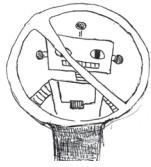




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Purple Press

Volume #24, Issue #4 February 9th, 2024

E-passes get mixed reviews

New online pass system garners varied responses from students, teachers

Beatrice Cosgrove
Staff Writer

You are sitting in a class on an average day and need to use the bathroom. What do you do? A. Go ask a teacher for a pass and proceed to the bathroom, or B. Open Clever, sign in, click on the smart pass icon, choose a teacher, select where you're going, for how long, send a pass off to your

teacher and wait for them to approve it. I would take a wild guess that A is the most popular choice, it's simply easier and more efficient. Or is it?

The SmartPasses were rolled out in late 2023 with the goal of keeping better track of students and their whereabouts through technology. "Initially it seemed

like a really good idea to be able to track all of the students that were in the hallway at any given time and where they were going..." Math teacher Tom Totushek said about his first impression. A student goes through Clever (or can download the SmartPass app) and clicks on the green 'SmartPass' icon. Then, the student fills in information

about which class they are in, where they are going, etc. The app proceeds to send an email to the teacher of the class, who must first approve it. Upon approval, a timer begins on the app for the selected amount of time and the student is free to leave the classroom.

After using a smart pass I had endless questions about what it would be like going

forward. The district has had a lot of technological advancements, including going almost completely digital since the introduction of iPads. These advancements had numerous issues, including the lack of restrictions on student iPads, which is why a large number of apps and websites were blocked. I, and I'm sure others, are hoping that the

challenges presented by the smart passes are quickly solved by the district. So, what are the issues?

From a student's perspective, the process of creating a pass can take much longer than the actual action of, say, going to get water, especially if you are in

Passes, 4

Manatee adopt year-round training



Bea Lloyd

Varsity players pose for a photo in between points at the Manatee Mowdown (left), the Manatee mixed team huddles around coach Madie Scott (right).

OWL's frisbee teams are looking to improve individual skills and team chemistry

Bea Lloyd
Staff Writer

This year more than ever the Ultimate Frisbee grind never stops. The Manatee's are making big changes this year, implementing more practice, weekly team meetings and alternate jerseys—all in preparation for the most important season of the year.

After the end of an extremely accomplished fall season, the teams reflected on their success, and how they can continue that success into the spring. The fall season is co-ed and both a mixed team and a boys team play games every Saturday morning. The mixed team went 5-1 and won their final game of the season

against Great River, historically one of their biggest rivals. The boys team went undefeated. The Manatees also hosted the first ever Manatee Mowdown Tournament, which was a great opportunity to raise money for the team and play some more frisbee outside of the regular season. The Manatees placed 2nd in Mowdown.

Fall season is the lowest commitment season for most players. Players have two practices a week, and one or two games Saturday mornings. Due to the overlap with other fall sports, fall season usually has less of a turnout numbers wise. Players often overlap and play for both the boys and mixed teams for games.

Fall season stakes are lower, so it's truly just about having fun and working on the team chemistry for spring.

Typically, winter marks the "off-season" for many players, with the occasional captain's practice on days off from school. However, the boys

Manatee, 4

What's the new state flag?

Hiroko Zeleke
Staff Writer

Water and loons and stars, oh my! After months of debate, the State Emblems Redesign Commission has decided how to best represent Minnesota on the new state flag and seal. The final design includes a white eight pointed star on a dark blue background in the vague shape of Minnesota to the left, with a lighter blue panel intersecting it on the right. A new state seal also boasts a loon surrounded by wild rice, trees, and stars—all common features of Minnesota.

More than 2,600 flag designs were submitted to the state commission before the deadline of October 30, 2023. Some fan favorite submissions included a loon with laser eyes, a picture of a Labrador, and many childlike sketches. "I would've voted for the dog [flag]," said 9th grader Moray Moore. On November 21st the commission narrowed the choices down to six flag designs and five seal designs, most of which had common features of stars, snow, greenery, and water. The seal design was finalized in early December, and three flag designs were selected as finalists a couple weeks later. On December 15th, flag design F1953 made by 24 year old Andrew Prekker was decided to be modified before being chosen. Originally, the flag included green and white stripes to represent snow and agriculture, as well as a slightly

Flag, 4

Students start prep for History Day

The school competition took place on February 7th for middle and high schoolers

Claire Ales
Staff Writer

It's that time of year again! Students across the school are gearing up their History Day projects for the school competition on February 7th. Students and teachers alike are all excited to kick off the History Day season!

Following the school contest, students that move on will have a regional competition on March 16th,

and a state competition on April 20th.

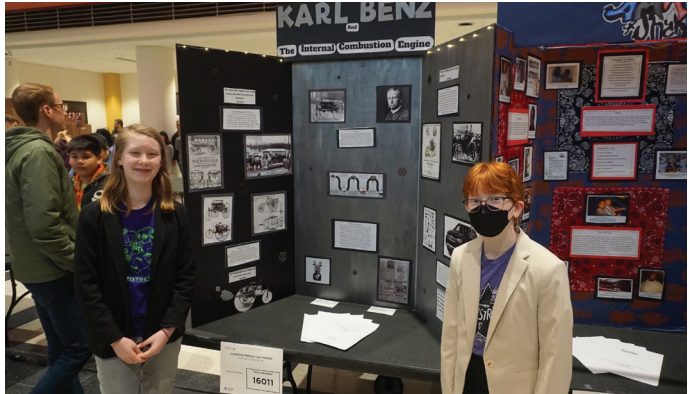
Social Studies teacher Katie Craven is excited about having the first in person school contest since 2020 and about this year's theme. "Compared to last year and the years before, Turning Points is so concrete. It's easier for students to understand and I think we will be getting a lot of good projects," said Katie.

With this year's theme,

students will have to display why they think their topic is a turning point in history in their different types of projects. This year we can expect projects from many grades, a variety of topics, and students with high hopes.

9th grader Anya Robertson has some goals for this year. "For us, nationals is definitely a goal," said Anya, who placed 3rd at state last year. 8th grader

History Day, 2



Purple Press staff photo

OWL students Luci and Josey at the State History Day competition with their exhibit board.



The Purple Press

OWL’s longest-running student newspaper was founded in 1995.

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OWL archery recap: things are looking up

Team could be approaching another state title

Maggie Jansen
Staff Writer

The OWL archery team has begun the 2023-2024 season with several team and individual placings and numerous personal bests, and it’s possible they could be looking towards another state champion title.

The team kicked off the season with the Faribault Falcon Classic in Faribault, Minnesota. Two individual archers placed in their respective categories, and a few 50s were shot. 8th grader Benji Diaz placed third in middle school boys, and 7th grader Sophie Sherman-Hoehn placed fourth in middle school girls, also shooting a 50 during a practice round. 11th grader Duncan Smith shot a 50 at a practice round as well.

This tournament was followed by the Beacon Shootout in Roseville, Minnesota. This tournament was quite successful, the team returning to Saint Paul with both teams placing, along with other individual archers. Shooting at this tournament, there were seven teams for both middle school and high school, OWL’s middle school team placing second and their high school team placing third. 11th grader Syllas Kolb placed fourth in high school boys—senior Jacob Landy following him in fifth place.

The following week was focused on the upcoming tournament on January 20th: the first OWL Open since 2019. Throughout the week, the team split their practice between shooting and preparation for the weekend. The archers set up for the tournament at Johnson High School on the



Purple Press staff photo
The team waits in between shooting rounds.



Purple Press staff photo
Archers prepare their arrows to shoot.



Purple Press staff photo
Tom hypes up the team.



Purple Press staff photo
Coaches supervise seated archers.

Friday prior, receiving help from families as well. They put up safety nets, marked floors, propped up targets, and placed down quivers—completing their composition between six and nine PM.

The team shot at seven AM, working the tournament the remainder of the day. OWL students did various tasks such as changing targets in the main gym and field house, selling concessions, and anything else they could do to help the tournament run smoothly. Many rural NASP teams traveled from around Minnesota to participate in the tournaments, from New Prague to Princeton to Minnetonka. Students who were not on the team, but rather on the Outward Bound committee, assisted with the event as well. The high school team held first place for the majority of the day with 3296 points, but were stooped down to second place shortly after Zimmerman’s high school team shot, only 64 points ahead of them. The middle school team ended in eighth place and Jacob was also ranked third in both high school boys and overall boys.

Upcoming tournaments scheduled for the team to participate in include New Prague, Princeton, Regionals in Becker, State in Rochester, and most importantly- Nationals in Louisville, Kentucky, a tournament they are working to take everybody to. At this rate, it looks like their success will continue.



BikeMag

5 craziest mountain biking trails

From Utah to the Alps, these trails push the limits of riders

Ronin Eckfeldt
Staff Writer

One of the scariest mountain bike trails in the world is the White Line in Sedona, Utah. This trail is not for the faint of heart; the trail is an off camber white line on the side of a mountain. The trail, which is along a rocky cliff, has a 100 foot drop onto the side of the mountain; the trail is only known by the naturally made white line on the side. In the middle of riding this line of death you have to make two 90 degree turns; the first turn is sharp down a 10 foot ridge type hill. The second turn is at the bottom of this small but steep hill. This turn is on to the second part the way back this way back is very like the top it is also marked by the same white line. A mistake on this trail could be fatal because of the huge drop on the side. There are no other features on the trail because the location of the trail is enough to be one of the hardest trails in the world. The trail is so well known that it even attracts spectators to watch people attempt this trail. There have been people who have lost their bike on this trail because they had to jump off but there are no recorded deaths.

The second trail is called The Portal; this trail is located in Utah close to Moab. The trail is a two mile long trail located on a cliff in Moab, Utah. The first half of the trail is very open and not said to be very difficult. The bottom half of the trail is where it gets its reputation. One part of the trail has a 200 foot drop with technical rocks and berms. This trail is rated double black and 96% of riders who ride it agree with the rating. The trail is 2 miles long and has a max -66% grade and an average of -9%. One of the hardest parts

of the trail is it loses dirt and is hard to slow down on a lot of the second section.

The third trail is the Maritime Alps trail; this trail is not for the normal biker. This trail is a skinny trail on the side of the Swiss Alps. This trail has a 500 plus foot drop and a rock wall on one side. Like the white line the trail does not have super hard to ride tech features as the main part of the trail is the huge drop on your left. There are some turns and other features but it is pretty raw. There are no recorded deaths or falls off the cliffs but it doesn’t make it any easier.

The fourth trail is called crabapple hits. This trail is located in bc Canada this is a double black jump trail with jumps that are huge this trail is located in the whistler bike park. Some of the jumps are over 50 feet in length and you go flying. This is the trail that the bike park uses to host whip offs. A whip is when in the air you turn your bike to the side and a whip off is when you see you can get the farthest side ways and look the coolest. This is one of the most known trails on the list as it is in one of the best bike parks in the world. Crabapple hits has been ridden by many professionals and more casual alike. The trail is 1,440 feet long. It is rated as double black because of the huge jumps.

The last but definitely not least story on this list is the Dakota Ridge Trail located in Denver, Colorado. The Dakota ridge trail is a very popular trail in Denver. The trail is a very rocking and bumpy ride. It is a 6 mile loop with slick off camber rocks. The trail has 700 feet of elevation and is the most technical trail on this list with big rock rolls and huge drops.

on what makes a History Day project good, we can focus on making it amazing,” said 9th grader Connie Van Genderen.

Overall, OWL students are excited to showcase their projects and work towards achieving their goals.

As of press time, results from the school competition had not been released.

Stage managers fuel theater

OWL plays wouldn’t happen without these key volunteers

Charley Cheatham
Staff Writer

You see the lights. You see the costumes. You see the sets. Most of all, you see the acting. But there is one key role in any play that is totally behind the scenes, and without them, there would be no play at all.

Who are they? Stage Managers.

So what is a stage manager? What do they do? I asked two OWL students with experience on the topic for their input. Senior Ted Dobbins has been a stage manager for three years and 8th grader Maggie Jansen is a second year stage manager.

“I would describe a stage manager as somebody who kind of runs the stage and manages both the actors and design departments,” said Maggie.

But what do they do? The answer is a little bit of everything. While all the actors focus on acting, and all the departments like costumes,

sets, and props, work on their specific jobs, stage managers generally do whatever is necessary to make the theater run smoothly.

“During rehearsals stage managers take attendance, schedule rehearsals, and help coordinate design and department heads. Stage managers also work with the actors pretty closely, helping run lines and scenes,” said Ted. “This year, I’ve been working more on the design. I’ve been working a lot with sets and props,” said Maggie, “so I usually just coordinate them with the actors and help

them with their notes.”

But it isn’t just as simple as that. According to Maggie and Ted, there are plenty of challenging parts when it comes to the job. From dealing with actor frustrations, to wrangling middle schoolers, to coordinating between different design departments, stage managers have their work cut out for them everyday, work that no one can see on the surface.

“When you’re stage manager you kind of just deal with everything,” said Maggie, “so you have to work with actors and design and a lot of the time you have to coordinate them with one another and that can be just



Purple Press staff photo
From left, stage managers Charley, Ted, and Maggie pose for a photo on the set of A Murder is Announced.

confusing, especially because there’s just so many people involved a lot of the time.”

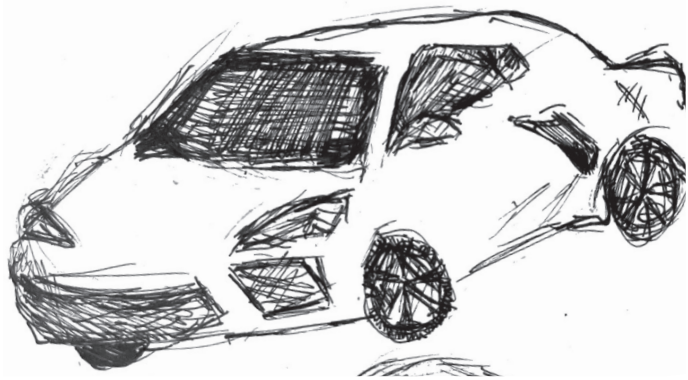
Ted commented, “A lot of the work stage managers do isn’t really seen when watching the show, and it’s also important to know that a lot of the work we do is done in the months before the show.”

It isn’t all bad though. “The best part for me as a stage manager is that you get to work with so many departments and see the show really progress and develop over time,” said Ted.

Maggie agreed. “I really enjoy when we like actually get to the performances because I just love to see everything come together,” she said, “like with all the hard work that everybody’s done it’s just nice to see.”

With every play, all of the hard work everyone puts in eventually leads up to a final performance. And while the actors are out on stage speaking their lines, the stage We’ve all been there: you’re

Stage managers, 4



Cecilia Mason

Beginner’s guide to window tint

Whether it’s carbon or ceramic tint, know before you buy

Victor Mason
Staff writer

Whether it is the hot summer sun, or the glaring winter sun, driving can sometimes be dangerous, or just plain bright. Many people get their windows tinted to help prevent the glare from the sun and keep the inside of the car cool. Window tinting isn’t as simple as it seems, as there are hundreds of combinations of darkness and type of tint that can be applied and many laws behind what is legal or not.

The percentage of visible light allowed through your car windows is called VLT: Visible Light Transmission. In the United States it is illegal to change the VLT level/tint on the windshield of a car. When it comes to the other windows of the vehicle the VLT percentage laws vary by state. In Minnesota the laws change based on what type of vehicle in question, on sedans and coupes all windows must allow more than 50% of light in, AKA 50% of tint is the darkest legal amount of tint allowed.

On SUVs and vans, front side windows must allow more than 50% of light in, on back side windows and back windows any level of tint can be used.

In southern states like Texas the laws allow for lower VLT percentages on all types of vehicles. In Texas all vehicles must allow 25% of light in front side windows and any level of tint on back side and back windows. Many southern states allow for darker tint because of the heat from the sun in the south being so much hotter. The darker window tint allows less UV rays to get into the car and is more beneficial and popular in southern states like Texas

The two main types of tint used are carbon tint and ceramic tint. Both options are good in what they do, but run

at a premium price. Carbon window tint is made up of carbon fiber particles that don’t fade over time like other window tint options. Ceramic tinting has a matte finish that many people like for aesthetic reasons. Carbon tinting also has very strong insulating features. It reduces heat from the sun that raises the vehicle’s internal temperature by about 40%. Ceramic window tint is made up of ceramic particles that won’t fade over time. Ceramic tint is the best in UV protection by blocking out more than 99% of UV rays. Unsurprisingly, ceramic tint is the most expensive out of all tint, with carbon tint coming in a close second.

“On an older vehicle like this, 50% is perfect,” said Mylan Sleet, Owner of Pristine Detail, a Detailing and Auto Spa in Saint Paul. I brought my 1996 Lexus Sc400 to Pristine Detail to have the windows tinted. I went with 50% tint and it turned out perfect. The windows are darker but not too dark, and it keeps the temperature of the car consistent, and keeps the glare of the sun away. After talking to Mylan, 50% tint is the best level of tint in Minnesota to keep the sun’s winter glare and summer heat out.

When it comes to what type of tint to go with, I would have to recommend Carbon or Ceramic tints. Although they run more expensive than other types of tint, the amount that the tints do, along with the durability they provide with not fading over time, Carbon and Ceramic tint still reign over all other types of tint. On a newer vehicle going darker to a 35% tint not only looks better, the darker tint also provides better sun protection, and a better level of privacy on the car. On older vehicles and Coupes, 50% is the best, providing better privacy and good sun protection while also staying at the legal VLT limit.

Baking Bad: amateurs take on gingerbread

Staff writers and beginner bakers Nick and Owen attempt to make these classic cookies

Nick Christopherson and Owen Belmares
Staff writers

A common practice around New Year’s is trying new things. People frequently set resolutions for themselves to motivate them to take on a new hobby, or challenge themselves somehow. So while it wasn’t exactly a resolution, in the spirit of the new year, the both of us decided to try something new and challenge ourselves at the same time. We have no kitchen experience, the only food we’ve made are sandwiches and scrambled eggs, and I (Nick) don’t even know how to turn on an oven. So naturally, we decided to try and bake the perfect gingerbread cookies.



We came to this idea on a cold December day in Journalism, when we were both struggling to come up with story ideas. I proposed that we, two people who’ve never baked before, try our hands at baking cookies over Winter Break. In the spirit of the season, gingerbread cookies seemed like the best choice. The plan had been set in motion.

The first step was to get a good recipe, but just looking one up on the internet felt like a cop out. If we were going to bake, we were going to do it RIGHT. And there was only one place where we could get an authentic recipe: grandma’s house. So I (O) traveled to my grandma’s house to procure a simple yet refined recipe.

Another thing we needed was someone to guide us through our journey: a person who could act as an official Baking Consultant. We came up with a couple candidates, but the one who got on board was our dear friend, fellow junior and well known baker (at least by the two of us) Paige Rohde. With the team assembled, the next step was to get the supplies.

I (N) had Owen send me the recipe the night before we met up, and then my mom and I did a full inventory of my kitchen to see what ingredients

or supplies we needed. I sent the shopping list to Owen, and the next day he and Paige set off for the store. We went shopping, we spent some time in traffic. But then, FINALLY, we made it to Nick’s house. It was time to Bake Bad”.

The first step was to beat butter and shortening together in a bowl. Unfortunately our (Owen & Nick’s) mistake here was not taking the butter out of the fridge. We put it in the microwave, but didn’t want it to melt, so it was only in for about four seconds. That four seconds wasn’t nearly enough. To simultaneously soften the butter and keep it from melting, we kept putting it in for three or four second intervals.

After a couple rounds of this it seemed like it might have actually been soft enough, so we put it in the bowl with Crisco. I (N) grabbed the whisk and slammed it down into the bowl, hoping it would sink through the butter easily. Instead, the whisk just sort of smacked the top of the butter and made a slight impression. I didn’t want to have to put it back in the microwave, so I just sort of went with it. Unfortunately, the shutter (shortening and butter, which looked like uncooked scrambled eggs) got stuck to the whisk several times and we had to poke it out with a butter knife. While our recipe said to beat the shutter for 30 seconds, we had taken a bit longer. As Paige recalled later on, “You guys were on the first step for like an hour.”

As we finally moved on to the second step, we realized that we had actually made a mistake before we even started the first step. Earlier, we had tried to gather some of our ingredients before we started. One of the things we needed was a ¼ cup of molasses, but the ¼ cup in my (N’s) kitchen was in the flour container. So instead we used a ½ cup and filled it up halfway with



molasses. Unfortunately we didn’t read far enough ahead in the recipe to see that we needed the ½ cup for brown sugar. So in a similar fashion to how we solved the molasses problem, we grabbed the whole cup and filled it halfway with brown sugar. It made me (N) a little nervous that we had to do that so many times. We had been

warned by both Paige and my mom that baking was a pretty exact science, so putting in too much or too little of any single ingredient could seriously mess up the final product. But, at this point, there wasn’t much we could do but keep going and hope for the best. “Trust the process” became our motto.



However, sometimes it can be hard to trust the process. We had to add sugar, brown sugar, and an egg to the shutter and mix them all together until they were “fluffy.” We started to mix them all with the whisk, but much to our dismay, the addition of new ingredients to the shutter only made it stickier, which in turn made it much more difficult to beat with the whisk. We could mix freely for about eight seconds before a huge clump would form and we’d have to grab the butter knife again to clear out the wire loops. At this point, I (O) had realized that we were doing this all wrong. This wasn’t made to be mixed by hand, this was for a stand mixer, and a stand mixer was not on the list of items to purchase. At one point, I was feeling dismayed and said “I’ve been doing this for about 10 minutes now, and it still looks like this,” pointing to the brown, clumpy mess in the bowl. Paige looked up, laughed, and said “It’s been less than three.”

That step tested our patience, but the next step introduced a new challenge. To add some bitterness to the cookies, the recipe said we needed either “sour milk” or “strong coffee.” We decided to go with the coffee because we figured it would be easier to make than the sour milk, and it would taste better. The only problem with choosing the coffee is that neither of us drink it, and Paige couldn’t figure out how to use the coffee maker in my (N’s) kitchen. Luckily, my mom came back from the errands she was running and made the coffee for us. After it was done, we had to mix it with the molasses, and put that mixture into the other one with the shutter and brown sugar.

Before we had gotten to this step, the kitchen had begun to smell pretty nice. It was actually comforting in a weird way. Not only was the sweet

smell of cookie batter filling the room sort of nostalgic, it was also a sign that we were on the right track. But molasses has a drastically different smell from cookie batter. For those who haven’t gotten a strong whiff of it, be thankful, because the best way to describe its smell is to say that it smells like expired barbeque sauce. And when that smell is mixed with the smell of very strong and bitter coffee, it can get a little hard to handle. Molasses is also very sticky, so there were various spots on the table that we had to try to avoid touching.

We were still enjoying ourselves, but I think all three of us were anxious to move along, and we only had a few steps left at that point, so we went all in. We added flour, baking soda, nutmeg, ginger, and cinnamon, and now all we had to do was beat it into the dough that would finally form into the beautiful cookies. However, when we looked at the recipe once more, one of our biggest fears was confirmed. The card said that after we added everything together, we had to “beat on low speed.”

Low speed. A setting for a stand mixer. The one thing that was not on the grocery list. We would have to mix the dough with only a whisk and our raw strength. We had no choice but to continue, so we rolled up our sleeves and got to work.



I (N) held the bowl down on the table so it wouldn’t move around, and I (O) beat the dough with the whisk. This was by far the most physically taxing part of the process. Even just holding down the bowl made my (N’s) arms ache. After about seven minutes of mixing, everything had finally been blended together.

Now that we were done mixing the dough, we divided the dough into three clumps and chilled them in the fridge. We took a much needed break. A bit later we came back, rolled the dough, cut out a bunch of different shapes with cookie cutters, and finally put the first batch in the oven.

Baking Bad, _

Interested in writing for The Purple Press?

Join Leo’s Journalism class and get your story in a future issue of the newspaper!

Nalbinding survives in a modern age thanks to Etsy

Traditional textile technique is finding new audiences on online marketplaces where makers can buy materials and sell products

Leo Scoggins
Staff Writer

Knitting is considered an old habit that people did. However, there is a textile method that is far older. Back in 793–1066 CE in Scandinavia, people would nalbind. Nalbinding was a common practice that was before knitting and crochet. Knit and crochet use loops to make garments making them unravel easier but when you nalbind you use a repeated knot pattern making the garment not unravel at all. Some stitches make nalbinding faster than knitting,

or slower, but it definitely makes warmer and thicker items. You use a needle with a short length of yarn and a needle. Nalbinding can create bags, socks, mittens, hats, nets, almost any kind of clothing if you try hard enough. Most needles are 2 ½ - 5 inches long and are made from wood, metal or bone. There is a small hole at the thickest part of the needle. Some needles are straight or curved, curved to help pick up stitches easier, but it's usually a matter of preference. The yarn is the most important part of the project and since people back then

couldn't buy it from a store they had to spin it themselves with spindles. The spindles were usually made with bone, antler, soft stones or amber. They were sticks with whorls attached. Whorls are discs with a small hole in the middle and they add weight making the spinning easier. Wool was used to make yarn for clothing, cows hair was used for milk strainers and horse hair was used for fishing line. To make softer yarn for clothes they mixed rabbit hair with wool. Today nalbinding has been taken over by knit and crochet, which is somewhat

easier and more widely known in the US. Nalbinding is still used in Peru, Iran and parts of Scandinavia. With the internet and the existence of Etsy and other online shops people who nalbind have an outlet to sell their wares. On Etsy you can find beginner kits, nalbinding needles, how-to books and nalbound items but the items come at a steep price. A pair of socks is about \$100-200, a hat is \$50-150, needles are about \$20-50 depending on what material you get.



State Emblems Redesign Committee

The new state flag embraces Minnesota's natural elements.

Flag, 1
differently shaped star. The new design was finalized on December 19th, 2023, and all the state seal and flag designs entered the public domain on December 27th.

The flag and state seal will become effective on Minnesota's 166th birthday, May 11th, 2024. The previous flag, which held the old state seal in the center, was offensive to indigenous peoples, as it depicted a pioneer with a rifle next to a racist caricature of a Native American on horseback. The State Emblems Redesign Commission, made of 19 people from various positions in the MN community and government, set out to "accurately and respectfully reflect Minnesota's shared history, resources, and diverse cultural communities," according to the commission's website.

But reactions to the new flag have been mixed. "I think it's okay. It's not a lot to look at. There's not too much to take in. But I do wish it represented more of what our state is about," said 9th grader Neve Dawson. "It's like the North Star and then the lakes. But I think that's represented badly. It's way too simple. I just don't like the color scheme," agreed Moray. That's a common complaint among Minnesotans. In an

effort to be non-offensive, it feels the commission has oversimplified the design. "I dont think it's as bad as people are making it out to be, but it's not great," said senior Hiroko Zeleke. "It's clean and it's not offensive to anybody," said 11th grader Luis Hernandez, "I actually don't mind it." The new seal has had slightly more positive reactions. "I love the seal, it's really good. It's pretty and it's got a loon," said Moray.

Not everyone is as ready to accept the new designs. Commissioners of Crow Wing County in central MN have discussed drafting a resolution aimed at Governor Tim Waltz and other lawmakers, even bringing up the idea of putting the issue on their ballot. This wouldn't prevent the flag from becoming effective in the county, but it will ensure the county's complaints are formally on the record. Several other states have already gone through the process of changing their flags. Utah and Mississippi both changed their designs to more accurately represent their state's history, and Michigan, Illinois, and Maine have also considered it. "Our flag [was] in desperate need of changing," said Neve, "...I'm just gonna go ahead and say it's such an improvement."

Manatee, 1
varsity team (and hopefully the girl's team) will be traveling to the Neuqua Knockout tournament in Illinois on May 4th and 5th. The tournament is a national qualifier, and a huge opportunity for the teams. This year there has been significantly more year-round involvement across the teams. Danny Hobday is an 11th grader who is HIGHLY involved in frisbee year round. This past year, Danny played for multiple club teams in the summer, as well as playing fall and spring with the Manatees. "After fall usually there is a break in the action until spring, but this year we are implementing winter practices twice a week before school for about an hour and a half at the West Side Dome, which will help a lot for the upcoming spring season." A push to have more involvement during the winter is a great opportunity for players to get in conditioning, and practice new skills that they can utilize during the showcase season.

Spring is the biggest season of the year for high school ultimate. Teams have practice twice a week, games once a week, and usually play three tournaments over the course of the season. There is usually the largest amount of participation

this season, and the boys are usually able to have both a JV and Varsity team. "This spring season is going to be so good. I'm really looking forward to Neuqua which is a tournament in Rockford, Illinois and is a national qualifying tournament. We've been



Beatrice Lloyd

The Manatees hosted their first tournament, the Mow-down, this fall.

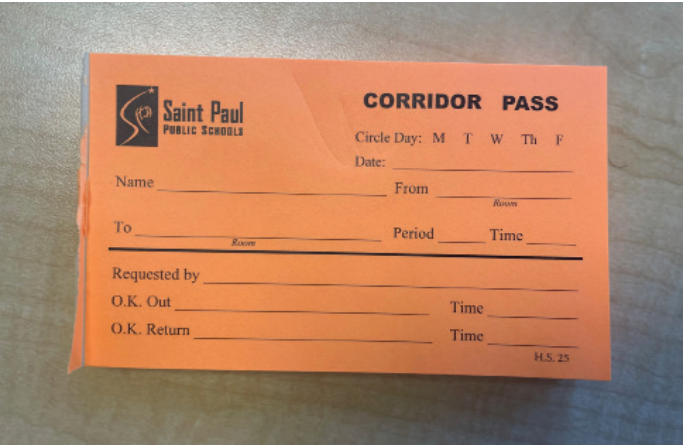
doing fundraising and even made our own tournament to make a bulk of the money. It's been a blast playing with the Manatees so far and the team is taking it really seriously this year so I'm very excited for the level of frisbee we will be playing in the spring. I don't want to jinx us but I think with the practices over the winter and all of the people on the team stepping up we could make a run in the state tournament and place in the top 3-5 teams," said Danny. "I prefer playing in the spring, because I'm the closest

with that team, compared to my Superior team that I played with in the summer, and the fall league team which is mixed and a different dynamic," said Gabby Govrik who is an eleventh grader on the team and has been playing all of high school, "the spring also

holds all of the club tryouts for summer and some club teams start in the late spring." Club frisbee allows players to participate in the summer, usually with higher stakes, and with a range of players from across the metro. For Danny, summer is the most intensive season, "For MSP we started a little bit into summer. Summer is really where it kicks in. I played for Minnesota Superior and Minnesota Star Power (MSP) which added up to five days a week. The other two days were also filled with frisbee. I held

Passes, 1
Tom, Leo or Preston's room, which the water fountain and bathroom are right outside of, so do you use a pass in those classes or not? Social studies teacher Katie Craven answered that burning question, "Probably for the bathroom, I would say yes [use a smartpass]...that way we know where you are and if something happens, like a fire drill or if we have a lockdown or something like that, at least we can look and be like 'oh, we know that Beatrice is in the bathroom right now,' and if it's my classroom and even Leo's and it's just the water fountain, then, no [you don't need a smartpass]," she said. But it can all depend on the teacher. "...some teachers are really strict about you [using] a smart pass. But others are kind of like 'if

it's right next to the door...oh, yeah, just go.' Because it's not like you're traveling that far away from the classroom," 9th grader Claire Ales said about her experiences as a student. From a teacher's perspective, it's even more difficult. Constantly staying near a computer and checking emails can tie them down to



Purple Press staff photo

Physical passes are ways of the past now.

it needs to be -- as far as a kid who just wants to use the restroom," said English teacher Leo Bickelhaupt. The positives are that hall monitoring is taken to a new level. When a student asked for a pass previous to the smartpasses, the only way to stop hall wandering, skipping class, etc. was to deny them a pass, and if given one, there was a possibility that teacher would not see the student again in their class that day. With the SmartPasses, checking on students whereabouts is much easier, as teachers and faculty can see where the student requested to go, when the pass was requested and a history of student pass records that can be used to find patterns.

Stage managers, 2
reading a book, and you know exactly what's going to happen long before it even does. Maybe it's that these two characters will fall in love by the end, even if they're going to will-they-won't-they throughout the whole book first. Maybe it's that these people, despite being the main character's parents, are going to be completely missing from the narrative of most of the story. And that character definitely isn't dead, even though the author may want you to think so. These tropes come up over and over again, and while not all of them are the best, many of them are amazing. I'm going to be talking about some of the most common or prominent tropes that I've encountered, as well as several smaller ones that I just really like. But first, what is a trope? Merriam-Webster defines a trope as "a common or overused theme or device", basically the same thing as a cliché. I would say that a trope is a plot device or element in some kind of creative story that comes up multiple times in multiple different stories. As senior Hiroko Zeleke put it, "Two is a coincidence, three is a trope." For the purposes of this article, I'm counting just

about any recurring plot point as a trope that I can cover. Let's start with a few tropes that are very common - I would be surprised if you hadn't encountered a form of these tropes at least once. For instance, the Absent Parents trope. In lots of middle grade or YA fiction, it's pretty common for the main character's parents to be dead or absent from the narrative in some way - Percy Jackson having to save his mom from Hades in The Lightning Thief, Dipper and Mabel having left their parents to stay with their great-uncle in Gravity Falls, or just about any time the main character finds themselves in another dimension, leaving their parents back at home. This trope is pretty common due to the assumption that teen readers are uninterested in reading about parents. The idea is that, as Hiroko put it, "Adults have their own issues that teenagers can't relate to because they're not at that point in life, and teenagers like having people their own age to relate to." This is why many MG/YA writers may choose to leave the parents (and sometimes, adults in general) out of the narrative when writing.

Senior Spotlight

Jonas Ruberg



What pronouns do you use?
He/him

How long have you been at OWL?
Since 6th grade, but I joined, like, halfway through first quarter.

What are your plans for next year?
Ooh, go to a college, ideally in a big city, still not sure where that city'll be, or what I'll do at that college.

What's been your favorite class in high school?
APUSH. It was difficult but super enjoyable.

What extracurriculars are you involved in?
Theater and GSA.

Favorite field work experience or school trip and why?
Camp Wapsi. It felt like we were getting a different vibe and different oppotrunites. I recauked a pool.

If you had a walk up song, what would it be?

That One Little Kid ...

What pronouns do you use?

How tall are you?

What's your favorite book, movie, or TV show?

Who's your favorite senior?

What is your favorite thing about OWL so far?

What extracurriculars do you plan on getting involved in at OWL?

Rating Taylor Swift's discography

Part two of the complete discography review of the famed singer

Olivia Trobaugh
Staff Writer

The first part of this story ran on December 22nd in Issue 3 of The Purple Press.

Fearless (Taylor's version) (2021). This was the first album she re-recorded but it was too country for me sorry, 4/10

"You belong with me"-- It's an amazing song that I have loved for years and years.

"Mr. Perfectly fine"-- Sounds like a cool love song like one that someone would sing or write for you when you're in your first relationship.

"The way I loved you"-- Intro is too long and I kinda was wondering where the song began, other than that it was pretty good. "And I miss screaming and fighting and kissing in the rain and its 2:00 a.m. and I'm cursing your name" now for this lyric it really made me think of how high school relationships were in the early 2000s that were based off of Disney movies that were also from the early 2000s to 2010s, now I may be wrong because I have never been in a relationship before, or as it should be pretty obvious I'm an 8th grader so I have not the slightest idea how high school goes.

"Today was a fairytale"-- IDK why but it sounded like it was from Debut I'm sorry 4/10.

"We were happy"-- Same as the last one.

Red (Taylor's version) (2021). 9/10 album I love it.

"22"-- 100/10 song, nothing else. "We won't be sleeping" this lyric I think most students here at OWL can relate to, when at the end of the quarter or semester trying to cram for studying or to get late work done and turned in to try and keep from having a bad grade.

"Stay stay stay"-- Very upbeat what can I say this was the first album to come out that I really listened to.

"Come back...be here"-- A bit too sad for me and a big contrast from the rest of the album.

"Ronan"-- This is so damn sad, the music, and then there's the reason for writing it.

"Better man"-- I don't know who this song is for or about, but who hurt you Taylor back when this was written.

Midnights (2022). 7/10 I liked this one but it just reminded me too much of Reputation.

"Lavender haze"-- The bridge and song aren't the best but it can grow on you if you listen to it enough.

"You're on your own, kid"-- I freaking love this song and

I'm not really sure who doesn't. "You're on your own, kid, you always have been" this line I think can hit hard for a lot of people. To me I don't think it means that there has never been someone there for you, but rather that if something happens to you that is a life altering experience to you in probably a more negative way, it can really make you take a step back and reconsider how past experiences could have affected you in the same way, but you might not have realized how it affected you back then and it can make you think how truthful people have been to you and if they truly are good people for you, or rather if they may just be using you, and that really makes you feel like you have always been on you own. Or it can talk to the people that have always been alone and how it can affect them in growing up or devolving as a person.

"Bejeweled"-- Very upbeat compared to the rest of the album that I have listened to.

"Vigilante shit"-- Villain era that's all. It's just like you would listen to this if you really screwed over and wanted revenge.

"Mastermind"-- Same as the last one but instead of wanting revenge like breaking their car it would be more like manipulating the person.

Speak now (Taylor's version) (2023). 10/10 album I love speak now.

"Long live"-- It's a nice melody that I really just like to listen to.

"Ours"-- Calming like sunset by the beach.

"Foolish one"-- This is a country for me.

"Back to December"-- I did "August" already so I had to do this one, it's not the best but it's okay. The music and melody just didn't really speak to me. "I'm so glad you made time to see me" now this was the opening lyric, but it can really make you think about how you never really know how happy you can make others by just trying to see them or to stop by and talk to them and I really think that this song really portrayed that.

"Enchanted"-- 1000/10 song, I love it, the words, melody, all of it.

My overall rating of Taylor Swifts albums from most to least favorite is 1989 (1000/10), Speak now T.V (10/10), Reputation (9/10), Lover (9/10), Red T.V (9/10), Evermore (8/10), Midnights (7/10), Folklore (7/10), Taylor Swift (5/10), and Fearless T.V (4/10).



Purple Press staff photo

Nick and Owen with their professional Baking Consultant, Paige.

Baking Bad, 3

They baked at 350° for seven minutes. When we took them out, we saw that the shapes we had originally made with the cookie cutters were distorted as the dough expanded, so they didn't look as pretty as at least I (N) had hoped. We let them cool for a few minutes, and then the only thing left was to try them.

I (N) picked up one cookie shaped like a Christmas tree. This was the crucial moment. We had worked hard for nearly three hours to get to this moment. We had gathered ingredients, got them all over our hands, made intense physical efforts, picked my cat up off the counter many times to, and now we had finally baked them. I had so many thoughts running through my head as the tree-shaped pastry was nearing my mouth. I bit down on the cookie and much to my surprise, it was actually good. It wasn't too bitter or too sweet, and the thinness of it gave it a great consistency.

I (N) kept the rest of the dough in my freezer for a few days, and the day before we came back from Winter Break I got it out and made more batches. I gathered plenty of the cookies to give some to Owen and Paige, and they handed a lot of them around for people to try. Here are some of the reviews we got:

"7/10. I think it would be good with some frosting." - Mae Heeringa, 12th grade.

"I think they did something that gingerbread cookies rarely do, which is that the center was soft. I'd give it an 8.5/10. You should try putting vanilla in the next batch." - Jonas Ruberg, 12th grade.

"These aren't bad. Maybe a minute too long in the oven, I don't know. It's good though. It's simple but refined. Taste-

wise I'm saying that it's in, like, the high 7s. I'm gonna go 6.8/10, and that's mostly texture based." - Luke Turvold, social studies teacher.

"6.5/10. I think it's too hard, it could be softer or chewier. But the taste was pretty good." - Theo Kimball, 11th grade.

We were over the moon because of how much people liked the cookies (everyone finished their whole cookie!), and we appreciated that people seemed to be fully honest when giving their opinions. So if you're one of the people that left us a review, thank you.

Another person who left a review was our professional Baking Consultant herself, 11th grader Paige Rohde. "I thought that they turned out well and I was very proud of you guys," she said. "I was not sure if they were gonna turn out, but we had to trust the process and it turned out really well." Paige, we'd both like to thank you sincerely not only for your kind words, but also for being such a big help to us in this whole endeavor (also for reminding me [N] to preheat the oven).

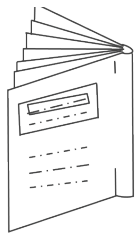
And with that, we had done it. Days of planning and labor had rewarded us with a job well done and some lovely reviews. Perhaps more importantly, doing this on a whim taught us something. Trying new things is how you enjoy life, how you keep things exciting, and how you can feel good about yourself. So maybe the next time one of your friends says something like "Hey, wouldn't it be funny if we did ____?" Say, "Yeah, it would. Let's do it." (Unless Mikko or Duncan said it, DO NOT HEAR THEM OUT).

Upcoming Events

- February 12th:** National African American Parent Involvement day (NAAPID)
- February 15th:** African American culture night
- February 19th:** Presidents' Day (no school)
- February 28th:** Wilson Library field trip (History Day)
- February 28th - March 2nd:** FIRST Robotics Competition Northern Lights regional tournament (Duluth, MN)
- March 6th:** Better Crew Bureau leadership retreat



Reviews ‘n’ stuff



Olivia Rodrigo's album GUTS was released September 8th.

GUTS hits hard

Olivia Rodrigo's latest album is an emotional roller coaster

Maisy Wall
Staff Writer

One Disney star to pop artist. We've seen this stereotype play out many times with people like Sabrina Carpenter, Selena Gomez, and Demi Lovato, some of which have gone much farther than others, and Olivia Rodrigo is one of them.

The 20-year-old TV actor and singer started out her career at 12 years old in an Old Navy commercial. Bet you weren't expecting that! Shortly after that, she appeared in the 2015 film An American Girl: Grace Stirs Up Success. Rodrigo's first Disney debut was in 2016, when she co-starred alongside Madison Hu in Bizaardvark. Since then, Rodrigo has appeared in the mockumentary series High School Musical: The Musical: The Series as the female lead, Nini. Her career as a musician began with her debut album SOUR in May of 2021.

GUTS, the album I will be reviewing in this article was released on September 8th, 2023, reaching 60 million streams on the first day, surpassing SOUR by nearly 55 million streams. GUTS has 12 tracks, which, in my opinion, is the perfect amount for an album- not so short that it leaves you feeling incomplete or dissatisfied, but not so many songs that you grow bored and the songs start to all sound the same. I will only be reviewing seven songs, enough to give you a general idea of what topics the album covers and the overall feeling of it.

The album starts off strong with the song Olivia herself admitted to being one of her favorites she's ever written. "all-american bitch" makes for a wonderful anthem of young women in the United States, facing double standards between themselves and men, and demanding unrealistic expectations related to things like behavior and body image. It starts out soft and quiet (similar to society's expectations for women...) but eventually becomes

loud, strong, and angry, with throaty vocals (kind of like how women feel on the inside but don't want to admit it for fear of being judged and called "emotional". Coincidence? I think not.) I give this song -- my second favorite on the album -- a solid 10/10, too relatable to resist.

Next is the fifth track on the album, "ballad of a homeschooled girl." This is an exceptionally fun song to scream, even if you can't relate, which I certainly can't. After this song, however, I grew a new respect for homeschoolers, especially those who, like Rodrigo, were forced into as a result of child acting. 8/10.

Marking the halfway point of the album is "making the bed," in which Rodrigo voices the things in her life she wishes she could change, but admits it was all her own doing. Many of my friends shared that they can relate to this song and some even said it's their favorite on the album. While I have nothing against it and I think it's a well written song with a clever melody and emotional lyrics, I can't relate to it and I don't exactly understand a lot of the metaphors and struggles she talks about. For me personally, it makes me upset when other people understand and relate to something I don't, especially when I try very hard to, searching every lyric for a clue I can use to crack the code. 4/10. Now before I spark a bunch of controversy on this matter, I am aware that many people can relate to "making the bed" and would give it a very different rating. This is just my opinion, and that goes for the rest of the songs too. You are entitled to your opinion just as I am entitled to mine, so please don't come for me. Thanks!

Next is another of my favorite songs on the album, the beautiful and tender "logical." This song isn't exactly relatable for me, but

GUTS, 10

Tropes make or break books

The overused literary device is more complex than you imagined

Anson Lind
Staff Writer

We've all been there: you're reading a book, and you know exactly what's going to happen long before it even does. Maybe it's that these two characters will fall in love by the end, even if they're going to will-they-won't-they throughout the whole book first. Maybe it's that these people, despite being the main character's parents, are going to be completely missing from the narrative of most of the story. And that character definitely isn't dead, even though the author may want you to think so. These tropes come up over and over again, and while not all of them are the best, many of them are amazing. I'm going to be talking about some of the most common or prominent tropes that I've encountered, as well as several smaller ones that I just really like.

But first, what is a trope? Merriam-Webster defines a trope as "a common or overused theme or device", basically the same thing as a cliché. I would say that a trope is a plot device or element in some kind of creative story

that comes up multiple times in multiple different stories. As senior Hiroko Zeleke put it, "Two is a coincidence, three is a trope." For the purposes of this article, I'm counting just about any recurring plot point as a trope that I can cover.

"Two is a coincidence, three is a trope."

Let's start with a few tropes that are very common - I would be surprised if you hadn't encountered a form of these tropes at least once. For instance, the Absent Parents trope. In lots of middle grade or YA fiction, it's pretty common for the main

character's parents to be dead or absent from the narrative in some way - Percy Jackson having to save his mom from Hades in The Lightning Thief, Dipper and Mabel having left their parents to stay with their great-uncle in Gravity Falls, or

just about any time the main character finds themselves in another dimension, leaving their parents back at home. This trope is pretty common due to the assumption that teen readers are uninterested in reading about parents. The idea is that, as Hiroko put it, "Adults have their own issues that teenagers can't relate to

because they're not at that point in life, and teenagers like having people their own age to relate to." This is why many MG/YA writers may choose to leave the parents (and sometimes, adults in general) out of the narrative when writing.

Another common trope - this one for sci-fi stories in particular - is the Planet of Hats. This is when the main characters wind up in a new place, which is defined almost entirely by one singular trait - like a planet where everybody wears a funny hat. For instance, in the Star Trek: The Next Generation episode "Darmok", the crew discovers an alien culture which communicates only by referencing stories and legends. It's an extremely interesting idea, which is used very well in the episode, but the aliens don't have a single notable trait outside of their language. Depending on the circumstances, this trait can work well, but it's generally more interesting to the reader to have a much more interesting, fleshed-out



Aria Kulseth

Tropes, 12

5 party games to play with friends

These fast paced PvP and co-op round video games are thrilling

Erik Imholte and Grayden Smith
Staff Writers

Party games are a classic game genre which revolve around fast-paced PvP or co-op rounds. They're designed to play with a group of friends and they're often chaotic and funny. Here's our list of the top five.

Number five: TowerFall Ascension.

TowerFall Ascension is a 16-bit four-player PvP platformer developed by Madeline Thorson, the same person who made Celeste, under her Maddy Makes

Games label. You can pick from a variety of heroes clad in their own distinctive colors, and fight with a series of arrows with different abilities, like bomb arrows, lightning arrows, and drill arrows. The game is incredibly chaotic and you can activate many different modifiers to change the experience, like flight, seeking arrows, and double jumping. Overall, the game is a ton of fun and the last one standing wins.

Number four: Stick Fight: The Game.

Stick Fight: The Game is a game where you are a stick figure and you try to kill your

friends. There are lots of guns and weapons to use as well as your fists. There are plenty of maps and some even have a boss fight where the first player to get the boss item, can have overpowered powers and the non-boss players try to kill them. There are also lots of guns that shoot snakes and maps that have snakes. Stick Fight: The Game is just a chaotic and fun game to play with your friends where you beat them up.

Number three: Gang Beasts

In Gang Beasts you play as light, silly, Play-Doh like characters who fight in a variety of maps. Your goal is

to throw others off of the map, and you can attack them with punches, headbutts, and kicks. The physics are really funny and they allow for some cool tricks to help you win fights. The characters also make really funny poses when they're knocked down and they rag doll. The maps include a meat factory, a train, an aquarium with a hostile octopus, and an incinerator. The game overall is really funny and it's a bit glitchy which adds to the fun. The only issue is that the online multiplayer is a little finicky and it's hard to connect

Party Games, 11

Percy Jackson show is a must see

Some changes made, but the series "is living up to expectations"

Claire Ales
Staff Writer

Gaining 13.3 million views in the first six days after its release, and becoming the top Disney Branded Television premiere of all time, the Percy Jackson TV series has taken the world by storm and the show is totally worth the watch!

The series kicked off the first season with a two-episode drop on December 19th, 2023, and will continue to release episodes weekly, on Tuesday nights at 8:00 pm.

The Percy Jackson and the Olympians TV series stars Walker Scobell

as Percy Jackson, Leah Jeffries as Annabeth Chase, and Aryan Simhadri as Grover Underwood. Guest appearances include Adam Copeland as Ares the God of War, and Lin-Manuel Miranda as Hermes the God of Travelers.

Since the release of the book The Lightning Thief in 2005, the Percy Jackson book series has gained a lot of popularity. Fans were especially excited at the announcement of a TV series adaptation after a movie adaptation fell short and left most Percy Jackson fans



DISNEY/David Bukach

Walker Scobell stars in the Percy Jackson TV show.

disappointed. But, so far, the Percy Jackson series is living up to expectations.

Unlike most authors, Rick Riordan was closely involved in the process of making the TV series. Rick and his wife Becky were among the executive producers of the series. This ensured that the series would be as close to the book as possible and in my opinion it definitely shows.

The Percy Jackson TV series did a great job of casting the characters. So far all of the actors have brought the characters to life just how I have imagined them and all of

Percy Jackson, 10

AI threatens the entertainment industry

Generative artificial intelligence is being used to write movie scripts

Kaden McNamara
Staff Writer

Imagine if you will, a world where everybody has to do the manual labor and all the entertainment and art is done exclusively by robots in the most uncanny valley way possible. Unfortunately you don't need to imagine the possibility as AI is already starting to replace many people in the entertainment and art industries and they're struggling to not have these plagiarism machines run them out of their livelihoods and replace all of their work with soulless regurgitations.

AI has many various forms that it takes, but let's start with AI generated art. AI generated art is created by scanning the work of artists and feeding it into the machine to create a sort of hodgepodge of different artists styles and work, commonly called scraping. Scraping is almost never consented to by the artist whose art is taken, and neither do they get credit, all they get is their hard, hard work stolen, and closer to companies replacing them with AI.

Ignoring the scraping, the resulting art that gets generated is stuffed full of stereotypes and biases. For example if you make it draw, say, an Indian person, almost 100% of the time it will be an old man with a beard, an orange turban, and sometimes

it's a Native American person instead, a Mexican person will be a man in a sombrero, and an autistic person will be a depressed white teenage boy, that unless you put filters that make it otherwise, will be covered with puzzle pieces representative of Autism Speaks. This doesn't just apply to people either, places and objects like flags also get heavily stereotyped in the art. This is due to the fact that this isn't real artificial intelligence, it would be best described as "machine learning" instead. It isn't actually intelligent, it just learns patterns and puts down those patterns of objects and people in the patterns of art styles it has stolen.

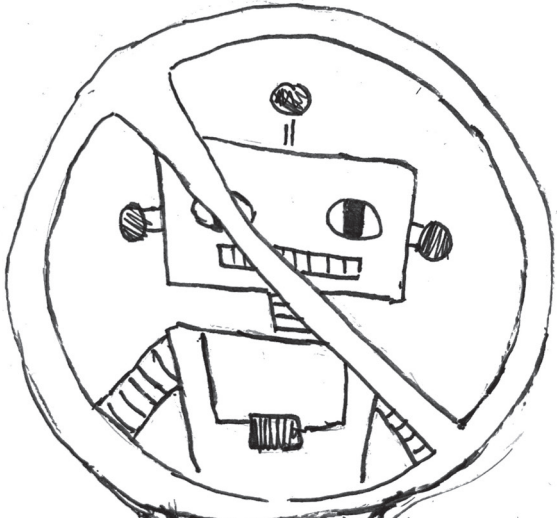
Now if you're an artist and this is sounding scary to you, there is a way to safeguard art against AI. The University of Chicago has a freely downloadable system called Glaze, and is working on developing a second system called Nightshade. Glaze works by understanding the AI models that are training on human art and computing a set of minimal changes that make the art unchanged to human eyes but to an AI it's a completely different artstyle. It isn't a perfect defense to ever evolving AI scraping but it is an effective one. While Nightshade works or at least will work by effectively poisoning the AI output, dogs

become cats, cars become cows, cakes become toasters and so forth. These aren't the perfect defense to the ever evolving AI scraping but they are effective ones, and free ones.

On the other hand, AI art's counterpart, AI writing, works in a very similar way. It acts somewhat like a far more complicated and advanced version of your phone's autocomplete, and predictive text, that instead of learning how you write, it is trained by scraping pieces of writing on the internet. Particularly there is one spot on the internet with millions of unpaid pieces of writing on it, created purely for hobby, that being the volunteer fan run website of Archive of Our Own or commonly called AO3.

The very nature of AO3 makes it very vulnerable to AI

scraping as it is not any sort of social media but just an archive for fan written works, as the name may suggest, fan works that, mind you, are not bringing in any money or recognition, only pleasure from a hobby. In response to AI, many authors have locked their works so that only users with accounts can read them, a worry that is not at all helped by a certain brand of entitled reader that will take still updating, uncompleted works, or abandoned ones and feed them into AI, to "get an ending." Not only is this feeding into AI in a detrimental way to writers, it is incredibly insulting to the writer and heavily disheartens them from writing. Not just the AI itself is harmful here, as the very server costs millions of dollars to run and is terrible for the environment,



Evelyn Pennington

and as a result, the company behind ChatGPT and other AI programs like it, OpenAI, is currently at risk of having to shut down the servers.

Other than stealing from hobbyist writers there is another way that AI is undermining genuine writers, that being against scriptwriters. Currently studio executives are actively using AI as writers in a poor attempt to avoid paying their actual writers. Fortunately the current WGA deal that recently got made protects writers from that, with limits on forced AI usage, knowledge of AI usage, AI training, and AI not being considered source material or copyrightable, under MBA or other law.

Though AI writing isn't the only AI subclass that people making entertainment have to fear. AI is also being used by companies via deepfakes. Deepfakes are when somebody's likeness is artificially plastered onto another's body, via AI. This is concerning for many reasons, not the least of which is the fact that if you have your face put into the system you could have your face eternally being used for things that you have no idea about, let alone consented to. Studio executives are exploiting this as a way to avoid paying their actors, except for only the things that the actors actually

did, an example of this can be seen in the background actors of Disney's Prom Pact. As a result the restriction of AI has become one of the biggest requirements for the SAG-AFTRA strike.

However not everything here is considered safe for work. On the nsfw side of this debacle, deepfakes are also being used to create pornography of people without their knowledge. While doing so of celebrities likeness is the most common way that that is done, it is also not uncommon for this nonconsensual deepfake pornography to use the likeness of absolutely anyone it can. Particularly minority women in high school appear to be a very common target for this.

But stealing one's appearance isn't the only feature that AI steals. It also has the ability to replicate one's voice to say anything you want, in that person's voice. Recently it has been improving at replicating tone and emotion in voice as well. But that is exclusive to the voices of those that can consent or not consent to it as there are current attempts to have AI replicate the voices of deceased famous people. "These recreations are, at their very best, a poor facsimile of greater people, but

Anti AI, 11



Evelyn Pennington

Tulsa King came to streaming on Paramount+ in 2023.

Tulsa King is enjoyable for all

Carlos Amaya
Staff Writer

Imagine you are a mobster who has been in prison for the last 25 years, you used to rule New York City but now you find yourself all alone in Tulsa, Oklahoma with no connections or knowledge of the city. You are tasked with setting up an operation, using your physical strength, experience, charisma and loads of money you must take over Tulsa.

Tulsa King is a 2023 TV show streaming on Paramount+, it stars Sylvester Stallone as Dwight "the General" Manfredi, Jay Will as Tyson and Domenick Lombardozzi as Charles "Chickie" Invernizzi to name a few. So far there is one season

with nine episodes but a second season is expected.

Tulsa King follows Dwight "The General" Manfredi, a ex-mafia capo who was just released from prison after 25 years for murder. After being released he returns to New York only to find out his old mob family has moved on without him. When his family learns of Dwights' return they decide to send him to make money for them in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As he starts to make connections in Tulsa he encounters a rival gang who threaten to drive his crew out of town. Across the episodes Dwight uses a combination of his know-how of the business, charisma and violence to build his new mob in Tulsa while

Tulsa Kings, 9

Mexican WhiteBoy is enthralling

Matt de la Peña's book discusses identity, race, and privilege

Joseph Sierra Zepeda
Staff Writer

When I first chose the book, my attention was brought by the title of the book. The words Mexican whiteboy are not usually put together like that so I think that it was brave to put such an interesting title to this book.

Danny Lopez is mixed-race. He's kinda stuck between his Mexican side and the mostly white surroundings he grew up in. Danny wants to figure out who he is. Especially since his Mexican dad hasn't been around. This leaves Danny feeling kinda lost and wanting

to know more about that part of himself. While he's dealing with all this Danny turns to baseball, his big passion, and becomes buds with Uno who is a cool and street-smart guy that is around his age. They bet against good street baseball players that Danny could strike them out. They mainly achieve this because Uno puts in time to research some of the best baseball players around them. Uno becomes an important friend to Danny, giving him a sense of belonging. Together they face the challenges of growing up, dealing with friendships, loyalty, and trying to figure out their identities.

Mexican Whiteboy was written by Matt de la Peña and is an amazing book. This book is about a teenager named Danny Lopez who's mixed race. It talks about how he deals with being both Mexican and growing up in a mostly white neighborhood.

The book is set in National City California. They are living in what the book calls "El Barrio" where people in the summer are brought together by baseball games. They play a game of baseball and whoever hits the ball as many times or strikes somebody out wins the pot. The pot is usually \$30 or more.

The story gets interesting when Danny decides he wants to go to Mexico to find his dad and learn more about being Mexican. This trip becomes a huge deal for Danny's self-discovery. Mexican Whiteboy is not just about Danny's struggles but also talks about bigger stuff like race, fitting in, and how different cultures come together. Uno's friendship adds a cool layer, showing how important real connections are when you're figuring out who you are.

The book does a great job talking about the main

Mexican WhiteBoy, 10

Web-slinger Miles Morales is back

Spider-Man 2, the sequel video game, came out on October 20th

Oscar Mons
Staff Writer

Swinging through the city, webbing various enemies to walls and defeating evil super villains in an immense, complex and visually appealing map, it's none other than your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man! The much anticipated sequel game came out on October 20 of last year and has stunned its audience beyond expectation. Spider-Man 2 is the sequel to the first game, Marvel's Spider Man (2018), and its expansion Spider-Man: Miles Morales (2020).

For me, the game had

a lot to live up to, the first one was brilliant and blew people away. While the first one was groundbreaking for superhero games, Spider Man: Miles Morales only added to its success. Together the games sold over 33 million copies in 2022. This made people skeptical of the third game's success as a sequel. However while this may have posed a challenge to its developer Insomniac Games, they certainly delivered. The game sold 5 million copies in only its first ten days. It's considered to be one of the best superhero games of all time. It was released for

PlayStation and exclusive to the PS5 which resulted with fans on Xbox, PC or PS4 unable to play immediately at launch. Preordering the game was 70 dollars and also gave you several skins for Peter and Miles. Prices for the game now stand at around 69.99. Gameplay for the game is around 18-20 hours to complete all the main quests but contains many other side quests in-game.

The new game involves both Peter and Miles and during the game you can switch between using both of them. The previous Spider-Man game involved playing

as Miles towards the end, but was primarily focused on Peter and Spider-Man; or Miles Morales is the opposite. But Spider-Man 2 enables you to seamlessly switch between the two heroes when completing quests and otherwise just exploring the city. In terms of graphics, Spider-Man 2 isn't a whole lot better than the first one, however the two previous ones were known for having incredible and in-depth graphics so expansion wasn't necessary.

For gameplay the new Spider-Man offers a new set of villains, Hunters, and an

Spider Man, 10

New Hulu show earns 5 stars

Black Cake addresses issues such as sexual assault and racism

Mya Chandler
Staff writer

A young Jamaican teen runaway bride named Covey disappears into the coast of the Jamaican sea. Right after rumors spread around that she drowned in the Jamaican seas; others on the island believe she is a fugitive on the run for the murder of her adult husband the day of their wedding.

This conflict sets the tone for the hulu show Black Cake.

Black Cake has a story adapted by Marissa Jo Cerar, and is based on the New York Times Bestselling book written by Charmaine Wilkinsonwriter. Marissa Jo Cerar is the producer of hit series like Netflix's 13 Reasons Why, Freeform's The Fosters, Fox's Shots Fired, and Hulu's hit show, and The Handmaid's Tale. She is a NAACP Image Award and Humanitas

Prize winning writer and producer, focusing her efforts on projects that explore the intersectionality of the human experience through character-driven and female forward stories. Black Cake is a gripping story of tragic family trauma, and outdated social norms, with a twist of murder mystery.

The story takes place in multiple places, first starting

in Jamaica, Covey's home country, later taking place in Italy, Scotland, England and Southern California. Broken up into decades, the story starts off in the 1960s when a young Covey is victim to a child marriage with a much older man because of her fathers gambling addiction. Typically the episodes start off with Covey as an older woman speaking about her

past life to her two adult children via recordings she made on her phone for when she passes away. Each episode Covey's children listen to one recording, learning about what their mothers life was like before they were born, the secrets, the lies and the tragedies that occurred in her life.

One of the things I like about the show is that it addresses real life issues such as sexual assault within the workplace by people in power in the 1960s, and the need to hush and not come fourth about the assault in fear of losing their job, as well as family dynamics that hold old views on things such as same sex relationships. In the show Covey's daughter Benny is shown to be in a relationship with another woman and she



Black Cake was created by Marissa Jo Cerar and produced by Oprah.

Black Cake, 9

Top 5 most heart wrenching films

These classic heart-wrenching movies never fail to make you cry

Kiara Steiner
Staff writer

Have you ever found yourself seeking that sweet emotional release only a good old sob would fulfill? Well, you've come to the right place. After many inquiries, and my own research I have compiled a list of some of the most gut-wrenching films out there.

Note that this list is more about films that make the tears flow, instead of movies that are generally depressing throughout (although some do still fit in this category). Some of these movies are pretty light-hearted most of the way through, but are included based on a pinnacle moment that tugs on your heartstrings. Also, just because a movie makes you cry—doesn't mean it's good. So I've only included enjoyable, well-made movies, instead of cheesy and cliché "the dog dies at the end" kind. I tried to go for some hidden

gems as well, so as to not be cliché.

A lot of these movies depict triggering topics such as abuse and death so if you think that would affect you please look up the warnings before watching any of them.

At number five I've chosen Good Will Hunting. This movie is about Will Hunting, a 20-year-old working at MIT because he was placed there by his parole program as a janitor. He is discovered to be a mathematical genius after solving a problem written by Professor Gerald Lambeau on a blackboard meant to challenge his students. Will ends up getting into a fight with a gang and is arrested after he attacks a police officer who was trying to break up the fight. After Professor Lambeau sits in on his court appearance he offers that if Will agrees to study mathematics under his supervision and go to therapy,

he could avoid jail time. After Will agrees, he meets with several therapists but mocks each of them. As a last-stitch effort, Lambeau decides to call his college roommate Dr. Sean Maguire, a psychologist that Will finally begins to open up to.

This movie has everything you need. Not only will it make your eyes water but it also includes a phenomenal soundtrack and impressive performances from Robin Williams who plays Dr. Sean and Matt Damon who plays Will Hunting. The relationships as well as the acting makes this movie what it is. Will's whole relationship with Dr. Sean is well-developed and each plot point feels important used to explain and show the feelings each character is going through. It's a complicated story about a traumatized kid who puts up a front of toughness to cope

with his struggles. Even when he messes up you find yourself rooting for him to be okay and fix the mistakes he made. I highly recommend everyone watch this.

"If you have some deep childhood wounds you should probably check this one out—from a licensed childhood wounded person. Watch if you wanna feel something for the first time in years," said 11th grader Cal Schmid about the film.

At number four I chose Perks of Being a Wallflower. This movie is about Charlie, a new freshman who has suffered from clinical depression since childhood. At school, he is very shy and manages to only make friends with his English teacher, until he meets two step-sibling seniors, Patrick and Sam. As he goes through his freshman year, experiencing

Sad movies, 11

Live-action Zelda in early stages

It was announced the nintendo game will come to the big screen

Tait Vossen-Nelson
Staff writer

"This is Miyamoto. I have been working on the live-action film of The Legend of Zelda for many years now with Avi Arad-san, who has produced many mega-hit films, I have asked Avi-san to produce this film with me, and we have now officially started the development of the film with Nintendo itself heavily involved in the production. It will take time until its completion, but I hope you look forward to seeing it," announced Shigeru Miyamoto, co-creator of The Legend of Zelda, on Nintendo Co., Ltd.'s social media accounts.

Nintendo announced on Nov. 8th that they will be developing a live-action film of the video game series The Legend of Zelda. It will be produced by Nintendo's Miyamoto,

Representative Director and Fellow of Nintendo and Avi Arad, Chairman of Arad Productions Inc.. Nintendo is partnering with Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc., SPE, to co-finance the movie, with more than 50% being financed by Nintendo. Wes Ball is

directing and Derek Connolly is doing the screenplay. SPE is also doing the worldwide theatrical distribution of the film. No release date, actor information, or any plot details have been disclosed as of now.

Arad Productions Inc. was formed in 2006 by

Arad, after serving as Chief Creative Officer at Marvel Entertainment and Chairman and CEO of Marvel Studios. Arad produced the Academy Award-winning film Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse and many more Marvel mega-hit films. Director Ball is best known in Hollywood for creating The Maze Runner trilogy and has long dreamed of creating a live-action Zelda. Screenwriter Connolly is known for the Jurassic World trilogy from the Jurassic Park Franchise.

By Nintendo producing cinematic content of Zelda, they are enabling more people to enjoy the worlds that Nintendo has created. We can see this in this year's earlier Nintendo success The Super Mario Bros. Movie which grossed \$1.246 billion



Zelda co-creator Shigeru Miyamoto announced the upcoming production.

Zelda, 11



AP Photo/Darren Abate

T-Wolves have a historic start

MN's team is currently leading the NBA west conference

Roman Rufi
Staff writer

The Timberwolves have been electric this year, filled with many dunks and big-time threes. They have been one of the best teams this year after last year's playoff exit in the first round against the NBA champion, the Denver Nuggets. They were one of the teams to be good this year, and they have exceeded the hype. This is not an April fools article.

Last year, the Timberwolves had a 42–40 record and made the playoffs after the play-in. They played the one-seed nuggets as the eight-seed; they won one game against them, but the nuggets won four and made the second round. They had Anthony Edwards make the All-Star game, average 24.6 points, 5.8 rebounds, and shoot a great 37% from three.

Even though Karl Anthony-Towns was out for 43 games, they still had a positive record and made the playoffs. They had some great wins last year; one of the best games was against the Chicago Bulls, when they scored 150 points to the Bulls 126 on December 18, when Anthony Edwards scored 37 points and had 11 assists. Another big game came late in the season when the Wolves scored 140 points to the Knicks 134. Taurean Prince was the MVP of the game for the Wolves when he had 35 points on 92% from the field and 100% from three, and he had one of the most efficient games in NBA history when scoring 30+ points.

This year, the Timberwolves have played 46 games and have a 32-14 record. Some of their most impressive wins so far have been against the reigning champion Denver Nuggets and the Boston Celtics, who made the Eastern Conference finals last year and have been one of the best teams in the NBA. They also had some low lights when they lost to the Toronto Raptors in their first game of the season and blew a 21-point lead to the Hawks.

The Wolves have had a historic start to the season, having their best start since 2003. A lot of help has come from Anthony Edwards, and his amazing season so far, averaging 26 points, 6 rebounds, and 5 assists, has helped him be an MVP candidate. They have

also had a defensive player of the year type season from Rudy Gobert, who is averaging 11 points, 12 rebounds, and 2 blocks. Opposing players are shooting 38.6% when Gobert is guarding them, which is second best in the NBA.

Edwards has been a key factor to their success because of his defensive impact this season. "I loved the Boston game when Ant locked up Tatum." Said Math Teacher Tom Totushek Even though his offense has been slowing down recently because of his injury he got during the Oklahoma City game on November 28th. He still has been one of the best offensive players this year. He is part of the 99% percentile of rim shot creation and 98% of three point shot creation while only being open 1% of the time according to nba-university.com. He has a 107.1 defensive rating and the average is 110.6 in the NBA(Lower is better).

While the Timberwolves have been good this season, they still need to show more to prove they are a championship contender. They still need to be able to win games against bad teams easily. An example is when the Wolves got blown out by wizards in a 127 to 142 loss. To be a contender, they need to be able to beat the best teams in the NBA. The Wolves were projected to win 43 games before the season started. But now they are projected to win 54 games and have a 95.9% chance to make the playoffs and a 2.5% chance to win the finals. "Their record will be around 56 and 26 when the season ends." Said Math Teacher Tom Totushek Every Wolves fan has been happy with the start and hopes that we can keep winning and make the playoffs.

The atmosphere of Target Center is like no other every time a big play like a dunk or a three happens the whole place erupts. In past years if you went to a Wolves you would see more jerseys of the opposing team. This year there are way more Wolves jerseys at the games both home and away. There is so much energy in the Arena just wait till someone hits a game winner and the place will shake. Also with the commentators for when you watch a wolves game. The play by play commentator Micheal

Timberwolves, 9



Inside the life of David Beckham

New Netflix series gives insight into the footballer’s career

Olli Liimatta
Staff writer

There is a new series on Netflix called Beckham, it is about the life and career of English footballer David Beckham. The series is not really about his career as a player so much as his personal life and how his football career affected his life as well as how one mistake in a match affected how his entire country turned against him. There are five episodes in the series, all of the episodes are around an hour long.

The first couple episodes are about his upbringing and early career at Manchester United. It also focuses on his relationship with a Spice Girl and his future wife Victoria. It also includes David’s first World Cup with his country England. Another thing that happens in the first couple of episodes is David talks about his first child and how he got kidnapping threats from anonymous people.

The end of the series is

all about his transfer saga where he ended up at Real Madrid. It also talks about his relationship with the press and how some nasty rumors about him and his wife spread throughout the city of Madrid. Most of it started because of David’s kids.

Then the show follows his transfer to the MLS which was a gigantic transfer similar to the recent transfer of Lionel Messi to Inter Miami. Beckham went to the LA Galaxy and eventually went to AC Milan so he could get a place on the England World Cup squad. When Beckham went to Milan he wanted to stay there but eventually after lots of lawsuits and Victoria nagging him a lot he decided to come back to the US.

In conclusion I think that it is a very interesting and good show that sports documentary fans and soccer fans should watch. It takes roughly five hours to watch the show but it is definitely worth the investment of time.

368 pages of vampires and music

Mike Chen’s new book Vampire Weekend does not disappoint

Jay Schluender
Staff writer

As someone who has a liking for both punk rock music and stories with occult themes, I was quite excited when I found the book Vampire Weekend while looking for a new book to read as I (for once) didn’t have a book on my list, and this book didn’t disappoint.

It is a pretty brief read, only 368 pages and is set in modern day LA. The book is by Mike Chen and is one of his less popular books, he has also written Star Trek; deep space nine and we could be heroes: a novel.

Louise Chao is an Asian American vampire living in LA and working as a hospital janitor making it easier to get blood. when two of her estranged family members showed up at her doorstep, named Ian, a 13 year old with a love of music, and ej an elderly man who Louise later upon their second meeting relishes is her younger brother who she hasn’t seen for 40 years. They were on their way to see Ian’s mom in the hospital and decided to stop by looking for Louise’s aunt.

Louise decides to take Ian for the weekend after his

mom is discharged because there was nothing they could do for her (she’s going to die soon), Ian soon realizes the truth about Louise and begs her to Change his mom into a vampire to save her, Louise refuses, and Ian decides to find a vampire who would grant his request.

I specifically liked seeing Ian and Louise’s relationship develop before he found she is a vampire, as well as seeing Louise learn how to be close to someone again as she had been pushing everyone away since her best friend died. They really bond over their love of

music and Ian’s want to learn how to play the guitar, and his want for Louise to teach him.

When I saw this book wasn’t expecting it to be a well formed or written book, when i have read books like this in the past they have had a very weak plot and characters with no personality, but upon starting the book I was pleasantly surprised by the depth of Louise’s character and backstory, they also did a good job showing her connections to other characters. this wasn’t the very best book I’ve read but it was much better than I thought it would be. 4/5 stars.

Tulsa Kings, 7

battling adversaries both in his old mob and in Tulsa.

One of the main things I like about this show is the characters and their personalities. For example the main character, Dwight is a very simple yet well portrayed character. In episode 1 Dwight displays his simplicity and efficiency by how quickly he takes over Bohdi’s dispensary using only a metal water bottle, smooth talking and a lot of money. Dwight bribes his cab driver, Tyson, to wait outside while he goes in. He walks in and goes straight to the register waiting no time and demanding to know who owns the store. When the security guard approaches him and tells him to leave he does but only to grab a metal water bottle from the taxi, walk right back in and knock out the security guard. Throughout the show Dwight is proven to be a loose cannon; being quickly aggravated and responding with violence and lashing out against members

of the Invernizzi family he doesn’t agree with. Dwight also has a somewhat noticeable disconnect from the rest of society as he was in prison for 25 years

Another character I like is Chickie, he is set up to be the main antagonist of the next season when he takes over the Invernizzi family at the end of the first season. Chickie is more of a background character at first but as the show progresses he becomes more prominent. Chickie is the son of [name], the leader of the Invernizzi family and like a brother to Dwight. One of the main things I like about Chickie’s character is how he develops throughout the show becoming more and more agitated with the dismissive and oftentimes mean ways his father treats him, as well as his anger towards the leniency his father shows Dwight. The climax for Chickie’s character comes in the last few episodes of the season when Chickie comes to a breaking point while giving his father a bath and realizes he no longer

wants to reside in the shadow of his father. Following his realization he comes to the decision that the best choice of action to further his own interests is to drown his father and assume leadership of the mob. I picked this scene because I think it really shows the animosity Chickie feels towards the way he is treated and how decisive he is in his actions.

One more character I like is Tyson the taxi driver. Tyson is one of the first characters introduced in the show and has a much more lighthearted and joking tone than most of the other characters which helps even out the intensity of the show. Tyson is the first person Dwight meets when he arrives in Tulsa as he drives the taxi Dwight chooses to get into. At first Dwight seems somewhat weary and annoyed by Tyson since Tyson acts very naive when talking about Dwight’s history as a gangster but Dwight eventually warms up to him and you can see their friendship progress as the show goes on. One of the

main scenes for Tyson when he has a fight with his father over working for Dwight and getting involved in likely criminal activities. His father is very determined to protect him and keep him away from dangerous people however Tyson is not persuaded by these arguments, instead wanting to follow Dwight to pursue a more interesting life with more financial gain. Eventually the argument reaches a climax and Tyson storms out of his family’s home choosing to follow Dwight rather than to turn back to his old life as a cab driver.

Overall I really enjoyed Tulsa King and would recommend it to anyone who is interested. It has a good balance of drama and fighting while avoiding being too intense. Even though the first season came out I am already looking forward to season 2.

Are New Year’s resolutions the real deal?

23% of Americans quit their resolutions after the first week, so why do we keep making them?

Amelia Keenan
Staff writer

Another year, more failed New Year’s resolutions. Every year, thousands of people set goals they want to achieve throughout the year. Resolutions are seen as a good thing, because it is a way for people to constantly be improving themselves. But how well do they actually work?

According to the Ohio State University, only 9% of Americans who make New Year’s resolutions actually keep them throughout the entire year, and 23% of Americans quit after the first week. “I’m

gonna be honest, I probably quit after the first week,” said 8th grader Evelyn Pennington in response to how long she keeps her resolutions. “If my goal is more of a weekly thing, I could keep it for longer. But a daily goal is harder to keep up.”

There are a variety of reasons why so many people’s New Year’s resolutions fail so fast, one of those being the fact they make them at the same time every year. If someone needs a change or goal in their life, they should do it as soon as possible, not wait until the

next year. Many people make resolutions purely because of tradition, not because they desperately need to change something. This gives people less motivation to achieve their goals.

Another reason is that

motivation to actually finish them. “I think most people quit their resolutions because they don’t have the motivation to do them,” said Erik Imholte, an OWL 8th grader during an interview. “They make their resolutions too big, and

science teacher at OWL, she talked about what she does to keep up with resolutions. “I read about resolutions to research them before I make them,” said Megan. “I also make resolutions at the beginning of the school year.” As you can see, M e g a n d o e s n ’ t just make

achievable goals.

I think that making resolutions every year with the goal of improving yourself is an amazing concept, but many people only make them out of tradition and/or pressure from others. If you don’t truly believe and want to improve yourself in the ways that you list at the beginning of each year, you won’t have enough motivation to actually complete them. So as much as I think New Year’s resolutions are a great concept, I think if you want to set goals or improve your life in any way, you don’t have to wait until the end of the year.

“I think most people quit their resolutions because they don’t have the motivation to do them.”

the goals that people set are unachievable, and when they don’t succeed immediately they lose all hope in their resolution. People tend to think too big with their resolutions, and have no

it would be better to start off smaller.”

So how come some people make resolutions and fail, but others succeed? Well, there are many possibilities. During an interview with Megan Hall, a

Black Cake, 8

is afraid that her parents will disapprove of the relationship and see her differently. Another noticeable thing to mention is that I personally love when shows have a predominantly black cast, and this cast does a great job with this, whilst also showing issues that young black men face. In the show, Covey’s son Bryon is faced with the issue of letting people step on you for the sake

of being viewed as non violent or non argumentative or speak up and stand up for yourself without fearing if others may view you negatively or not.

And lastly I would like to mention that this show does include what an addiction will do to someone. In the show Covey’s dad becomes heavily obsessed with gambling and drinking his money away. Because of this he sells his teenage daughter Covey to a much older man in order to

pay off his debt. I found this quite interesting considering that unfortunately this is an issue that still happens to this day. Overall I would rate this show a 5/5 and would recommend this show to my friends and family.

Timberwolves, 8

Grady has a bunch of Energy and makes some great calls. With the combination of Grady and Jim Peterson make every Wolves game entertaining. Peterson is entering his 26th season with the Wolves and is a fantastic Analyst.

There are some key factors to why the Wolves have been way better than last year is the development of Anthony Edwards. Edwards has had

his best offensive year of his career this year in every major offensive stat except rebounding. A big part of their jump to being better has been Head Coach Chris Finch. He has gotten better as a head coach every year and has taken a huge leap this year. He has gotten better at closing out games and the rotations of players. Karl Anthony-Towns has been way better on the defensive end this season. He has been having his best

defensive season which has helped the wolves have the number 1 defense in the NBA. The team has been way healthier this season and has led to the timberwolves being one of the best teams in the NBA.

Percy Jackson, 6

them complement each other well. We get Percy’s sassiness, while also getting Annabeth’s natural leadership skills and the ability to take command. But the best part is seeing Grover’s nervous satyr energy brought to life.

The camp director Mr. D (also known as Dionysus, the god of wine) brought his usual “I don’t want to be here” attitude to his first meeting with Percy Jackson. The gods tend to trick or rely on demigods to acquire items that are important or they can’t get themselves. I really like how this was showcased when Mr. D asked Percy to get him a glass of wine when he knows that as part of his punishment

he isn’t allowed to drink it.

A unique part about the TV series is that the episode titles correspond with Rick Riordan’s famous chapter titles that make everybody laugh and draw the reader in. For example, the first episode is called “I accidentally vaporize my pre-algebra teacher” and the second is called “I Become Supreme Lord of the Bathroom”. The beginning episodes had around five chapters in them, where the ending episodes had anywhere from one to three chapters in them.

Since I have read all of the books, I have seen how each character has grown over several books and multiple years, but nothing prepared

me for how amazing it would be to see Percy, Annabeth, and Grover slowly become the close-knit trio that we know them as now.

Another thing that I liked about the series is how much



HULU/Disney+

time was put into the design of Camp Half-Blood. Every detail was paid attention to, from the Big House to the Forests where the capture the flag game took place. You can tell that careful consideration was put

into place when designing the cabins that the campers stay in because they are just how I imagined them from reading the book.

Although there have been a few differences between the

series and the book, none of them I would consider major. And while watching the show it is important to remember that changes are to be expected and most times necessary to move the series forward in the

Spider Man, 7

epic battle with Venom. The plot follows a mysterious new organization that arrives in New York City and begins to eliminate supervillains around the city. Peter and Miles try to uncover the reason for their appearance and how to stop them. At the same time Peter gets a job with his old friend Harry who had returned from his ‘treatment’ and the two establish a foundation. Later in the game Peter must confront Venom and save the city from an alien symbiote that infects its citizens. The game ends with a memorable encounter with Venom that contains an epic battle that ends the.

Arguably the best thing about Spider-Man 2 for me is combat. The first two games have been acclaimed for their incredible combat and battles which are even better in the new game which boasts very refreshing and responsive combat with both Peter’s new venom skills and Mile’s enhanced electricity. In my experience boss fights are incredibly fun and filled with dialogue and cut-scenes that enhance the experience.

For example, the battle with the Lizard below the streets of New York. The battle has three stages each with their own cutscene and the ability to use your environment by releasing smoke from vents to stun him. Even the beginning of the game is started with a stunning battle with Sandman that acts as an introduction and amazing tutorial. It helps you understand the mechanics of the game and introduces you to a new skill: web wings which can be used to glide through the air, traverse the city faster using wind currents and tracking down killer bird-robots!

Side-quests in the game include, solving crime within the city such as car-chases, robberies and arson, collecting remnants of Sandman’s mind, speed-running through Mystério’s Mysteries, revealing secret base locations, photography and an exclusive quest to Miles relating his uncle’s past. At one point in the game you’re even allowed to play as Venom as he rampages through Osborn Tower crushing soldiers and progressing up the tower.

Another one of the game’s great qualities is movement. you can teleport to different

checkpoints and locations throughout the map however players will find that en route to quests you can find many other opportunities like photo ops and crime. For any player, outside of speed running, exploring the city is made very simple by easy transport via webs and swinging through city streets encountering side quests and other fun activities. Web wings also enable people to move throughout the city much faster by catching wind currents.

The map is very closely similar to the first one’s and is set in New York City and includes iconic landmarks such as Central Park, the Raft, Empire State and the Chrysler Building. The map is divided into districts which can be completed by completing objectives within that district giving rewards like gears and tech that can help progress the skill tree and upgrade and craft gadgets. The play space isn’t too large to make it time-consuming to travel between objectives or too constricting and without complexon, but something in between that allows you to travel long distances in relatively short time and still not uncover every secret the map has to offer.

Combat within Spider-Man 2 is superior to many other games I’ve played and is easily the game’s best quality. Web-slinging and a variety of skills gives battle in the game a fluid and smooth feel that also makes combos and moves like finishers come easily. The controls aren’t difficult to master which allows space for beginners and others new to the franchise and also offers many different move sets and combinations for experienced players making it all the better. Pros are also given the option to perform tricks and flips while swinging through the city streets to earn combos and xp. This leads to the game’s second best quality which is movement. The movement in Spider-Man is incredible because you are able to cross long distances quickly and access other bonus quests along the way that enrich the game furthermore. However on that note, the game also has a few qualities lacking in comparison such as plot.

The plot in Spider-Man 2 starts off very simple; however, after a prison breakout at the Raft and the arrival of the

Hunters, it begins to get a lot more serious. For the first several hours of the game once you have completed the tutorial and begun to explore the city, the game is very open with few quests. But it takes a turn later where you start to track the leader of the Hunters and find out what he intends to do. This section is by far the most fun and involves the most complexity. However after this point the plot takes a turn for the worst and begins to repeat itself and becomes repetitive. The first 8-12 hours are arguably the best but lack of ingenuity marks the plot’s downfall. The plot is too predictable for intrigue and makes a brilliant game seem less fun in the eyes of some.

If you’ve never played the first Spider-Man or Miles Morales, Spider-Man 2 is a great pickup game in the franchise even though it’s the newest one and doesn’t require much background knowledge on the story or characters. This is another reason for its success because people were either able to start the franchise at Spider-Man 2 or went back and bought one of the first two to begin with. The game is often mentioned in arguments on which console is better (Xbox v. PlayStation) and is partially why PlayStation is so ahead of Xbox in sales with games like Spider Man and the God of War franchise.

For that reason I very much recommend the game for everyone even if the plot is sometimes too plain, the gameplay and every other aspect is brilliant and I wouldn’t change it if I could. You should totally consider buying it even if you’ve never played the first two, although it cannot come close to comparing with the first game which is untouchable. Either way you are guaranteed an amazing and eye-opening experience especially if you’re new. The Spider community has thoroughly enjoyed the game and it was a nominee for Game of the Year and almost won, with Baldur’s Gate just sliding past and beating the web-slinging masterpiece.

GUTS, 6

in a way, I wish it was...? It sounds weird, I know, but part of me just wants to understand Olivia’s experience on a deeper level. She does an outstanding job of making people really hate the guy she’s singing about; the first time I played it for my mom, not only did she enjoy it, but after hearing the bridge, in which Rodrigo lists the ways the guy has hurt her, with lyrics like “[You] said I was too young, I was too soft”, she remarked, “He sounds like a jerk! She should dump his ass!” A resounding 10/10 from both me and my mother.

Next up is “get him back!” an awesome revenge song that earned its own (not very good) TikTok dance. The weekend after GUTS was released, I listened to this song on repeat while simultaneously cleaning my room and having a very necessary private concert for my stuffed animals. Let’s just say, not much cleaning got done. 9/10.

Next up, “the grudge!” FINALLY- I’ve been waiting for exactly 796 words for this. “the grudge” is my current favorite with the heartbreaking lyric “you know I can’t it go, I’ve tried, I’ve tried, I’ve tried for so long, it takes strength to forgive but I don’t feel strong,” and the equally sad line, “and I know in my heart, hurt people hurt people, and we

given time.

Probably one of the most significant changes from the book to the TV series is the fight with Ms. Dodds and what happens after. In the books, the fight between Mrs. Dodds (who turned out to be a Fury) and Percy had a little more action involved and gave us a sense of what Percy’s first monster fight looked like. However, in the series, it is portrayed as more of an accident when Percy defeats Mrs. Dodds. The whole scene seemed a little rushed, but I think doing it this way will give Percy a chance to have more character development throughout the TV series.

The aftermath of the fight with Mrs. Dodds also seemed

both drew blood, but, man, those cuts were never equal.” “the grudge” may be similar in melody to “drivers license,” but the lyrics are definitely unique. 10/10, obviously.

Second to last, wrapping up my review is the ultimate, the elite, the one and only, “pretty isn’t pretty!” Although it only places 4th in my overall ranking, no one can tell me it didn’t deserve that absolute boss introduction. Despite the fact that it’s not the only sad song on the album, it is the only song that has made me



Press/Olivia Rodrigo

cry. The combination of the unfortunately-relatable and tear-inducing lyrics paired with the beat that will, for whatever reason, fill you with this sad, oddly-nostalgic-ish, heart dropping feeling, and the desperation in Rodrigo’s voice are to blame for the many selfies on my camera roll of me bawling to this song alone on my couch. In the dark. At ten pm. Enough said. 10/10.

The last song on GUTS is also the last song on my review, “teenage dream.” I’ve listened to this song over and over, trying to understand and

a little rushed. Once the fight was over, we were immediately brought to a scene in the principal’s office where Percy was being accused of pushing his bully, Nancy Bobofit into a fountain. In the TV series Percy gets expelled from his school, and to make matters worse, it’s his own best friend Grover that turns him in. This gives viewers who haven’t read the books a false view of Grover’s character.

I would recommend this TV series to everybody! Even if you haven’t read the book. You will fall in love with the characters and find yourself wanting to be immersed into Percy Jackson’s world.

relate, seeing as how I myself am in fact a teenager. It kind of seems like it’s trying to prove two very different points; “I’m not looking forward to being a teenager”, and, ‘I wish I wasn’t a teenager right now.” Maybe that’s just me. All that said, the part of the song that hits so freaking hard is the bridge, where Olivia slowly transitions from singing softly and anxiously to shouting shamelessly, “they all say that it gets better, ‘it gets better the more you grow’, they all say that it gets better, ‘it gets better’ but what if I don’t?” Like, Olivia, do you have cameras on me?? In all honesty, I would give this song a 4/10, but, please, if you strongly disagree, feel free to try convincing me otherwise!

So, in summary, I love GUTS and personally believe it is better than SOUR. I still love SOUR, but I think many of the songs have gotten too popular so I’m kind of sick of them now. I think GUTS gives off more of a grunge vibe than SOUR, but I still think fans of Olivia’s would enjoy it. I would highly recommend it for anyone who has experienced overly powerful feelings of a broken heart, being misunderstood, pressured to be someone you’re not for the sake of others, and feels they are having trouble expressing said feelings through words. If this is you, give it a try!

Mexican WhiteBoy, 7

character Danny Lopez who’s trying to understand his mix of Mexican and other backgrounds. It’s like a journey of discovering who you are and where you fit in. Also it shows how the life of Uno is kind of like Danny’s life. Uno spends time with his father and he thinks that if he goes with his dad his dad will help him stay on the path. The author Matt paints a real picture of what it’s like to be part of Mexican-American culture. It helps you understand the challenges of being in different worlds at the same time. In some parts of the book it shows how the family has meals and how they spend their time together.

The book talks about real-

world issues like race, privilege, and big problems in society. It makes you think about these things in a way that connects with your feelings. The way that the character feels captivates you and it makes you feel like you are the main character. Mexican Whiteboy makes you feel something. It brings out emotions as you go through the struggles and successes of the characters.

Some people might feel that the book’s story speed is a bit up and down. It’s like sometimes it’s super intense and other times it’s slower. Everyone likes different speeds in stories. While the main guy Danny is well described some other people in the story could use more details. Adding more

depth to them could make the whole story even better. They could go into more detail about the city where his dad’s family came from. They mention it in the book as this amazing place that they don’t even know why they left.

Mexican Whiteboy is a cool journey of finding yourself and dealing with important themes. While some parts could be faster or include more details about other characters it’s good at making you feel and think about who you are. It’s all about how the book connects with you and how you can relate to the main characters or just any characters overall.

Zelda, 8

worldwide, making it the biggest success of 2023 in cinema and the most successful movie based on a video game ever. The movie also may have drawn people into the gaming world of Nintendo and others, which will most likely be the case with Zelda if it is done with lots of care and accurately represents Zelda.

“Regarding the live-action film of The Legend of Zelda, I know we face an extremely high hurdle in producing a film that will not disappoint the global fan base,” Miyamoto said. “With this challenge in mind, I have been discussing this project with Avi Arad, chairman of Arad Productions, for about ten years.”

Director Ball has long dreamed of directing a live-action Zelda, it is this passion that probably was one of the factors among others that led Nintendo to hire him. In a tweet from 2010 after seeing James Cameron’s Avatar he wrote “Since I could never

hope to direct it... the next big mo-cap Avatar-like movie should be... THE LEGEND OF ZELDA.”

The thought of a live-action Zelda movie has been on lots of minds for a while. Nintendo has probably thought about it a lot and may have many ideas on how to make it come to the big screen because Miyamoto has been working on it for around ten years. But ten years also represents how difficult it will be to make a movie that is up to the standards of the fans.

One of the main things that was surprising to fans was the decision to go the route of live action for the film. There are many Zelda games and lots of them have different styles but most of them are just begging to be implemented into animation. Take the most recent game, Tears of the Kingdom or TOTK, for example, many scenes look like paintings and would translate beautifully into a hand-drawn animated movie. With live action, it may be hard to achieve the style of one

of the games.

One worry about attempting a live-action Zelda movie is that it may drift too far from the whimsical and enchanting style of the games and become a dark fantasy like Lord of the Rings or Game of Thrones. But Director Ball said his vision for the movie is “this awesome fantasy-adventure movie that isn’t like Lord of the Rings, it’s its own thing. I’ve always said, I would love to see a live-action Miyazaki. That wonder and whimsy that he brings to things, I would love to see something like that.”

One more of the fan’s worries about live action is casting, if they did animation they could use the voice actors from TOTK in the movie. With live action they may need to find new actors that fit the voice and look of characters from Zelda. It is also possible that they will still keep the voice actors and have them do the live-action acting for the movie.

Many fans have opinions on who they think would be

best to play Zelda, the princess with magical powers. A top pick is Patricia Summersett, who voiced Zelda in Breath of the Wild, Hyrule Warriors: Age of Calamity and Tears of the Kingdom. Another top pick is Hunter Schafer from the series Euphoria.

For the silent knight Link, who uses actions instead of words to portray his thoughts, many fans have thrown out celebrities like Tom Holland and Timothée Chalamet. Other fans have said Link is a child in most games and is meant to be a blank slate for the player to imagine themselves in and his actor should reflect that. They say Link is a portal into your own adventure and doesn’t talk so he doesn’t ruin that immersion that he is you.

When Miyamoto was asked about the story in Breath of the Wild in an interview back in February 2017 he said “... instead of creating a game where you’re playing the story, you yourself are embarking on an adventure... I think what’s important, especially for the

Zelda series, is for the person to be able to think it through for themselves, and to really live the story.”

I’m very excited for the movie but I don’t know whether or not I will watch it. I am worried that Link is too big of a hurdle for cinema. For me, Link has always been a portal into a different world and I worry that hearing his voice may ruin that feeling forever. When I play Zelda games his voice will haunt me and remind me that I’m not him. I hope Link only talks using subtitles because then I will definitely feel comfortable watching the movie.

Seeing Ganon/dorf and Zelda on the big screen is super exciting. I hope that Matt Mercer who voiced Ganondorf in TOTK and Patricia Summersett are cast in the movie as their respective characters. I think, if done right, they will be epic characters in a live-action film.

It will be very exciting to see Hyrule, the Zelda world, in all of its beauty on the big

screen. A live-action Hyrule is very exciting because even if I don’t watch the movie I will still get to see photos. I hope the movie isn’t an adaptation of a game or even close to one of the games because Nintendo would be digging themselves into a hole because they can’t hope to achieve the feeling of the games. The feeling of endless adventure will disappear in the movie because I’ve played Breath of the Wild for 500 hours and I still find new things but the movie will only be a couple of hours of content.

I’m excited for Nintendo to be trying different things with their content but hope they continue making games as their main focus. I’m very conflicted on whether to watch the movie or not and I hope to get a review and some details from one of my friends to help me decide.

Party games, 6

to other people’s lobbies.

Number two: Super Smash Bros Ultimate.

Smash Bros. is a platform fighting game, and it’s also the probably best one. It has maybe one of the biggest character rosters and well designed stages (excluding Great Cave Offensive and Norfair). You choose a character and a map, then fight each other. It’s very fun except it’s really hard. It’s hard to do combos specifically. There also is a story mode for some reason. It’s about a giant light guy named Galeen who took control of all the fighters except for Kirby. And you have to defeat Galeen while saving different characters on the way. It has the most fighters of any Smash Bros. game with 89 including Sephiroth from Final Fantasy, Sora from Kingdom Hearts, and of course, Steve

from Minecraft.

Number one: EA FC 24

This is just an opinion but the entire EA FC/ FIFA franchise is at its best when playing with friends. Specifically on the kickoff mode (which you would know all about if you read my first article). Because you can choose the most obscure teams and do the worst slide tackles, creating funny moments. It’s especially fun when you play no rules because there isn’t a punishment for your wrong doings. It’s just really fun to mess around on the soccer field with your friends.

This might be the best party video games list you’ll ever see. But if you don’t think so, it’s just our opinion. But either way, I hope you enjoyed the list.

Sad movies, 8

new exciting things like new friends, a girlfriend and general teenagehood, he’s eventually confronted with the reason behind his depression.

There are some heavy themes in this movie, but it’s such a great coming-of-age story. If you’re watching as a teenager, you will find yourself empathizing and relating to the experiences each character goes through. The characters are also complex in their own ways and the movie does a great job exploring those personalities. Each relationship Charlie has is also explored in ways that help you better understand him and the characters around him. It’s an overall pretty sad yet bittersweet movie.

“It’s about a depressed high schooler. It’s depressing,” said 11th grader Gabby Govrik.

At number three, I’ve picked Brokeback Mountain. Brokeback Mountain is about two modern day cowboys, Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist who meet during a shepherd-herding job and work together isolated on Brokeback mountain for the entire summer. They begin a complex and intense relationship with each other as they fall in love but have to hide it due to homophobia. The film depicts their relationship through the years as they begin to have families of their own, but continue to be drawn to each other.

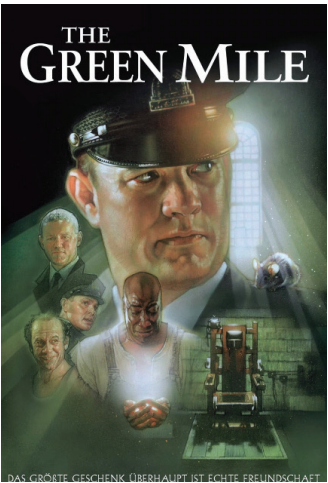


This movie has all the feels. It’s a deeply complicated love story where the characters deal with internalized homophobia and toxic masculinity

throughout their lives. It’s a one of a kind groundbreaking film, especially for its time. The ending is heartbreaking and will for sure make you cry.

At number two is The Green Mile. The Green Mile is about death row inmate John Coffey who has the power to heal people’s injuries and sickness. After the cell blocks guard, Paul Edgecomb finds out about his powers, he tries to stop his execution.

This movie is LONG, and it would be really hard to say that the whole entire thing is sad because it really isn’t. The aspects of this movie that induce tears include the disturbing cruelty the inmates are subject to and an ending that will leave you shattered. The villain, another guard Percy Wetmore is depicted in a way that is so despicable and truly shows the cruelty



of other humans in shocking ways. Despite the kind of silly supernatural detail, it’s an interesting story and fantastic movie.

Because there are too many other sad movies, It felt wrong to not mention more that will make your eyes sweat. These weren’t included on the list because they were either 1. Not sad enough, 2. Cliche, 3. Bad movies or 4. I had no more room on the list.

Honorable Mentions:

After asking people about the saddest movies they’ve seen, many mentioned Titanic. While I agree that it’s sad, and it did make me cry the first time I watched it, I felt that it was too cliche to make it to the top five. La La Land was another one that almost made

the list because it makes me cry every time. But I chose not to include it because I felt that it’s not a movie that will affect the overall OWL audience.



“La La Land did make me cry. The first time I watched it I remember being absolutely heartbroken,” said 12th grader Nora Crosby.

There is also Disney’s Bridge to Terabithia, which so many people said was the saddest movie they’d ever seen, and I have to agree that it is for sure a brutal watch. It didn’t make the list because it didn’t fit the general vibe of the other movies mentioned, but it is very sad and will probably make you cry.

Also, Pixar’s Coco, without fail, makes me cry every time. I’m not kidding. I know what’s coming, I know the scene, but I will still tear up. It wasn’t included because honestly any Pixar movie could’ve made the list, there are too many to mention.

“When watching Coco I always cry,” said Nora.

There are also some movies that might make you cry, but are also just worth watching. These include movies like Moonlight, Everything Everywhere All at Once, Up, and When Marnie Was There.

At number one, the saddest movie I have ever seen, that even the coldest of hearts would tear up at, is Studio Ghibli’s: Grave of the Fireflies. Grave of the Fireflies is an animated film set in Kobe Japan during the last few months of WW2 in 1945. It follows two siblings; Seita who is 14 and his four-year-old sister Setsuko. They become orphaned after their mother

dies when bombs are dropped on their neighborhood. They begin to live with their neglectful and selfish distant aunt who leaves them with very little help. After living with their aunt for a while, Seita and Setsuko decide to run away. They find an abandoned bomb shelter and begin to live in it. They try to survive the last few months of WW2 alone with no help.

This movie will make you SOB. Just thinking about it makes me tear up. Not only is it an incredibly human story about the innocence of children during wartime, but also one with beautifully crafted symbolism. It will have you crying over a candy tin (if



you know, you know). I cannot stress enough how good it is. After watching it you will not be able to watch it again. It’s a movie that is so sad that it causes physical pain—so be warned.

“The movie starts with you being depressed, and ends with you being depressed,” said 12th grader Hiroko Zeleke.

This list was hard to curate. Everyone experiences movies in different ways and certain things or tropes in films will affect others differently. I chose the movies on the list not only because they will make you cry but also because they are all absolutely worth the watch.

Tropes, 6

society for whichever group of people the heroes have just discovered.

And now, it's time to discuss the Fake-Out Death trope. It's pretty common, but when done successfully, can work really well - the revelation that this character is still alive can be a standout moment within a story. However, it's really easy to get it wrong - if it's obvious that the character actually survived, then there's no emotional weight to the moment. On the other hand, it's really easy to make it seem like the writers just decided to bring back a character that should have been dead, which, again, removes the emotional weight from the moment. That said, good fake-out deaths can not only enhance, but even drive the story forward, making it a particularly important trope to get right.

The main cast of characters within a story are, for obvious reasons, the most important to get right. For this main group, it's pretty common for stories to include some variation on the five most common roles for the main characters: the Leader, often the main character, who leads the group, the Lancer, who serves as a counter or foil to the Leader, the Heart, who holds the group together and often serves as a love interest, and then the Big One and Smart One, who usually come as a duo within the

main group. While different stories may shuffle, replace, or combine these roles, many stories have some form of this trope. Additionally, it's not uncommon for stories with two main characters to utilize the Happy/Grumpy trope, in which one optimistic, cheerful character is counterbalanced by the opposing grumpy and pessimistic character.

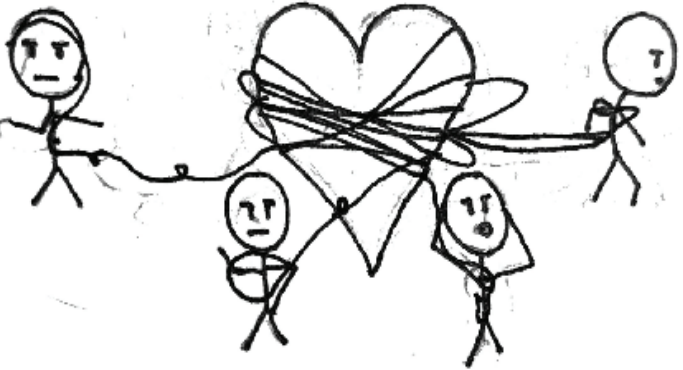
But talking about the relationships between characters leads into the romance tropes, of which there are many. The more common tropes here include Enemies to Lovers, Friends to Lovers, Friends to Enemies to Lovers on occasion, Will They Won't They, Star-Crossed Lovers, and possibly the most well-known trope of them all, the Love Triangle. Most romance-related tropes are similar in that they can make or break a book, especially when the book centers around said romance. Similarly to the Fake-Out Death trope, these are fantastic when done right, but can be annoying or even ruin a story when done wrong.

Though this is less common, one romance trope that I really like is what I call a Love Tangle - like a love triangle, but much, much more complicated. Just about everyone wondering whether they're in love with anyone else can be a really fun time, depending on the circumstances (although in certain stories it can just get annoying). Additionally, the

Love But Also Hate trope, in which two people love each other but also hate each other at the same time, can make for really good stories as well.

Another trope I absolutely love is the Found Family trope. The main character may not have a "traditional" family, but they have a family just the same. For instance, the residents of the orphanage in

best tropes I know of, the Unreliable Narrator trope. The narrator of the story may not always tell exactly the truth, or if the narrator is a character within the story, they may embellish things to make them seem better. Great examples of this include The Trials of Apollo, in which the titular character does his best to paint himself as the victim in just



Aria Kulseth

The House On The Cerulean Sea by T. J. Klune and Unit 919 in Nevermoor by Jessica Townsend are both fantastic examples of found families. This is probably one of the most wholesome tropes, and a decently common trope as well.

This next trope is a very rare one but easily one of the

about any situation, or Harrow the Ninth, which I can't really get into because of major plot spoilers. Murder mysteries as well tend to utilize this trope:

any time it's told through multiple narrators, there's a good chance one of them is lying. Unreliable narrators not only make the book seem more real, as if it's being told

Anti AI, 7

at their worst, a horrendous Frankensteinian monster, cobbled together from the worst bits of everything this industry is, instead of what it should stand for," says Robin Williams' daughter Zelda Williams about people recreating her father's voice.

One particularly infamous example of AI replicating people's voices is the ordeal that professional voice actor Erica Lindbeck went through. The controversy started with a video of an AI replicating Lindbeck's voice for one of her previously voiced characters, Futaba, to sing the lyrics of Bo Burnham's Welcome to the Internet, a song with quite a bit of profanity and crude language in it. Upon discovering the video she very reasonably reached out to the creator and asked to have it taken down, as she wasn't happy with her voice being used like that without her consent, and the creator obliged. However that's where the trouble started. Some inconsiderate people on what was formally twitter, were unhappy with what Lindbeck did and reuploaded the video dozens of times, and started harassing her. The harassment eventually reached a point where it resulted in Lindbeck deactivating her twitter and instagram accounts.

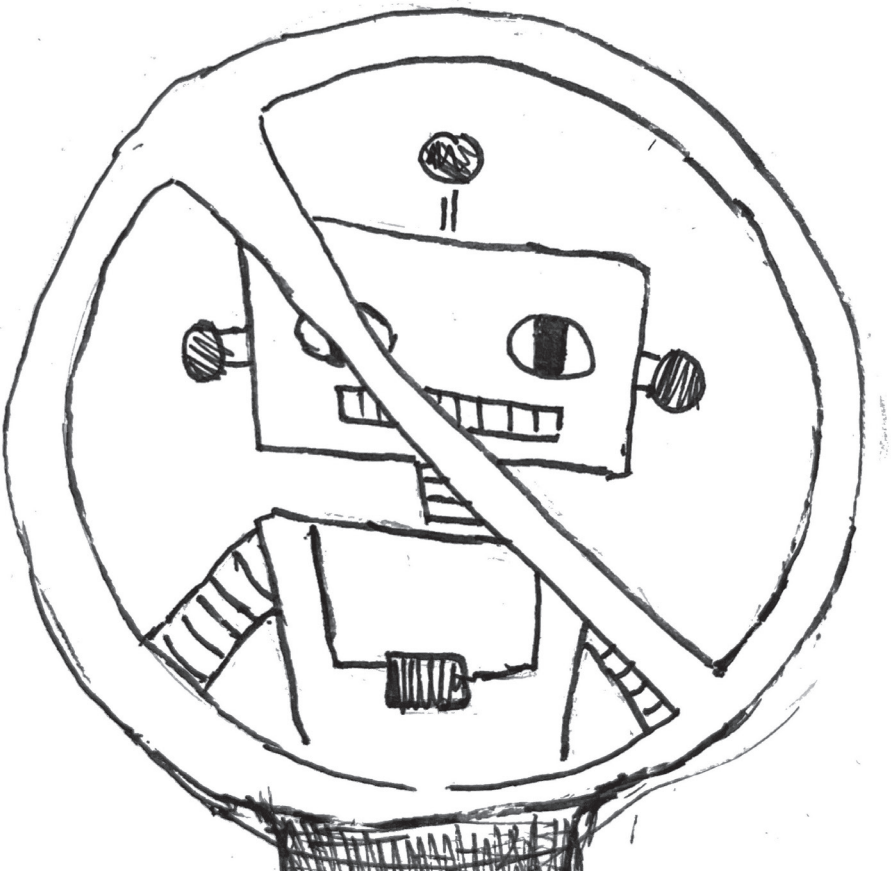
There is however one form of AI that is widely accepted and embraced despite all of its counterparts in AI being heavily despised, a form of it that either you probably use yourself, or know someone that does, that being AI chatbots, particularly Character.AI. An AI chatbot is a form of AI

that one talks with while it emulates a character or person, one that you can instruct to act or behave in a certain way with certain information. Most of the various chatbot sites are also not run by OpenAI as well, so another worry is taken off of people's shoulders there. As can be surmised it is a very popular way for people to roleplay, due to common pitfalls of roleplay, such as time zones, concern for minors, conflicting opinions on character, deciding when to be done and so on, being complete non-issues with chatbots. Unfortunately it isn't as simple as that.

While being able to give traits to the AI does give one a feeling of control over it and a reassurance of no scraping present, it is little more than a feeling as while you do put instruction on how to act into it, it still needed to learn what that was and how to act that way from somewhere, and that somewhere is still scraping. It's like other AI functions in that way, AI writes what you tell it to, AI draws from the filters you put in, and AI acts the way you tell it to, but it didn't learn what that was from you.

A consequence of it seeming like a better alternative to online roleplay is that it is effectively replacing roleplay with actual people and the dedicated places that exist. Those places that could previously be found all over are now getting scarcer and scarcer. Those places fading away has the consequence of online friendships and communities also fading

disparity between interacting with AI and real people is that AI is one sided, now for most people that's fairly obvious and a given, but for others, especially those without the greatest mental health, this isn't as easy, and can be easily consumed by a parasocial relationship with the AI. A parasocial relationship being a form of a one sided relationship where, while



Evelyn Pennington

away, in favor of one person focusing on a bot with rarely any interaction with other fans. While there are places where people will share funny things that the AI said, there is a major difference between fan-made content and content for fans, and this is eroding away the former.

Another downside of the

one side pours all they have into the other and feels like they're very close to them, the other side doesn't even know that they exist, and is almost always extremely unhealthy. This is fueled by the fact that some people, especially vulnerable teenagers, will use AI acting as their favorite character as a sort of mock-

by an actual person, but also can set up some great twists and make the story seem much more memorable.

Of course, while these tropes can often be a delight to find, some of them turn up a lot. It can get to the point where a book becomes overly predictable due to the use of a trope- obvious fake-out deaths, obvious twist villains, and overused plot points can make a story, well, boring. Some authors may try to remedy this through trope subversions, deliberately avoiding or even reversing a common trope. In fact, this has become common enough that it can almost be counted as a trope itself. For instance, the author may try to make it seem like you're about to reach a rather predictable twist villain, only for that character to be completely innocent and the actual villain is completely unrelated. However, this isn't a perfect solution, by any means. Trope subversions can occasionally work well, but often just completely miss the point of the original trope. Rather than the author trying to make a good story, the author is focusing on tricking the reader, which may leave the story itself feeling uninspired.

Well, there's no use putting it off any further. Any members of SLAC reading this have undoubtedly been waiting throughout this entire article for me to bring up this next trope, and here it is: the

Murdered Cousin Trope. In this trope, the plot is spurred on when the main character's cousin is murdered, often prompting an investigation of some kind. It works well, as having a murdered cousin allows for an emotional connection between the main character and the victim, while not having to be quite so distressing as, say, a murdered parent or sibling. This trope can be found in books such as Elatsoe, Cemetery Boys, and more. Also, it's the Student Library Advisory Council's biggest and most famous inside joke, so I'm pretty sure I'm legally obligated to mention it at some point.

There are lots of tropes out there. Way more than I can fit into one journalism article. I wish I could have brought up Chosen One, Cute But Bloodthirsty, the Unexpected Musical Number, the Power of Friendship, the I Know You're In There Somewhere Fight, the Randomly Recurring Phrase, the False Ending, and so, so, so many more that I had to cut because they all said I couldn't make the article 5,000 words long. Regardless of whether or not a trope made the list, it is still important to how a book works. Utilizing the right tropes - and more importantly, writing them in the right ways - is immensely important to the success of any story.

therapist, and will go to them for mental health help, or in some extreme cases advice on what to do about self-harm impulses or eating disorders. The parasocial relationships only get worse when you take into account that this isn't just a software with nobody behind it, a company focused on self growth and profit is running this and you can't tell what their intentions are, unlike how you might trust your favorite character.

On a counter-argument side of things there is a common argument that AI is taking the 'art and writing monopoly' away from those with 'creativity privilege' and 'giving it to the people'. An argument that could have easily been spent instead practicing drawing and writing, for that is all that really prevents someone from being great at art or writing in the end, lots and lots of practice. Another argument for AI out there is that AI can give disabled people the ability to do art and write that they would otherwise not be able to do.

But a counterpoint to that is that their disability needn't stop them, it hasn't stopped

some of the best artists in history after all, and even today there are artists that will hold their brush, pencil, or other with their teeth, attached to a headpiece or even between their toes. After all Beethoven was deaf in his later years, Michelangelo, the artist of David and the Sistine Chapel, had limited function and mobility in his hands, Van Gogh had epilepsy and bipolar disorder, Henri Matisse, who is considered to be one of the most revolutionary artists right next to Picasso, used a wheelchair for mobilities sake, Frida Kahlo had chronic pain, John Milton wrote his best works while blind, and so many others with disabilities thrived and are remarkably famous.

And yet despite all of the harm that AI causes there are still many that advocate for it and use it quite frequently. Why is that? Well two things, one being recency bias, the train of thought that because it's new it has to be good, the other being that the concept of machine learning has significant potential if used for anything but its current use, especially for disabled people. As 9th grader David Heil puts it, "I'd say that not an AI but more of a pattern reading bot would be good. Like someone with this symptom gets cancer, and someone with that symptom gets cancer and other diseases like that." And he makes a very good point: machine learning could be used in ways like auto-captioning that actually works, self-driving cars without much error, better email spam filtering, and search engines without AI generated results.

The benefits of multilingualism

Learning languages is good for your neurological and mental health, promotes global connection

Hiroko Zeleke
Staff Writer

Languages. How many do you know? Have you ever wanted to learn a new language? Are you currently taking a language course? I am here to tell you about why learning a new language is good for you.

Now admittedly, I am at the moment monolingual. I'm fluent only in English. Fun fact, English isn't the first language I spoke, it was Japanese, but when I started pre-school in North Carolina, I started learning English and then eventually stopped speaking Japanese, and now I can't even understand a conversation in the language.

I also took Spanish at OWL for five years. And... I'm not fluent. However, my older brother several months ago decided he was going to start improving his Spanish at home more, and I decided I would join him as well. It has involved watching a lot of content in the language, and I can say it's been an enjoyable process as I am improving. This and the somewhat bilingual nature of my upbringing got me thinking about languages in general and why it's beneficial to be bilingual.

According to a survey conducted in 2019, in the US, 67.8 million people spoke languages other than English at home, and the number has continued to grow over the years. The top five most frequently spoken languages at home other than English in the US are Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Arabic.

Studies show that multilingual brains look different than monolingual, and there are a lot of benefits to the brain to be bilingual, such as it exercises your brain more and it can even lead to a delay in things like Alzheimer's. However I found it very interesting to learn that before research on multilingualism's benefits started, it was believed that being bilingual was bad for children, as it was believed that it would delay a child's development and confuse them being around multiple languages.

Auditory languages aren't the only types of languages that are beneficial to the brain. Sign languages use other parts of the brain that aren't used in spoken language and have visual benefits. If you're reading this and thinking that sign languages aren't actually languages, you'd be very wrong. "They are individual languages with different grammatical structures and entirely different sentence structure. Everything means something different depending on context and it is entirely its own language. It doesn't just translate directly and there are some things you can't translate just like any other language," said senior Aspen Osweiler,

who's currently learning American Sign Language.

They also added how there are dialects in sign languages and different ways something can be said, just like any language. Sign languages are used everywhere in the world by deaf communities, with there being so many different sign languages worldwide. So no, ASL isn't English with your

"The idea that sometimes people in the US think that they don't need to learn another language is a myth."

hands by any means. In fact, ASL actually has origins in France instead of England, as a deaf French man in the early 19th century started teaching deaf youth in the US. This evolved into ASL, which still maintains a lot of similarities with French Sign Language.

"Personally as a hard of hearing person, I think that it would be very beneficial for pretty much anyone to take ASL and I feel like it should be a required class just because of the fact that it's useful for more than just deaf people and you never know when you are going to encounter a deaf person and it just gives you a way to be more accessible if you know sign language," Aspen said. This is a good example of how learning a second language can make it easier to connect with more people. "Some of the best relationships I have are with people that don't speak English at all," said Spanish teacher Tim Leone-Getten, who's also currently learning Italian. "You can more just get closer connection with people who speak that language because they appreciate when you speak their language," said U of M Japanese teacher, Ayumi Mita, also known as my mom, who's trilingual, "It's not a relationship on the surface, you can go deeper, so more kind of human connections."

When people go traveling around the world, a lot of the time, they might not speak the main languages spoken there. "The experience is entirely different," said Tim, "and I've noticed that like, if I've gone some place like, Hungary, and not very many people speak English. It's interesting, it's great to be

there but it's not the same kind of experience as a place where I can communicate directly with people." Aspen, who's also learning Japanese said, "I'm going on a trip to Japan over the summer and I wanted to be able to understand and know what's happening around me so that I can more effectively navigate while I'm there."

Learning other languages doesn't only help you learn about other cultures and languages, it can also help you

ASL sometimes where I'm forgetting how to say the word or I don't know what word I'm trying to think of and then I like, sign what I'm thinking and I'm like 'oh! That's what it is!'" My mom Ayumi said, "You can see your language like, a more objective way and compare it to other language, so you more appreciate your language and also kind of appreciate their language itself and culture."

Learning a language can also help you get better at other languages you're learning. "I didn't have a chance to speak English much growing up, so when I came to US, that was actually really first time using language," my mom said, "but

able to look at things in those two different perspectives," said Aspen, "because if I look at a sentence and I try to think of how it would be said in ASL versus Japanese it helps me to memorize things like that easier so I've gotten a lot better at grammar by learning two very differently grammatically structured languages because it allows me to know different types of grammar what is correct depending on context."

Something I found really interesting while talking to Tim is that when he raised his kids, Spanish was the only language he spoke to them in, while his wife spoke English to them. "I realized they would have a huge advantage. They wouldn't have to spend all this time in middle school and high school learning Spanish when they could just be doing other things," he said on the topic, "a lot of times people think 'oh if you're not a native speaker how can you do that? They'll pick up the same errors as you' and I'm like 'well if they can speak as well as me, that's good.'" Tim also added that they continued to study it in college and use it for their work frequently.

Which gets me into how it can also be useful in day to day life. Tim uses Spanish every day for his work obviously, but also outside of the classroom. "I'm like the kind of main contact person with many Spanish-speaking families here so with office staff whenever they need to connect with people, I help with that," he said. "I actually tend to communicate with my sister in sign a lot, so like, whenever she's over at our house if she's

practice. Tim said, "I think classes are a good way to learn, but also you need to go and live there and really immerse yourself for some extended period of time. And then when you're there you also have to be disciplined. When I lived abroad I was like, very clear about, I'm not gonna speak English, and you know, make sure I'm using all the time I have to get better." Ruby, who went to a Spanish immersion school, said "Spanish class at OWL has definitely helped. I was in middle school and I didn't have Spanish class and I wasn't getting Spanish immersion and I'd read books in Spanish, and even then, when I got to 9th grade in OWL and started taking Spanish 4, I did notice I'd lost quite a bit of it and I'm still working to regain it back. Sometimes when I'm writing I'll come across a word that I don't know or a sentiment that I don't know how to express in Spanish and I'll be like 'how did I go through all of elementary school without saying anything like this or expressing this sentiment. I must know how to do it, I've just forgotten.' So it's definitely a process you have to do in maintaining fluency but it's worth it."

If you're one of those people who think learning a second language isn't going to be helpful to you, Tim has some words to say. "I think that the idea that sometimes people in the United States think that they don't need to learn another language is a myth. They're fooling themselves to think that it's not going to greatly improve their lives. To me, it's really one of the three or four things that are most important things you can learn in school. Languages, communication skills, writing, computer skills, those are kind of like the most important things you're gonna learn that are gonna apply and really make your life better because no matter what you're gonna do because you know if you've got great computer skills no matter what work you're in, you're gonna be a valuable person on a team. Same thing with being at least bilingual, it's super valuable on a team."

I encourage any of you readers to start learning a new language. There are so many options now with the internet, and you could always take Spanish at OWL. It's never too late to learn, and it's okay to make mistakes. My mom

shared a philosophy of hers that I want to share with all of you. She said, "If you really want to convey the message to speak something, you can communicate in any language."



Cecelia Mason

understand your own culture and language better. "You learn a lot about the United States and you learn a lot about our own cultures here by immersing yourself in another culture and immersing yourself in another country and having that perspective," said Tim. "I see a word and I don't know what it means, I've never seen it before," said 11th grader Ruby Kate Nolen, who can speak Spanish, "but I do know what it means because I know Latin roots cause of the Spanish, you know, I know what a word means in Spanish and that word looks like a different word so I can tell sort of what it has to do with." "If I know what the word is in a different language then it might make it easier to remember what it is in English," Aspen said, "I've noticed that with

it's a interesting thing, Russian helped me a lot because you know, Japanese is very far from English, but Russian being one of the Indo-European languages, but still kind of not completely same way... it does not work the same way as English. Knowing a second language helped me learn a third language, so it helped. So I think second language is actually the most difficult to master." "Just trying to remember the different grammatical structure between each language is a little bit difficult but it's... in the end a very important skill to be able to structure different things different ways and be

"If you really want to convey the message to speak something, you can communicate in any language."

in the middle of a conversation with my dad or my brothers but I need something for her I'll like, sign something and she'll just be like 'oh give me a minute' and once she's done she already knows what I need instead of me needing to wait to be able to tell her," said Aspen.

When learning a new language, it's important to

The best of this year's winter dance

OWL's winter formal was held in the cafeteria on Friday, February 2nd



Clockwise from top left: 11th grader and DJ Gwen Stender does karaoke, high schoolers dance along to the Cha Cha Slide, a dance line forms around the cafeteria, a group of 10th graders pose for a photo, volunteers at the ticket booth give the camera a thumbs up, Elle Galbreath dances with fellow senior Anna Nowatzki.