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Cooper Nordic skiers Luke Skoglund (12) and Stella Fesenmaier (12) took part in the Prince Haakon 15K on February 21

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HAWKS ATTEND LECTURE BY THIRST PROJECT REPS

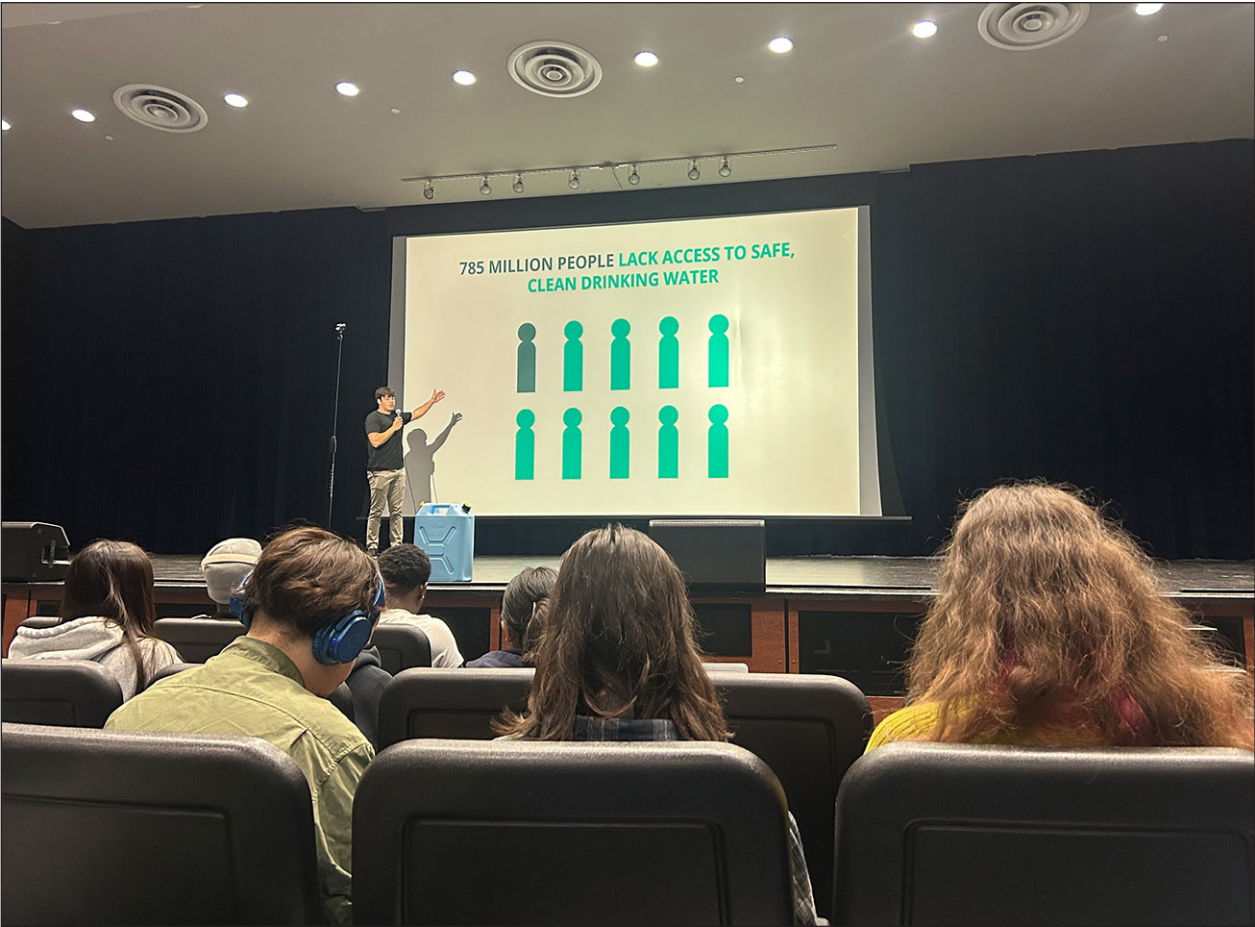


Photo by MARIAH WASHINGTON

Organizing the appearance at Cooper by the Thirst Project representatives was the school's Student Council.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Cooper hosted a presentation by the Thirst Project in the school auditorium during third period on March 26.

The event was designed to shed light on the global water crisis and inspire students to take ac-

tion. The presenters were brought to the school by Cooper's Student Council members, who aimed to raise awareness about water issues, a topic many Hawks are not aware of.

According to Student Council Advisor Ms. Geise, the idea to bring the Thirst Project to Cooper came from a desire to

increase awareness of the water crisis and build a sense of global community.

"I just wanted to bring awareness about an issue and then come together as a community to see how we can work together to solve the issue," Geise said. "A lot of the time, we think of build-

ing community within the school, and sometimes our local community, but we really forget globally how we can build those connections, especially because we have so many students who are originally from different countries and that connection can be even more powerful."

The presentation, led

The presentation took place in the auditorium during third period on March 26

by a representative from the Thirst Project, Andrew Reese, emphasized the power of collective action. Reese shared his own story of how the experience with the organization has significantly changed his life, reinforcing that fact that students, despite their age and knowledge level, have the ability to make a real difference in the world.

"I think a lot of times as a young person, it is kind of implied that you have to have a lot of knowledge to make a change," Reese said. "It's easy to think these global issues are out of our control, but we all have the power to do something small to create a greater impact."

According to Reese, the Thirst Project is a non-profit organization that aims to bring safe drinking water to communities around the world where it is not immediately available. The Thirst Project raises money to work on water, sanitation and hygiene projects in communities that do not have immediate access to safe, clean drinking water.

Geise said that students were moved by the

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Annual soup cook-off crowns 2025 champion

Winning the competition this year was student counselor Ms. Walters, who made a recipe called Loaded Baked Potato Soup

By TESSA LENOCH
Quill staff writer

Cooper staff's annual Soup-er Cooper Cook-off was held on February 27, hitting its 13th anniversary and crowning a new winner. The Soup-er Cooper Cook-off is a competition between Cooper staff to see who can cook the winning soup, which is decided through the votes of the Cooper teachers and staff members who taste each soup. This year, student counselor Ms. Walters won the contest with her Loaded Baked Potato Soup.

"The cook-off is such a fun thing that staff can participate in. Regardless of who wins, it was fun to bring a soup. I haven't ever been someone that wins a lot of things, so this was exciting. I only beat Mr. James by two votes, so shout out to him for making an awesome soup as well," Walters said.

Walters added that she decided on her soup recipe after her mom had cooked the very same dish earlier in the year.

Student counselor Ms. Hough, who introduced the cook-off in 2013, said she strives to make the event fun for all staff.

"I really try to make sure everyone is welcome and knows to come down, and I want staff to know anyone can be a judge. The more the merrier," she said.

Since the competition has been around for quite some time, planning has become routine for Hough even as the amount of entries and interest grows.

"I always get a little nervous that there aren't going to be enough soups. It's never been a problem, but I still get nervous about it," Hough said.

In the end, Hough said the competition process is not too strict. Instead, the cook-off serves more as a community-building event as well as an excuse for many of the staff to hone in on their cooking abilities, something that would normally go unseen in a school environment.



Photo by SALINEE HOUGH

Ms. Walter's winning dish beat the second-place soup by two votes.

"I've entered the soup cook-off most of the years that it's been held. I like to cook, and cooked professionally many years ago at a seafood restaurant in Hampton, Virginia," media specialist Mr. King, who entered the competition this year, said.

Despite his past experiences with cooking and with the cook-off, King said everything did not go as planned this year.

"My soup didn't turn out quite the way it was supposed to this year,

ANNUAL SOUP COOK-OFF continues on page 6

PSEO students make use of space at Cooper to work

Although their actual classes may be based at various area colleges, many Hawks in PSEO are still in the building

By SAM PETERSON
Quill staff writer

PSEO, which stands for Post Secondary Enrollment Options, is an alternate form of classes Cooper students can take that earns them college credit while they are still in high school.

These classes are taken through programs done at certain area colleges and universities. Classes through North Hennepin Community College and the University of Minnesota are the two most frequent choices among Cooper students. These classes are at a college level and demand more work from students.

Ms. Hough, the 10th grade counselor, is helping students register and prepare for the PSEO courses next year.

"I'm supporting students in the applica-

tion process for next year," Hough said.

At this time, there are 50 PSEO students. These students are given space to work in the Media Center since there is no designated classroom for the PSEO classes. Students can either sit in the group study or quiet study areas of the Media Center. However, students also can decide to take the classes on the campus of the university or college through which the classes are being offered.

"We maintain the quiet study section of the center, where students aren't allowed to talk. They can sit quietly and study or read," Mr. King, Cooper's media specialist, said.

Each student has their own reasons why they choose to take PSEO courses. However, a common factor is that the student wants to try something new. Additionally, PSEO provides free college credit opportunities to students. In fact,

college credits students earn also cover that student's high school credits.

"PSEO gives me exposure to college classes and a chance to double my credits depending on the classes I take," Vashite Budhu (11) said.

Although PSEO can be a fun and challenging experience, students and staff do have their criticisms about where the program could be improved. For instance, being on campus allows more hands-on learning. However, if a PSEO student chooses to go on campus for the classes, they have to provide their own transportation.

"While on campus, North Hennepin Community College offers a lot of in-person support. When you can't get a ride or access, it leaves you lacking support," Adeline Peterson (11) said.

PSEO STUDENTS continues on page 6

The Graduate

Former *Quill* editor-in-chief and member of the Class of 2024 Noah Plahn shares his insights about life after high school in the sixth installment of an ongoing series

Selecting one's major, classes a college challenge

The choices students make can have an impact on future career pathways

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

When the highly anticipated excitement of applying to and being accepted by a college passes, you quickly are met with the overwhelming reality of mass autonomy never experienced before in high school. The first monumental step in your college journey is declaring your major. To some, even this “simple” task can create mass panic and confusion. However, such a “simple” decision is understandably daunting. With the implications it has for your potential lifelong career, choosing a major can be a major stressor to any 18 year old stepping out the doors of the same education system they have been a part of for 13 years.

For the first time in your life, you are not forced to attend school, no parent or guardian is required to take care of you and you must decide what is next for you and your life. When I was met with this choice a year ago, I reached out to multiple resources for support. The following are some steps I took in choosing a major that will hopefully help you as you select your major.

First off, plug in with your

Your college can provide you with step-by-step guides on how to declare a major and complete your degree.

support system at the place you are now: Cooper. If you have built rapport with your grade-level counselor (or even if you have not), reach out to them for all things related to college. Even before you ever open the application website for your soon-to-be college, you can discuss major-related options with your counselor as they can help you navigate the unknown terrain of college. After four years together, odds are your counselor may know more about you and your traits than you may know.

In addition, do not limit yourself to your counselor. You have likely built relationships with numerous staff and teachers throughout the building who can also be of help. The whole process of choosing a major may be easier when you rely on the help of those who know you best.

Once you have touched base with your high school support network, the next step is to once again plug into a system: this time, your new college. Even if you have not been accepted yet, colleges will still likely offer various resources to potential students, including rapid support from their advising center.

On top of that support, your college can provide you with step-by-step guides on how to declare a major and complete your degree. These academic plans help you gauge the type and quantity of classes you will need to take and the time span that will likely involve.

As you get used to your chosen college, and your school learns how to accommodate you, the confusion about choosing a major will dissipate and the excitement of going to college will once again return in quantities greater than you could have ever imagined. Just try not to get stressed about all the homework that will start accumulating in your new major.

Cooper group celebrates Asian culture

Members of the Asian American Club meet in room 248 on Tuesdays during Hawk Lunch and Learn



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Group meetings are led by Mr. Kek and used by members to engage in discussions and plan school events.

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

One Cooper club that has been important for community building is the Asian American Club.

Mr. Kek, Cooper’s Climate and Culture Specialist, has run the Asian American Club for the last three years. It is held every Tuesday during HLL in room 248.

Kek said he was inspired to take on this leadership role due to his own journey. Growing up, he never had the experience of coming into contact with an educator that not only looked like him, but also shared what he calls the “Three Es”: experiences, exposure and environment.

“I can’t lead the people if I don’t love them,” Kek said.

According to Kek, the Asian American Club is “rooted in self-esteem, identity and academic success, while providing a safe space to express ourselves

in a culturally specific environment.” Another goal of the club is to help the students be deliberate about affirming, validating and valuing their identity.

“I enjoy visibly seeing a lightbulb moment for them where something clicks or makes sense in regards to their experience to what I am sharing,” Kek said.

Although the club is mainly a space for understanding oneself, the Asian American Club does host and organize one school-wide event called The May Show. The show takes place in May to honor Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Kek said it is an opportunity for students to not only showcase their talents but to embrace and celebrate themselves.

While Kek helps oversee the club, the students who are in the group are the ones who help it operate on a day-to-day basis. One person who has been in the club since ninth grade is Tessa

Lenoch (11).

“It’s a very welcoming space and I don’t think that anybody there is really going to judge you because it’s all about learning your own culture, having that shared experience,” she said.

One activity that is done in the group that Lenocho finds fun is discussion. These conversations help her think about different issues and perspectives she may not have known about. Another element Lenocho enjoys about the group is the community and being with her friends. She said she has gotten to meet new people and make new friends through Asian American Club.

Another member of the club is Jasmine Lee (11), who was a part of the Asian American Girls Club in middle school. She joined that club because she wanted to find a space where she had community. However, she said she was not an active

member until eighth grade when she learned about “deeper topics that dove into what it means to be an Asian American.”

Once she arrived at Cooper, Lee joined the Asian American Club during freshman year. She said she has enjoyed the fact that the club goes into a set of topics that help her not only reflect on how she views the world, but how others view the world as well. She said that being able to relate to others and share their same experiences has been eye opening.

Another long-time member of the group is Adrian Her (11), who has been in the Asian American Club since freshman year. What drew her in to joining the club was connection with her community.

“I felt like I didn’t have a lot of Asian or Hmong friends,” Her said.

Her said she believes the club helps her get a little closer with her peers and her culture. What Her also enjoys about the club is being able to feel like she can talk about anything with her community. She also enjoys talking about the topic of race and how it impacts her community. She said she believes that these topics should be something that every person knows about.

The members of the club said there are ways they would like to see the group change in the future. First, Lenocho said she appreciates the May show, but she wishes that it was not the main focus of the club in the latter half of the year. Meanwhile, Lee said she would like to be able to meet more often and do more projects. Finally, Her said she would like to improve the outreach of the club. She feels like people in the school do not know about the club so she believes posters and social media would help with advertising and exposing more students to the club.

New vending machines are now stocked in cafeteria

After sitting empty for many months, the machines were opened up for student use during third quarter

By ROBIN JARMAN
Quill staff writer

Cooper has added food and beverages to the vending machines located in the cafeteria. While the machines were installed in April 2024, the food and drink items were not added until January 2025.

With the addition of these machines to the school, there has been a sea of opinions about them from cafeteria staff members and students alike. There are also a lot of questions about the vending machines and their use.

Overseeing the vending machines is Ms. Nordlocken, Cooper’s child nutrition manager and a member of the school’s cafeteria staff.

“The new vending machines are run by the Nutrition Department,” Nordlocken said. “They replace our a la carte area that we used to sell items from, allowing us to utilize our staff more efficiently.”

The machines feature items such as snack bars and water. Nordlocken said there are guidelines for how the school chooses each snack and drink item carried by the vending machines.

“All the snacks and drinks must meet the requirements set by the Minnesota Department of Education Healthy Snack Guidelines,” she said.

According to Nordlocken, state guidelines and administrators at the district level are responsible for the decision to add the vending machines and their contents.

“Unfortunately, students and staff were not a part of this decision making,” Nordlocken said.

Prior to the addition of the new machines last year, there



Photo by ROBIN JARMAN

Students can buy the food and drinks using their cafeteria account.

were vending machines in the cafeteria that were managed by an outside company. The new machines have changed the structure of this arrangement.

“These vending machines are part of the Nutrition Department,” Nordlocken said. “All costs and profits go directly to our department.”

locken said.

According to Nordlocken, the building is looking at the addition of something new in one of the cafeteria vending machines.

“The fourth vending machine will be offering a reimbursable meal once we can find a container that will fit all the required components needed,” Nordlock-

“The purpose and goals for installing these machines is to make it easier for students to purchase a la carte items without having to stand in a long line as they previously had to do,” Ms. Nordlocken said.

Now that the machines are overseen internally, Nordlocken said more work falls upon the cafeteria staff.

“We try to monitor the machines every morning so that we can fill any items that are needed. This is sometimes difficult to do if we are short staffed,” Nord-

en said. “These meals will consist of different sandwich and salad options.”

Nordlocken said the student feedback that she has heard in the few months the machines have offered food and drink has been limited.

“So far, the only feedback

we have heard from students is if they are having a hard time using the machines or if there has been an issue,” Nordlocken said. “I would love to hear some feedback from students as to if they like the options being offered or if there are some other options we can explore to see if they meet the healthy snack guidelines.”

Now that awareness about the existence of the vending machines has been spreading among students, more Hawks are using them to get food and drinks. In order to do so, students must enter their personal food account number in the same way they do when obtaining lunch in the afternoon.

“It’s nice to have them there, but it’s quite annoying to put all of my information in,” Ivany Rendon Gonzalez (11) said. “The only issue I’ve found with them is items do sometimes get stuck in there.”

Meanwhile, Teresa Valenzuela Salazar (12) said she would be interested in seeing the machines offer more options.

“I use the vending machines almost every day,” she said. “Overall, the variety of snacks is pretty good, but I’d like to see more drinks, like Gatorade.”

While students seem to agree that the vending machines are a good addition to the school, there are still some issues with malfunctions and food and beverage options that will be worked out over time. Nordlocken said she is hopeful students will give the machines a chance.

“The purpose and goal for installing these machines is to make it easier for students to purchase a la carte items without having to stand in a long line as they previously had to do,” Nordlocken said.

College decision needs pro, con approach

Listing out the various features of each school on your list can help you find the best fit for your future education



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Mr. Rosenblum in the College and Career Center can be a useful resource when deciding on a school.

From the Editors

Students are told throughout high school to keep an eye out for colleges and universities they might be interested in attending. Despite this advice, many juniors and seniors find that they have a hard time picking colleges once the time to do so arrives. While this can be a very stressful process for many students, there are some ways you can make the process easier.

The first thing students should do is make a list of all the colleges and universities they might like to attend. This list could be based on what characteristics students might want in a college. For instance, students can think about what

state they want to be in for college or how large the school's student population might be. These basic elements of a school will serve as a good starting point for a list.

method for learning more about it. You also can follow the school on social media accounts, which gives you an idea of what they are about. Even more importantly,

Your potential major will have a big impact on what college you would like to attend. Many universities have specific programs that they emphasize more than others. For example, some colleges may provide good nursing programs while others focus on engineering.

Once students have a list, the best way they can get a good feel for a school is by doing more research on it. You can watch videos about the school, which is a great

students should visit their potential schools. When visiting, you can ask for a tour and they will show you the class buildings, dorms and other important sites that students

will experience when they are on campus.

Another key is creating a list of possible majors. Your potential major will have a big impact on what college you would like to attend. Many universities have specific programs that they emphasize more than others. For example, some colleges may provide good nursing programs while others focus on engineering programs. Asking questions about majors is something that you should not shy away from when choosing your potential college.

Once you have zeroed in on schools that offer a major in an area that you like, the cost of tuition is an important factor to consider. While most people look at tuition as the central issue when choosing a college, many people do not realize that there are many ways that the school you like can help you with money. By completing the FAFSA, applying for scholarships and looking into on-campus jobs, there are many ways you can get help with the cost of school and not have to worry as much about your choice of college.

One obstacle to these various tips is that many students struggle with procrastinating. Pushing things to the side to avoid dealing with them can make the college decision more difficult than it needs to be. More importantly, if you procrastinate, you may unintentionally miss deadlines for college and scholarship applications.

These are some strategies for picking a good college or university to attend after high school without stressing about it. While it can be a very long process, before you know it, you will be in your top school.

Conferences are not as important as they used to be

Electronic communication has made the need to meet face to face less necessary

By TRISTAN JAY TOLENTINO
Quill staff writer

The periodic meeting of teachers and parents to go over a child's progress through school is a nerve-racker for some students. At Cooper, these meetings happen six times a year through the school's parent-teacher conference schedule. However, the importance of parent-teacher conferences seems to be diminishing as fewer students and parents are partaking in these checkpoints.

One possible reason why fewer parents take part is that they view these meetings as unimportant. Conferences are not mandatory for parents or students, nor do those conferences always prove necessary.

The act of not attending conferences shows how today's parents are less inclined to have many interactions with teachers. It also may show that parents are more focused on the struggles their student has at home as opposed to school.

On a related note, a majority of parents have other priorities rather than going to conferences. Yes, they still care whether or not their students' pass class, but they may choose not to intervene in their child's school life. For these parents, it is an expectation that the student is responsible for their own learning, which means those parents are not likely going to be involved in a conference.

For students, conferences are just something to skip over. Many of us do not think these meetings matter at all. For those of us who are dragged to conferences, we usually

CONFERENCES
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Four-day week could increase student success

Several schools in Minnesota are already experimenting with new schedule

By TRISTAN JAY TOLENTINO
Quill staff writer

As a student, a five-day school week often feels draining and unfulfilling. The days drag on and it feels like little work gets done. In contrast, a four-day week could provide the extra time students need to truly relax since Saturday and Sunday do not offer enough time to clear our minds of schoolwork. Now that some Minnesota schools are experimenting with four-day school weeks, I think our district should do the same.

In 2021, our school introduced "Win Wednesdays" when students returned to in-person learning after the pandemic. Through this system, the only students who had to report to school on Wednesdays were those who were falling behind. As the name suggests, the other students would "win" their Wednesdays by maintaining a C average or higher. I believe "Win Wednesdays" were effective because they encouraged students with lower GPAs to put in more effort to earn a break.

By sticking with a five-day week, schools often contribute to students' lack of motivation, leading to feelings of stagnation and redundancy. The pressure to learn is necessary, but it sometimes feels like the excitement of learning fades. This can stifle creativity and foster a negative perspective on education. An extra day off each week could help offset these feelings.

FOUR-DAY WEEK
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Hallway behavior requires a closer look

Problems in the hallway typically stem from students only thinking about themselves at the expense of others

By BEN KENYON
Quill staff writer

At the brink of the hour's end, a subtle preparation is made. Up from his seat, he joins the horde at the classroom door. He waits in the middle of the doorway restlessly, absentmindedly obstructing the opening while quelling his restlessness with brief glimpses at his phone. In the following moments, the clock's hands will near the endpoint. They make their way closer and closer, until, suddenly, they strike home. The bell follows suit an instant after, ringing out with distinctive tones, consequently giving our subject the stimuli needed to depart.

With the signal received, it begins. Without a moment of thought, nor conscience, he shoves all that is in his way to the sides, making haste through the doorway. Those who have been pushed make attempts at calling him out, which he ignores as he continues to rush forward.



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Passing time is when student actions are usually at their most volatile.

Now in the hallway, he notices that the right side has been bogged down with slow-moving traffic. To counter, a decision is quickly made: he begins toward the flow of incoming traffic, impeding its direction and causing slowdowns for the sole sake of his own swiftness.

He carves an open path from

this action, but it puts him on a collision course with incoming persons. While this usually results in their divergence, it occasionally leads to physical contact along the way, which causes complications of needless disruptiveness as he tries to make it to the next milestone of his journey.

Finished with the hallway,

he now merges with the crowd at the top of the stairwell, an area known to be naturally slow-moving. This fact does not sit well with our subject. For him, no man, no rule and no kind of celestial deity or higher power could compel him, even for an instant, to have a single fragment of patience, much less anything that could momentarily strip him of his constant sense of self-impunity and disregard for social order. He bumbles forth, again colliding with others to free a path for himself, cutting off and overtaking their paths until reaching the main level.

At this point, his journey comes to a predetermined end at the commons hallway junction. From the moment the bell rang and he sprung forth from that classroom, he had made it his destiny to be assimilated into a hallway bog. Hallway bogs, giant borderless masses, stretch

HALLWAY BEHAVIOR
continues on page 7

New vending machines are welcome addition to cafeteria

Although some Hawks are critical of the items available to purchase, the ability to access snacks, drinks is positive

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

The new and restocked vending machines in the cafeteria are now finally open. After standing there empty for some years, it is now possible for Cooper students to buy snacks and drinks from the machines. With these vending machines now available, a pair of questions arise: How do we use them and why should we use them? Hopefully, this opinion piece will push you to make use of the machines.

I will admit the process of using the vending machine did confuse me at first, but I get the gist of it now. In order to use the machines, you need to pay with your lunch account, so if you do not have money in your account, you need to do that first. If you want to add money to your account via

cash or check, you need to go to the sandwich-line cashier during lunch. However, if you want to deposit money via credit card, you will need to log in or create an account at LINQ Connect. There is a QR code at the vending machines that you can use to get to that website. Once you have money in your account, the hard part is over. All you need to do now is first press "\$" on the machine, enter your student ID, press "\$" again, enter your birthday and then finally select the snack or drink you want.

The vending machines are a great resource for many reasons. The most important reason is that if you do not like the school lunch, you can go to the vending machine for a quick snack. Not everyone can go out for lunch or bring a lunch from home. I know many students who do not eat lunch because they do not like the food or

they had a bad experience with the school food in the past. Although I understood that the school food is not for everyone, I still got worried for those students who do not eat. Thankfully, the vending machines hold snacks that are not typically served with our lunch, so it is possible that these students might eat the food or drink the beverages that are being provided by the machines.

I am glad that we now have the updated vending machines. It is nice to know that, if I need a quick snack or drink, I can go to the vending machines in the lunchroom. I do not always have time to pack a snack or drink in the morning or at night. I am either in a time crunch in the morning or I am busy with my after-school activities and homework in the evening. I am way too tired to even consider going to the kitchen to

prepare a snack in the morning. As a result, it is a relief that I have something at school to help me not be hungry throughout the day.

I hope that whoever is reading this will be willing to check out the vending machines in the lunchroom. I have heard that people are upset that the vending machines have "boring" choices and that the process of adding money to your account is "too much work." Please keep in mind that it is a privilege to have the vending machines in our school because not every school has them. Please also keep in mind that schools do still have to follow nutritional regulations when serving food, even snacks. This means that, unfortunately, they cannot put candy in the vending machines. Despite this, I believe the school is doing its best to provide us with something to snack on.

Indie musician writes memoir worth reading

Crying in H Mart recounts Michelle Zauner's journey through her mother's battle with cancer

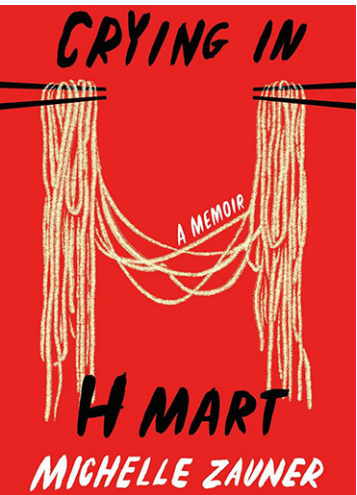


Photo by ALFRED A. KNOPF

The book's author is the lead singer of the popular band Japanese Breakfast.

By SAM PETERSON
Quill staff writer

Crying in H Mart is an emotional rollercoaster written by Michelle Zauner, lead singer of the band Japanese Breakfast. The memoir was published by Alfred A. Knopf in April 2021, about two months before Japanese Breakfast's junior album, *Jubilee*, was released. The devastating journey depicted in this memoir provoked grief, happiness, anger and acceptance in me as a reader. It brings perspective to how valuable and complicated a mother-daughter relationship can be. *Crying in H Mart* puts the love, and possible dislike, that exists in mother-daughter relationships into a relatable narrative.

Crying in H Mart details Zauner's journey of learning about her mother's cancer diagnosis and the aftermath. Between memories of her childhood, Zauner writes about her mother's diagnosis and finding her Korean identity without the guiding hand of her mother. Her heartfelt coming of age story is relatable and endearing as she traverses life to find herself.

An important device Zauner uses to explore her relationship with her mother is their shared love of food. Her use of descriptive words makes the reader feel starved and craving the various Korean dishes Zauner recounts. These sequences feel nostalgic even if you have never eaten the specific meals she describes. For example, she writes about *jatjuk*, a pine nut porridge, which was a food her mother ate while sick. Zauner describes it as a symbol of comfort, picturing her mother eating it and what it was like on her blistered tongue.

Because this memoir takes a more narrative approach, you cannot help but want to hope for some miracle cure for her mother. The dread can be felt in every chapter as the story continues forward, and when the moment of her death is finally conveyed, it produces an indescribable grief. It makes the reader feel almost hollow, like your mind is trying to picture it, but you just feel devastated instead. The format makes the experience feel palpable and heavy.

Obviously, the novel has a melancholy vibe to it. You feel unprepared for what is to come and there is a heaviness that can be felt from reading each line. While reading the book, if you put yourself in Zauner's shoes, imagining your own loved one going through something like this, it feels too real. Toward the end, a feeling of acceptance approaches, but grief can still be felt. It feels connective and brings a light to even the most upsetting aspects of life.

Crying in H Mart is an eye-opening experience of a book. Michelle Zauner's use of descriptive words, writing style and mood brings a sense of nostalgia, grief and even acceptance to the book. Overall, *Crying in H Mart* is a five-star memoir.

Mickey 17 destined for cult film status

Written and directed by Academy Award winner Bong Joon Ho, *Mickey 17* uses its sci-fi premise to deliver social satire



Photo by WARNER BROS. PICTURES

At the heart of the film's appeal is the fantastic acting by Robert Pattinson, who plays multiple iterations of the Mickey character.

By TESSA LENOCH
Quill staff writer

So far this year, I have watched 44 movies. Most of them were, unfortunately, mediocre. Sometimes, though, I am grateful for the more mundane, the more uninteresting and the plain stupid movies I watch. It is those movies that allow me to appreciate the few standouts that I am lucky enough to stumble upon. One of those standouts is Bong Joon Ho's *Mickey 17*, which did just enough to solidify itself as a classic in my movie-going experience.

Experiencing a turbulent marketing campaign and release schedule, *Mickey 17* was a movie I was constantly holding my breath to see. Delayed, un-delayed, bad reviews, good reviews: it was a total mystery what this movie could hold for me and when I would even be able to see it. That is why, the moment I was able, I bought my ticket for release day on March 7.

Although I had been following the development of this movie closely, watching each new trailer or TV spot and every interview I could get my hands on, I would still say I went into this movie blind. I say this because the

film's marketing painted a picture quite different than the actual final product. While this normally is not a good thing, I actually thought that the movie I saw exceeded my expectations and took twists I did not expect, rocketing itself up my personal rankings of favorite movies.

For a lot of people, the name Robert Pattinson is probably enough to buy

and finds himself, literally.

In recent years, Pattinson has been slowly making a name for himself in more "serious" movies, breaking past his previous roles in the *Twilight* young adult novel adaptations. Whether it be in *Good Time*, *The Lighthouse* or *The Batman*, Pattinson has proven his incredible range as an actor and displayed

Mickey 17 follows Mickey, a man who has signed up to die repeatedly; he is a lab rat of sorts. He is needed in order to further the journey to a foreign planet headed by a mildly corrupt Senator.

a ticket. Luckily for those fans, in *Mickey 17*, there are two of him. *Mickey 17* follows Mickey, a man who has signed up to die repeatedly; he is a lab rat of sorts. He is needed in order to further the journey to a foreign planet headed by a mildly corrupt Senator (Mark Ruffalo). During this journey, Mickey finds love (Naomi Ackie), finds aliens

his ability to create stand-out characters. In this film, Pattinson pushes himself even further, having to play multiple clones of the same wimpy Mickey, all with personality changes ranging from slight to drastic. Channeling the same sort of energy seen in last year's film *Challengers*, *Mickey 17* is forced to navigate the story with a more abra-

sive Mickey 18, who is out for himself and only himself. Despite the fact that Pattinson is playing both characters and interacting with himself, each Mickey remains distinct without being two entirely different people. The movie is incredibly engaging as the two struggle for power, both from each other and from their circumstances.

At the same time, it is hard for Pattinson's excellent acting to blow anyone out of the water in this film given its stellar cast. Mark Ruffalo delivers great line after great line in his obviously fake veneers as the Senator, Naomi Ackie exudes charm and care as Mickey's love interest and Toni Collette displays incredible talent as she balances being unsettling and ridiculous as the Senator's wife. Each character is just silly enough to be absurd, but just scary enough to be realistic.

Overall, the film is incredibly distinct, funny and potent with commentary. It is a fun watch, without veering too far into roller-coaster movie energy. Although the movie has something to say, it does not take itself too seriously. For me, this is the best kind of movie. The wait was worth it and I rate this movie five out of five stars.

Scott Pilgrim turns the superhero genre upside down

Edgar Wright's 2010 film is a master class in how various filmmaking elements can work together to create a greater whole

By ROBIN JARMAN
Quill staff writer

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World is a film directed by Edgar Wright that is based on the *Scott Pilgrim* graphic novel books by Bryan Lee O'Malley. It was released on August 13, 2010, and was originally a box office disappointment. However, it soon became a cult classic film, helping the franchise get both a video game and an animated TV show. The reason why I chose to review *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* is because I wanted to rewatch a movie that made such a big impact on the 2010s and 2020s.

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World is about 21-year-old Scott Pilgrim, played by Micheal Cera, who is a bass guitarist in a band with two of his friends, Kim Pine (Alison Pill) and Stephen Stills (Mark Webber). Scott meets a girl at a party named Ramona Flowers (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) and, in order to date her, he has to defeat seven of her evil exes.

This movie has some of the best casting I have seen in a movie. In addition to Cera, Pill, Webber and Winstead, the film stars actors such as Academy Award-winner Kieran Culkin (who plays Scott's roommate, Wallace) and *Captain America* actor Chris Evans. You can tell that the cast had fun acting in this film and it helps create a great chemistry between the



Photo by UNIVERSAL PICTURES

The *Scott Pilgrim* cast is stacked with young actors who were on their way to becoming A-list stars.

characters. The casting also helps us find each character funny or likable in their own way.

One thing about this film that makes it stand out is its special effects and editing. *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*'s style of editing helps give a comic book vibe to the movie, which helps connect the audience to the past comics on which the movie is based.

The movie also does a good job with its humor. The style of

the humor is very quirky and sometimes dry. The screenwriting and acting really helps jokes land when they are told in the movie.

The soundtrack is also a staple of the movie. With the film's focus on Scott's fictional band, called Sex Bob-Omb, the soundtrack features that band's songs, including "Garbage Truck" and "Summertime," which are written and performed by famous artist Beck. In addition, there are

also songs from other artists. For example, there is the song "Black Sheep" by Metric, which is covered in this movie by the actress Brie Larson, who plays Scott's ex-girlfriend Envy, the lead singer of a popular band.

Overall, *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* earns five out of five stars. The acting, directing, cast and editing help pull this film together. It deserves its status as a cult classic.

Pearl is rare sequel that improves upon first film

Written and directed by Ti West, *Pearl* tells the compelling backstory to a character featured in the movie *X*



Photo by A24

Bringing the Pearl character to life is a jaw-dropping performance by actress Mia Goth, who helped Ti West with the development of the film.

By LUCY KETA
Quill staff writer

Pearl is a psychological horror film directed, produced and edited by Ti West and starring Mia Goth. Released on September 16, 2022, the film presents a terrifying portrayal of an ambitious, isolated woman’s unraveling sanity. I chose this film because it blends the psychological horror, thriller, slasher and drama genres throughout. I view this film through a psychological lens that explores the complexities of the human condition, and how ambition and emotional turmoil can shape a person’s actions. West brilliantly uses beautiful cinematography, symbolic costume design and an insightful portrayal of Pearl’s psyche to delve into the catastrophic effects of unfulfilled dreams, ambitions, abandonment and mental deterioration, creating a haunting depiction of one’s descent into complete madness.

Pearl is set in Texas during 1918. The central character, Pearl (Mia Goth), is an ambitious farm

girl obsessed with dancing and the film industry, eager to leave home and make a name for herself. Instead, she is trapped in an isolated farmhouse, living under the same roof as her convalescing father and disapproving mother. As her romanticized dream of a glamorous, movie-like life fades, chronic frustration and violent tendencies begin to emerge within Pearl.

One of the most impactful ways costume design and cinematography convey Pearl’s descent into madness is in the scene where, after committing murder, Pearl transforms into a more intriguing, alluring version of herself by wearing her mother’s old red dress and lipstick. This scene beautifully marks her fall, as the color red symbolizes danger, dominance, anger and passion, which is a drastic shift from her former innocence and tendency to wear pastel colors. This transformation produces fear within the audience and emphasizes Pearl’s obsessive longing for fame and validation. The choice of red perfectly reflects her restrained

desires, previously repressed by her overbearing, strict mother, and how that repression has driven her into madness.

Cinematography plays a crucial role in capturing Pearl’s transformation, especially during her audition scene. The camera’s tight close-up shots frame her face, focusing on her emotional state as it shifts. The lighting emphasizes her red dress, with ominous shadows surrounding her as she stands in the center of the stage. This brilliantly symbolizes her break from innocence into darkness, with the camera shots emphasizing her calculated movements as she performs. These techniques are impactful because they show the audience Pearl’s psychological agitation and slow descent into darkness.

Another pivotal moment in the film makes use of synchronous sound, tracking shots and close-ups. This is the scene when Pearl screams at the projectionist during a fit of rage: “Why are you leaving me when I didn’t do anything wrong? I don’t understand, I thought you

liked me.” The intensity and passion of her voice contrast with the growing tension within her emotions, enhanced by the synchronous sound matched with her frantic body movements and twitching. The manic energy is evident as she screams at him with rage.

Tracking shots are highlighted in the scene immediately after this when the terrified projectionist says, “You’re scaring me, Pearl,” and quickly leaves the barn. He gets into his Model T-style car and tries to escape. The tracking shot captures him walking to his car and getting into it, with the camera performing a 360-degree rotation around him, perfectly showcasing the turning point of the scene.

As the projectionist enters his car, Pearl enters the frame, filled with wrath, and says, “You’re not going to leave me here. I’m not staying on this farm. Nothing’s gonna keep me here.” She then stabs him and the camera does

PEARL
continues on page 7

Infinity War marks peak moment in Marvel movies

Fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe are hopeful the 2026 Avengers sequel will recapture the magic of *Infinity War*

By SARAH PADILLA MARTINEZ
Quill staff writer

Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo and released in 2018, *Avengers: Infinity War* brings together some of the most iconic superheroes to face off against the powerful villain Thanos. I chose to review this film because of the recent release of *Captain America: Brave New World* and the upcoming *Avengers* films that will continue the story. *Avengers: Infinity War* is about the heroes uniting to stop Thanos, showing their determination and strength in the face of Thanos’ abuses of power. It is my favorite movie and I remember watching it in the theater when it first came out. The film shows how people with bravery and determination can overcome any obstacles.

In the film, Thanos (Josh Brolin) embarks on a mission to collect the Infinity Stones, the most powerful objects in the universe. With the Space Stone and Power Stone already in his possession, Thanos sends his minions Ebony Maw (Tom Vaughan-Lawlor) and Cull Obsidian (Terry Notary) to retrieve the Time Stone from Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), while Proxima Midnight (Carrie Coon) and Corvus Glaive (Michael Shaw) are tasked with stealing the Mind Stone from Vision (Paul Bettany).

On Earth, Tony Stark (Robert Downey, Jr.) teams up with Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), Wong (Benedict Wong), Spider-Man (Tom Holland) and Doctor Strange to form a



Photo by WALT DISNEY STUDIOS

Making *Infinity* memorable is the way it brings together dozens of superheroes.

plan to stop Thanos. Meanwhile, in space, Thor (Chris Hemsworth) joins forces with Star-Lord (Chris Pratt), Drax (Dave Bautista), Rocket (Bradley Cooper), Groot (Vin Die-

sel), Mantis (Pom Klementieff) and Gamora (Zoe Saldana) to face Thanos.

In the film, Thanos embarks on a mission to collect the Infinity Stones. With the Space Stone and Power Stone already in his possession, Thanos sends his minions to retrieve the Time Stone from Doctor Strange and the Mind Stone from Vision.

As the battle eventually unfolds, all attention is shifted to Wakanda,

War Machine (Don Cheadle) and Bruce Banner are working to protect Vision and the Mind Stone from Thanos.

One notable scene in the mov-

ie features Thor’s dramatic entrance during the battle in Wakanda. The heroes are initially winning, but they are soon overwhelmed by Thanos’ monstrous army. Just when things look bleak, Thor arrives wielding lightning, striking down the creatures with his hammer. This moment is impactful because it shifts the tide of the battle. The visual effects, especially the lightning, create a thrilling spectacle and the audience feels the suspense as the heroes’ fate seems uncertain. Thor’s arrival with his weapon and power makes the scene both electrifying and entertaining.

Another memorable scene occurs near the film’s climax when Thanos arrives in Wakanda, having collected five of the Infinity Stones. The heroes attempt to stop him, but he proves too powerful. After battling the Avengers, Thanos begins to approach Vision, who still carries the Mind Stone in his head. Vision asks Wanda to destroy the stone to prevent Thanos from obtaining it. Wanda uses her powers to destroy the stone, but Thanos uses the Time Stone to reverse time, bringing Vision back to life and ripping the stone from his head, ultimately killing him. The special effects in this sequence are incredible, especially when Thanos manipulates time to reverse events and restore Vision. Wanda’s attempt to destroy the stone and her struggle to hold off Thanos adds emotional depth to the scene.

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Mean Girls is classic teen film that still connects

The 2004 movie spawned a popular Broadway musical and a film version of that musical



Photo by PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Mean Girls is an insightful look at the cliques that rule high school life.

By JAEDA WILEY
Quill staff writer

The movie I have selected to review is *Mean Girls*, directed by Mark Waters and released on April 30, 2004. I chose this film because it is a classic filled with humor, gossip and intrigue. It tells a compelling story with a well-developed plot while also keeping the characters realistic. *Mean Girls* uses great music, precise costuming and effective editing to convey the important message of always being yourself.

The film follows Cady Heron (Lindsay Lohan), who moves to a new home in the U.S. after living with her parents in Africa. On her first day of school, she meets Janis (Lizzy Caplan) and Damian (Daniel Franzese). They warn her to stay away from The Plastics, a popular and beautiful clique led by Regina George (Rachel McAdams). Unfortunately for Cady, she inadvertently develops a friendship with Aaron Samuels (Jonathan Bennett), Regina’s ex-boyfriend. When Regina finds out, she seeks revenge by dangling Aaron in front of Cady. As a result, Cady, Janis and Damian plot to bring Regina’s social status down. However, the more time Cady spends with The Plastics, the more she starts to become one of them.

One key filmmaking element that enhances the movie is the use of special effects, particularly in a scene where Cady, overwhelmed with jealousy, imagines herself confronting Regina. When Regina asks Cady to compliment Aaron by saying his hair looks good pushed back, Cady responds, “I know how this would be handled in Africa,” and the scene abruptly shifts to a jungle-like setting. Cady leaps on top of Regina and everyone around them starts moving like wild animals. This creative use of special effects highlights Cady’s intense emotions without her actually acting on them. The reference to Africa is also a great touch, as it connects to Cady’s roots, which are often mentioned throughout the film.

Another important filmmaking element is costume design, which helps convey character development. A notable scene is when Cady throws a party she was not supposed to throw. As she descends the stairs in a short black and pink dress with her hair and makeup fully done, the change in her appearance symbolizes how much she has transformed. At the beginning of the film, Cady shows up to school in a simple shirt and jeans, barely wearing any makeup. By the end, she is wearing a revealing dress, signifying how she has shifted into someone she is not. This moment is impactful because it shows the audience how much Cady has changed, even though she did not intend to. She is so caught up in trying to fit in that she does not even realize how far she has strayed from who she really is.

One of the main messages of *Mean Girls* is to be yourself and not let others change you. A key moment demonstrating

MEAN GIRLS
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Concert spotlights world music

World of Music show featured performances from multiple Cooper specialty choir groups

A group of five young women are performing on a stage. They are all singing and clapping. The woman in the center is wearing a red and black patterned dress and glasses. The woman on the far right is wearing a blue and white patterned dress. The other three women are wearing black clothing. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

The 100 is a binge-worthy sci-fi show

Although the quality of the series declines slightly in later seasons, it is still fun to watch from beginning to end



Photo by THE CW

The adventures and development of the central ensemble of characters helps keep the show interesting throughout its run.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

The 100 is a post-apocalyptic, science-fiction TV series created by Jason Rothenberg and produced by Alloy Entertainment. Premiering on The CW in 2014 and ending in 2020, this show quickly gained a fanbase for its drama and ruthless storytelling. Based on the book series by Kass Morgan, The 100 is one of the recent standout shows in the sci-fi genre, combining action with complex characters and a well-developed plot.

The 100 takes place around 90 years after a nuclear apocalypse wipes out most of humanity. The survivors live in space on a station called The Ark. The story begins when 100 teenagers are sent to Earth to test its habitability after The Ark’s resources become limited. The main characters include Clarke Griffin (Eliza Taylor), Bellamy Blake (Bob Morley) and Octavia Blake (Marie Avgeropoulos). As they land on Earth, they discover it is filled with other survivors and great danger. Their mission quickly becomes to survive, rebuild society and develop alliances on Earth.

One of the aspects that stands out is the strong performances, particularly by Eliza Taylor as Clarke Griffin. Taylor brings emotional depth to Clarke, showing the weight of leadership and how it impacts her morals. Bob

The directing by Jason Rothenberg and the show’s other directors keeps the series moving at a quick pace, especially in its early seasons. The show makes sure that the stakes always feel high. However, as the series

was so amazing in the earlier seasons. Still, Rothenberg and his team show a clear ability to balance action and drama, which showcases their overall skills as directors.

The 100 also is a visually compelling show, especially in the way that it portrays the state of post-apocalyptic Earth. The special effects are one of the show’s most impressive aspects. The show does a good job of making you feel completely immersed in its world. Despite some occasionally ineffective use of CGI, the visual effects work to build a believable future setting. However, there are moments in later seasons when the effects start to feel fake, which makes the show lose the impressiveness of its earlier seasons.

The 100 is a show that thrives in its characters and visuals, but falls short as the seasons progress. While it is not perfect, the show does warrant a watch, especially if you are drawn to post-apocalyptic and sci-fi stories. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys survival drama with ruthless aspects, but be prepared for a few bumps along the way. The 100 deserves a rating of four out of five stars.

The 100 is a show that thrives in its characters and visuals, but falls short as the seasons progress. While it is not perfect, the show does warrant a watch, especially if you are drawn to post-apocalyptic and sci-fi stories. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys survival drama with ruthless aspects, but be prepared for a few bumps along the way.

Morley’s portrayal of Bellamy is also noteworthy. He transitions from a rebellious guy with a gun to a more empathetic character throughout the series. The chemistry between the cast members also stands out and contributes to the on-screen performances.

progresses, some of the directing quality goes down. The later seasons sometimes rush through pieces or make it feel like they are only adding in plots to drag the show out, making it harder to remain invested in the characters and their development that

HALLWAY BEHAVIOR REQUIRES A CLOSER LOOK continued from page 3

far and wide to cover all open space. They split the halls and form choke points and standstills where once there was steadily flowing traffic.

A majority of those in the bog behave like our central subject, which is to be expected. This causes them all to be utterly indifferent to the thought that others around them might need to pass. Instead, they only stand in place as oblivious bulwarks.

Our subject has now been properly integrated with the populace of the bog. Trudging through the mess, he meets up with his friends, briefly convers-

ing with them before being taken up into a splinter group, which he follows down the nearby hallway. They walk in a line perpendicular to the walls without a single recognition of their surroundings, which causes a mass of traffic to accumulate behind them due to their absolute monopoly on passing space. This disruption is of course amplified when you factor in their walking speed, which is so agonizingly slow that one could sooner experience the heat death of the universe than witness them walk a meager five feet.

So what becomes next of our main subject? Well, it is not ex-

actly easy to say, since he is an imaginary exemplifier. However, if I were to imagine the places a real person of the same affinity would be, I would have three different ideas. Number one: he goes to class after the hallway boulder started degenerating, which is pretty unlikely. Number two: he continues walking aimlessly with a splinter group, conversing about sweet nothings until inevitable apprehension by hallway patrol. This option is somewhat likely. Finally, there is number three: he skips next period entirely by hiding away in either a bathroom or some un-

spotted crevice. Ding ding ding! You won the jackpot. The computer finds your answer to have a perfect accuracy score.

Truth be told, what I have been speaking of should be taken with an astronomically sized spoon of salt. Hallway behavior, at least in this school, seems pretty mild. Encountering blockages or being cut off is annoying at times, sure, but it does not pose that large of an issue. However, would it not be better if we did not have to encounter multiple versions of our central subject every time we are walking through the hallway?

PEARL

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a close-up shot of both their faces, highlighting the projectionist’s fear, panic, desperation and disbelief, while Pearl’s expressions are filled with intensity, ferocity and derangement. The combination of synchronous sound, tracking shots and close-ups during this extended sequence confirms Pearl’s irreversible descent into insanity.

Overall, the message, lesson and moral of Pearl is that ambition and the desire for fame and recognition can lead one to madness. The film illustrates Pearl’s struggle as a young girl living during World War I and the Spanish flu pandemic, which caused widespread depression and fear among those fighting in the war and those suffering from illness. Living on an isolated farm with her ill father and cold, resentful mother, it is understandable why Pearl feels driven to be seen by the outside world. She says, “I’m tired of living here on this farm. I’m better than this. I hate this place. I hate the way it smells, looks, everything.” These lines highlight her loneliness and desperation. Watching movies gives her hope that a better life exists away from the farm. Her obsession with fame is encapsulated in her words: “I’m a star. The whole world is gonna know my name.” Ultimately, the film’s message warns of the dangers of obsession and isolation, and how chasing recognition at all costs may never be worth it.

Ti West’s brilliant use of cinematography, symbolic costume design and Mia Goth’s insightful portrayal of Pearl successfully depict the catastrophic effects of unfulfilled dreams and ambitions. This haunting portrayal of madness places Pearl among my top five movies of all time. I loved this movie for its interesting storyline, brilliant cinematography and Goth’s outstanding performance. West is an amazing director and I admire all the movies he has created with Mia Goth, especially the X trilogy. In conclusion, Pearl is a masterpiece deserving a five-out-of-five-star rating.

INFINITY WAR

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The use of special effects in this sequence creates a sense of wonder and intensity, captivating the audience as the stakes rise.

The main theme of Avengers: Infinity War is that greed and the pursuit of power often lead to emptiness and regret. This is shown when Thanos finally collects all the stones and snaps his fingers to wipe out half of all life in the universe. After achieving his goal, Thanos is confronted by a vision of a young Gamora, who asks him, “Was it worth it?” Thanos is left alone, regretting his sacrifices. He has gained ultimate power but lost everything, realizing too late that his actions have led to his own misery. This theme serves as a reminder that greed and power do not lead to happiness and, ultimately, regret follows those who pursue these goals at any cost.

Overall, Avengers: Infinity War shows how teamwork, unity and determination can help people overcome any challenges. The film was both entertaining and suspenseful, and I enjoyed seeing my favorite characters come together. The high quality of the movie is evident and it is clear that the directors took great care in crafting this epic story. I give Avengers: Infinity War five out of five stars and am excited to see what unfolds in the upcoming Avengers films.

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NSPA

Skiers compete in famous race

Luke Skoglund, Stella Fesenmaier took part in the Prince Haakon 15K on February 21



Photo by STELLA FESENMAIER

Skoglund and Fesenmaier (left to right) competed in the race after the end of the Cooper Nordic season.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Two Cooper Nordic skiers, Stella Fesenmaier (12) and Luke Skoglund (12), competed in the Prince Haakon 15K on February 21.

The race is part of the American Birkebeiner series, taking participants along a 15-kilometer course. Starting north of Hayward, Wisconsin, the trail winds through forests, across Lake Hayward and over the American Birkebeiner International Bridge before concluding on Main Street in Hayward.

Fesenmaier finished with a time of 1:28:38, earning her 109th place out of 550 skiers. Meanwhile, Skoglund clocked in at 1:26:08, landing him in 104th place overall.

For both skiers, competing in the race was about more than just their times, it was about pushing their limits.

"It was incredible just being out there and feeling the energy of everyone around you," Fesenmaier said. "There's something special about the camaraderie you feel during these races."

For Fesenmaier, the inspiration to compete in this race came from her coach, Mr. Faochier, who often talked about his experience in the 30K race held on the same day.

"My coach Jason was constantly talking about the 30K race he does which takes place the same day on the same trails," she said. "He made it sound so exciting and challenging. I wanted to see what it was all about."

Though the Prince Haakon 15K is a demanding event, both athletes found ways to stay focused and motivated throughout the course. Fesenmaier said that watching the people around her ski kept her going.

"I just kept reminding myself that I needed to leave it all out there," Fesenmaier said. "I know I

am going to do my best, so I don't worry about it too much. It's all about giving your best effort and enjoying the experience."

According to Fesenmaier, she competed in the race despite a winter training routine that was less rigorous than she would have liked due to the extremely cold conditions in Minnesota during January and February.

"Honestly I didn't ski much because it was so cold. I kind of just winged it and hoped for the best," she said.

Nordic skiing has been a part of Fesenmaier's life for three years now, and it all began with a simple curiosity sparked by others who spoke of the sport as a life-long activity.

"Everyone around me talks about how it's a lifetime sport, and I

50K Birkie eventually. I will achieve these goals by continuing to get out and ski every winter," she said.

One person who is impressed by the performance Fesenmaier and Skoglund put in during the race is their Nordic coach, Ms. Meredith. According to Meredith, both Fesenmaier and Skoglund have demonstrated dedication and leadership during their time on Cooper's Nordic skiing team.

"They both have drive, persistence and endurance," Meredith said. "Our team has benefited from Luke's and Stella's commitment in so many ways: by running captains' practice, helping new skiers with skate and classic techniques, offering rides to practices and pasta parties, leading practices with stretches and warm-ups, encouraging the team to push themselves to do better and by getting announcements out to the team and checking in with individuals. Their commitment was invaluable."

Meredith added that the pair's willingness to guide younger athletes has left a lasting impact on Cooper's squad.

"Luke and Stella are the kind of athletes who lift others up. They make the entire team better through their passion and dedication," Meredith said.

To younger athletes interested in pursuing Nordic skiing, Fesenmaier offered some advice: "If you are scared about the length, just think of it as a normal ski, not a race. Take in the nature because it sure is beautiful on the Birkie trails and I'm sure you will pass plenty of old timers," she said.

As Fesenmaier and Skoglund continue their journeys in Nordic skiing, they remain focused on improvement and the sheer enjoyment of the sport.

"I just want to keep getting better and challenging myself," Fesenmaier said. "It's all about the experience, the friendships and the fun."

loved downhill skiing, so I thought I might as well try it," she said.

According to Fesenmaier, Nordic skiing has had a positive impact on her life beyond the race course.

"Nordic is about speed but another big part is technique. Once I realized I understood the technical part, I became more confident and it made me more ambitious, not just in Nordic, but in my other sports too," she said. "Nordic has helped me find my potential in every sport and activity I do."

Looking toward the future, Fesenmaier dreams of participating in the full 50K Birkebeiner someday.

"I would love to ski the rest of my life and to start doing the full

FOUR-DAY WEEK COULD INCREASE SUCCESS continued from page 3

Switching to a four-day school week could give both students and teachers the mental refresh they need, which a five-day week often cannot provide. Teachers are already exhausted from managing classroom behavior and grading assignments. A shorter school week might help alleviate some of that stress. For high school students, the added time for rest could help them develop more independence and a greater drive

to learn.

However, some students may worry that a four-day week might lead to an overload of work. They fear teachers will cram an entire week's worth of lessons into just four days, which could negatively impact the quality of education. Additionally, a shorter school week could lead to a longer school year, meaning students might lose part of their traditional three-month summer break.

In conclusion, while the idea of a four-day school week is appealing, especially for students seeking more time to recharge, it also presents challenges. Teachers would need to adapt to a new schedule and there would be concerns about workload and the overall impact on learning. As schools consider possible shifts toward this new model, it will be important to consider all the positives and negatives a change would bring.

CONFERENCES ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT continued from page 3

do not want to hear the banter between our parents and our teachers.

To combat this, the school has tried to make conferences more flexible. Since the pandemic, conferences now feature in-person, online or on-phone options. This shows that teachers and staff are reaching out to parents and that they

care about their students' grades. At the same time, this also shows how needless an in-person conference is if a teacher can just send an email or voicemail to a parent about their child.

Whether or not conferences are important is truly based on the specific perspective of teachers,

parents and students. The intention of conferences is very important because they help keep all three stakeholders in the education experience on the same page. By doing so, the three parties can help each other with problems, correct mistakes and address any needs students may have.

Cooper Competitors

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

Elisha Simmons

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

For Elisha Simmons (12), sports are a way of life. This three-sport athlete plays baseball and ultimate Frisbee in the spring and football in the fall.

Simmons, who has been playing baseball since first grade, said he fell in love with the sport early on.

"Since I was a kid, I had this plastic bat and ball and always used to hit the ball over the fence into the neighbor's yard," he said. "Ever since then, I've fallen in love with the sport."

His dedication paid off when his baseball team achieved their first section win in over a decade, which he points to as his favorite memory. Despite not officially holding the title of captain, Simmons said he tries to lead by example.

"I think others would agree that I am

a team player," he said.

Though he only started playing football as a sophomore, Simmons said enjoyed his time in Cooper's program. His team finished last season with an 8-2 record.

"I had lots of fun making new friends and building relationships with teammates and coaches," he said.

Outside of Cooper sports, Simmons has taken up bowling and recently got his own bag and ball.

"I love to see the ball curve and go down the lane and knock down all 10 pins," he said.

After high school, Simmons plans to work in maintenance and construction, and possibly become a barber. However, if an opportunity to play sports presents itself, he said he is ready.

"Sports and being active is my life," Simmons said.



Photo by R. VANGLOHINES

Reese Biedler

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Reese Biedler (12) has spent the past four years perfecting her aim as a dedicated member of the school's trap shooting team. From the spring and fall seasons of shooting to the camaraderie built along the way, trap shooting has become an important part of her high school experience.

"I've been doing trap for four years," Biedler said. "I chose this sport because I always have liked target practice and doing things of this nature."

While trap shooting may be an individual sport, Biedler said she enjoys the friendships she has made along the way.

"Having some of my friends in it, the fundraisers and the end-of-year fun shoot are some of my favorite parts of the

sport," she said.

One of Biedler's most memorable moments came during an Annie Oakley shooting game, as well as watching her friend build a snowman using shotgun shells for the eyes and nose.

"Seeing how much I've grown with it and watching myself get better throughout the years is another highlight of trap," she said.

Beyond shooting trap, Biedler enjoys hunting, fishing, drag racing, four-wheeling and gaming. She also has a love for art, which can be seen through her work in the Clay and Painting classes.

Another favorite class is her EMT and First Responder class, which has her considering a career as an EMT.

After high school, Biedler plans to either pursue work as an EMT or attend Hennepin Technical College following a gap year.



Photo by R. VANGLOHINES

Cheemeng Xiong

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

For Cheemeng Xiong (12), volleyball is more than just a sport, it is a family. As a third-year member of the Cooper boys volleyball team, Xiong has seen the program grow from a club sport to a state-sanctioned team.

"I've been with the boys volleyball team since we started as a club sport during my sophomore year of high school," Xiong said. "Even before my freshman year, my brother and the seniors were pushing the school to add a boys volleyball team. Without them, we wouldn't have gotten this far."

Xiong, who also enjoys playing volleyball and soccer with friends during the fall and attending volleyball open gyms in the winter, said he values the

camaraderie built through sports.

"What I enjoyed the most about being a part of the boys volleyball team is the memories we make during our seasons," he said. "From every good and bad game to every drawback we had to run, it always felt like a big family."

Although Xiong does not hold an official leadership role on the team, he said the two captains, Jasper Yang (12) and Chace Chang (11), are highly dedicated.

"Our captains excel at their roles," he said. "There's a good reason why they are trusted as our sideouts."

Looking ahead, Xiong hopes to help his team achieve more wins this season. While his future college and career plans remain uncertain, one thing is for sure: volleyball will always be a part of his life.

"I'll most likely play Hmong volleyball after high school," he said.

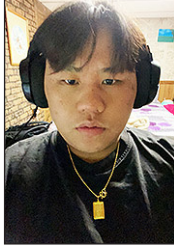


Photo by R. VANGLOHINES

Chase Launderville

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Chase Launderville (12) has been a dedicated member of the trap and skeet team for four years, starting his journey as a freshman after learning from his mom about the district's new high school team.

"My mom told me how Armstrong had a shared team with Cooper," Launderville said.

Launderville only participates in the spring season, but the friendships and experiences he has gained over the years have kept him coming back to the team.

"Getting to hang out with my friends and do something I like to do is what I enjoy most about the sport," he said.

Although he does not hold a leadership role, Launderville said he admires

the captains who help new shooters improve their techniques.

"They do well helping new kids with their stance or telling them things that will help them," he said. "The supportive environment has been a big part of my positive experience on the team."

Memorable moments while on the team are abundant for Launderville. One of his favorites was building a snowman and using spent shotgun shells for the face, a fun and creative use of what would otherwise be discarded.

Outside of trap shooting, Launderville enjoys working on cars, spending time outdoors and hunting. While he is not planning to continue with athletics after high school, he is excited about his future plans to attend Hennepin Technical College to learn about being a diesel technician.



Photo by R. VANGLOHINES