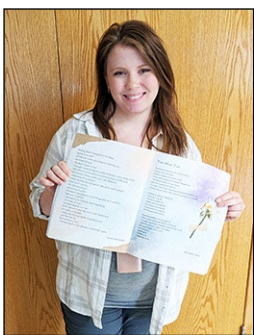




Chamber
Strings
plays at
library
reopening
event
Page 5

Round-
lay being
finalized in
preparation
for its annu-
al release
Page 5



ALSO INSIDE

News



Quill reporters bid
readers goodbye

After covering hundreds of students throughout the school year, reporters share their thoughts about high school, what comes next

Page 2

Opinion



Farewell to the
Class of 2024

The last four years have been highly consequential ones for every member of the Class of 2024, which will graduate on June 3

Page 3

Opinion



Scheduling makes
end of year easier

Balancing school, work, extracurriculars, social life is a solvable challenge all students face as summer break approaches

Page 3

Variety



Marching Band
preps for D.C.

The marching Hawks will travel to the nation's capitol next July to perform during an Independence Day parade

Page 4

Sports



Hawks serve up
spring success

After one year as a club sport, the boys volleyball team was a state-sanctioned high school spring activity in 2024

Page 8

GRADUATION CEREMONY IS UNDER TWO WEEKS AWAY



Photo by DERRICK WILLIAMS

The Class of 2023 (above) was the first to have commencement in Minneapolis after years of the ceremony occurring at Cooper.

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

Only one thing begins to surface on the minds of seniors and their families as the 2023-2024 school year nears its end: graduation. In a time full of bittersweet endings and beginnings, a lot of uncertainty looms around graduation and the ceremony.

Fortunately, with the event less than two weeks away, the final details are being put into place.

For the second time in two years, the graduation ceremony will take place at the Minneapolis Convention Center (MCC) on June 3. The MCC, in collaboration with four city of Minneapolis parking ramps, will provide

parking for attendees. All ramps are connected through the skyway system and are located within two blocks of the MCC.

Commencement begins at 6:30 p.m. but the MCC recommends you arrive an hour early for the screening process, which will involve metal detectors and bag checks. The purpose of the

screening is to find any prohibited items such as guns, knives and noisemakers.

Administrative Intern Mr. Mahan said the safety measures are designed to make sure everyone has a good experience at graduation.

“We just want to make sure that all of our students have a safe and positive ex-

The event will take place on June 3 at the Minneapolis Convention Center in downtown

perience. We know we can’t control every single facet, but we also want to make sure that it’s the safest experience as possible,” he said.

Mahan added that the security process is something recommended by the MCC for events of this size.

“They’ve done this a million times and they typically know how long it’s going to take with large groups. The last thing I would want is for anyone to miss this ceremony because they didn’t have enough time,” he said.

Tickets are required for family and friends who are attending the ceremony. Seniors will have the ability to request up to seven tickets for the event. Mahan said this makes it important for spectators to show up early in order to get the best seat possible.

“It’s first come, first served,” Mahan said.

Students are expected to be in their ready rooms by 5:30 p.m. Transportation to and from the event will not be provided to students following budget cuts made by the district.

The ceremony will begin with a prelude and the band will play music for the audience as they enter. As

GRADUATION
continues on page 8

Three weeks of IB exams come to an end

Seniors, juniors took multiple exams across a wide array of IB subject areas during this year's testing window

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH
Quill staff writer

The annual May exams for International Baccalaureate (IB) students took place May 1-May 17 at the House of Hope Church located just west of the Cooper student parking lot on Boone Ave. S. There were 95 students who took at least one IB test and there was a total of 156 different tests that students took this year.

Administering the exams were Cooper’s IB Coordinator Ms. Christensen along with IB Secretary Ms. Meyer. Christensen said there are many potential benefits for students who take the exams as part of their IB classes.

“Depending on the student’s score and which college they attend, the exams allow the student to earn college credit. In some cases, this means that students may bypass the introductory courses offered by the college and move directly to higher-level courses. Almost always, it results in cost savings as students earn credits based on their scores. A student that tests in five or six areas during their junior and senior years and scores well could begin their college journey with the status of a sophomore,” she said.

In the months and weeks leading up to the exams, the individual IB teachers prepare their students for the tests. Ms. Kope, who teaches IB English Literature HL2, said she specifically prepared her students during class throughout second semester of the school year as well as offering after-school study sessions. Kope said the English exams follow a similar process each year.

“For English, students arrive at the church 30 minutes before the exam, put away all electronics and items with text, go into the test room, and wait for the exam to be passed out. Once it is passed out, they have two-and-a-half hours to write essays in response to the questions by hand, without any source material,” she said.

While each subject-area test is different, Kope said that most involve more than one test. In the case of English, there are two tests total.

“The first test requires students to read two short passages from four genres and write a guided literary analysis of each one. Students will not have any knowledge of the genre or the text until they receive their exam. For the second test, students write a comparative essay on two works studied in the IB HL English classroom. They are given four



Photo by KARI CHRISTENSEN

The IB office coordinates hundreds of documents during testing.

questions; they choose one of them to answer, and then they write a 1,000-word essay by hand about the two books without having the books with them,” Kope said.

Students taking IB exams had different approaches to getting ready for the testing window. Andrew Brooks (11), who is an IB diploma candidate, tested in multiple subjects this year and will test in more next spring. He said that focusing during class is a big part of being ready for the tests.

“I paid attention and did the best that I could always,” he said. “Doing this helps me to have more confidence in my abilities and answers to these monstrous tests.”

IB EXAMS continues on page 6

SROs return to Cooper heading into next school year

Police officers are coming back to schools across Minnesota after recent changes to a controversial state statute

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

School resource officers (SROs) from the New Hope Police Department are returning to Cooper after the Robbinsdale School Board approved a new contract on April 15. Robbinsdale is one of many school districts across Minnesota that are having SROs return to their schools for the remainder of the year following changes to the wording of a statute passed last year that caused Minnesota police departments to pull their officers from school buildings over concerns about possible lawsuits.

According to Mr. Jansen, one of Cooper’s two SROs, the return of officers to school buildings is an important change.

“School is a community and law enforcement is part of that community,” Jansen said.

The initial decision to remove SROs from school buildings stemmed from Corporal Punishment Statute 121 A.58, which was passed by the Minnesota legislature last year. This statute declared that “an agent contracted by the district, including a school resource officer or police officer, shall not inflict any form of physical holding that restricts or impairs a pupil’s ability to breathe or communicate distress, places pressure or weight on a pupil’s head, throat, neck, chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back or abdomen, or results in straddling a pupil’s torso or prone. Only under harm or a life-threatening situation may a school resource officer intervene.”

This statute caused law enforcement agencies across Minnesota to remove SROs from schools due to concerns that the new regulations could make it more difficult for SROs to do their jobs or potentially open them up to prosecution. However, on March 25, the state legislature updated the statute to make clear that SROs are not con-

sidered school district employees.

Following these changes, on April 15, the school board approved an updated contract with the New Hope and Plymouth police departments providing SROs for Cooper and Armstrong high schools.

The new bill that was passed will require some additional training for SROs. Specifically, Subdivision Four of the revised law requires that SROs have an understanding of juvenile brain development, de-escalation techniques and teen mental health.

With these trainings in place, Mr. Arthur, Cooper’s second SRO, hopes the relationship between the SROs and students will be a positive one.

“The point of an SRO is to build a bond with the school as a way of protecting the community as a whole,” Arthur said. “Having school resource officers returning to Cooper High School will add an extra blanket of safety for the school.”

Hawks heralded during Academic Awards event

Among the awards distributed were departmental honors, special cords for seniors

By DRIANA SANMARTIN
Quill staff writer

The Academic Awards Ceremony took place in the Cooper auditorium on May 17 during school hours.

This year, administrators combined the ceremony for grades 9-11, which took place from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Meanwhile, the ceremony for seniors followed, starting at 11:10 a.m.

The ceremony was designed to celebrate and recognize students for their academic accomplishments over the course of the school year. In addition to the in-person ceremony, the event was also streamed on Google Meet, allowing families and staff to participate in the celebration even if they were not physically present in the building.

The areas for academic recognition celebrated at the event included academic letters, bars, honor cords and medallions based on a 3.8 GPA. Additionally, there were high honors recognition awards for seniors, which included awards for the top 20 percent, the top 10 percent and the top 1 percent. Finally, each department distributed subject-specific honors, such as Outstanding Student in English, which were voted on by teachers in each department.

Helping oversee the event was International Baccalaureate (IB) Secretary Ms. Meyer. She

“Spanish and French honor society students were honored as well with cords. Based on their years, IB diploma scholars and candidates received cords or a medallion. AP scholars earned a medallion for taking three or more exams. Sophomores who completed the IB MYP Personal Project earned a medallion,” Ms. Meyer said.

said there were many unique awards given during the ceremony in addition to the different awards listed above.

“Spanish and French honor society students were honored as well with cords. Based on their years, IB diploma scholars and candidates received cords or a medallion. AP scholars earned a medallion for taking three or more exams. Sophomores who completed the IB MYP Personal Project earned a medallion,” Meyer said.

Almost all the awards entailed a personalized certificate. Along with these certificates, the cords, medallions and other special items were designed to acknowledge and award students for their achievements over this school year and, in the case of some senior and junior awards, multiple school years.

Meyer said all of the senior-specific awards can be worn during the graduation ceremony on June 3, allowing the graduates to show off their hard work and achievements.

Students received the official invitations to the ceremony during advisory on May 15. Invitations were also sent through the mail inviting families to join on Google Meet or to attend in person in the auditorium.

“The stage was decorated with flowers and tables were laid out along with our podium. The administration team and counselors handed out each award and shook each student’s hand,” Meyer said.

Quill staff says goodbye to readers

After covering hundreds of students throughout the school year, reporters share their thoughts about high school, what comes next



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Staff members convened during seventh period every day to bring readers nine issues of the newspaper.

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

After eight issues of the newspaper filled with 64 arts and sports profiles of seniors, and dozens of news articles covering various twelfth graders, *The Quill*’s graduating seniors are turning the spotlight on themselves to leave their mark in their final issue as newspaper staff members. The senior *Quill* staff members would like to thank you for your continued support throughout the year, and we hope you enjoy learning more about us individually before we depart from high school.

Bethzy Arias-Pliego (12)

Arias-Pliego is a member of Cooper’s Chamber Strings and takes the Symphony Orchestra class. Orchestra has been Arias-Pliego’s favorite class since she started at Cooper, but she decided she wanted to be challenged and eventually joined the advanced group.

“I started because we got to try and play more challenging music and be a chamber and not be conducted by anyone, although during practice, we had our teacher. Once we performed, we had nobody but us and would either look at each other or just listen to who was going to start us,” she said.

Arias-Pliego said the size of the Chamber Strings group is what she enjoys most about being involved.

“Just being in a small chamber and learning to conduct each other by either breathing or looking at each other. I enjoyed being in Chamber Strings because we really got to play and had such amazing senior cellos last year,” she said.

Arias-Pliego said her favorite music memory was playing at elementary schools in the morning before the holidays.

“It was really fun to see kids really enjoy the holiday spirit when they saw us playing,” she said.

Away from Cooper, Arias-Pliego enjoys driving around alone listening to music. She also enjoys going out with friends.

Arias-Pliego is undecided about post-secondary school but wants to major in music production or music in general. She hopes to attend either North Dakota State University or Normandale Community College.

As she wraps up a year of working on the school newspaper, Arias-Pliego said *The Quill* has meant many things to her.

“I really liked making stories, how we got to share them with the school and that students and staff were able to read them,” she said. “It was also nice being around people who are doing the same thing with their stories even if they were different. I also enjoyed how many students would tell me that they liked how their stories were written and it was nice to get a compliment from those students.”

Milo Athias Finn (12)

Athias Finn is *The Quill*’s sports editor, but his passion for writing sports stories comes from being an athlete. Currently, Athias Finn is wrapping up his track season. He said he joined track under unfortunate circumstances.

“Initially, I played baseball. I got injured my sophomore year. I injured my shoulder, and it never recovered, so I decided to join track on kind of a whim to keep my speed up in hopes [that] if I

did recover, I’d be a much better athlete. I just fell in love with track and got a lot of colleges interested in me,” he said.

Although it was an unfortunate beginning, Athias Finn relished the opportunity to run track and made many memories along the way.

“My favorite track memory was going to sections and competing for a medal,” he said.

Athias Finn’s passion for track also connects to his chief hobby outside of school.

“I know I’m in track, but I like to just sprint on my own,” he said.

Additionally, Athias Finn said he likes to read and watch movies.

“Movies are a huge passion of mine,” he said.

When it comes to school, Athias Finn said his two favorite classes are IB English HL2 and Rec and Leisure.

“[IB English HL2 allows me to] write and express myself without being limited, like in math. In English, there are multiple right answers; you just have to support yourself. [I also enjoy] Rec and Leisure because I like to move around,” he said.

Following high school, Athias Finn plans to participate in track at the collegiate level and study business and marketing.

“I don’t want to work for someone. I want to start my own business. I would rather make a lower wage and work for myself. Maybe, when I’m in my forties, I will start writing [movie] scripts,” he said.

According to Athias Finn, his time on *The Quill* allowed him to meet people and express himself.

“It has given me friendships and the opportunity to converse with people I normally wouldn’t converse with. It’s also given me the opportunity to write and express myself about movies, which I’ve always wanted to do,” he said.

Emily Carillo Acevedo (12)

Outside of writing for *The Quill*, Carillo Acevedo has taken part in Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestra Leadership Council, Chamber Strings and the Cooper theater program.

“I have been in Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Strings for the past two years and the Leadership Council for the past three years. I started in Philharmonic Orchestra and, during my junior year, I was placed in Symphony Orchestra as the post orchestra teacher, Ms. Pflaum, thought I would be a good fit. For Chamber Strings, I auditioned and was placed as a second violin [and] occasionally a first violin. I have been a part of the Leadership Council for the past three years and Ms. Pflaum showed me how to help lead others when our former presidents needed that extra help,” she said.

Meanwhile, Carillo Acevedo’s work in theater has spanned the last two years. She was a violinist during *Newsies* last year and an ensemble player in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* this year.

“I started with *Newsies* [because] I wanted to try being in a musical production. It was very fun that year. This year, for *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, I wanted to try acting, and a few of my friends, as well as [my] partner, had encouraged me to try. I had a lot of fun,” Carillo Acevedo said.

Carillo Acevedo said she has en-

joyed many aspects about her work in the arts.

“I’ve enjoyed orchestra ever since I was in fourth grade. My friend, Madisyn Pepper (12), and I decided to join together. So far, my favorite technical parts are being able to play music for others,” she said.

After years of orchestra, Carillo Acevedo said her favorite moment came last year.

“My favorite memory would be playing in Orchestra Hall in my junior year. It had been my dream ever since I was a child to be able to play for others in such an amazing place. Many of my favorite musicians and conductors have played there,” she said.

After years of dedication, Carillo Acevedo earned herself a leadership role in music this year.

“I currently am the co-president of the Orchestra Leadership Council and president of the Symphony Orchestra. I think it is going very well and I enjoy it, although at times I can get slightly overwhelmed by taking on more than I can handle to make sure that any event can go smoothly,” she said.

When it comes to choosing her favorite classes, Carillo Acevedo said she likes Orchestra, Economics, Journalism and Math. In Orchestra, she said she likes to “play for others,” while in Economics, she likes that her teacher, Mr. DiSalvi, “is quite eccentric,” which “makes the class enjoyable.” Meanwhile, she enjoys Journalism because she enjoys being able to write about stories that she finds interesting and Math because Mr. Simpson makes her “feel confident” in her abilities.

Outside of all of these activities, Carillo Acevedo said her favorite hobbies are drawing, playing tennis with friends and family, making jewelry and hanging out with friends and family.

With regard to post-high school plans, she has narrowed down her interests to physical therapy or being a therapist. The school she is interested in attending next fall is Concordia, St. Paul.

As she prepares to graduate, Carillo Acevedo said she enjoyed her chance to work on *The Quill* this year.

“*The Quill* has been something very fun for me. I love listening to others talk to me about their interests, plans or events. *The Quill* staff is very fun as well. They made me feel extremely welcome and I will miss being able to write for future issues,” Carillo Acevedo said.

Akeya Easley (12)

Easley is in her first year at Cooper after moving here from Illinois. Her passion showed as she discussed her favorite class.

“My favorite class this year has been Journalism, of course. The creative freedom we get in terms of writing is what makes me enjoy the class so much,” she said.

When she is not at Cooper, Easley said her job takes up a lot of her time.

“Outside of school, I don’t really do much besides work, but once I have time to myself, I really enjoy getting a few pages in and reading. Cooking has been a recent hobby of mine, but I’m not really good at it,” she said.

After spending her senior year at Cooper, Easley is headed back to Illinois, where she plans to attend Northern Illinois University in the fall. She hopes to major in psychology and potentially go to graduate school later.

As she gets closer to departing high school, Easley reflected on what *The Quill* has meant to her this year.

“Joining *The Quill* has caused me to meet amazing people inside and outside the classroom. I’ve also learned a new form of writing, which has benefited me in more ways than one,” she said.

Heather Holzersmith (12)

Holzersmith is in her first year of working on *The Quill*. She said she joined due to her interest in community interaction.

“It makes me feel involved in the community,” she said.

Another important aspect of working on the newspaper for Holzersmith is how it connects to one’s rights as an American citizen.

“*The Quill* provided me with an inclusive feeling to be the voice of a student-run press. Freedom of the press is important. *The Quill* does a great job of broadcasting students’ thoughts and opinions about certain things that revolve around Cooper High School,” she said.

Aside from Journalism, Holzersmith said her favorite class is Math. Outside of Cooper, Holzersmith spends a lot of time at work.

After graduating from high school this spring, Holzersmith will be attending Dunwoody College of Technology.

“I’m going to Dunwoody to be an electrical drafter/estimator,” she said. “This is someone who makes blueprints/models.”

Leonardo Perez (12)

Perez is the variety editor of *The Quill*. Perez also takes part in the arts through his work in Concert Band and Photography.

Perez said he joined Photography for the first time at the start of the second semester to earn his final art credit required to graduate. Meanwhile, Perez joined Concert Band and began playing the trumpet for the first time in his life this year. He said his motivation spawned from a family lineage full of trumpet players.

According to Perez, his favorite moment during his arts-related classes was getting his hair cut in Photography class by Mr. Molitor.

Despite his fond memories in that class, Perez said his two favorite classes this year are Journalism and Film Study.

Outside of his classes, Perez said he loves putting together models.

“Gundam and Gunpla are my favorite hobbies,” he said.

Perez said that making new friends, hanging out and writing stories have been his favorite things about joining *The Quill* staff this year.

Starting next fall, Perez said he plans to major in sociology at a community college and hopefully transfer to the University of Minnesota.

Noah Plahn (12)

Plahn joined Journalism in his junior year and was named *The Quill*’s sports editor. This year, he was promoted to Editor-In-Chief.

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed giving people the spotlight. The excitement they have when finding out they’ve been chosen for a story is extremely fulfilling. The anticipation for when their story releases is incredibly rewarding after all the hard work we’ve put in,” he said.

Having now been on *The Quill* staff for two years, Plahn said he has many favorite memories.

“It’s hard to narrow down just one favorite moment from Journalism. To find an outing for myself, I would say the overall class environment. It sounds satirical, but we’re like a family. There are not many *Quill* staff members. Despite this, we try our hardest to put out the best paper we can and have a fun time while doing it. Mr. Zuccola, on the surface, may seem too professional to have fun (maybe it’s the suit), but some of my best memories come from the jokes he’s made in class,” he said.

The Quill is not the only publication Plahn writes for. He has also contributed to the *Roundelay*.

“I joined *Roundelay* for the first time this year. I took Cooper’s Creative Writing class to expand and enhance another form of writing I hadn’t done very much of. I also had Ms. Major during my junior year and loved her teaching style, which inevitably pushed me to take the class,” he said.

Plahn said his newfound appreciation for creative writing was his favorite thing about taking Major’s class.

QUILL STAFF
continues on page 7

Seniors reach end of their time at Cooper

The last four years have been consequential ones for every member of the Class of 2024, which will graduate June 3



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

While some graduates will be back frequently to see the school and its landmarks, other will leave Cooper for the final time this June.

From the Editors

The feeling of achievement is a strong one in every senior as our last days of high school approach. The Class of 2024 is about to graduate and we should all be proud of what we have accomplished, persevered and overcome as we made our paths through high school. With commencement less than two weeks away, it is a perfect time for seniors to reflect on their academic experiences and look forward to what the future might be bringing our way.

As we leave Cooper and start the rest of our lives, we encourage

each and every one of you to never forget what you learned here. It goes without saying that high school often feels like a terrible time, but even bad experiences can teach us something. Take the good, the bad and the ugly and use them as guides for your life after Cooper. All of these moments, good or bad, can help us in real-life situations in the future.

Whatever you choose to do after you graduate, you should all remember the many things you have accomplished at Cooper. Remember your personal achievements and those of the class as a whole. We have done great things; too many to name. These achievements are not something to hide;

instead, we all should proudly and openly share what has been achieved during our time here. This school and the pride we developed here will only help us in the future. Be proud of what we have done as a school, as a class and as individuals.

The biggest piece of advice we can offer about the future is to make a difference in whatever you do and wherever you go. Take your experiences and accomplishments and use them to make a difference. Change a life, a community, maybe even the world. We truly hope no senior graduates feeling powerless, defeated or unimportant. Although high school is not always the

most nurturing and empowering environment, there is love and support available, so take the love and support and channel them toward something you are passionate about.

All in all, our four years in high school are almost over. It seems mind-blowing to realize that, but on June 3, we officially graduate and go on with our lives. Thinking back, many of us have been together since sixth grade, while some of us have been together since elementary school. It has been long, stressful and at times enjoyable. Good luck to everyone in their future after high school. We cannot wait to see what we all do next.

Phone use can put teen drivers in big danger

Summer road trips will be much safer when new drivers put away their phones

By AMARILYS BALMACEDA
Quill staff writer

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 3,308 people lost their lives in 2022 due to distracted driving incidents. Aside from these fatalities, distracted driving is the cause of 1.6 million car crashes every year. Experts also found that using cell phones while driving is six times more dangerous than driving drunk. Clearly, distracted driving is a major issue, especially among teens, who are new to driving. With summer approaching, and students and families making plans to travel and have fun, it is a perfect time to get more serious about putting away your phone while driving.

Many distracted driving incidents I have seen in the past stem from cell phones being used behind the wheel. I have witnessed girls doing their makeup or looking at themselves on their phone while driving. Perhaps the incident I best remember is a time when I was in the car with my mom and she commented that a semitruck in front of us seemed to be moving erratically. When we got up to the point where we had a view of the driver, we saw that he was texting with both hands and driving with his knee.

As a female, I understand the urge to look in your phone or the rear-view mirror numerous times to make sure that your makeup and hair are still looking nice. News flash, ladies: it is extremely dangerous to do this while driving a car. In fact, according to a PD Insurance report from 2021, 46 percent of women surveyed in the U.S. admitted to applying makeup while operating a motor vehicle. I personally believe in remaining completely focused when I am operating a motor vehicle. If your makeup needs to be done, get out of bed 20 minutes earlier in order to ensure that you have designated time in the mornings to apply your makeup somewhere other than your car when stopped at a stop light or in traffic.

To fix the distracted driving issue, I think we need to make it a priority to put anything that can be a distraction in the back seat. Keeping distractions in the back seat can help you focus on the road. Also, putting on your mascara and lip gloss before getting in the car can prevent 450,000 accidents annually. Finally, using your knees to hold the steering wheel in place is never a good idea, especially when you are piloting a semitruck and attempting to text at the same time. I hope you all have a safe summer.

Corrections

The April 25 issue of *The Quill* featured the story “Students win top spots in 2024 BestPrep contest.” Included with this article was a photograph of the winning students and their AVID teachers. In the caption below that photograph, Mr. Simpson was not properly identified. Additionally, in the article “IB artists display their works in exhibition,” the section focusing on Evelyn Coombs (12) mistakenly reported that she was painting a mural in the hallway as part of her art class, which is not the case. We apologize to Simpson, Coombs and our readers for the errors.

Careful planning can make end of year easier

Balancing school, work, extracurriculars, social life is a solvable challenge all students face as summer break approaches

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ
Quill staff writer

The end of the school year is close. Seniors are near the bottom of the slide, juniors are approaching the time to make big decisions about the future and underclassmen are preparing for the remarkable academic years ahead. Following the steps they have already taken this year, students need to ensure they are prepared for managing school, work and extracurricular responsibilities as they head to the end of the current school year.

As the summer creeps up on Cooper students, the primary goal is ending the school year with a bang. The final quarter shows if a student can finish strong and leave a mark with good grades. But how is it possible to do so? Students should always take advantage of the school’s academic resources. The use of help from the tutors who work with the Catch Up and Succeed program is a great resource for students needing assistance from other stu-

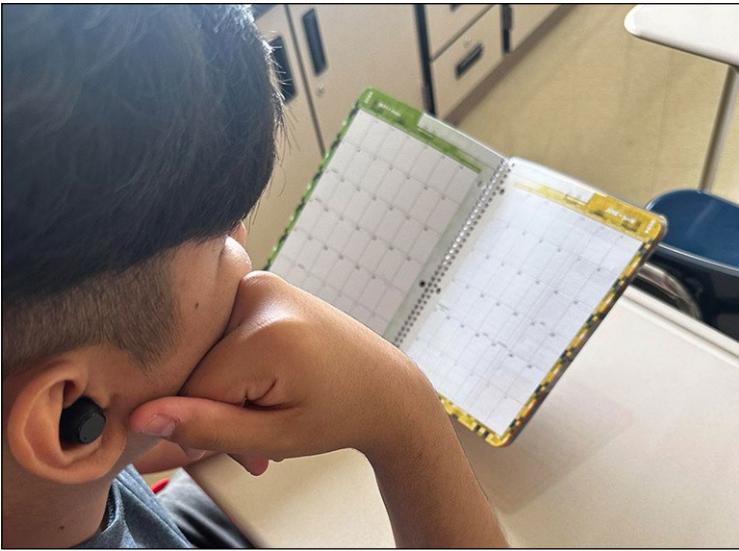


Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Something as simple as using a planner can make a big difference.

dents who are eager to help you do well in class. The bottom line is that a majority of the students and teachers around the school are willing to help, no matter what the subject is.

Beyond getting help with classes if they need it, students also need to manage their other responsibilities at the end of the school year. These other responsi-

bilities could be athletics or clubs. These extracurricular activities can be time consuming and are at times hard to balance with school work. While these extracurricular activities may be important to you, it is best to remember that staying caught up in school comes first. If the opportunity is there, it is best to have your teammates or colleagues schedule days when everyone in-

volved in the sport or club takes time off from the extracurricular activity to complete school work. These work days are great for getting individuals on the team or in the club caught up and on track.

The final time-consuming item on the list is work. Balancing work and your other responsibilities is important. It is a good idea to make your colleagues, supervisors and managers aware that responsibilities other than work are taking up your time. By doing so, your boss at work can build your schedule around your school and extracurricular commitments. Although having the ability to spend money on cheeseburgers and Cheetos is great, we need to remember that academics should come before work.

It is important to take control and balance all of the important tasks in your life. With school, work and other extracurricular activities taking up your time, it is easy to fall behind. Stay ahead of the responsibilities by using the resources that are available to you.

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Premier Performers

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

Eilir Zimmermann

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO
Quill staff writer

Eilir Zimmermann (12) is a member of multiple choir groups and was in the 2023-2024 winter musical.

Zimmermann has been in choir for four years. She has been in Concert Choir, Bella Voce and Chamber Singers for two years. Being involved in choir is what she has enjoyed most during high school.

"I have been involved with choir forever and continuing that into high school was something I looked forward to. It's lived up to my expectations," she said.

During her years in choir, Zimmermann has made many memories. Her favorite has been the Fall Music Festival held at Orchestra Hall.

"[I enjoyed] all the Fall Music Festivals, especially this year's," she said.



Photo by C. VANG

"It's the most fun I think I've had during my time in choir here and [I have] looked forward to it every year."

In addition to choir, Zimmermann has had many classes throughout the school year. Currently, she said her favorite is Film Study.

"I like to think I'm a film buff, but I don't know how to watch movies critically, so that's what I'm hoping to get out of it," she said.

Outside of school, Zimmermann plays soccer and reads books.

Next fall, Zimmermann plans to attend Minnesota State University, Moorhead and major in environmental geography.

Zimmermann said she will continue her arts-related activities once high school ends.

"I will [continue] because it's something that I genuinely enjoy and it is just adding another level," she said.

Marching Band lands D.C. gig

The marching Hawks will travel to the nation's capitol next July for an Independence Day parade



Photo by MARKUS HAHN

The band has enjoyed several notable performances this year, including a slot at the state fair.

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

The Cooper Marching Band will participate in the national Independence Day parade in Washington, D.C. on July 4, 2025. The band was nominated by Minnesota U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar to represent the state in the parade.

The parade is approximately one mile long and the route will include seeing all of the memorials along the National Mall in Washington D.C., including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorials, the Lincoln Memorial and the Jefferson Memorial.

The members of the Marching Band will also be able to take part in various tours, including a chance to visit the National Archives, the Smithsonian and Ford's Theater, which is where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Additionally, they will attend the capitol's July 4 concert and the Independence Day Fireworks Display.

"Participating at the parade, I expect Cooper High School

to represent the HAWK expectations, as well as behave like a school going out of state representing Minnesota," Marching Band teacher Mr. Hahn said.

Hahn said he expects his musicians to have a great experience during the trip.

"It will without a doubt have a lasting impact on all of those who attend because, we are not only going to Washington D.C., we are going to be part of the July 4 celebration in our nation's capital. As an adult, I'm excited every time I think about it," Hahn said.

Music students who are not already part of the group are welcome to sign up for Marching Band, while non-music students are encouraged to sign up for Color Guard. The form for signing up for the Marching Band is posted on Schoology.

Current members of the band are looking forward to their chance to entertain the July 4 crowds.

"It's not really about skill; it's more about how we play and what we provide to the audience," Luke Foster (12) said.

Of course, this year's graduating seniors are disappointed they will not be able to take part, but they are glad that the trip will take place.

"I'm a bit jealous that it wasn't my year, but I hope that the Marching Band does great at the national parade when they go visit there," Elias Contreras Tapia (12) said.

For this year's juniors, the ability to plan ahead and start raising money for the trip is essential.

"Selling candy bars is one of our fundraisers," Isabelle Ross (11) said. "I have already sold about seven boxes, which is key given that the trip will cost about \$1,500 for each student."

Even if you are not in the Marching Band, you can still visit the national parade in Washington, D.C. on July 4, 2025 to see Cooper's Marching Hawks perform.

"It is an amazing honor and privilege for the students of Cooper High School. There are very few things I can truly and confidently say are life changing. This trip is one of them," Hahn said.

Amy Vue

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO
Quill staff writer

Amy Vue (12) is a student who started International Baccalaureate (IB) Art in her sophomore year.

"I originally just joined because I enjoyed drawing. My art teacher convinced me to join IB Art, although I wasn't all that confident in my skills," she said.

During her three years in IB Art, she said she has enjoyed being able to use emotions to send "some sort of message either to myself or others."

Vue has made many memories during her time in IB Art, her favorite of which is being able to look back at the effort she put into her work. For the rest of the year, Vue will have many art-related activities coming up. In addition to taking a field trip to



Photo by C. VANG

the Walker Art Museum on April 17, she will be working on a mural for the school.

This school year, Vue said her favorite subjects are math and art.

"Math feels like a no-brainer this year, and although I'm a bit behind in my artwork this year, art holds a special part in my heart," she said.

Outside of school, Vue spends her time drawing, playing video and board games, and spending time with her friends and family.

After high school, Vue is still undecided about what she will do.

"I haven't figured it out yet. As a senior, I know I should, but it's hard figuring out what I want in life," she said.

However, after high school, Vue said she will continue her arts-related activities as a hobby.

Nicholas Thao

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO
Quill staff writer

Nicholas Thao (12) is a Cooper artist who is currently in the school's International Baccalaureate (IB) Art class.

"I am currently painting a mural in the school hallway right now," Thao said.

Thao said he has found art compelling since he was much younger.

"I have been interested in art and getting involved in an art class seemed interesting to me," Thao said.

According to Thao, a big appeal of the IB Art class is the process of creation.

"I enjoy the steps that go into making the art," he said.

In fact, Thao explained the conceiving of his pieces has led to his most cherished moments in the IB Art class.

"My favorite memories were mak-



Photo by C. VANG

ing the plans for the art and thinking of the ways I could create it," he said.

As the number of remaining school days winds down for seniors, Thao said he will be spending much of his extra time every day working on the hallway mural, which he said will be part of the legacy he will leave behind when he graduates from Cooper.

In addition to IB Art, Thao said he has taken painting, clay and photography classes at Cooper. He also cited his foods class as another personal favorite.

Outside of school, Thao enjoys cooking and writing.

"I also like drawing if I have free time," he added.

After high school, Thao hopes to attend college and pursue a major related to human resource management. Additionally, he intends on continuing his art work on the side.

Diego Yaw

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO
Quill staff writer

Diego Yaw (12) is a member of Cooper's music program, taking part in Symphony Orchestra, Concert Choir, Chamber Strings and Drop the Octave.

"I am a violinist in orchestra and a bass in choir," he said.

Yaw's involvement in music stretches back to his elementary and middle school years.

"I started playing the violin in fifth grade after a high school orchestra performed at my school," he said. "I started choir in my last year of middle school and had a very good teacher."

Yaw attributed his enjoyment of music to two factors.

"I like performing music with others and being able to enjoy music every



Photo by C. VANG

day," he said.

According to Yaw, two of his favorite music memories actually took place this school year.

"I enjoyed playing in the pit orchestra for the musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and performing at Orchestra Hall," he said.

Given the many musical groups in which he takes part, it comes as little surprise that Yaw cited Symphony Orchestra and Concert Choir as his favorite classes of the school day. Outside of school, he said he likes to play piano and spend time with his family and friends.

After graduating, Yaw plans on going to New Jersey to "help and spend time" with his grandmother. As for music, Yaw said he hopes to one day join a community orchestra.

Mid90s an effective coming-of-age film

The 2018 release marked the directing debut of actor Jonah Hill, who also wrote the screenplay

By ZACHARY WITTIG
Quill staff writer

Mid90s is a coming-of-age drama written and directed by Jonah Hill in his directorial debut. Although he has gone on to direct a documentary, Stutz, and several music videos, Hill is perhaps best known as an actor who has appeared in such successful films as *The Lego Movie*, *Sausage Party*, *Moneyball*, *21 Jump Street* and *The Wolf of Wall Street*. Clearly, his lengthy career in front of the camera helps him behind the camera in *Mid90s*, which is an excellent film. Chief among the movie's many strengths is its great use of cinematography, music and lighting.

Mid90s is about a boy named Stevie. When we first meet the character, we learn that he has a single mother and there is no direct indication who or where his father is. As the film begins, Stevie is around 12 years old and it is apparent that he does not have many friends. What he is interested in is skateboarding because he is mildly fascinated with the cool style and aesthetic he sees displayed by some local skaters.

Stevie becomes so obsessed with the fantasy of becoming a skateboarder that he buys a goofy, small cruiser board because it is his only option. He tries his hardest to learn how to skate while also purposefully shopping at his local skate store every day because he wants to become friends with the store's employees, who are all skaters. As the film unfolds, Stevie establishes a friendship with this group and slowly goes on a downhill journey. His relationship with his mother and brother becomes strained, and he begins drinking and smoking as a way to fit in with his new skater friends.

One highlight of *Mid90s* is the way in which cinematography, music and lighting are utilized to convey the ups and downs of Stevie's journey. Al-



Photo by A24

The film features a largely unknown cast, which makes it more realistic.

though there are many scenes in *Mid90s* during which the combination of cinematography and music are effective, a key one happens at the midpoint of the movie. In this sequence, Stevie and his new friend group are skating to an outdoor plaza where they intend on hanging out. As they head to their destination, the group skates downhill in a line while the song "We'll Let You Know" by Morrissey plays in the background.

During this scene, the camera is all the way at the bottom of the hill and slowly backing up while Ray, the oldest of the skater group, skates toward it with all of the other skaters following him. Eventually, the group swerves around the actual camera, at which point we cut to a long shot that shows us the two youngest skaters, Stevie and Ruben, following very far behind the main group because they cannot keep up.

In addition to the impact of the cinematography and music, this sequence also benefits from the use of lighting. As the group is making its way down the hill, the sun is setting, which gives the scene a warm-but-dimming glow. This

adds a moodiness to the scene as we see the sunset behind the skaters as they descend the hill. Overall, this sequence implies that friends should have fun together and stick together.

Another great scene that makes use of cinematography and lighting involves an interaction between Stevie and Ray, who Stevie looks up to. Prior to this scene, Stevie has gone through a horrible change in his attitude that sees him rebelling against his mother, drinking alcohol and stealing money. Stevie's mother is understandably concerned and decides to take him up to the skate shop and confront all of Stevie's friends. Stevie's mom yells at the other skaters and criticizes them for being a bad influence on Stevie, who is incredibly embarrassed and decides to run away.

Eventually, Ray finds Stevie on the roof of the skate shop and decides to bring him to an abandoned skatepark, which is when the memorable sequence takes place. In this scene, Ray

MID90S
continues on page 8

Chamber Strings helps reopen library

The group played for patrons at the Rockford Road location of the Hennepin County Library during an April 13 celebration



Photo by ANASTASIA VERDOLJAK

Hawk musicians played two, 45-minute sets to mark the reopening of the library after nearly a year of construction inside and outside of the building.

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO
Quill staff writer

The Cooper Orchestra group Chamber Strings held a performance on April 13 at the Rockford Road Hennepin County Public Library. This performance was to celebrate the reopening of the library following a construction project that lasted from May 1, 2023 until April 8, 2024.

The director for Chamber Strings is Ms. Verdoljak, the Orchestra teacher at Cooper. The group is made up of several musicians ranging from ninth to 12th grade.

“The group meets once a week during Hawk Lunch and Learn for rehearsals. We had a couple of rehearsals that needed to be moved because of the days off. There are students who want to pursue other performance opportunities and they do it on their own time,” she said.

Rockford Road Library did not reach out to Verdoljak until Mr. Hahn, the band teacher at Cooper, recommended Chamber Strings for the reopening event due to the available space and the fact that

Chamber Strings is a quieter group than Jazz Band. Verdoljak eventually was asked a month in advance whether the group could perform at the event.

The performance was held in two intervals of 45 minutes each with a 15-minute break in between.

“We pulled from music we’ve

“Also, the students were enthusiastic to play on a Saturday when they could have been sleeping or working,” Verdoljak added.

There were a total of nine students who participated in the event. A few had to leave during the break due to other events.

One of the students who took

“The group meets once a week during Hawk Lunch and Learn for rehearsals. We had a couple of rehearsals that needed to be moved because of the days off. There are students who want to pursue other performance opportunities and they do it on their own time,” Ms. Verdoljak said.

been rehearsing from the past year and put a packet together,” Verdoljak said.

A few of the highlights from the event for Verdoljak were seeing students from the district, meeting parents and witnessing how the audience responded to the show.

part is Raiden Southwell (9). He was the bassist for the orchestra performance.

Southwell said he started practicing around a month ago when the first rehearsals took place. According to Southwell, there were multiple rehearsals before the event.

Southwell said he was able to stay at the event for the whole time.

“The performance was around two hours,” he said.

Southwell said some personal highlights from the concert were being able to show off and teach others about his instrument.

Another participant in the event was RYANNE DUTTON (10). Dutton was one of the violinists at the performance.

“I am a second violin. I also switch to first violin from time to time,” she said.

Dutton practiced around two weeks before the event. Dutton said she was not able to stay for the entirety of the actual performance.

“I was able to play for an hour and a half but I had a softball event to go to,” she said.

Dutton had many highlights from the library performance.

“I liked how some of the little kids were singing along throughout the song ‘Stand By Me’ or tapped their feet with it. There was one kid in front who was bouncing to the

CHAMBER STRINGS continues on page 7

Roundelay celebrates release of new edition

Annual literary publication includes poetry, short stories, artwork from Cooper students in all four grades

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH
Quill staff writer

Cooper offers many ways for students to express themselves, from painting murals on the wall to marching around the school and sounding the halls with music. One of the many ways students are artistically involved in their community is the *Roundelay*.

The *Roundelay* is issued every year at the end of May, with this year’s release happening on May 29. It contains student creative writing and artwork. Students can submit poems, short stories, drawings and pictures to the annual publication.

The advisor of the *Roundelay* is Ms. Major, an English teacher who helps students nurture their interest in writing. Major has been the magazine’s advisor for two years. Major said she decided to become the *Roundelay* advisor because of her passion for creative writing. In fact, she even teaches the Creative Writing class offered at Cooper.

“I am lucky enough to teach Creative Writing, so the two go hand-in-hand. I love working with students and seeing how creative they can be,” she said.

Commonly, students are curious about how to submit their work to the *Roundelay*. Major said that students who are interested in sharing their work next year can stop by her classroom, 244, or send an email to olivia_major@



Photo by CHIMUANG VANG

Creative Writing teacher Ms. Major oversees the production of the magazine.

rdale.org. Submissions each year are due at the end of April.

Major said she enjoys the personal connection between writing and artwork.

“I know we have a lot of talented and hardworking writers and artists in our school. This is a space for them to celebrate their work. I also know that writing is very personal and sometimes uncomfortable to share. If anyone would like to submit to the *Roundelay* but remain anonymous, that’s an option too,” Major said.

One contributor this year was RYAN GUILLÉN BARRERA (12). Guillén Barrera is an International Baccalaureate (IB) Art student who submitted a few of his pieces to this year’s issue of the *Roundelay*. He said this is the first year he

has participated in the magazine.

“I have not participated in the *Roundelay* until this year. What prompted me to participate in the *Roundelay* my senior year was a very successful art exhibition project for my IB Art class,” he said.

For Guillén Barrera, the *Roundelay* has offered a creative outlet to engage in self-expression. He said he enjoys sharing his artwork.

“The *Roundelay* helps me express myself by allowing the opportunity to showcase my art to more and more people that might possibly find interest in it,” Guillén Barrera said.

The types of pieces that can be submitted to the *Roundelay* have no strict rules. Therefore,

Guillén Barrera said he submitted pieces that have a personal meaning to him.

“The type of artwork I submitted to the *Roundelay* primarily consisted of video game-themed depictions. A few categories of art I submitted to the *Roundelay* include drawings, paintings and cardboard crafts that I think people will like. When it comes to video games, my artwork primarily revolves around the video games *Splatoon* and *Five Nights at Freddy’s*, but there are some other fandoms you might see sprinkled about,” he said.

Student artwork and writing are strategically placed by Major on the pages of the *Roundelay* to clearly depict each artist’s message. In Guillén Barrera’s case, the main focus is his love for video games. In fact, almost all of his work ties to the main inspiration of video games.

“The main focus of expression in my artwork is appreciation and honor for the video games that shaped and formed some, if not most, of our childhoods. Even if one does not resonate with my message due to separate interests, it’s always good to keep an open mind. There’s a video game for anyone,” he said.

For Guillén Barrera and the many other students who have contributed to this year’s magazine, the *Roundelay* will continue to offer students a creative outlet to express themselves freely.

Sandman series features unique plot, characters

Neil Gaiman's distinct storytelling is joined by breathtaking visual elements

By DRIANA SANMARTIN
Quill staff writer

The graphic novel series *Sandman*, written by Neil Gaiman and published by DC Comics, originally ran from January 1989 to March 1996. The influential series consisted of 75 issues total. I started reading this series for one main reason: as someone who enjoys Neil Gaiman’s writing as a novelist, I wanted to dive into his comic books as well. Overall, I find this series to be well-written and incredibly illustrated. I highly recommend *Sandman* if you want to be met a complex story with interesting characters.

The *Sandman* series follows the character of Dream, an anthropomorphic personification of the Lord of All Dreams and Reality. In the series, this character is first shown to be trapped in a glass-like dome, held by a man hoping to achieve immortality. After Dream manages to escape, he is tasked with trying to rebuild and fix things after his long imprisonment in the dome. The series follows the multiple obstacles and challenges Dream has to work through, which sometimes requires him to work with his immortal siblings. The series continues with very well-written storytelling that effectively rounds out the reader’s understanding of all the characters and their importance within the story.

An aspect I enjoy about the series is the illustrations, which always include something new and interesting. I find the illustrations to be extremely fitting for each installment in the story and believe they help convey the incredible themes of the series. The illustrations of each character and the worlds they inhabit are fitting and never bland. Given the fact that the series takes place in a large number of fantastic places, and that it includes otherworldly characters like angels, demons and mythological creatures, the illustrations are a critical component of the story and I find them all to be well-made.

Another aspect of the comics I enjoy is the writing and the storytelling. The comics are set up with interesting and well-developed characters that help tell a complete story. I enjoy the way Gaiman uses linked stories and how he continuously reveals new things about their world and how it is structured. This is particularly noticeable in the second volume, which introduces multiple stories with multiple characters. Not always having Dream as the main focus is critical to the series and Gaiman does a great job of making sure the stories link back up at the end.

The final aspect I find great about the series is the design of the characters. Gaiman does an excellent job of writing each of the main characters. I enjoy the fact that each character receives a great story about their background, their current journeys and their impacts on the world.

Especially noteworthy is the writing for the character Dream. This character is not shown as a good or bad person; instead, Dream is shown to be a complex character, with multiple responsibilities and work to do. Dream often makes questionable decisions and has a constantly shifting moral compass. His character and others are engaging because of the incredible writing behind them.

In conclusion, the *Sandman* series is fully engrossing. All its aspects, from writing to illustration, combine to make *Sandman* a great series. I recommend reading it given all its great aspects, especially if you are someone who wants to dive into something new. I give *Sandman* five out of five stars.

Fallout series expertly brings game to life

New Apple show will appeal to gamers and people unfamiliar with the *Fallout* universe

By LEO PEREZ
Quill staff writer

Fallout has been an expansive video game franchise that has brought millions of people together since the first game introduced the harsh conditions of a futuristic wasteland to people’s computers in 1997. Recently, the *Fallout* universe has expanded thanks to a new Amazon Prime streaming series.

The new show is something multiple people, including myself, have wanted since the fourth *Fallout* game was released back in 2015. Finally, our prayers were answered on April 12 when Amazon Prime dropped the eight episodes that make up season one of the *Fallout* show. In fact, I was so excited that I watched all eight episodes in one night. The show is really good. I am especially astonished by all the sets and props, which are one-to-one with the art featured in the actual *Fallout* game.

The locations are a staple of the *Fallout* games and they are also a main feature of the show. Much like the game, the lands in the show are harsh, tough and rough. There is danger everywhere and just about everything and everyone wants to kill the main characters.

That is especially shown through the main character, Lucy MacLean. She is a dweller in Vault 33. After a group of revolutionaries kidnaps Hank MacLean, her father and overseer of the vault, Lucy embarks on a mission through the wastelands of what used to be Los Angeles to find him.

Lucy is the physical embodiment of the show’s viewers as they first enter the *Fallout* universe. As she sees the horrors of the new world for the first time, we go through the same learning process. She is basically just like us as she wonders what has created the monsters she encounters and tries to understand what happened to make the world as bad as it is.

Lucy is not alone, though. She soon enlists the help of Maximus, a squire of the Brotherhood of Steel. As she continues on her quest to find her father, the two meet wacky characters and go through a variety of dangerous situations.

Given the premise of the show, it is not surprising that it has some incredible scenes. The makers of the show have done a phenomenal job with the established *Fallout* universe and its lore, especially as it pertains to the locations, the set design and the props, all of which are accurate to the original games.

The actors also do really well in their roles. Ella Purnell, who plays Lucy MacLean, Aaron Moten, who plays Maximus, and Walton Goggins, who plays The Ghoul, are three stand-out members of the excellent cast. They do an effective job of bringing to life the various characters from the *Fallout* universe, taking the game we know and love from our computer screens into a live-action context.

The music in this show is another one of its phenomenal elements. The show uses many of the same tracks that are used in the original games, including “I Don’t Want to Set the World On Fire” by The Ink Spots and “Orange Colored Sky” by Nat King Cole. The show also showcases music that is not from the game but still fits the feeling of *Fallout*, including “So Doggone Lonesome” by Johnny Cash and “Only You” by The Platters. All the music has been carefully compiled to create a soundtrack that rivals that of the actual *Fallout* games.

Also important is that the show’s creators make sure to sprinkle in Easter eggs for the fans of the games while keeping the main plot of the show understandable for those who have not played or read anything about *Fallout* before. This ability to reach both types of viewers is what makes the show a successful adaptation that should be able to reel in new viewers.

Overall, the *Fallout* series successfully introduces viewers to a vast and exciting world that will hopefully continue in future seasons. I would recommend this show to all viewers who love action and adventure stories. Of course, I also recommend it to people who love the *Fallout* games. I give this show an enthusiastic five out of five stars.

Fallout 4 a worthy installment in franchise

Nearly 10 years after its release, *Fallout 4* remains one of the best installments of the video game series



Photo by BETHESDA GAME STUDIOS

Fallout 4 does an excellent job of maintaining the reputation of the series for effective world-building.

By LEO PEREZ
Quill staff writer

Fallout 4 is a game developed by Bethesda Game Studios back in 2015. This release won the award Game Of the Year for 2015 and is the fourth main title in the ongoing *Fallout* series. Although I like all of the games in the *Fallout* series, the fourth installment has many attributes that make it one of my favorites.

Fallout is a game series focused on a world where nuclear power became America’s first choice of energy after all other resources were depleted. Eventually, a war occurs and nuclear bombs rain down all over the world, creating the wasteland in which the games take place.

In this desolate world, Vault-Tec emerges as a key company. This company builds environment-proof vaults in order to protect the rich and powerful people who can afford it. Additionally, this company is connected to very secret, very illegal experiments for the government. Within *Fallout 4*, the main characters are part of one of these experiments that deals with cryofreeze.

As you play *Fallout 4*, you are in the shoes of either Nate or Nora, a

husband and wife who are parents to a baby named Shaun. Both characters have their own background: Nora is a lawyer and Nate is a war veteran. You can select either of these two characters without having much impact on the central story. The only real differences will be in some of the dialogue with essential characters and with the random NPCs you encounter in the world.

Whichever character you are, the beginning of the game starts the same: you are at a mirror where you can change your appearance. The sun is shining, the house is clean and Codsworth, the family automaton, has just prepared coffee for you. Shaun is in his crib and all is well until you hear the dreaded sirens. You and your spouse quickly get to the vault and enter your cryo pods.

While you and your spouse are sleeping, an unknown man enters, kills your spouse and takes your baby. Due to a malfunction in your pod, you do not wake up until years later, 210 to be exact. Now, the mission is to find Shaun and save him. However, the obstacles in your way will make journeying through the wasteland look like a stroll in the park.

As you engage in the mission to

get your kid back, you will meet some helpful companions along the way, each of whom have their own quests and their unique likes and dislikes. Also helping you survive the harsh wasteland of The Commonwealth, which includes what was once the city of Boston, are the weapons and armor you select.

There is a wide range of weapons you can use to take down the biggest and baddest foes in Boston, including weapons that use lead, lasers or plasma. All of these weapons have their own positive and negative attributes. For example, laser weapons do less damage against leather armor and lead-based weapons do less damage against metal armor. Every weapon has an advantage or disadvantage depending on what situation you are facing.

While The Commonwealth area is not the harshest place around, if you do not know what you are doing, you will die. While in this wasteland, stimpacks are your best friend. They are handy in a pinch and can fix any broken bones or bullet wounds. These packs can be found in containers distributed randomly throughout the world of the game. In fact, you can even find them through other charac-

ters, and you can buy them from doctors or wandering traders.

Another helpful tool is a pipe gun. They are littered everywhere and are easily customizable. While they usually do pitiful damage, the ammo for a pipe gun can be found on nearly every enemy that uses a gun. Pipe guns will be your second best friend until you reach higher levels, so keep your strongest weapons on standby and use a pipe gun for regular enemies, like raiders, radroaches and ghouls.

Grenades are another super useful weapon. They are especially helpful when you are facing enemies in rooms, people who are positioned closely together and bigger enemies. Regular grenades are commonly found on gunners and better-equipped raiders. The two premium kinds of grenades are plasma grenades and nuka grenades. These variants are pretty rare, but they are fearsome tools against the toughest enemies.

Also helpful to your character is V.A.T.S., which stands for Vault-Tec Assisted Targeting System. This system allows you to target specific body parts when fighting. For instance, you can choose to always damage an enemy’s legs so they cannot run, their hands so they cannot hold their weapons or their head so you can inflict critical damage.

While all these tools are key in holding out against human enemies in the game, facing wildlife is much harder. The wasteland will waste no time in trying to kill you, with giant bloatflies shooting maggots at you and giant lizards coming after you with their aptly named deathclaws. But do not worry: explosives and high-caliber weapons will do the trick against these creatures.

Overall, *Fallout 4* is a phenomenal game filled with funny glitches and great music. While the story is just all right, the character dialogue and personal stories are nearly perfect. I like that you can make either Nate or Nora be whatever you want them to be: funny, serious, compassionate or completely sarcastic. Also key is the fact that the game’s mods are splendid and the *Fallout 4* community keeps this game alive with extra weapons, armor and animations. This release deserves five out of five stars.

Groundbreaking *Fireflies* still resonates

Isao Takahata's 1988 war movie helped make animation a place where filmmakers can deal with adult issues, themes

By MILO ATHIAS FINN
Quill staff writer

Grave of the Fireflies, directed by Isao Takahata, was released to audiences in Japan on April 16, 1988. The movie took more than a year to become adapted into an American format, with the first screening of the adaptation occurring July 26, 1989. This movie is often heralded as one of the best examples of adult-oriented anime and that praise is definitely accurate.

While *Grave of the Fireflies* is a work of fiction, the subject matter focused on in the film is real and accurate. The movie takes place during World War II in the large city of Kobe, Japan. Kobe was the sixth largest city in that country during the time of World War II, making the city subject to air raids and bombings. The customary flimsy nature of the houses only aided in the city’s destruction.

Grave of the Fireflies centers around two protagonists: Seita (Tsutomu Tatsumi) and his little sister, Setsuko (Ayano Shiraiishi). After a horrific American bombing leaves the city of Kobe in shambles, Seita discovers his mother in the rubble. With his father off fighting in the war, Seita is forced to mature and become Setsuko’s sole caretaker.

Eventually, Seita and Setsuko are



Photo by CHIMUJAL VANG

The film follows two siblings as they try to survive the aftermath of World War II.

forced to venture out and seek shelter, eventually finding a hillside cave in which to take refuge. Seita struggles to find a job due to the struggling Japanese economy, and resorts to petty thievery as a means to satisfy his sister’s hunger. In a time of such forlornness, can Seita and Setsuko rely on each other to survive?

Grave of the Fireflies is a unique film given that it is a war story but focuses on the effects of war on civilians as opposed to combatants. It is not your traditional action movie or propagan-

da-induced cash grab, which is often the case in typical war movies. It is an authentic, true-to-life tale of heroism and family.

The film conveys the true nature of war and shows that there are no winners. It is a heartbreaking tale of a sibling bond and the power it holds. Takahata uses Seita’s unrelenting passion to protect his sister to create a universally relatable character.

The character of Seita is convincing and complex. He is a once humorous and lighthearted boy who is

thrown into the fire. His personality shift over the course of the film is jarring. At times, Seita wants to go back to the way things were and just be a kid. However, he pushes this notion aside to become the man that Setsuko needs him to be. Seeing the war permanently desensitize and age Seita is heartbreaking to watch as a viewer.

Shiraiishi’s voice acting is spot on. At the beginning of the film, Setsuko is almost annoying and she is seemingly always blabbering about something. However, her bubbly personality and continuous need to speak her mind is only a sign of her young age and love for life. Eventually, during the second and third act, she becomes more reserved as she becomes physically weaker. It is truly upsetting as a viewer to see a young child full of spirit get stripped of her personality.

Grave of the Fireflies is a movie that transcends the times. Despite the film being released in the late 1980s, its visuals hold up against animated films from the present day. Additionally, the film’s focus on the effects of war will always be a relatable topic. *Grave of the Fireflies* is a well-done film, with great animation and a fantastic storyline. It is also a movie I feel will be celebrated well into the future. I give *Grave of the Fireflies* 4.7 out of five stars.

THREE WEEKS OF IB EXAMS COME TO AN END continued from page 1

Brooks said he enjoys the broader thinking IB classes offer and the way that the tests address that thinking.

“Different perspectives on topics, resulting in varying interpretations, is quite interesting to me,” Brooks said.

Another IB diploma candidate testing this May was Eliana VanSistine (11). VanSistine said her IB teachers were nothing but helpful when preparing her and the other students for testing.

“IB teachers have lots of experience with testing, so in class, they make sure you know what to expect for the

test and that they have given you all the helpful materials they can to aid in studying. Most studying happens outside of school, and my strategy has been to just utilize any free time and devote any time you can in the weeks leading up, even if it’s only like 10 minutes a day,” she said.

VanSistine said she wanted to be part of the IB program because she enjoys classes that push and challenge her. She also likes to take advantage of earning college credits in high school.

“I love how collaborative IB learn-

ing is with peers and how receptive the teachers are to new ideas and learning styles. IB provides longer-lasting knowledge than other classes because you aren’t just memorizing the facts; you need a deeper understanding to connect ideas you hadn’t thought of before,” she said.

According to Christensen, IB classes are designed to follow a style of education that gives every student the chance to prevail academically. The whole purpose of IB learning is to offer a higher-quality education that challenges students to develop new skills and be-

come free thinkers. Students learning in the IB program are given the opportunity to become knowledgeable in other cultures, which strengthens the sense of community all schools are expected to foster.

IB courses can be found in any subject matter, ranging from math to science to global language. For each of those subjects, there is an accompanying test that students can take. After the testing season is complete, students can look up their scores on the IB website anytime after July 6.

Nightcrawler casts a compelling spell

The film follows the journey of a morally dubious cameraman as he tries to capture lucrative crime footage for the evening news

By MILO ATHIAS FINN
Quill staff writer

Nightcrawler, directed by Dan Gilroy in his directorial debut, was released to audiences on October 31, 2014. The film premiered in several Canadian film festivals a month prior to its full release, including the Toronto International Film Festival and the Atlantic Film Festival, where the film was well received. I chose to review this film because of its unorthodox but compelling characters, the stark attention to detail of the film’s production team and the movie’s frighteningly realistic action sequences.

Nightcrawler is the embodiment of a character study. The plot centers around the erratic Lou Bloom (Jake Gyllenhaal), a petty thief who is in search of finding a job and his true calling. After robbing a security guard at a railyard, Bloom attempts to sell the items he stole at a local pawn shop. Bloom attempts to haggle the price and eventually even asks for a job, but it all ends in his failure.

During his car ride home, he stumbles upon a fiery car crash being filmed by Joe Loder (Bill Paxton), a freelance cameraman who immediately attempts to sell his footage for profit. The following day, Bloom recognizes the car crash on the local news and is inspired. After stealing and selling a bicycle, Bloom uses the money to purchase a camera and police radio. Bloom then begins filming petty crimes with his newfound assistant, Rick (Riz Ahmed), and names his new “company” Video Production News.

When Bloom later discovers a violent crime scene, he makes sure to get as close as possible to the victim of the shooting, despite warnings from the police to get away from the scene. With this provocative footage now recorded, Bloom approaches Nina (Rene Russo), the program director of a struggling local news outlet, to see if she wants to buy the footage.

Nina is highly impressed with



Photo by OPEN ROAD FILMS

Actor Jake Gyllenhaal puts in what is arguably the best performance of his already impressive career.

Bloom’s ability to record graphic and grisly content. As a result, she eventually offers Bloom a contract with hopes that his footage will drastically raise the company’s ratings. With Bloom’s high aspirations of making Video Production News the most successful news production company in the area, he welcomes the challenge. Bloom then embarks on a mission to record the best footage and goes to increasingly greater lengths to achieve his goal, soon blurring the lines between observer and participant in the crime scenes he encounters.

One reason for the film’s appeal is the complexity of the Lou Bloom character. He is not a traditional protagonist in any sense and actually displays several characteristics of a sociopath. He lacks empathy, he is narcissistic and he commits crimes; however, he is still the protagonist of the film. Gilroy does a great job making a rather unredeemable character relatable to audiences by giving Bloom admirable traits. He is obser-

vant, polite, extremely dependable and, most importantly, he does everything to the best of his ability. Bloom does not see a point in pursuing an endeavor if you are not actively trying to be the best at.

As the film unfolds, it becomes clear to audiences just how despicable Bloom is. Unlike a traditional hero that redeems their flaws during the latter half of the film, Bloom remains true to himself throughout the film.

While Bloom is written perfectly, he is not the only well-crafted character. Bloom’s employee, Rick, is an interesting character who serves as a slightly more moral counterpoint to Bloom. Meanwhile, Nina is a woman who fears she is past her prime and is weary of the compromises she has been forced to make in life.

Bringing these compelling characters to life are the film’s excellent actors. Jake Gyllenhaal is fantastic in his role, and despite having a very impressive filmography that includes

Brokeback Mountain, *Prisoners*, *Donnie Darko*, *End of Watch*, *Jarhead* and *Zodiac*, this may arguably be his best performance. I have no idea how Gyllenhaal did not even get nominated for an Oscar the year of the film’s release. His performance is certainly stronger than Eddie Redmayne’s in *The Theory of Everything*, which was the performance that earned the 2015 Academy Award for Best Actor. Gyllenhaal’s lack of an Oscar or Golden Globe nomination for this film may be the most egregious snub of all time.

Despite *Nightcrawler*’s lack of recognition from film awards committees, it was a critical success that was, and still is, well received by audiences. *Nightcrawler* is a masterpiece that conveys a stark and sometimes gruesome story in a beautiful and realistic way. If you are ever in the mood for an expertly devised character study or a fast-paced, action-packed thriller, I highly recommend *Nightcrawler*. I give the film 4.8 out of five stars.

QUILL STAFF SAYS GOODBYE TO READERS continued from page 2

“The *Roundelay* provided me with a new approach to poetry and creative writing as a whole. I am no professional, but who truly is when it comes to creative writing? That’s the beauty of it. It’s not my favorite form of writing or one I’m very good at, but I enjoyed the new perspective,” he said.

Plahn said another one of his favorite parts of taking Creative Writing was the timing of the class.

“My favorite memory from Creative Writing was the work time environment. Creative Writing was my eighth-period class, so it provided a nice way to wind down the day with some fun writing,” he said.

In addition to his work on school publications, Plahn also takes part in Cooper performing arts.

“I took Choir my freshman year and realized it wasn’t for me. I still wanted to perform, just not with my voice, so I decided to join Concert Band my sophomore year. It was a rocky start, but I learned to love it, and now I’m incredibly glad I stuck with it over the years,” he said.

Plahn said the band’s director is his favorite part of that class.

“Mr. Hahn has been a pivotal part of my high school journey and has always steered me in the right direction when I undoubtedly needed it. Of course, the shenanigans and fun of class are enjoyable, but moreover, my relationship with Mr. Hahn really benefited me,” he said.

Plahn said that Hahn is effective in teaching him class concepts.

“Mr. Hahn’s teaching methods will always stick with me. Learning dynamics with Mr. Hahn inside his office during sectionals practice and having to say each of them at their respective volume despite the orchestra practicing as a class right next door was the climax of uncomfortable interactions. It was a very awkward walk out of that office, but I suppose I never forgot my dynamics,” he said.

Outside of the classroom, Plahn became a volunteer this year in Mr. Hoffman’s Catch Up and Succeed program.

“I started tutoring around the start of this year. It’s amusing how I ran into the program’s advisor, Mr. Hoffman, for the first time. I was covering a story for *The Quill* and ended up in his study hall seeking a student. It turns out he was already

looking for me due to my grades and asked me to join the program. Since then, I’ve had many wonderful interactions with Mr. Hoffman and am proud to be a part of the program,” he said.

Plahn said he feels fulfilled in the program through his ability to help students.

“As cliché as it sounds, I love that Catch Up and Succeed gives me an opportunity to help people. It makes me feel like I belong to something larger than myself when I’m able to give a student that final push in the right direction,” he said.

Plahn’s favorite moment while working in this program came from an interaction with a student he was tutoring.

“I remember early on in my tutoring when I was helping a student, and I saw the moment where it clicked. I was very unsure about how well I could teach someone, but this moment was really inspirational for me,” he said.

Plahn said he has a number of hobbies when he exits Cooper’s doors.

“Outside of school, I love sports. I played them for nearly my entire life until my senior year, when I took a step back to focus on school and my job. I still follow football and basketball heavily. I don’t have a lot of free time, but when I do, I enjoy reading books, playing video games and just hanging out with my friends and girlfriend,” he said.

Following high school, Plahn will attend North Hennepin Community College and get his associate’s degree before transferring to the University Of Minnesota to earn his bachelor’s degree. According to Plahn, his work in Journalism and *The Quill* will prepare him for the next steps in his educational journey.

“Journalism has taught me a ton of valuable life skills. *The Quill* was extremely transformative for me and allowed me to learn a new level of professionalism I lacked before. My high school journey has been an incline, starting pretty low, but I’m proud of where I am now. I’ve never truly expressed this to him, but Mr. Zuccola has been an instrumental part of my progress as not only a student but a human being, and I am forever in debt for how much he has taught me,” he said.

Driana Sanmartin (12)

Sanmartin is a *Quill* staff writer who also participates in activities like Cooper’s

book club and the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).

Sanmartin said she joined the book club during its inception and has stuck with it ever since. She joined because she wanted to continue reading and exploring new genres.

“I really enjoyed book club because of the chance to discuss and share what we thought of the books we read as well as just enjoying the new books we received,” Sanmartin said.

What is more, Sanmartin said she joined GSA her sophomore year and returned to it this year. She has enjoyed GSA because of the friendly people and activities she gets to take part in.

Sanmartin said she has gained some favorite memories in both activities.

“For book club, a fun memory was when we discussed a particular book we really enjoyed and it seemed like a really interesting moment for us all to agree on one really good book,” she said. “For GSA, we went on a trip to Quest and had a lot of fun meeting other students and different panels and it was really informative and fun.”

When it comes to school, Sanmartin narrowed down her favorite classes to Journalism and Chemistry.

“I really like the opportunity to improve my writing and having a place to put it into practice and I just really like the math and everything I’ve learned in chemistry,” she said.

As June approaches, Sanmartin is now finalizing her post-graduation plans.

“I’m currently going into a gap year before my next year of school begins,” she said. “Hopefully, I want to enter computer science or something related but I’m hoping to improve my writing and become an author.”

According to Sanmartin, she has gained many skills from being a *Quill* writer this year.

“It’s been a big help to my writing being able to actually write for something and putting it out in the open. I’ve been able to grow my skills in not only writing, but socially as well,” she said.

Chimual Vang (12)

One of two veteran *Quill* staff members, Vang currently is the news editor of the newspaper. After nearly two years of

Journalism, Vang looked back on how he ended up in the class.

“I personally joined Journalism on a whim. It was between Photography or Journalism, and I chose Journalism over Photography because, on the first day of Photography, we were given an assignment with many regulations and I felt that I just preferred to work in a free-work environment,” he said.

Despite his uncertainty upon arriving, Vang stuck with Journalism.

“After my first semester of Journalism, my schedule was changed and I no longer had Journalism in my roster. When that happened, I went to my counselor to change it back. Although I joined Journalism on a whim, I went out of my way to re-join Journalism. That’s probably the most memorable moment throughout my activity in Journalism,” he said.

His triumphs in Journalism resulted from the many tasks Vang has to manage while working on the paper.

“I am a [section] editor, as well as a photographer in Journalism. Being one of the [section] editors isn’t as difficult as being a photographer in my experience. Being a photographer means you’ll have to bother a lot of people, and most of the time, a lot of people are uncomfortable getting their pictures taken, so it’s up to me to convince them somehow,” he said.

Outside of *The Quill*, Vang likes to play video games, make furniture, build computers, write ideas or concepts for stories and read.

Vang said his favorite class is Math. Similar to Journalism, he chose this class as his favorite because of the free work environment where pacing is not an issue.

Following graduation, Vang wants to major in computer science at either St. Thomas University or Hamline University. He hopes that one day he can make a popular app.

Being one of the more experienced *Quill* staff members, Vang said he gained many benefits from his two years of working on the newspaper.

“*The Quill* has been a real breath of fresh air for me. Maybe because it’s the last class I have before the school day ends, but, really, *The Quill* has helped me understand Cooper High School more just in general and how to connect with students and teachers better,” Vang said.

Kill Bill, Vol. 1 is classic story of getting revenge

While director Quentin Tarantino released *Vol. 2* to complete the story, *Vol. 1* remains superior

By AKEYA EASLEY
Quill staff writer

Kill Bill: Volume 1, directed by Quentin Tarantino and released on October 10, 2003, is a movie that grips you from start to finish. It is all about Uma Thurman’s character, The Bride, who is seeking revenge against those who wronged her. With cool fight scenes and intense moments, the movie keeps you on the edge of your seat. While the sequel, *Kill Bill: Volume 2*, wrapped up the story six months after the release of the first film, Thurman’s performance as the determined Bride, alongside Lucy Liu’s chilling portrayal of O-Ren Ishii, makes the first installment of *Kill Bill* the more captivating one.

One key aspect of *Kill Bill: Volume 1* is that the movie is not just about action; it has heart too. The film explores themes of betrayal and redemption, showing how the Bride fights through it all. Quentin Tarantino’s storytelling keeps you hooked, making you feel every punch and every twist in the plot. With its mix of thrilling action, strong characters and deep themes, *Kill Bill: Volume 1* is a movie whose plot you will not forget. It is a must-watch for anyone who loves excitement but still wants a good story.

Additionally, the film’s unique style and visual flair sets it apart from other action movies. Tarantino’s use of vibrant colors, stylish cinematography and memorable music creates a world that feels both familiar and entirely original. Each scene is meticulously crafted, drawing viewers deeper into the story and immersing them in the Bride’s journey.

Moreover, *Kill Bill: Volume 1* leaves audiences eagerly anticipating what comes next. With its cliffhanger ending and unanswered questions, the film sets the stage for an epic conclusion in *Kill Bill: Volume 2*. Viewers are left wondering how the Bride’s quest for revenge will unfold and what challenges she will face along the way. While viewers receive all of those things and more in the conclusion, I still prefer the first of the two films when compared to the second.

Overall, *Kill Bill: Volume 1* is more than just an action movie: it is a cinematic experience that entertains, challenges and leaves a lasting impact. With its compelling characters, thrilling action sequences and thought-provoking themes, the film cements Quentin Tarantino’s reputation as one of the greatest storytellers of our time. This movie earns five out of five stars.

CHAMBER STRINGS continued from page 5

beat,” she said.

Playing cello at the concert was Isabelle Atkins (10). Atkins said she practiced around four weeks before the event took place and went to the rehearsals that took place every Monday. Atkins said she was able to stay at the event the whole time.

“I played the entire two hours,” she said.

The highlight of the show for Atkins was the little kids who asked about the instruments.

“I had a couple of little kids try out my cello as well,” she said.

Another performer at the event was Connor Watkins (12), who was the first cellist at the concert. Watkins started practicing around two weeks before the performance.

“I practiced not very long ago but we started the songs at the beginning of the school year,” he said.

Watkins said he attended the Monday rehearsals before the event. He added that he was able to play at the event for both of the two, 45-minute intervals.

There were many highlights of the event for Watkins.

“Carissa [Chilson (12)] joined us even though she’s not a part of Chamber Strings. I also got to see my family and friends,” he said.

Hawks serve up successful season

After one year as a club sport, the boys volleyball team was a state-sanctioned activity in 2024



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Enough athletes joined volleyball in its inaugural season to allow for a varsity and two junior varsity squads.

By AKEYA EASLEY
Quill staff writer

The Hawks boys volleyball team is winding down its first season as an official school sport. The team started out as a club last season before the Minnesota State High School League voted on May 9, 2023 to make boys volleyball an officially sanctioned high school athletic activity starting this school year.

Coaching the Hawks boys team this spring has been Ms. Russell, who also coaches the Cooper girls volleyball team. More than 30 athletes signed up for the sport this year, which has given the team a chance to have a varsity and two junior varsity lineups.

According to the squad’s members, this inaugural season has already left a memorable impact on every player. One highlight many players agreed on took place on Monday, May 6.

“My highlight was varsity getting their first win on Monday against Buffalo and eating donuts afterward,” Samuel Momanyi (11) said.

Meanwhile, Dylan Vang (9) added that he has enjoyed getting

better through practice.

“The highlights of the season have been my team and I all becoming better as a whole and seeing the practice translate into games,” Vang said.

What practice looks like for the Hawks is nothing out of the ordinary when compared to other sports teams. According to Justin Brown (11), the team starts with dynamic warmups, after which they warm up their “bodies, speed and reaction timing with a partner.”

After warming up, the players focus on different areas of play, such as serving, passing drills, hitting lines, serve-receive rotations, reaction drills and driving drills. The coaches also make sure to focus on communication and team strategies. Additionally, the coaches find the weakest points of the team’s play and focus on correcting them.

“Each day is different and sometimes we spend more time on things than others,” Momanyi said.

When it comes to a competition, the junior varsity squads play a three-set match. Meanwhile, the varsity team plays up to a five-set

match.

“Whoever gets two out of three sets or three out of five sets wins the game,” Kyle Vang (12) explained.

This season has garnered lots of new members, all of whom pointed out the benefits that come from being part of this sport. Skyler Yang (11) said volleyball provides him with “a learning opportunity.”

“Boys volleyball allows players to practice their skills, develop teamwork and gain confidence before competing with others,” he said.

For his part, Brown said that “making new friends” and “learning teamwork skills” have benefited him and the other players the most during the current season.

Looking ahead toward the 2024-2025 season, Brown said there will be “unlimited potential and success” for the team. Agreeing with him is Dylan Vang, who said next year’s team will build upon the success of this year’s squad.

“We’ve all been putting so much work in during practice, you can only imagine how great we’ll all be,” he said.

GRADUATION CEREMONY IS UNDER TWO WEEKS AWAY continued from page 1

the graduates begin to enter the room at around 6:30 p.m., the song every senior has waited 13 years for will begin to play: “Pomp and Circumstance.” Following this, “The Star Spangled Banner” will be played.

After the music opening, the senior class president will address the audience. Afterward, the honored teacher voted on by seniors will speak, followed by selected student speakers who tried out for that role.

The next stage of the ceremony will be the presentation and certification of the Class of 2024. First, Head Principal Ms. Smith will address the class, after which the Student Council president will speak. Next, the Class of 2024 will be accepted by the district school board, after which the awarding of diplomas will begin.

It is at this point that each senior will be introduced by their advisory teacher and then cross the stage, receive their diploma and shake hands with administrators. After every student has been named, Smith will say farewell to the Class of 2024 and families and now former students

will be free to exit the auditorium.

Before seniors accept their diplomas and move forward with their life, they all must come to terms with the magnitude of change that is coming their way. While each graduate has a different approach to the graduation event, one thing is for certain: this is it. One senior who is looking forward to commencement is Darien Muhen (12), who is also Student Council president.

“I’ll be doing the speech. I’m super excited to [be there] on behalf of the Student Council,” Muhen said.

Another student, Rassan Alexander (12), said he is looking forward to being on his own and becoming independent after graduating. Meanwhile, Margaret Stassen (12) said she does not know what to expect from the ceremony but is excited to find out what is next for her.

“I look forward to seeing what I can do with my life moving forward now that I’m done with high school. I think that there is a lot of growth and change coming up and I’m excited to see where I end up,”

Stassen said.

The gravity of the ceremony is also felt by Cooper staff. Mahan said he looks forward to graduation because he has seen a lot of this year’s seniors grow up.

“This class is amazing for me because a lot of the 12th graders, when I started in the district, were seventh graders, so I’ve been able to see them have a complete process of turning into adults,” he said.

Also reflecting on what this class has meant to her personally and Cooper as a whole is Smith, who said she is looking forward to graduation.

“I got to spend all year with this class as the head principal so that means a lot to me. I feel like I’m connected more with this class compared to others because I’ve been in this role and had different conversations and been in a different element of my career where I was able to get feedback and listen to our 12th-grade class, who are extreme leaders for our building. Our other students look up to this class [and] we’re going to miss them a lot,” Smith said.

MID90S AN EFFECTIVE COMING-OF-AGE FILM continued from page 4

tries to teach Stevie tricks all night and they end up falling asleep on a bench together. I like this scene because the angles of the camera make it feel as if we are right there with the two characters as they skate together. Meanwhile, the lighting indicates that the action is taking place at sunset and during the night time, which gives everything a slightly nostalgic feel.

Aside from its great use of filmmaking techniques, *Mid90s* is also a film that deals with compelling themes. One important issue dealt with in the movie is the importance of friendship, the ways in which friendship is found and the impact friendship can have on people’s

lives. The best illustration of the way in which *Mid90s* deals with these issues comes toward the end of the film. As the movie approaches its conclusion, Stevie and Ruben get in a fight, while Ray and his best friend have a falling out. This all happens during a party at which all of the characters have been drinking. Unfortunately, they all decide to drive to another party, eventually getting in a car crash because no one was sober enough to drive. The only person who gets seriously injured is Stevie and the rest of his skater friends all spend the night sleeping in the hospital outside of Stevie’s room waiting for him.

This is the point when Stevie’s

mom finally decides to accept Stevie’s friend group because she realizes that they are not horrible people. Instead, she sees that they care for her son and want to make sure that he is safe. When Stevie is healthily enough to see his friends, they all excitedly greet him, reinforcing the idea that friendships are important and they can have a positive impact on one’s life.

Mid90s is one of my favorite movies. As a viewer of the film, I can feel the true care that Jonah Hill put into each frame of this film. His attention to every detail is apparent and it is clear that he knows what a really good movie should look and feel like. *Mid90s* earns five out of five stars.

Cooper Competitors

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

Keethan Lee

By MILO ATHIAS FINN
Quill staff writer

Keethan Lee (12) is a spring athlete who participates in the Cooper boys volleyball program.

Lee has played volleyball ever since he was little and said he has found enjoyment in the sport from a young age.

“I was excited they finally made it a [high school] sport,” Lee said.

Lee has thoroughly enjoyed being “able to play with different people” as well as the physical aspects of the game.

“I love hitting the ball,” Lee said.

The Cooper volleyball team has had their fair share of exciting moments over its two seasons as a school sport. Some of Lee’s favorite memories include participating in team scrimmages

and aching his serves.

Lee was appointed team captain during his junior year, a role he still has this year.

“I try to be the best leader I can and be as helpful as possible,” Lee said.

The spring season is not the only time Lee is involved with sports. During the fall, he was a team manager of the girls volleyball team.

Lee’s favorite class Cooper has to offer is Weight Training because it gives him “a chance to get a good workout in.” He added that staying in shape yields tremendous benefits on the volleyball court.

Next fall, Lee plans to continue his schooling at the University of Minnesota as a sports medicine major. Although he does not plan on continuing volleyball at the higher level, he is considering continuing the sport just for fun.



Photo by N. PLAHN

Lowell Grosslein

By MILO ATHIAS FINN
Quill staff writer

Lowell Grosslein (12) is a spring athlete who participates in the Cooper track and field program.

“I throw for the track and field team in the spring and in the fall I play football. I started doing track and field my junior year and decided to do it because it can help you with conditioning and strength for football,” Grosslein said.

Grosslein is committed to Gustavus Adolphus College to play football, which is a lifelong goal of his. He will be majoring in exercise science at college.

“Football is my favorite sport and I always wanted to play in college,” Grosslein said.

Despite being committed to

play football in college, he thought it was important to go out for track again this spring. Grosslein had his fair share of memorable moments from the current track season, however, his most beloved memory is when he achieved a personal record in his throwing.

Grosslein’s favorite aspect of track is the community the sport creates.

“What I enjoy most about track and field is talking to my friends at practice,” Grosslein said. “I’m one of the leaders for track. I have a group and I have to make sure they are doing everything right and make sure I get people coming to practice.”

Outside of school, Grosslein likes to lift weights, listen to music, watch basketball and hang out with his friends.



Photo by N. PLAHN

Marlow Oliver

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO
Quill staff writer

Marlow Oliver (12) is a two-sport athlete who competes in football in the fall and track in the spring.

“I throw shotput and discus in track,” Oliver said.

In fact, Oliver said his decision to get involved in track during the spring first stemmed from his participation in football.

“I’ve been doing track since my sophomore year to help with football at first, but now, it’s more than that,” Oliver said.

Oliver said he appreciates the fact the track team becomes like a family over the course of a season.

“I enjoy the community that comes with being in track,” he said.

Of the many things he has accomplished during his time in track, Oliver

said that “making varsity for the first time” was a personal highlight.

Prior to the track season, Oliver was focused on football. He said the fall season was a positive one.

“Our season went pretty good,” he said. “We had some ups and downs but we had a good season.”

As a student, Oliver said he gravitates toward math and science classes.

“I’ve always done well in those subjects,” he said.

When he is not at school or on the track, Oliver said he likes to “go to the gym or just spend time with friends.”

Next fall, Oliver will be attending Saint Mary’s University.

“I am going to be majoring in computer science and I’ll be doing track and field there as well,” Oliver said.

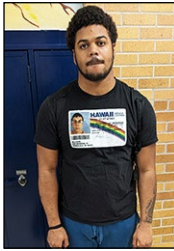


Photo by C. VANG

Kyle Vang

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO
Quill staff writer

Kyle Vang (12) is a member of the Cooper boys volleyball squad, which is in its first full season as a fully sanctioned spring high school sport.

“I have been playing for two years,” Vang said. “I started playing for the school this spring. Volleyball is a sport that my family plays.”

Of the many aspects of volleyball that Vang said he enjoys, the one constant for him is putting in the work.

“I like putting in hard work and seeing myself improve,” Vang said.

As a team sport, volleyball requires players to work together. Vang said that process is what has produced his favorite volleyball memories.

“Learning to play with others and

communicating with others has led to my favorite moments in volleyball,” Vang said.

The volleyball team has attracted a large roster this year, including many ninth graders. Vang said he tries to serve as a role model for these younger players given his status as a senior.

When he is off the volleyball court, Vang said his favorite part of the school day is his painting class.

“I like being able to express things and paint them,” he said.

After leaving high school this spring, Vang has his sights set on the future.

“I plan to go to trade school to be an electrician or work with HVAC,” Vang said.

Vang added that he hopes to continue playing volleyball after his time on the high school team comes to a close.



Photo by N. PLAHN