lot of comics, they also need to create some of their own. In the first half of the course, students research a historical figure or event in LGBTQ+ history, and then create a comic about it. “We had comics on activists and movements like Simon Nkoli and the Lavender Menace, to comics about how pirate ships and the Wild West were historical places where LGBTQ+ folks thrived,” Preston said. “My favorite part [of the class] so far was seeing the informational comics that students created. Most students picked people or events that I didn’t know much about, so I learned a lot while reading and grading their projects!”

In the second half of the course, students work on narrative comics, learn about queer literary theory, and explore LGBTQ+ identities and representation in the American superhero tradition.

Preston’s class has attracted many students for various reasons. 10th grader Maren Sletten, for example, took the Queerness in Comics and Cartoons interim last year, and said that they enjoyed the active, hands-on aspects of the week-long course. So when they saw that the class was being offered, they signed up right away. “I’m kind of into comic books, and I knew that there’s queer representation in

the media these days,” Maren said. “I just wanted to know the history of it, and Preston’s really been covering that in class.” Senior Aspen Osweiler didn’t take the interim, but they were very excited to take the class, being a part of the LGBTQ+ community themselves. “I was very interested in learning different media techniques in LGBTQ comics, and just LGBTQ media in general,” they said. “So I was just super interested in the topic. From the second I saw it, I was like ‘ooh, I really wanna do this.’”

Preston had a lot to say about why he thinks this class is a valuable one. “Unlike many marginalized groups, most LGBTQ+ youth are not raised in families who share their identity,” he said. “Many come from families who are actively hostile towards LGBTQ+ folks. This makes it especially important for queer spaces to be created and protected at schools, since it is the only

place where they can connect with people like themselves. While this class is open to all, my hope is that it provides a space for community building and learning about LGBTQ+ history and culture to help make OWL a safer and more joyful place for LGBTQ+ students.”

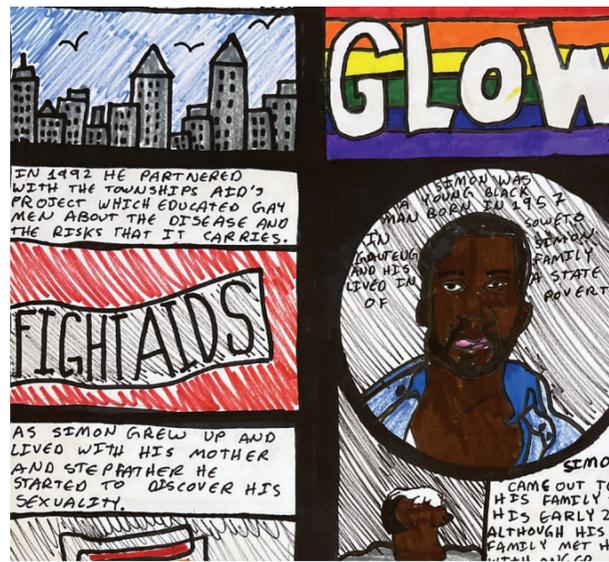
His students had a lot to say as well, praising the material being taught in particular. “I really appreciate that Preston has been talking about the history of LGBTQ representation in media,” Aspen said. “He talked about the history of queerbaiting, and the history of the Hays Code, and laws preventing representation for LGBTQ people.” Aspen also appreciated Preston bringing up Queer Theory, which is a perspective that approaches things through a queer lens and questions the all too common perception that cisgender and heterosexual identities are “standard.” Maren agreed,

saying that “getting to actually learn queer history through comics and, like, cartoons and stuff—it’s more helpful than just having him sit down and talk about it.” Both Maren and Aspen encouraged others to sign up for the class, especially if the material interested them.

This is only Preston’s second year teaching high schoolers ever since he was a student teacher, which has been a bit of a learning curve. “I’ve still got a lot to learn about working with older students, because the way I need to structure lessons for them to be engaging is very different!” he said, adding that he has plenty of ideas on how to improve basically every unit in the course for next semester. “Teaching anything for the first time is a bit like a rough draft. I’m proud of what I’ve worked on, but it definitely has a lot of room to grow.”

One of his hopes for the future of the class is that it could be made available to students at Humboldt as well as OWL students, though he acknowledged that it would be tricky to make the schedules line up.

Even though there might be some room to grow, the very existence of the class is incredibly important. “The fact that this class is being offered at all is a testament to the support for the LGBTQ+ community from both the student body and the administration—Dave has championed me working on this for about a year and half now,” Preston explained. “It’s the type of class that I just don’t think would be possible for me to teach at many other schools in the district, let alone the state. OWL is a really special community, and I’m proud to be a part of it!”



Art courtesy of Preston West

An excerpt from a comic by Amya Wright.

Feminism, 1

as she put it, “it focuses on [the rights of] all women, not just white cis ones.”

Now that we have some context on how the feminist movement started, let’s zoom out from New York in the 1840s and into our school in the early 21st century to take a peek at how feminism is coming along!

The Feminist Club was started by a middle schooler, which doesn’t happen often for our school. Before it accumulated its 5 co-founders, (Cecilia Mason, Olivia Trobaugh, Charley Cheatham, Beatrice Cosgrove, Abby Horton) the club was originally started by 8th grader Evelyn Pennington. Evelyn said she officially got the idea in the middle of the summer, but she had been considering it awhile. “Over the summer I learned more about feminism, I read a couple essays on the topic and it inspired me to make a club at OWL,” she explained. “I texted the groupchat [with some of my friends] and Charley was like ‘talk to Margaret’ so I was like, ‘okay!’ And [Margaret] gave me some tips, and yeah!” Charley Cheatham is an 8th grader who was invited by Evelyn to be a co-founder of the Feminist Club, and 10th grader Margaret Moe is the founder of OWL’s thriving Environmental Club.

Evelyn shared that the club’s

long term goal is essentially to bring more attention to women and events that have proved to be relevant to the feminist movement.

Flyers for Feminist Club were displayed on walls all over the school in the two-or-so weeks leading up to the first meeting, and the club met for the first time in early October, resulting in a largely middle school turnout. Evelyn noted that you are not at all excluded from Feminist Club if you don’t identify as female, and you certainly don’t have to have previous experiences involved with feminism acts, such as protests. “You know, I’ve never been to a protest [and] even if you don’t identify as female, feminism, it’s just

gender equality. You know, patriarchy affects men too, it affects everyone. So, if you want to join, come on down!”

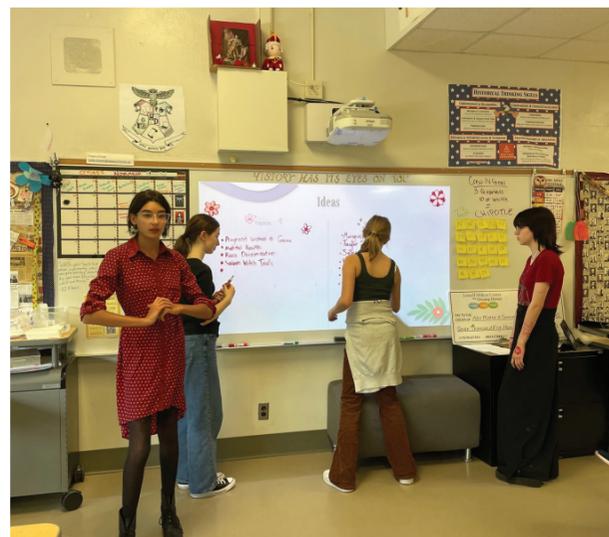
While it would be great if some members had previous experiences exercising their voices, students of all identities and backgrounds are still highly encouraged to join, and if you are interested, meetings take place every other Wednesday during Crew in Katie’s room.

That’s right; everyone’s favorite female OWL history teacher is largely involved in Feminist Club. “When I was talking with Margaret, she was saying Katie would be a good option because Katie had done feminist work in the past, and also she didn’t have a club at

the time,” Evelyn shared.

I attended the second meeting on October 18th, which started off with all attendees contributing to creating a list of women they find inspirational. The final list included American abolitionist Harriet Tubman, educational activist Malala Yousafzai, tennis player Coco Gauff, American labor leader and civil rights activist Delores Huerta, and some even mentioned their moms, which, in my opinion, are some of the best inspirations. The meeting also included the introduction of the Feminist Club’s first big project; creating posters for both a few Women of the Month (those of which were voted on at the meeting), and some to educate about current events in the world of feminism. Keep an eye out for these signs in the next few upcoming weeks around school!

The club’s next meeting is set for Wednesday, December 13, so please come if you’re able; having the chance to be a part of such a magnificent feminist community as the one we have is a great thing that should not be taken advantage of!



Maisy Wall

The feminist club holds a meeting in Katie’s room.

Senior Spotlight

Cooper Peterson-Antin



What pronouns do you use?
He/him/his.

How long have you been at OWL?
Since 6th grade.

What are your plans for next year?
I'm hoping to go to college.

What's been your favorite class in high school?
You know, I've enjoyed a lot of my high school classes, but I'd say one that stands out to me is APUSH. You know, Katie's a great teacher, it's a lot of fun being in a class with all your peers and being able to talk about history.

What extracurriculars are you involved in?
I'm involved in robotics and frisbee. I'm involved in Fracquetball. I hope to be more involved in Model UN.

Favorite field work experience or school trip and why?
My favorite was DuNord; it was a lot of fun getting to hang out with classmates for a whole week and eat good food and play fun games.

If you had a walk up song, what would it be?
Probably *My Heart Will Go On* from *Titanic*.

That One Little Kid

Lydia Manfred



What pronouns do you use?
She/her.

How tall are you?
Short. 4' 6" or something.

What's your favorite book, movie, or TV show?
My favorite book is the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* series.

Who's your favorite senior?
Elena and Violet.

What is your favorite thing about OWL so far?
I like my classes.

What extracurriculars do you plan on getting involved in at OWL?
Sports, but I have no idea which one.

Layout: it's harder than you think

Staff writer and editor Beatrice Cosgrove breaks down layout

Beatrice Cosgrove
Staff Writer

I sat in journalism class, wondering what to write for Issue two of the Purple Press while bawling my eyes out. Yup, okay, backing it up.

While I was racking my brain for a story idea and trying to stop writer's block from setting in (reporter's block?), I watched a devastating short film (see *Fuelled* review next issue) that made me cry as soon as the beginning credits started rolling and, well, after it had ended. Once I was fully recuperated, Leo told me to go work on layout with the one and only 9th grade Claire Ales. "Okay," I said, excited at the prospect of helping put the finishing touches on the Purple Press. As I worked on runoff pages, it was then that I realized anyone who hasn't ever sat at the layout computer in the back of Leo's classroom knew, really and truly knew, just how much work goes into creating the layout of the paper you are currently holding. Endless runoff, decks, headlines, picture sizes, fonts, texts. IT NEVER ENDS. And that's why I love it.

Layout is, in my opinion, satisfactory. It's like those ASMR slime videos. It's nice at the beginning, but then it slowly becomes a weird mix of satisfying and stressful.

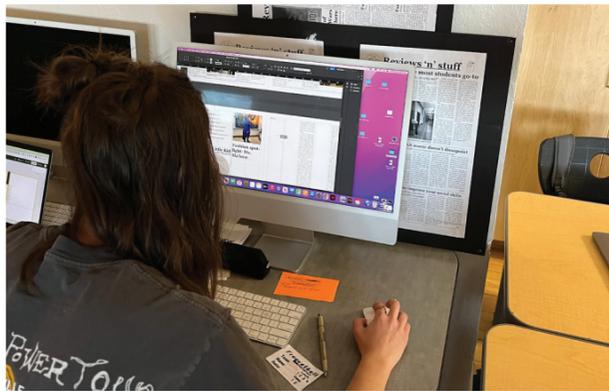
Seriously. Where does all that slime go? That was a feeble attempt at a metaphor. Layout is almost an escape, and watching senior Willa Campion, senior and editor-in-chief, "in the layout zone" is scary. Probably because getting everything right is crucial.

So, why do people love it? Why has it become a way of life? For Claire, it's a success she can see, "I think the best

So, what is layout? Layout is, in a nutshell, putting the newspaper together. Taking all the materials and embellishing them with headlines, decks, photos, artwork and a variety of other things to bring it to life. "It's all about how you frame and highlight and guide people through what they should read and how they should read it," English teacher Leo Bickelhaupt said

that, I looked at the goal of the school newspaper as a whole. "I think that with the Purple Press one of the most important things is making sure that every student who wants to write an article gets a chance to have it published... that's a huge accomplishment and motivator for people," said Willa, "every story has space and time within the paper." Highlighting student's voices and amplifying what they have to say is the ultimate idea. But how does layout play into that? "So there's placement of images, placement of stories and then there's writing headlines and decks...I think not only do you want the page to look nice but you want the headlines and decks to sort of draw the reader in to get them excited about a story," said Willa.

Being able to achieve that has been a road of trial and error. The Purple Press, like all newspapers, has a history of different designs. In 2014, the layout looked similar to a newsletter, "I don't know why they didn't fire me," Leo said. He went on to tell me that we got the more modern-looking newspaper layout in 2017, "[It is a] more professionalized version...because we started focusing on higher quality pictures, decks and modular



Senior editor-in-chief Willa Campion lays out an article for the latest issue of the paper using Adobe InDesign.

part of it is probably seeing the finished product, because you see what has been in the works for...x amount of days or weeks," she told me. Willa has a similar take, "It's one thing to write a journalism story...but I think when you have that reward of a physical copy of the Purple Press [so you can] bring it home and show your friends...I think that's rewarding," she said.

regarding the goal of design. Claire often works on layout during her journalism period (and sometimes outside of it), while also writing articles for the newspaper. Willa has an independent study period devoted to layout, and fits in other time slots as deadlines loom.

The next thing, I'm sure you're asking, is what is the layout's goal? To answer



Purple Press Staff Photo

Ms. Ma'lene poses for a photo in her fit of the day.

Fashion spotlight: Ms. Ma'lene

OWL's assistant principal breaks down her stylish looks

Raina Rossell and Kiara Steiner
Staff Writers

What's your go-to fit?
"Um, I want to say stretch pants, a sweater—comfy sweaters, and some rider boots."

What is your skincare routine?

"I don't have one, I just wash my face with water and I put Cera Ve on."

What is your hair routine?
"My hair depends on the style it is, so currently I wrap my hair at night. Wrap it up in a circular motion and put a scarf on. In the morning I take a brush and brush it out. Either flatten it or put some curls and feather it back with my fingers through my head."

How early do you wake up to get ready?

"I'm so slow. My alarm goes off at six o'clock. But if I want a few minutes, I'll do 5:45. So I set it for 5:45 or six, but the regular alarm is set for six o'clock every day."

Where do you shop?
"Oh I love shopping. I love shopping. I like... Macy's and Nordstrom Rack, those are my favorite stores. Then for shoes, I like Nordstrom Rack for that too, or DSW. I love DSW."

What's the number one store you shop at?
"Macys."

Who is your fashion icon and why?

"I don't think I have one, you know—I'm very visual when it comes to fashion. I like to see it. But like high fashion is too over the top for me. So there's not anybody that I look to, you know, someone I admire and say, yeah, I want

that kind of thing.

What do you have to say about the current style trends of OWL?

"I think it's very... loose. Very open. Everybody is welcome to express themselves in whatever style they have. There really isn't a trend OWL has, do whatever you like."

What fashion trend do you think should come back?
"Bell bottoms."

What fashion trend do you think should never come back?

"Oh, I forgot the name of the shirt but the shirt, it's got the ruffles down the middle of it. After six ruffled tuxedo shirts."

Glasses or contacts?
"Glasses."

Describe your wardrobe in one word.

"Makeover, and I say that because I've been buying a lot of clothes and I've got too many clothes. Yeah, I need a makeover."

What teacher at school has the best fashion?
"Rhonda."

Students hot takes on Ms. Ma'lene's outfits?

"She's the type of teacher that I want to twin with on twin day. We actually have the same shirt—Ms. Ma'lene, Elle, and me," said 12th Grader Raina Rossell. "She's a stylish gal," added 12th grader Nora Crosby.

At Ms. Ma'lene's recommendation, our next staff member to interview is Rhonda.

Upcoming Events

November 29th & 30th: Student led conferences

December 8th: College March

December 13th - 15th: Performances of the fall play

December 25th - January 5th: Winter break

A history of skateboard culture in America

Skateboarders have been thriving in spite of the haters since back in the day -- just ask Bridget

Amos Lucken Hills
Staff Writer

The first skateboards were made of a plank of wood with some old roller skate wheels. Skating originally evolved from surfing so that surfers had something to do on days where the waves weren't as good.

Nobody really knows who made the first board, but the first mass-manufactured boards were ordered and shelved by a skate shop in California in the early 1950's. Skateboarding, originally referred to as "sidewalk surfing," drew inspiration from surfing. Early skateboarders copied the style and techniques of surfers, and usually skateboarded barefoot. Skate magazines are also a popular thing in skate culture.

The first issue of a skate

magazine was published by the quarterly skateboarder by a surf publication in Dana Point California, who released four issues a year. During the 1980s the style called vert skating was first seen, in which skating on ramps such as half pipes or large ramps.

Freestyle skating was also becoming a bigger thing during this time. Freestyle skating is making a trick as your own kind of thing with less moving and more stationary tricks.

The first skateboarding competitions were held in 1970 with the first one being called the Del Mar National Championship. In the 1990s street skating was at its peak with people skating on ledges in the cities and less at skateparks. 1990 set the board size around where it is today



Photo courtesy of Bridget Leba

Bridget Leba with her three favorite skateboards.

with monster boards ranging from 7.25 inches to 8 inches wide. By 2001 skateboarding had around 10.6 million riders all across the US. In 2003, June 21st became a day in skateboarding history when they introduced national go skateboarding day. This was a day where they closed some busy streets and organized spots around cities for skaters to do tricks and hangout.

It may be hard to believe but ELL teacher Bridget Leba started skateboarding back in the 90's and still longboards to this day. "I preferred riding on a halfpipe rather than riding in the streets, but back in the 90s street skating was more accessible," said Bridget. Lots of shopkeepers in the 90's had put up signs to keep skateboarders out of their shops. Skating is still considered borderline

illegal by many because of the destruction of private property. "I definitely got approached by the police and got chewed out."

"Downtown Minneapolis by the Federal Reserve was a great place to skate with all the stairs at the building," said Bridget. Skateboarders have even gotten their boards taken or snapped by the police.

The 90's was also the time where gigantic clothing and baggy pants were a big trend with brands like Carhartt and Jnco. This trend of baggy clothing is coming back these days along with skating spiking in popularity again.

Winter tires, 2

per tire depending on size. While these do give you all the performance of a winter tire, you still have to buy another set of tires for all the other seasons and you still have to swap them out every end of winter.

Winter tires sound like a lot of work, so are they worth it? Yes, if you can afford them 100% get them. You will feel a lot more confident on the road and you will be able to keep up with Minnesota's harsh winters, keeping others safe as well as yourself. However, most people don't have \$400-\$600 to spend on tires. In that case your all-season tires will do okay. During the big snowstorms you are going to be more likely to lose grip or

get stuck, but as long as you drive slowly and carefully all seasons will be okay.

If you've ever been driving in a state like Colorado with big snowy mountains, you may have seen a sign saying something along the lines of "Chains required." What are chains and why don't you see normal people using them? Chains are actual metal chains that trucks and heavy commercial vehicles put around their tires for added grip. You mostly see chains where steep grades and snow meet. Many states say that legally you can use chains if the weather permits. In Minnesota chains are allowed on vehicles when the road conditions permit. studs, on the other hand, are illegal on any Minnesota road.

What are studs? Studs are little metal spikes on the tread of your tire mostly used in areas of a lot of ice like Frozen lakes. The reason they are illegal is because they damage roadways with the spikes in the warmer seasons. Spiked tires are usually double the cost of winter tires and aren't worth it unless you live somewhere with a very intense winters where you would have to drive on ice lakes and there is multiple inches of snow on the road, or if you live in a mountainous area where you would slide down hundreds of feet due to ice.

Champions League, 2

is a new path, the League Path. In the first round of the League Path, the runner-up of the UEFA ranked 10-15 leagues plays a game against each other, again the winner moves up. Whoever wins their matchup moves on to the third round.

For the League's path the three runners up from UEFA ranked leagues 7-9, the third-placed team from the French Ligue 1 which is the sixth ranked league, and the fourth-placed team from the Netherlands Eredivisie. For the champion's path, no new clubs get added and they play another game, the loser is out.

The League's path is a smaller pool than the Champions path with fewer

teams. The League's path consists of teams that were runner up in their league.

For the final round, the only teams that get added to the pool are the champions of the UEFA ranked 11 and 12 leagues. In the Champions Path, the eight teams that are in the final round play a match, and the winners move on to the group stage. In the Leagues Path, the four teams that are in play a match, and the winners of both matches make it into the group stage.

The knockout stages have four rounds starting with the Round of 16 followed by the round of eight and then the semi-finals with only four teams. The finals of the Champions League work differently than the rest of the knockout stages.

There is only one game for the Finals, which is held at a neutral site. Last year, the Champions League finals were held in Istanbul, Turkey. This year, the Champions League finals will be held at Wembley Stadium in London, England. Last year, Manchester City won the trophy. The three teams that might win the Champions League are Bayern Munich from Germany, Real Madrid from Spain, and Manchester City from England.

I like the Champions League because you can watch teams from leagues you would never normally watch. It is a good thing because it brings football fans together over a period of 10 months. You can watch the Champions League on Paramount+.

Pencils, 6

better, but what really matters is what other artists think. "This issue of No. 2 Pencils or mechanical pencils is no joke. I like the agility of the No.2 pencil compared to the mechanical pencil. The No.2 offers more options for shading and line quality that relates to emotion and expression," says Kent. Next, we did our middle school interview. "In general, I'd say normal pencils for sure. Cause you can get more of a range for darkness and thickness. The nice thing with mechanical pencils is that they have better erasers," says 7th grader Atlas Schultz. With two votes for No. 2 pencils, it pulls ahead and wins the peer preference competition.

It seems that with its affordability and variety for line quality and shading, the No. 2 pencil beats the mechanical pencil. Despite this, mechanical pencils still have many die-hard fans. As 8th grader Rosie Douglas puts it, "Mechanical pencils are just simply better in every form. They're just tasty and delicious, and wood is just not it."

However, we do not recommend eating pencils of any type. "When eating a No. 2 pencil, the paint flakes off in your mouth and that is not good," stated 8th grader Adelaide Stender.

Thrifting, 6

prices, and occasionally they even still have tags on.

If you're into certain brands, look for those as well, since likely, you'll find something that way. Also, if you're going to a thrift store with no dressing rooms, such as goodwill, make sure to wear thin and tight clothes, such as tighter shirts and pants, so you can easily try stuff on over your clothes.

If you're still questioning thrift stores, just know that clothes aren't the only thing thrift stores sell. You can also buy books, records, home decor, bags, and electronics. For a discounted price of course.

Thrifting is also an eco-friendly option, since we all know Earth is burning up-- sorry to call attention to the obvious facts. Thrifting also saves you money, but I should probably shut up before I sound like some unwanted ad. Sorry. Not really.

Now for real this time, try out a thrift store. Or three. It's not as embarrassing as you might think. To be honest, shopping at the mall is way worse, since you'll show up broke and looking like every other person on the planet. That's such an L.

Layout, 4

design," Leo told me, "I took a graduate class from Kent State in the summer and realized I'd been doing everything wrong and...[reid] the whole layout system." Some key elements to the new design include the large, fancy letters reading Purple Press and the OWL logo in the center. Decks (short summaries of the articles below headlines), photo captions and more fonts have since been added, creating a more inviting and signature style. This style is also ever-changing. When things begin to surface that aren't working anymore, it is up to Leo and the layout team to find a solution.

I got my first taste of layout in 6th grade, when Leo explained some of the wonders of InDesign. The next year, I was in the Publishing Interim, creating the 7th grade phenology calendar. Current 8th graders Charley Cheatham, Abby Horton and myself learned the program and created the calendar in a week with some time to spare (Gilmore Girls was very possibly involved). Throughout the week we had a lot of fun, but there was some frustration, too, especially since we essentially started from scratch. "The whole process of adding photos is

more difficult than it needs to be in general," said Abby when asked about the hardest part of layout, InDesign in particular. "Resizing pictures. Oh my god, it can be so annoying. Especially when the picture stretches and gets all weird," Charley agreed.

This year, I started learning to lay out the Purple Press while getting to know the program a little better. I wouldn't consider myself an expert on layout, but from careful observation I have found that it is through meticulous, measured steps and a lot of praying over the computer that the Purple Press looks the way it does. Because of this I found a new appreciation and a lot of people who may have never worked on or knew much about layout thought similarly. "If we didn't have layout, there wouldn't be a Purple Press!" said 8th grader Maisy Wall. "[Layout] is the newspaper, no layout, no paper," fellow 8th grader Evelyn Pennington commented.

Throughout my experiences in behind the scenes work for the Purple Press, I have gained a new perspective on the overall process of creating a publication, and others have, as well. "I started out as a regular news writer and that was a super fun experience and I love news writing... [but] I never thought about

how a paper was laid out, I never thought about what goes into writing headlines and stuff like that. So I think I'm grateful...[for] the new perspective layout has given me on journalism...I think that's one of the best parts," Willa explained to me.

When a reporter writes a story, it is edited and placed in a Google drive, where it is easily accessible to the layout team. Then, it is put in the section it relates to (news, reviews 'n' stuff, etc.) and placed in the area it best fits (depending on amount of images, length, etc.). After the area has been selected, there is the matter of headlines and decks, which are written on the layout computer by the layout team, if they have enough brainpower to encapsulate a story in a few, precious words. This is all done through communication and organization, crucial parts of the layout process.

"Communication I feel like is definitely key. I know that is said for a lot of things, but really for this, communication is key. You need to always be on top of what is new, what is happening," Claire replied when I asked her about the importance of communication in layout and publication, "Going along with communication organization, you need to really know what's done [and]

who's doing what." Layout is a lesson in communications, to be able to create the feat that is our newspaper means to check in with Leo, the reporters, and have a running Google Document of things that are finished and/or need to get done. "It's important to communicate... because each person on the layout team needs to know where each story is going and what the flow will be for the newspaper," Abby said. It has also taught me to be patient with technology, brought my problem-solving skills to another level and showed me the importance of working with other people, whether directly or indirectly.

So, if you don't appreciate the layout team by now, I have two words for you. For. Shame. And, if you have learned to appreciate the layout process and have beared with me throughout, I have two words for you to tell Willa, Claire, Leo or anyone who spends time creating the masterpiece you behold. Thank you.



Reviews 'n' stuff



The great pencil debate

"This issue of No. 2 pencils or mechanical pencils is no joke"

Jae Lind and Onyx Oberheide
Staff Writers

Your teacher has just instructed you to make a quick sketch. You open your pencil bag, and you have two pencils to choose from. A mechanical, or a No. 2 pencil. You pick the mechanical pencil, but... was that the right decision?

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of Art Supplies Wars! Here, we will be putting two different art supplies against each other for one simple reason... to find out which one is the best. This article, we have regular pencils vs. mechanical pencils. For the purpose of this article, we will be using a standard HB No. 2 pencil. Artists, you all

know just how many standard pencils there are, and it would be impossible to compare them all. On the mechanical side, we will be using 0.7 mm lead, simply because we (the authors) both have some.

So, what will we be judging these pencils on? First off, convenience. Which is easier to use? Then, affordability. Which is cheaper and easier to find? Even if there is such a thing as the perfect pencil, if it's impossible to find and costs \$1000 it's just too impractical to obtain, and therefore use. Then, artists in the field. We will be interviewing Art teacher Kent Miller, a middle school artist, and a high school artist to hear their preference. Which is better, and why? This

article represents the first in a series.

Convenience:
Within moments of applying large amounts of pressure to a mechanical pencil, it snapped. The regular pencil was very, very hard to break -- and once we did get a break, just the tip came off, and it was still usable. It did create an explosion of lead fragments, which does not help the No. 2 Pencil out. The mechanical pencil was much easier to break, due to the thin lead. And with the thin, replaceable lead, comes only one line weight.

"The No.2 offers more options for shading and line quality that relates to emotion and expression," says Kent.

But when we add in the factor of replacing lead, the mechanical pencil pulls ahead -- you just press down, and more lead is ready to be broken. The No. 2 pencil, however, you need to stand up, find a pencil sharpener, use it, and sit back down. Though some may argue that you have more control over the sharpness of a No. 2 pencil, others argue that you have more consistency with the mechanical pencil. As no one side of this argument is wrong, these two can politely cancel each other out, so we don't have to take more sides. Plus, mechanical pencil lead can be purchased--when you run out on a No. 2 pencil, you just need to buy a new one.

Overall, Mechanical wins

in convenience!

Affordability:

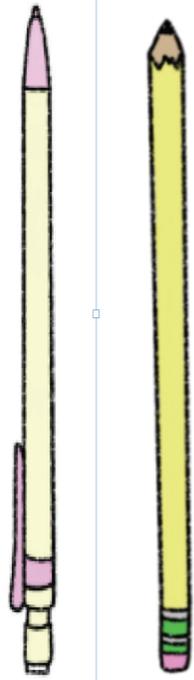
Target carries both of these pencils, so it's not a question of where one can be bought. Target offers a 24-pack of No. 2 pencils for only 99 cents. This equals out to 0.04125 cents per pencil. They also offer mechanical pencils (with 0.7 mm lead) in an 8-pack for \$2.19- 0.27375 cents per pencil. And while you can buy lead and eraser refills for mechanical, those don't help the price point.

No. 2 Pencil wins the affordability competition, and brings this to a tie.

Artists in the field:

Sure, the price and convenience can make them

Pencils, 5



Onyx Oberheide

Thrift shopping is the better option

Staying away from commercial stores is the stylish, eco-conscious choice to make

Zania Hiermaier
Staff Writer

You know that feeling when someone compliments your outfit? It's pure heaven.

And I'm just like, thanks, girly pop, I know. When they ask me where I got all that cute stuff, I say Goodwill, because I did not do hours of searching through grandma shirts in the small section that are definitely size XL or up--A for the effort grandmas, we love you--to say I got this adorable shirt at the mall--basic!

I am a thrifter, no going back.

When I tell people about my thrift finds, I either get shocked glances or horrified faces. No in between, I'm not kidding. It has come to my attention that some people just have an unreasonable amount of hatred for thrift stores. Like if you could hear the trash coming out of their voices, and for what? Just let me shop in peace. Also, where do you shop again? Old Navy? Got it.

The place that sells \$50 jeans that are so stiff you cannot walk and the same shirt in ten different designs? No thank you. I will forever rate thrift stores 10/10.

Except for those ones in those musty, dusty small towns with America merch on every rack. Just don't visit Iowa thrift stores if you can avoid it. You might ask me, well Zania, what's your experience with

small town thrift stores if you don't even live there. Trust me, I've seen enough, especially since my parents are obsessed with road trips. No, mom, I don't want worn overalls with permanent brown stains on the knees. I am not a farmer, and I definitely don't need to look like one. Also, why so many Trump hats? They aren't even washed.

If you don't like thrift stores,

you probably just don't know how to thrift right. No offense. So I'll give you some tips. First, know what kind of things you're looking for. I suggest getting Pinterest, it can help you figure out your personal style and get inspiration for new outfits. By scrolling through pictures, Pinterest will adapt your page to show outfits you are interested in. You can make boards on

Pinterest and take them with you shopping, where you can look for similar clothes.

For example, a few weeks ago, I was looking for new y2k jeans in a style I saw on Pinterest, and I found some, which were adorable and vintage for \$10! Now we're talking. Next, go through every rack or bin. Most goodwills will have racks and sections based on what type of clothing you are looking for. I normally spend 20-30 minutes at these types of stores, but if you decide to go bold and visit the goodwill outlets, you may end up staying there for an hour or two.

At the outlets or bins, everything is sold by the pound, and you can walk out with 20-30 articles of clothing for under \$20. However, you will have to dig through unsorted bins, which can get very tiring. Either way, your trip will be worth it. I've found plenty of clothes for good



Purple Press Staff Photo

Thrift and secondhand stores have become popular places to shop in recent years.

Thrifting, 5

Goth vs. Emo

What is the difference?

Cecilia Mason
Staff Writer

While walking through the hallways of OWL, you may have noticed individuals dressed in all black, long skirts, lacey shirts, or trip pants. What word comes to mind when you see these people? You might think of "emo" or "Wednesday Addams!" I'm here to inform you that the labels you might have hurled at people in the hallways are incorrect. Contrary to popular belief, many of these individuals aren't emo or in Wednesday Addams cosplay.

I'm a goth, and I understand what you're thinking. So, what exactly distinguishes goth from emo?

For starters, both of these are music-based subgenres. If you identify as emo or goth, it primarily hinges on the kind of music you listen to rather than your outward appearance or clothing choices. Although both of these musical subcultures have associated fashion styles, it's important to emphasize that you don't need to dress in a goth or emo style to be part of these subcultures; all you need to do is listen to the music. Only listening to the music does not make you any less goth or emo.

The term "goth" encompasses various aspects, from gothic architecture to makeup aesthetics. However, for the purpose of this discussion, I will primarily focus on fashion and music. The goth movement originated in the late 1970s, drawing inspiration from the punk movement, and can

Goth, 8

Another movie, another dimension

Animated Spider-Man movie lives up to original

Amelia Keenan
Staff Writer

Remember that movie that everyone loved back in 2018?

Well, a new sequel to Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse has been released this past June. With the first movie being such a success with a rotten tomatoes score of 97%, it's obvious that its sequel would have very high expectations. Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse, the second movie in this popular series, has fully lived up to the first movie.

The directors who created Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse are Joaquim Dos Santos, Justin K. Thompson, and Kemp Powers. They announced this movie in November 2019, and the animation started in June 2020, three years before it came out. The most present voice actors are Hailee Steinfeld, who plays Gwen Stacey, and Shameik Moore, who plays Miles Morales. Other big characters include Miguel O'Hara, Spot, (the new villain), and Peter Parker.

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse -- the first movie -- ended with every version of Spider-Man returning to their original dimension, with a hint at the second movie where we heard Gwen's voice talking to Miles. Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse -- the new movie -- revolves mostly around the different dimensions of the Spider-Verse, a universe built on a ton of different dimensions with different Spider-People. The beginning portion of the movie, and the

Spider-Man, 8



Disney+

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse was released this June.



Nora Xiong

Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have long been the focus of who's the best male soccer player of our time.

Putting the Messi-Ronaldo debate to rest

George Abelson
Staff Writer

It is the biggest sports debate ever. Messi vs Ronaldo? Who is on top, who is the best, who is the GOAT?

Now if you're not familiar here is a little background on the subject of today's debate. Let's start with Messi.

Lionel Andrés Messi Cuccitini was born on June 24th, 1987 in Rosario, Argentina. That's common knowledge, but here are a couple facts I bet you didn't know. Messi is actually a gifted musician who is known to play the piano and guitar in his free time. He has also performed on stage with famous Argentine singer Sergio Denis. It seems like everyone wanted Messi. Spain decided to offer him an option to play for their national team but he denied it wanting to follow in the footsteps of the legend Diego Maradona.

Throughout his entire career he has played for the Argentina national team. Messi has always dreamed of achieving the ultimate prize you can win in soccer, the World Cup. Finally in 2022 he won it. How important it was for him to win the World Cup can not be stressed enough, and we all know how great Messi is, but that victory could end the GOAT debate forever...

Messi spent 21 years at Spanish giant FC Barcelona, joining as a teenager and leaving in 2021. He then traveled to Paris to play at French club Paris-Saint Germain. After two seasons he realized he had enough in France and decided to move to Inter Miami, a surprise for many people as he had wanted to return to Barcelona, but due to financial problems Barcelona could not afford him. He had additionally received a lucrative offer from Saudi Arabian club Al-Hilal.

Now for Messi's fiercest nemesis—Ronaldo. Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro was born on February 5th, 1985 in Funchal, Madeira Portugal. You want to hear some interesting facts about

Cristiano? Turns out he was actually named after Ronald Reagan -- quite fascinating because this was actually before Reagan became president.

Ronaldo started his professional career at Sporting Lisbon in Portugal, only playing in 31 senior games. But even in the short amount of time he played there, it was obvious he had a bright future. After one season he transferred to Premier League team Manchester United, where he stayed until 2009 -- having a successful spell winning the Champions League and the Premier League. Interestingly enough, he actually transferred to Real Madrid in 2009, who are the fierce rivals of Messi's FC Barcelona. He stayed at Madrid until 2018, winning four more Champions Leagues and multiple La Liga titles.

All the while Messi and Ronaldo competed to be the best players in the world. Ronaldo then transferred to Juventus, leaving Juventus in 2021 and transferring back to his boyhood club Manchester United. In 2022 he transferred yet again at the end of the 2022 World Cup, after disagreements with Manchester United. Most recently, Ronaldo moved to Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr, where he remains today. It's time to give you the long awaited statistics.

Let's start with all time goals. Now keep in mind that Ronaldo started his career a little bit before Messi as he is a couple years older. In total Messi has 819 career goals and Ronaldo has 851 career goals. But in assists Messi has 361 and Ronaldo has 243, showcasing an important part of the debate. Ronaldo has more goals for two reasons, the first one being, as previously stated, he started playing sooner than Messi and the second reason is that Ronaldo is more of a selfish player and a ball hog. Ronaldo has 32 trophies and Messi has 44 trophies.

Both Ronaldo and Messi have their own individual strengths. For example, Messi

Messi, 8

FIFA replaced by EA FC 24

A review of the first game in a new soccer video game franchise

Grayden Smith
Staff Writer

The long-running soccer video game series FIFA has been canceled. But there is a replacement, and it's pretty much the same thing. EA FC 24 has replaced the next FIFA game and is now the first installment in the new EA FC franchise.

You may be wondering why it's called EA FC. Well FIFA demanded that EA (The creators of the game) double the cost of licensing, raising it from \$150 million to \$300 million. Because of that, they decided to part ways which means that the game's FIFA World Cup mode that appears every four years will no longer be available. Lots of other modes are no longer allowed to have FIFA in the name, such as FUT or FIFA Ultimate Team, giving many fans a sense of sadness.

It was released on September 29th of this year on all platforms for \$70 or \$100 for the ultimate edition which just gives extra perks, though the switch is different with lower graphics and less stuff due to its low processing power. And of course, it had many glitches and most are still in the game.

In the game, you have five main game modes, Kick Off, Ultimate Team, Career Mode, Volta Football, and Pro Clubs. All of these were in the previous game FIFA 23.



EA SPORTS FC

EA FC, 9

In Kick Off you can play as many country's national teams and their leagues across the world. There are also special twists you can put on a game like no rules, only headers, and mystery ball where -- every time the ball goes out a new multiplier is added.

In Ultimate Team you can build your team with any players from across the world and go against other players' teams. There's a rating system based on how good the players are in real life. There are three new additions to Ultimate

Team, Playstyles, Women, and Evolutions. Women were in the FIFA games just not in Ultimate Team, but Evolutions are completely new, as well as Playstyles.

There are different types of evolutions that have criteria only some players can meet. This is so you can't upgrade already insanelly good cards to make them even better. Then after you select your player you'll have to do certain objectives to upgrade your player in stages. Playstyles are something only some players have, they give some players specific attributes they have in real life. Like for example Neymar Jr. is known for his skills so he has the Trickster+ Playstyle which gives better skills and dribbling.

Ultimate team has different ways to play which are Division Rivals, FUT Champs, Squad

R6 game is fun, challenging

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege is team-based 5v5 video game

Benjamin Diaz
Staff Writer

This game makes me want to throw my Xbox out the window, but I play it every week.

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege is a tactical, military-based game, created by Tom Clancy and owned by Ubisoft. Rainbow Six came out in 2015, and costs about \$30. This game is available on Xbox, PlayStation, and PC.

Rainbow Six Siege is a team-based 5v5 game featuring two teams, attackers and defenders. The objective of the game revolves around a bomb. If you are an attacker, you are trying to diffuse the bomb; on defense you are trying to defend the bomb. To achieve these objectives, you need to strategize and communicate with your team. Collaborating with your team is important to organize which operators to use together, confirm locations of the other team, and plan your playstyle. Your team can be people that you have added on the game or random strangers

Siege features 35 attacking operators and 34 defending

operators. Each operator has their own unique ability but for the most part, have the same few categories. Intel: Intel operators are used to reveal information about the other team, such as their position and active gadgets, these operators can belong to both teams. Breachers: Breachers belong to the attacking team, they're goal is to break down hatches, walls, floors, and windows creating new angles and entry's. Anti entry: anti entry operators belong to the defending team and their

abilities usually feature traps, dealing damage or weakening senses.

The gameplay is unique because you need to focus on the audio to decipher enemy locations and actions. You can decide to play passive, waiting for good opportunities, or aggressive, trying to eliminate the enemy team quickly and efficiently. Each round is engaging and intense, making you rely on game sense and reaction time to survive.

What makes me wanna obliterate my Xbox is that

the developers don't listen to the community's ideas and critiques about the game. There are also frequent bugs and glitches with the game, like when people's kill/death ratio would be reversed or characters' hit boxes are often messed up. Oftentimes the developers change operators and different parts of the game that the community was content with, but then not change things that people dislike.

What makes the game great is that players need to rely on their operator's abilities to create solutions to different situations, rather than the average FPS game where you just run around and shoot people. Often you will find yourself using your unique ability to help you through the situation, rather than just going out and trying to shoot them.

I would recommend this game to anyone who wants a challenging, tactical first person shooter experience unique from other games. I think this game is definitely worth buying.



Ubisoft

Ahsoka show shoots for the stars

The new Star Wars installment brings back beloved characters

Tait Vossen-Nelson
Staff Writer

What was once a dream has now become a frightening reality for Star Wars fans as Star Wars: Ahsoka takes place on a planet in another galaxy where Grand Admiral Thrawn, Heir to the Empire, resides.

Grand Admiral Thrawn is a tactical genius when it comes to war strategy, if the Empire returns under Thrawn's command they could shatter the peace that the New Republic worked so hard to achieve. Terrible things would thrive under Grand Admiral

Thrawn's Galactic Empire.

Ahsoka season one was written by Dave Filoni and premiered August 22nd on Disney Plus, starring Rosario Dawson as Ahsoka Tano along with her padawan Sabine Wren played by Natasha Liu Bordizzo. Lars Mikkelsen plays the main villain of Grand Admiral Thrawn. Diana Lee Inosanto plays another villain Morgan Elsbeth, a Dathomirian Nightsister trying to reach Thrawn. The series is eight episodes long and each episode lasts 40 minutes to an hour. It was filmed mostly in the

countryside of California.

Ahsoka is the story of the return of Grand Admiral Thrawn, the nemesis of the Phoenix squadron from the show Rebels, as heir to the Empire and Ahsoka attempts to stop him. It takes place after the Battle of Endor during the era of the New Republic. Ahsoka and Sabine, one of the members of the Phoenix squadron, journey to Peridea, a graveyard planet in another galaxy ridden with the bones of Purgil, or hyperspace traveling star whales. They go there to stop Thrawn from getting back to the Star Wars

galaxy after Jedi Ezra Bridger, Sabine's friend and another member of the Phoenix squadron, brought him there and got trapped with him.

Ahsoka and Sabine get separated when trying to stop Morgan from reaching Thrawn. This results in Sabine going to Peridea without Ahsoka on Morgan's ship, a huge hyperspace ring built to bring Thrawn and his star destroyer, the Chimera, back, and the only ship able to travel between galaxies. Ahsoka then has to find an alternative

Ahsoka, 8

Spider-Man, 6

portion I will be talking about, takes place either in Gwen Stacy's dimension, or Miles Morales' dimension.

It starts off in Gwen Stacey's dimension, one of the main characters. She fights a version of the Vulture in Queens, New York. But this vulture is not from her dimension. Miguel O'Hara and Jessica Drew, two people whose job is to fix holes in the Spider-Verse, arrive to bring the vulture back to its dimension with Gwen's help. Gwen's dad figures out that she is Spider-woman, whom he has a great hatred for, and Gwen decides to go with Miguel and Jessica to the Spider Society, a group of spider people who stop dimensional anomalies.

It cuts to Miles Morales' perspective, a Spider-Man from another dimension, where he meets a villain named Spot -- more on him later. Eventually Miles cannot catch Spot, and Spot gets away. Miles gets grounded by his parents because he was late to his dad's party. Gwen suddenly arrives in his room, even though she lives in another dimension. Although he is confused, Miles hangs out with Gwen until Gwen suddenly says she has to leave, and Miles' mom tells him to go with her.

Miles follows Gwen to a building, where she figures out that Spot has traveled to another dimension. Her job

was to go to this dimension to stop Spot from leaving his dimension, and she was not supposed to see Miles. She then opens up a portal and goes back to the spider society. Miles decides to follow her in secret. This scene marks the end of the first section of the movie.

Overall, I enjoyed watching this film and thought it was a fulfilling sequel to the first movie, which many people, including myself, thoroughly enjoyed. Although it was a long movie at almost two and a half hours, I felt that it was a very full movie, and it was almost always catching my attention.

My criticism is that I wish it brought up fewer questions for the viewers and instead answered more from the first movie and a few that were brought up in this movie. Such as how many canon events need to be broken



The third movie in the animated Spider-Man series is expected to come out in March of 2024.

in order to break the spider verse, whether it's an exact number or an estimate. If you don't know, canon events are certain events that happen in every Spider-Man dimension. If someone breaks one of these events, very bad things could happen, including the collapse of the Spider-Verse. I would also have liked to see more backstory on the villain Spot, for we wouldn't see too much of him in the movie. I thought he was a really cool and interesting character and would have loved to see more of him.

I left the theater feeling entertained and thinking about all of the great audio and animation choices that really added to the scenes, such as the amazing soundtrack. Yet over time I developed questions about why certain things happened and why characters did something that didn't make sense, like when

Gwen didn't warn Miles when he was about to break a canon event.

On the good side, I loved the new characters and the development of the old characters. I especially liked Spot, the new villain, and thought that he was an interesting character and loved how he connected to the first movie. Spot's character design is very Creative as well. He has pure white skin with black holes all over his body in which he can use to travel about a dimension. He was a background scientist in the first movie, and was turned into what he is now because he was too close to the collider when it was destroyed at the end of Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. I also liked Jessica Drew, Miguel O'Hara's partner. I thought she played a good mother figure to Gwen, and she had a very cool design, including a motorcycle and cool background music.

I liked the scene transitions, they were very smooth and well done. I feel like many different people could enjoy this movie, but if you have trouble sitting down and watching a long movie, this movie might not be your favorite. For the overall rating, I would give this movie 4 out of 5 stars. Although this movie was slightly confusing at parts, I really enjoyed watching it and am very excited for the newly announced third movie.



Disney+

Ahsoka, 7

way to get to Peridea to stop Thrawn.

Hera Syndulla, the leader of the Phoenix squadron, tries to get the New Republic fleet to help them stop Thrawn, but without evidence, she has trouble getting the fleet to help. Ahsoka and Sabine end up having to try and stop Thrawn without them.

The best thing about the show in my opinion is Baylan Skoll, an ex-Jedi who works for Morgan, played by Ray Stevenson, and how he started out as a villain and then developed into a much more complex character throughout the show. At the start of the show he massacres a New Republic ship, then when on Peridea he talks about how he misses the idea of the Jedi Order and how he doesn't align with Thrawn.

His dialogue is magnificent throughout the show and the pacing for his character is a masterpiece. The wonder that Baylan brings to Ahsoka is perfection, as he goes off on his own near the end of the show to search for some sort of otherworldly power on Peridea to end the cycle of rising and falling powers.

"Won't our alliance with Thrawn finally bring us into power?" asked Shin Hati, Baylan's apprentice.

Messi, 7

is clearly the winner when it comes to passing and dribbling and Ronaldo is clearly the winner for heading given his height and huge vertical jump.

Messi also takes the cake in shooting but only by a little bit. Now you might be thinking Ronaldo has more goals right? Well yes but that does not mean he is better at shooting. Here is why. Both Messi and Ronaldo scored a goal every 85 minutes in competitions over their careers, but what makes Messi better at shooting is his goals per game ratio; Messi scores 0.79 goals per game and Ronaldo scores 0.72 goals per game. In other words Messi scores a goal every 105 minutes and Ronaldo scores every 112 minutes

This brings us to the conclusion: Messi is better. Let me tell you why. First of all Messi is much more creative on the ball. The way he dribbles defenders is a form of art. He has fantastic vision when it comes to the game. He has incredible shooting technique, deadly free kicks and is also extremely talented at passing. Messi gets a very high amount of assists. In total in his entire career he has 361 assists Okay you get it right? Messi is less selfish and a better passer with the ball.

"That sort of power is fleeting. What I seek is the beginning, so I may finally bring this cycle to an end," said Baylan.

One of my other favorite things about the show is Ahsoka's character arc. At the beginning of the show, she is getting destroyed by enemies in duels and is not fighting well or making the best decisions. But a final lesson from her former master Anakin Skywalker pulls her back to the land of the living after certain death. After this, we are met with a better, much more relaxed Ahsoka who is living up to the legacy of Anakin's former padawan.

While I'll admit some of the acting and script are not extraordinary and can be clunky at times, most of the time they are very good. A lot of the duels are phenomenal with Ahsoka's fighting style taking inspiration from Samurai.

I loved the show and the new approach to Star Wars with Peridea, a new galaxy that hooked my explorative mind. The pure amount of wonder alone is enough to watch this show. I would recommend it to anyone, but watching the show Rebels first makes the show much better as you get a deeper depth of understanding about Ahsoka.

Goth, 6

be considered a post-punk movement. Goth music is characterized by off-pitch vocals, morbid themes, and eerie instrumentals. This music was inspired by the dark themes found in gothic literature. For example the band Bauhaus, Sisters of Mercy, and some of The Cures older stuff.

In the 1980s, Gothic fashion began to emerge, known for its classic goth makeup, now referred to as "traditional goth makeup." This makeup typically includes large lashes, eyeliner, black lipstick, white face paint, and black contour. The goth makeup look is intended to resemble a corpse or a vampire, both common themes in goth music. The goth movement is anti-establishment, striving to challenge capitalism. As a result, goth clothing predominantly involves thrifting. "By thrifting shopping, you can find a variety of unique clothes for much cheaper than retail prices. It's also considerably more environmentally conscious," says MCAD first-year student Niki Mason (Niki isn't goth but does dress alternatively).

Goth music and fashion appeals to me and many others because of political views, or personal life experiences. Dressing this way is a form of self expression, dressing goth is not saying you're sad, or obsessed with death, being goth for me is just expressing my personality and interests with my outward expression. I found goth music through social media, and felt a connection to it. Being a queer person the gothic community is a safe space.

Goth fashion started as an African American movement, trying to create a movement preaching for racial, gender, and sexual equality. The movement wanted to be a space of diverse identities.

Torn black tights, long black lace skirts and shirts, and goth band t-shirts are

encompasses anyone who deviates from conventional fashion norms. This category includes goths, the 2020 alt kids, skater kids, and even followers of cottage core and kawaii fashion. However, in the 2000s, all these groups, rather than being termed "alternative," were collectively

hardcore elements and is often accompanied by physical features such as swoopy bangs, black eyeshadow, and choppy, layered hair. In terms of clothing, emo fashion typically includes skinny jeans, band t-shirts, colorful studded belts, and knee-high converse with brightly colored laces.

Curiously, while emo was the most prevalent alternative style in the 2000s, it was closely intertwined with internet culture. Myspace pictures and phrases like "rawr XD" became emblematic of emo culture online. Consequently, emo has evolved into one of the most popular and iconic alternative fashion movements of all time.

As a result of emo's widespread popularity, people outside of the alternative scene tend to label anyone who appears different as "emo," even if their style is far from the authentic emo aesthetic. A prime example of this can be seen in Amos Lucken Hills, an 8th grader who has been called "emo" multiple times despite having a fashion sense that leans toward a more oversized and 90s skater look. It's evident that anyone, regardless of their attire, is susceptible to being labeled as "emo." As 8th grader Leo Scoggins put it, "I wear comfy things like sweatpants and sweatshirts. I was called 'emo' by somebody in 7th and 6th grade. Um, I don't think I'm an emo. That's not my style."

In conclusion no one is safe from being called emo, no matter what you look like or what music you listen to, one day you are bound to be called emo by some stranger on the street, or in the hallways.



Jae Lind

all characteristic elements of goth fashion. For the most part, goth fashion represents a way for young people to rebel against their parents and the establishment.

Now, onto the topic of emo. Although I've been labeled as emo on numerous occasions every day, I do not identify as such. So, what exactly is emo, and why has it become the term used to classify nearly every alternative person? The term "alternative"

labeled as "emo."

Emo shares similarities with goth in that it's a music-based subgenre with a fashion style influenced by this music. However, it differs from goth in terms of music, as it is more rooted in rock and punk rock, while goth is more classically inspired with a lot of punk.

Emo first gained prominence in the mid-1990s and became more mainstream in the 2000s. The music is marked by its

battles, Friendlies, Draft and Moments. Division Rivals is where you play games to rank up and the higher you rank, the better the rewards you get. Champs are pretty much the same except the players are better and so are the rewards.

Squad battles are where you play against real players' teams controlled by an AI, then you try to win the games to get points, and the more points you have the better the rewards. Friendlies are just where you play games that

don't matter and you can have special modifiers. Draft can be online or offline and you just draft a team from a group of players and win games to get better rewards. And finally Moments is where you play specific moments in a game to get stars and the more stars, the better rewards you can claim. These modes are the easiest way to get stuff like packs and coins.

Career Mode is a mode where you can make your player with their size, build, face, clothes, the way they move, and even Playstyles.

Also, you can become a real-life player and then ruin their career or make them reach their potential, it doesn't matter. Or, become a manager for a team controlling wages, what players you sign, and how your players play tactically. There is nothing really new in Career Mode besides more customization and Playstyles.

Volta is similar to a career in the sense that you can also make your character. Volta is also like futsal. If you don't know what futsal is, it's like soccer but indoors and you only have five players. You

have to do kick-ins instead of throw-ins and the celebrations are different. There are just about the same additions to Volta as there was to Career mode.

Pro Clubs is also similar to Career because you create your character. Pro clubs are where you create your player and then join a team with others online. Then on your team, you face other teams and win to rank up. One of the big additions to Pro Clubs is cross play which many have been waiting for.

I think the game is similar

to FIFA 23, but that's just common sense. However, it does add some small things that make it different. For example, Playstyles -- I think they're a great addition, but they're not balanced in the slightest. On the other hand, Evolutions are not great. Evolutions are a cool idea, but it makes the game more pay-to-win than ever because the most overpowered evolutions require a lot of coins or FC points which is the in-game currency.

I don't think EA FC 24 is better than FIFA 23, which is

odd because it's a pretty low bar. It's almost the same as other games besides the name changes and little additions, despite that I'd say it's a good game for people who like soccer or just sports in general. Even with the hefty price, I would recommend it to most who can afford it, unless, of course, you don't like raging.

Latinx culture night in photos



Clockwise from upper left: senior Raina Rossell does face paint for 11th grader Cal Schmid, 10th grader Monica Locken in her quinceañera dress, one of the event's organizers senior Rebecca Maldonado-Olivar helps serve food, dancers perform a traditional Mexican dance, ofrendas honoring passed loved ones and celebrities on display.

Tess Campion

Shedding Tears: Part 2

Joseph T. Schwartz
Staff Writer

The first part of this story was published on November 10th, 2023 in Issue 1, Vol. 24 of The Purple Press.

Kay stopped going to the snake exhibit once her brother went missing. She knew that what Sarah had said the last time wasn't empty words, 'I see you can't make decisions for yourself.' The snake had clearly done something, but Kay had still hoped her brother would show up and it'd all be a coincidence. But 7 days had passed since he'd gone missing, and the police weren't hopeful. Kay knew she had to confront Sarah and get her brother back.

Her shoes clicked against the floor as she made her way past the exhibits. Most reptiles ignored her as she walked by, but the snakes stopped and watched. Dozens of slitted eyes studied her every movement. A shiver ran down her spine.

She stopped in the back corner at a large glass enclosure. On the wall below the glass was a brass plaque. It read Sarah, Burmese Python, 19 years. Kay could barely see the tip of a tail sticking out from under a false rock decoration.

"I see you." Kay said simply. "Aren't you the perceptive one, Kaitlin?" said the voice of Sarah as she slithered out from under the rock, still dragging out her S sounds.

"Where is he?"

"Who?"

"My brother."

"What about your brother?"

"You took- stop playing games! Where did you take my brother?" Kay said loudly, the sound echoing in the empty room. Sarah hesitated, before slithering up to her branch.

"Abraham is in a place where he cannot hurt you anymore."

"What- Where is he?"

"He cannot hurt you-"

"I don't care if he can hurt me, I want him back!"

"Why?"

"Because it's the right thing to do!" Kay left the 'even if I hate him' silent.

"Fine," Sarah responded carefully, "If that is what you want."

"It is."

Sarah slid behind her rock without another word. This time, her tail didn't stick out.

It was less than a day before the police came knocking: her brother had been found behind a club, fast asleep, beer in hand. Abe had then been brought to a hospital, where they'd found traces of several different drugs in his blood, most notably alcohol. He was now in jail awaiting his court date.

Kay's mother and the officers left at the same time, leaving Kay home alone. Her mother returned an hour later, Abe in tow. She had paid his bail; his court date was in 60 days. She went up to her room when they got home, expecting her mother to get angry. All she heard before she

shut her door was half-hearted scolding. He walked upstairs 30 minutes later. Kay took that as her opportunity to ask him: what happened?

She knocked on his closed door.

"Can I come in?"

A dismissive grunt served as her cue to enter. Abe's room was a mess, as usual. His clothes were all across the ground and his trash can was piled high. Her brother was laying on his equally messy bed, scrolling on his phone.

"So, uh, are you okay?"

"I guess? Why do you care?" he responded disinterestedly.

"It's just- you were gone for a week, did anything... happen?"

"Why'd you say it like that?" he asked, seemingly genuinely confused.

"It's just-" she stopped. Something had been strange since she walked in, notably how not aggressive her brother was. She'd brushed it off as him

could stop her. Two rights and a left, and she was at the back door she often used, the fire exit with the broken alarm.

She grabbed the handle and yanked, intending to walk out into the school's back alley and run to... anywhere that wasn't the zoo, maybe the park a couple blocks away. But the handle didn't turn.

It was locked.

Crap crap crap. Kays started panicking and turned to find a different exit, but was stopped by a six foot, muscular teen. Abe.

"Where are you going, Kaitlin?" He never called her Kaitlin.

"I- uh, forgot something at home."

"Mhm, I wanted to talk about the other night," he said casually, "You looked a bit startled."

He lingered on the S again.

"Oh, it was nothing, I had homework, remember?" she said, her voice on edge.

By the time the mention of snakes registered in her mind, they had already moved on to a different segment. Kay grabbed the remote and rewound until she was where she wanted to be. There was a woman in a three piece suit and shoulder length brown hair standing in front of the zoo entrance gate, the building making up the background of the shot.

"Thank you, David. Here at Timucua County Zoological Park, nearly half of all the snakes are missing from their enclosures and haven't yet been found. The reptile exhibit isn't a very popular attraction here at Timucua Park, so it wasn't reported for what could have been hours. The official statement from the park is that theft is the most likely possibility, and they are opening an internal investigation. That is all that's been disclosed at this time, back to you, David." She

He was referring to the news station, which she had stupidly left paused on the woman standing directly in front of the zoo. She snatched the remote and changed channels.

"Nothing!" she said a little too loudly. She stood up from the couch and quickly walked upstairs before her brother could continue the conversation anymore. Kay could hear him comment to himself about her "strange behavior." Then she shut her bedroom door.

Kay's mother didn't come home from work that night, probably working late, so she didn't have to go downstairs for dinner and could avoid her brother more. Her intention was to stay locked in her room until tomorrow and leave before he wakes up, but her attention was caught by their stairs creaking as her brother went downstairs at almost midnight. Kay wanted

instantly. The rats were dropped and it stood up straight, jaw shut. She would have been convinced it was human, if it had human eyes. She didn't know how it kept those hidden all this time.

"Ah, Hello there, Kaitlin," the definitely-not-Abe said, "how are you?"

"What are you? Where's my brother?"

"Ah, about that. Well, let's just say your brother is somewhere he can't hurt you."

"Sarah."

"Well, aren't you clever?"

"H-how? How are you-"

"Well, it's not just me in here, I'm not that big."

Kay couldn't respond to that. She couldn't think.

"Now, don't be scared-" Sarah took a step forward, and that was enough to jolt Kay into action. She turned and scrambled up the stairs, out her house, and into the street.

She ran faster than she's ever run before, crossing deserted streets in the middle of the night until she was far enough away she felt safe enough to slow down.

Trees surrounded the road on both sides, the sidewalk had faded to grass several blocks back. She could only barely make out a train track crossing the road a few feet ahead of her. Her heart pounded in her head, louder than anything she'd ever heard before. Every breath tore at her dry throat.

Kay thought she was safe. Until her not-brother walked out from the treeline.

"Now, it's not nice to run away while I'm talking to you."

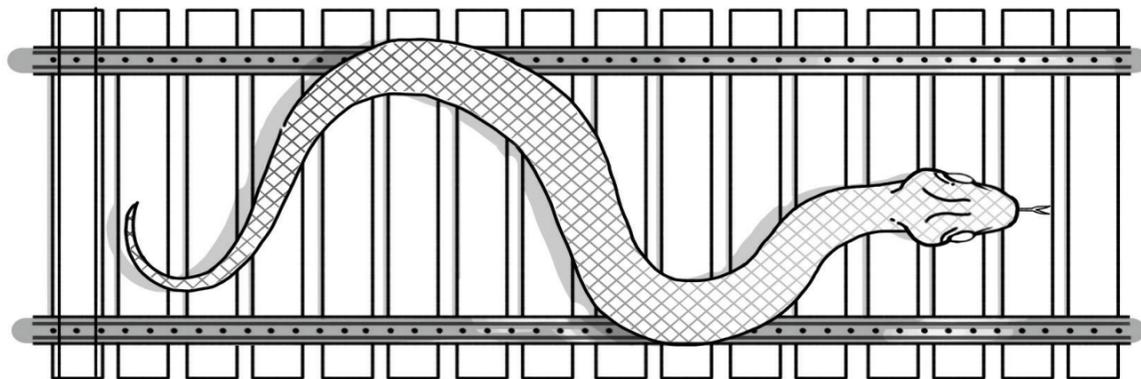
"Why? Why can't you just leave me alone?" she tried to yell, but ended up just barely wheezing out.

"Because you were the only one that cared, Kaitlin. No one stopped by to even look at us, let alone talk. But you talked with us so often. You cared." Sarah circled around Kaitlin slowly as she talked, unintentionally placing herself between Kay and the train track. "This was all for you, Kaitlin. You were supposed to be the one who killed him, but you couldn't. You just can't follow plans, can you? Now you're making us do this. We didn't want to hurt you." It took a step forward, towards Kay. At the same time, a deep rumbling and a faint light began to grow from behind the trees.

She didn't think before jumping forward, pushing what used to be her brother back, making it trip and fall directly onto the tracks. Not a second later, the train flew past, and she fell back to the ground.

Once the train had passed, all that was left was an empty skin the size of her brother and scattered dead snakes.

Kay pulled her knees to her chest and started to sob on the deserted road.



Nora Xiong

being tired. But what gave her pause was how he said "say." He lingered on the S.

"Yeah?" Abe prompted

"It's nothing," she said quickly, "I've got homework to do." She shut the door quickly and left. Kay had to consciously keep her breathing steady up against her closed door. She had begun to think that perhaps she was mistaken; Abe's story was plausible, toxins were found in his blood. She'd wanted to believe it was all a coincidence and she could forget about the snakes entirely. But he lingered on the S.

Even though she was rattled, Kay still had to go to school. She managed to make it all the way until lunch before she saw her brother.

She noticed him walking towards her from across the lunch room. Years of bullying heightened her awareness of where he and his friends were at all times. Strangely enough, he was all alone; his friends were seated along the wall behind him, not paying attention to him.

Even after his disappearance, Kay wasn't stupid enough to think he'd take it easy on her. She'd sat close to the exit, and was in the hall before anyone took notice. With luck, she'd be out the back door before her brother

"What homework?"

"Why do you care?"

"I'm only wondering, Kaitlin."

"It's none of your business," she said, her tone indicating that she was done talking.

"Alright, alright. Be that way."

And then he walked away.

Kay stood completely still for a moment, expecting him to turn and throw a water bottle, or run back and chase her. But he didn't. Even without him acting weird, that would have been evidence enough something was wrong. He left her alone, and that filled her with dread even more than if he had been about to shove her into a locker. Sarah did something to him, which means she has to do what she absolutely does not want to do.

She has to talk to Sarah again.

School went by in a blur, and in no time at all Kay was closing the front door behind her. The house was empty, so she sat on the couch to make use of her alone time. The news was on.

Kay wasn't paying much attention, but with the tv being the only sound in the house, she caught a few words every so often.

"Backed up on... off to you... the snakes are... haven't been found... back to-"

paused the TV and sat back, her mind racing.

It was a moment later when she realized that the newscaster never said which snakes were missing. She rewatched the clip over again to be sure and there was no mention of any specific snakes. Kay pulled out her phone and looked online, checking the homepage of the zoo, along with multiple articles before she found one that mentioned which snakes had gone missing. It was in the last few sentences of the article at the bottom.

Her heart dropped when one species of snake stood out to her on the list: Burmese python.

Sarah was out of her cage. Kay had no way of figuring out what she'd done to Abe to make him act so strange. And no way of figuring out how to fix it.

This wasn't what she wanted. She wanted regular Abe back, and she could just move on with life. Do whatever she needs to forget about what Sarah had tried to make her do. But Sarah had to make it so much worse. Lords above forbid something in Kay's life work out easily.

Kay's internal monologue was cut off by none other than Abe walking through the door, "What ya lookin' at there, Kaitlin?"

to stay hidden, but she let her curiosity get the better of her and went to follow him after a few minutes. The steps creaked less when she went down; she'd spent more time in the house than her brother, and knew where to avoid.

But Abe wasn't on the first floor when she got down there, and the front and back doors were still locked. That's when she noticed the basement door was cracked open. The stairwell was stuffy and covered in dust from disuse. As she descended, she could clearly hear a noise that could only be described as wet. Kay failed to suppress a gasp when she saw what it was.

Hunched back in the corner of the square basement, huddled between two stacks of boxes was Abe. He was hunched over, his back to her. When he heard her gasp, he quickly spun around, staring directly at her. With slitted eyes. Snake eyes.

Abe's- or whatever she was looking at- mouth hung open, jaw stretching almost to its chest. She wasn't sure, but she might have seen a rat tail disappear down its throat. That didn't seem unlikely to her, considering the bundle of dead rats in its hands.

It was almost like a switch had been flipped when it saw her; its posture changed