

Looking back at the journey of this year's graduating seniors

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The Quill

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Final film in popular *Venom* series may be the best of the bunch

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CLASS OF '25 PREPS FOR GRADUATION CEREMONY



Photo by ANDREA OBRANOVICH

The upcoming ceremony marks the third straight year the event has been held in downtown Minneapolis.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

As the Class of 2025 approaches their long-awaited graduation day on June 2, excitement and a bit of nervousness are in the air for Cooper seniors.

The ceremony will take place at 12:30 p.m., with seniors required to arrive by

11:30 a.m.

"Students should come ready with caps and gowns, tickets in hand and their best selves on display," Head Principal Ms. Smith said. "I expect them to be on time, follow expectations and enjoy their special day."

Painting a vivid picture of what the experience will be like is Administrative Intern

Mr. Mahan, who helps plan the annual event.

"There's energy in the air, music playing, people dressed up. It's a beautiful space. Students line up, hear speeches, receive their diplomas and leave as graduates. It's kind of magical," Mahan said.

While graduation may take just one afternoon, it is

the product of months of planning for Cooper staff.

"When it comes to graduation planning, there's an extensive process with many layers," Smith said. "We have a graduation team that meets often, both within the school and with the district, to ensure everything is in place."

According to Mahan, the detailed planning begins in the

Commencement will take place at 12:30 p.m. on June 2 at the Convention Center

winter.

"We start talking about what graduation will look like, venue, staffing, tickets and all the details. It's a long process because we want to get it right," Mahan said.

This year marks Cooper's third straight graduation at the Minneapolis Convention Center. After some early hiccups, Smith said that Cooper staff has learned how to streamline the process.

"Last year, it was perfect," Smith said. "Everything went smoothly. Staff knew what was expected and families knew who to go to. We were all on the same page."

Mahan agreed with Smith, highlighting the fact that past obstacles have helped refine the event.

"There were some small things that went wrong, like first-year seating issues, for example," Mahan said. "But, now, we've got a good handle on it."

With just two weeks to go, both administrators stressed the importance of seniors finishing the year strong.

"Senior slide is real," Smith said. "Get your hair, gown and everything ready the day before. Be early. Be prepared."

For his part, Mahan emphasized the importance of

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HBCU tour gave Hawks a chance to see colleges

The annual trip to the south took place March 30 to April 3 during the Robbinsdale District's week of spring break

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Awareness and opportunities are the best things for a person to grow. This is the philosophy behind the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Research Experience, an annual Robbinsdale School District program that culminates in a trip to visit HBCU schools during spring break, which occurred this year from March 30 to April 3. Students attending this trip had a chance to learn about HBCUs and about racial issues that are still prevalent today.

While the trip took place over four days, the entire program is four months long with a mandatory meeting every Tuesday after school. The topics talked about during the meetings vary. Some of the main topics include HBCUs and their importance, racial identity, civil rights movements and the effects of white supremacy. These topics are designed to challenge the way students think about themselves, open their eyes to issues that they may not have been aware of and validate the feelings and experiences that they have lived through. Students also get to build a sense of community with the people they are in the program with and will eventually travel with.

During the trip from March 30 to April 3, participants visited four colleges: Morgan State University, Howard University, Hampton University and Norfolk State University. Students also visited two memorials: the Lincoln Memorial and the Martin Luther King Memorial. Finally, the group saw two museums: the African American Civil War Memorial Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Before joining the program this school year, I had never heard of HBCUs, but once I did, it was eye-opening. What stuck out to me was that a lot of HBCUs were in the south and not in the north, including the four we visited. During the college visits, the students we met genuinely looked comfortable at the HBCUs and the student community at the HBCUs appeared



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Morgan State University was one of the many stops made during the trip.

to be lively.

A phrase that was used a lot during the visits to the HBCUs was "Black excellence." This term is typically used to describe and celebrate the achievements, success and abilities of Black individuals and groups.

Another interesting aspect of the college visits was learning that HBCUs are not exclusively for Black students. The schools actually accept students of all races and ethnicities.

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May Show will highlight an array of student talents

The May 22 event, which will take place in the school auditorium, is sponsored by Cooper's Asian American Club

By TESSA LENOCH
Quill staff writer

The annual May Show takes place on May 22. This year, Cooper's Asian American Club worked in association with Armstrong's Asian Student Union in order to expand the display of culture featured in the show. According to the Cooper group's advisor, Mr. Kek, the performance was organized to "sustain the tradition of honoring AAPI Heritage Month."

"The group has prepared by meeting weekly with Armstrong students since spring break to diligently plan out the event," Kek said.

The May Show has been a tradition at Cooper for many years.

"We hope that students will see commonalities among the differences and become more accepting that there are different ways of being in

the world that are equally valid," Kek said.

Two students in charge of organizing the May Show are Gianna Lee (11) and Jasmine Lee (11).

"Personally, participating in the May Show has been an opportunity to acknowledge my Asian heritage and appreciate who I am. Every year, I try to perform to showcase Asian student bodies at Cooper," Gianna Lee, who has worked on organizing and performing in the show for three consecutive years, said.

To participating students, the May Show offers an outlet for expression.

"Participating in the May Show gives me the opportunity to uplift my peers and connect with the community," Jasmine Lee said. "Overall, year after year, we've continued to grow and grow, and seeing that growth is one of the most fulfilling things to me. For one, it allows me to build stronger relationships with my peers, and on top of that, it allows me to

make new connections to people I may have never have otherwise. Two, I've cherished this show since the first time I saw my sister perform way back in 2018, and being able to somewhat carry down that legacy is just super charming to me."

The May Show tradition has been passed down from graduating members of Cooper's Asian American Club for years. Members currently in the club encourage those interested in the club to get involved in order to continue the legacy.

"My biggest advice if students are interested in joining the Asian American Club or to perform is to reach out. As a graduating senior next year, it saddens me how little our club is, and in the future, I look forward to connecting and working with our underclassmen. So, if anyone's interested, I advise them to reach out to anyone affiliated with the club to spread the word or to our advisor Mr. Kek," Jasmine Lee said.

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 seventh installment of an ongoing series

Prepping starts for second year of college life

Making it through one's freshman year provides extra confidence heading into year two

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

If you have read any of my previous stories in *The Quill* during the 2024-2025 school year, you have heard about the ebbs and flows of life as a first-year college student. As I reflect on my freshman year of college, I instantly find myself thinking the cliché that it went by so fast. But how do you not think that cliché? As life progresses, so does the passage of time and the rapidity of that passage.

The passage of time only amplifies further in college when you begin to manage your own life at new levels never seen before. Creating your own schedule, declaring your major and finding a balance between work, life and school are among the many skills you must master for success in college. These concerns begin to make days that once felt so long now pass by in the blink of an eye.

As cliché as it sounds, it truly feels like just yesterday that I was roaming the halls of Cooper as Editor-In-Chief of *The Quill*, impatiently waiting for what was next for me in the “real world.” Now, nearly a year later, I reflect on not only how much time has passed, but how much I have changed in such a short amount of time.

We all get excited for our future, but as I have mentioned in previous stories this year, it is so vital to stop and smell the roses. That realization has been a huge turning point for me. I know that in a few years’ time when my bachelor’s degree lands in my eager hands and I finally enter the workforce, I will once again reflect on how fast college has passed and still likely wish I would have taken a little longer to relax in the proverbial garden.

Sure, it is easy to compare your current self to your previous self and take note of all the changes you have experienced, but the jump from being a minor in high school to an adult in college is a staggering leap and I am sure there are still plenty more leaps to take. However, this slightly nerve-racking reality has luckily passed for me and now I am in the stage of eagerness again.

The first major thing that has my undivided attention as I look toward fall of my sophomore year is athletics. After building relationships with members of both the basketball and football teams, the anticipation for our growth both together and individually has amassed.

Although my growth on the field has piqued my interest, I am equally excited for the new challenges that await me in the classroom. Not to say that this year was not challenging, but I am very excited about an increase in course difficulty next year. After maintaining a 4.0 GPA throughout freshman year, I am not only confident in my abilities to maintain this status but to further challenge myself to strive for greater academic excellence. In the pursuit of that challenge, I began a campaign in the spring semester with the goal of becoming 2025-2026 President of Phi Theta Kappa, an international honors society. It with great pleasure that I can share with you all that I will be inducted into this position in the fall semester of my sophomore year.

Throughout my progression at college, I have always tried to maintain a “what’s next?” perspective, but with my sophomore year knocking at the door, I am truly looking into the face of my future self and I am unsure about “what’s next?” At a young age, we always feel so sure about where we will be in not just the next 10 minutes, but in the next 10 years, and as

SECOND YEAR
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Quill seniors getting ready for future

After covering countless peers in their reporting this year, the graduating staff members of the school newspaper are in the spotlight



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

The senior staff is TJ Tolentino (back left), John Papenfuss (back right), Robin Jarman (left) and Sam Peterson (right).

By TRISTAN JAY TOLENTINO
Quill staff writer

Four. That is how many seniors *The Quill* has this year. Over the last eight issues and one school year, these four seniors have written and drawn countless stories and illustrations for *The Quill*. As the 2024-2025 school year is nearly over, we want to feature the graduating seniors who have written for *The Quill* throughout the year and give them the spotlight they usually shine on other people in the school. June 2 will mark the end of their high school journey and their job as journalists at Cooper.

Robin Jarman

Robin Jarman (12) has not taken part in any sports during her time at Cooper, but she has now been part of *The Quill* for a year. Jarman has become known for her lengthy reviews of TV shows and movies as well as writing multiple stories for *The Quill*’s news department.

When looking back at the last year, Jarman said she has enjoyed the people she has met on *The Quill*.

“I don’t have specific favorite memory of *The Quill*, but I feel like it’s a nice environment, so a lot of the time I like being in there,” Jarman said.

In addition to her work for the

school newspaper, Jarman has taken part in many arts classes at Cooper. Currently, Jarman is in IB Art, which is giving her a chance to paint a mural of her choice in the Cooper hallway to commemorate her time at the school.

When it comes to her hobbies outside of school, Jarman said that writing is an important pastime.

“I like writing outside of school, especially making drama scripts. I like imagining dramatic things happening to people,” Jarman said.

After graduating, Jarman plans on going to North Hennepin Community College for two years before transferring to St. Cloud State University to pursue a degree in communications.

Sam Peterson

Sam Peterson (12) has partaken in many activities during their years at Cooper. Peterson has been a member of Belle Canto Choir and Concert Choir in the past. This year, Peterson joined *The Quill*, where she has covered many arts and news stories.

In addition to writing for the newspaper, Peterson said they have enjoyed being in the IB Art class this year.

“IB Art has really been something I’ve loved,” Peterson said. “It’s pushed me out of my comfort zone

by having me share my art with others. The students and Ms. Mielke are all very supportive. My favorite thing is when we participate in critiques, where we share our art with our classmates and they give a critique, compliment and suggestion.”

Outside of school, Peterson enjoys drawing, writing and listening to music. Specifically, Peterson said they enjoy the music of Ethel Cain.

“Ethel Cain inspires me a lot when I think about lyrics and writing. I listen to her while I go on walks,” Peterson said.

After graduating, Peterson plans on taking a gap year before going forward with their education. While she has not yet chosen a college, Peterson hopes to pursue a career in medicine and health.

John Papenfuss

John Papenfuss (12) has an interesting role in *The Quill*: he is the newspaper’s illustrator and comic strip artist. Papenfuss’ interest in the arts extends outside of the paper as well. He has been part of Cooper’s choir program for the duration of his high school life, having being part of Freshman Choir and Concert Choir.

Although he said he enjoys choir, Papenfuss said his engineering classes have been his favorites at school because he is a hands-on per-

son when it comes to electronics and circuits.

“These classes are what made me choose my career path of being an electrician,” Papenfuss said.

In fact, after graduating, Papenfuss plans on taking classes to become an electrician. After those classes, he hopes to do a two-year internship at his father’s workplace.

When it comes to personal interests, Papenfuss said he has a tremendous interest in fantasy. Currently, he is part of a Dungeons and Dragons group and expressed interest in creating his own group. Papenfuss said he also finds it interesting to research different cultures and mythologies. This interest even helped him create the characters for his *Quill* comics.

“One of the comics led me to research dozens of cultures and mythologies to make the characters in the depictions as accurate as possible,” he said.

Tristan Jay Tolentino

TJ Tolentino (12) is a part of Concert Choir, Chamber Singers and Drop the Octave. This year, he also became part of the staff of *The Quill*. Tolentino’s work on the newspaper and interest in the arts intersected this year as he made arts news and entertainment reviews the main parts of his work for *The Quill*.

When asked about his favorite classes at Cooper, Tolentino said he especially liked AP U.S. History because it pushed him and gave him a chance to learn more about America.

“The class pushed me in a good way as it taught me to make a work schedule. It wasn’t enjoyable, but it was rewarding,” Tolentino said.

Another school subject Tolentino has enjoyed has been choir.

“Choir is one of a few things I enjoy being part of in Cooper,” he said.

When he is not at school, Tolentino said drawing and playing card games are his favorite pastimes. Specifically, he likes playing *Magic the Gathering* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* Tolentino said he plays card games for around two or three hours every day.

Starting next fall, Tolentino plans on taking a gap year to save up money in order to pursue his academic goals. Specifically, he plans to attend culinary school in New York City at the Institute of Culinary Education.

Seniors share their plans for life after graduation

Whether it is college, work or the military, these exiting Hawks have many different post-high school plans

By ROBIN JARMAN
Quill staff writer

As the school year comes to an end, and the class of 2025 starts to prepare for graduation, many seniors are planning out their future after high school. While we all might have had to take the same subjects over the last four years, Cooper seniors have very different futures ahead of them. While some might be going to college, others might be taking a gap year or not going to school at all. No matter what you choose, each student has a reason why they are taking a different path.

Lynette Jaimes (12): “I am going to Hamline University and will either major in neuroscience, law or art.”

Mandelina Thao (12): “I am going to Minneapolis Community and Technical College and will be majoring

in communications.”

Chelsea Fontaine (12): “I will be majoring in arts and administration at University of Wisconsin, Stout.”

Isabelle Ross (12): “I am going to Charleston Southern University to major in nursing and minor in psychology.”

Erica Fessenden (12): “I am taking a gap year to travel.”

Charles Nichols (12): “I am going to Augustana University to study biology with an emphasis in cellular.”

Lucy Keta (12): “I am planning on going to community college for two years then transferring to a university for another two years. I will be majoring in psychology.”

Jamvon Rush-Reese (12): “I am going to University of Minnesota, Duluth, and majoring in political science.”

Cynthia Pha (12): “I am going to the University of Minnesota, Twin

Cities. I will be majoring in computer science.”

Emily Blanchette (12): “I will be going to Mankato State University for public relations.”

Alaina Anderson (12): “I will do online school at Normandale Community College for liberal arts education then transfer to Concordia University for public health.”

Teresa Valenzuela-Salazar (12): “I am going to Hamline University for business administration.”

Leslie Tlaseca (12): “I am going to the University of Minnesota, Duluth, to study bio chem.”

Melat Kiftu (12): “I am going to the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and majoring in biology with a minor in astronomy.”

Andy Scheveck (12): “I am going to Winona State University for elementary education.”

Toby Bishop (12): “I am taking a gap year then going to Winona State University for art and a minor in psychology.”

Diana Gutierrez Fuentes (12): “I am going to St. Catherine’s University for sonography.”

Samaya Taye (12): “I am going to Normandale Community College and will be majoring in dental hygiene.”

William Nichols (12): “I am going to Bemidji State University and will major in computer science.”

Ashley Romero Robles (12): “I will be studying abroad.”

Kiarra Valle-Jimenez (12): “I am taking a gap year and then going to Hennepin Technical College for graphic design.”

Isis Briscida Velazquez-Ramirez (12): “I am majoring in computer science and cyber security at the University of Minnesota.”

Family Literacy Program provides unique learning opportunities

Adult participants in the program can improve English skills while their children learn classroom readiness

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale School District’s Family Literacy Program is a place where both parents and children can go to learn a variety of things. Participating parents can get a GED or diploma, improve their academic skills or learn English through the Adult Academic Program. Meanwhile, the kids, who are in the same building, can attend Early Childhood Family Education preschool classes. During every school year, these classes run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

The program started in the early 1990s with an Even Start Grant and state funding through the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Academic programs. According to Ms. Cannata, who works with the Robbinsdale program, some of the goals of Family Literacy are child development, parent empowerment and adult education.

“This program emphasizes the importance of parents as their children’s first teachers and aims to create a supportive home environment for learning,” Cannata said.

According to Cannata, the subjects and skills that are focused on the

most when working with families varies. In the children’s rooms, they focus on all aspects of Early Learning standards in the state of Minnesota, such as: social and emotional skills; English language learning; and cognitive, math and literacy skills. As for the adult academic classes, parents learn English language literacy skills; citizenship; job skills; and GED completion.

One important resource for the parents in the program is that they get to attend parenting classes where they can talk about their parenting practices and experiences. Cannata said that parents all share the same goal of wanting the best for their families’ education.

“The parent gets to all have a voice and the classes are culturally respectful. Information and resources are given to the parents to help them develop pathways to success for their families’ educational experience in the school system,” she said.

Another unique aspect of the Robbinsdale program is its use of parent-child interaction classes. These classes are set up to help both parents and children develop literacy skills together through interactive activities. According to Cannata, these shared

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Reflecting on the journey of the Class of '25

This year's graduating seniors experienced an often tumultuous trip through the halls of Cooper High School



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

The various landmarks in and around the building will become part of the collective memory of the exiting twelfth graders once they leave.

By SAM PETERSON
Quill staff writer

While writing this, I felt very stumped. How do I properly articulate the emotions and experiences high school has produced in this one piece? Personally, I have looked at that “25” at the end of my school email since elementary school. The year 2025 seemed so incredibly far away. The 25 now holds a significance we did not understand as young children.

I think the cliché that high school goes by fast is extremely untrue. For one thing, the days seemed too long. They dragged on so much that even the most entertaining classes felt like they went

by at a snail’s pace. I constantly counted down the minutes until I could go home and escape the loud environment. Sadly, I eventually developed the skill of only being able to focus with that loud environment. I used to think I would not miss it.

I do not mean to make high school sound like a completely exhausting and unlikeable experience. High school and being a teenager is a stage in life people must go through to grow and learn from the experiences you can only really have in high school. I loved high school, but I will admit, I hated it a lot at certain points.

As a freshman, high school seemed like a daunting and un-

beatable part of life. Anxiety fueled a lot of us on our first day. A lot of us had that angsty teen outlook on life: How will any of this matter? I remember seeing students misbehave and act tougher than they truly were. Even now, I see it in the new cycle of freshmen from this year.

Sophomore year was an oddly strange, melancholic time. I have noticed a phenomenon of multiple people declaring it as their worst year in high school. It was a hard time to get through, with mental health falling to an all time low for some of my friends and even for me. Although the year was rough, I made it through, and I am very thankful for the resources Cooper

offers to students.

Junior year for the Class of 2025 was pretty uneventful all around. The most stress I can remember came from taking the ACTs. Leading up to the test, students were cramming as much information as they could into their minds. I can also remember the infamous gas leak and how Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson ran across the football field where we were all located during the evacuation.

Now, as our senior year comes to an end, we are experiencing a new kind of anxiety. The

CLASS OF '25
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Trump's tariffs a baffling source of global chaos

Experts agree that the U.S. consumer will foot the bill for these ill-conceived policies

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

“A vote for Trump means your groceries will be cheaper.” That is what our current president promised to the American people when he was campaigning in Pittsburgh last year. If we would just vote for him, he would bring down the cost of groceries. But how can he make anything cheaper when, the moment he gets into office, he puts tariffs on every country that we rely on for the items we buy at the grocery store?

It seems clear Trump is not considering low-income families or middle-income families that struggle with affording groceries. It is not always easy to get the groceries you need due to how expensive some items already are. Now, they are going to be even more expensive due to tariffs.

Food insecurity has always been a problem in the United States. For example, a nonprofit organization called Feeding Texas states that one in six households in Texas are food insecure. Now, with the tariffs Trump has put in place, food insecurity may rise. I think people forget how privileged we are if we can afford to buy the groceries we need and want. Not everyone has that option. Many people have to sacrifice grocery purchases to be able to pay for other bills. As Blue Book states, “55 percent of consumers base their shopping decisions on discounts and promotions.”

Trump has placed tariffs on many countries that we rely on for resources. China is one place from which we get many supplies and products, yet Trump placed a 145 percent tariff on China in April. Keep in mind we import electronics, machinery and consumer goods that we all use daily from China. If you look

TRUMP'S TARIFFS
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Staff cuts do a disservice to Cooper students

The reductions in staff for next year were made to help address the school district's \$21 million budget shortfall

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale School District is facing a \$21 million budget deficit and one way they are addressing it is by cutting staff. Cutting teachers to save money might sound like a good fix, but it is the wrong move in the long term.

With fewer teachers, classrooms will be overcrowded next year. Each teacher becoming responsible for more students means the quality of education will go down and stress will be added onto those teachers. I have seen what it is like when a teacher is overwhelmed: students get less help and lessons move too fast or too slow. The more students there are in a classroom, the harder it is for anyone to actually retain the information being presented to them. Not all students learn the



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Cooper let go of dozens of staff members in late March due to the budget.

same and it is impossible for a teacher to attend to each student’s educational needs in 45 minutes.

When these cuts go into effect, we will lose more than just adult bodies in a building: we will

dents will be effected emotionally.

The decision to cut staff is sending the message that teachers are not valued. Our district leaders are telling us that just because they made a financial mistake, it is teachers, who all have their own families and lives, that should be the price. People are not expendable and the district should not make anyone feel like they are.

Ultimately, cutting teachers to fix a budget crisis is a quick fix for a long-term problem. Unfortunately, this could just be the start of many more cuts to come. Twenty-one million dollars is not a small sum of money and the district could easily cut some of our favorite programs to accompany the teachers that are being let go. As a community, we have to come together and figure out how to solve this budget crisis without making more people suffer.

Taking a gap year brings with it many benefits, detriments

The decision to hold off on college can provide a break, but it can also have an adverse impact on a student's momentum

Many students in high school question whether or not going to college immediately after graduation is the right fit. While going straight to college may be the best decision for most students, it is not always the appropriate choice for everyone. In fact, a growing number of students have been taking a “gap year” after high school before moving on to college. There are some key points to consider when making the decision between going to college and taking a gap year.

Research has demonstrated that taking a gap year more often than not leads to a student never going on to college. Most graduates who take a gap year usually end up getting a job and never

going back to school, which can hurt their chances at an education and higher earnings in the future. The more students delay going to college, the less likely they are to do so.

Another issue with not moving on to college is that students will end up missing life-changing events and experiences that are often associated with the college years. College students learn academic, social and emotional skills that they will not learn in other places if they do not learn them in college. There are so many different opportunities that one might not get if they do not further their

education.

On the other hand, there are some good things that come out of taking a gap year. Graduates who take a gap year will typically work or travel, which will help them become more mature and a little wiser. This newfound maturity and wisdom can help these people get their priorities straight when they finally move on to college.

Another positive thing about a gap year is that it can help a person decide what career they actually want to pursue in the future. Many incoming college students do not know what to major in or they feel rushed to choose a career path be-

fore they are ready to. Having time to think this through during a gap year can help people enter college with a better grip on their potential career choices.

Ultimately, some people do not want to take the education route after high school, which is totally fine. There are many other things you can pursue in life without your college degree, such as joining the military, starting a business or traveling. However, a good tip for all high school students is to still apply to college, whether or not you think you will attend right away. That way, if you are accepted, you can defer your enrollment, which will give you something to look forward to when you are done with your gap year.

From the Editors

From the Editors

Keeping focused is important way to avoid lazy break

Relaxing is part of summer, but make sure you do not let the three months pass you by

Avoiding summer laziness is one of the hardest things to do. In the summer, there is no school to worry about and, for some of us, no part-time jobs to worry about either. As a result, a large number of us think that it is a good idea to spend our summer unproductively by watching TV, playing video games or scrolling through social media. Overall, there are both good and bad aspects to being lazy in the summer.

The temptation to do nothing during the summer comes from a lot of sources. One big one is the summer heat. The temperature can be so unbearable that it makes you just want to stay inside and watch TV, play video games or look at social media all day.

Another source of summer laziness is the need to recuperate after a long, tough school year. The 8:35 a.m.-3:25 p.m. daily grind can be difficult, and if you are involved in sports or activities at school, that daily time span becomes longer. It is no wonder, then, that many students need to kick back during the summer months.

Of course, although it may be viewed as laziness, summer is meant to allow you to be at home and do nothing all day. You do not have to worry about school work or any other school commitments. You can focus on yourself. In effect, summer break is designed to be a mini vacation at home.

KEEPING FOCUSED
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Spring concerts put a spotlight on music groups

The arrival of May brought with it a collection of band, choir, orchestra performances

By TRISTAN JAY TOLENTINO
Quill staff writer

As the 2024-2025 school year closes up its curtains, and caps are about to be placed on the heads of seniors, Cooper’s music groups unveiled their final concerts of the year. These shows all took place in the month of May and they gave music teachers a chance to spotlight their senior performers in an effort to honor of the Class of 2025.

Orchestra

Cooper’s orchestra groups performed their final concert of the year on May 20 at 7 p.m. in the Cooper auditorium. During the show, the orchestra performed 12 different pieces of music for the audience. According to orchestra teacher Ms. Verdoljak, two pieces worth seeing were their performance of a song from the movie *Wicked* and an arrangement that was designed as a farewell to the seniors.

One of the primary performers at the concert was cellist Leah Blanchette (12), who has been part of the orchestra for two years. She said she first joined in 10th grade because she wanted to understand music more. Blanchette said she especially enjoyed playing the piece “The Great Monarch Migration” during the show. According to Blanchette, playing the concert was a bittersweet experience because it marked the end of their time playing with the orchestra and Verdoljak.

“Ms. Verdoljak is very open to listen to what other people say,” Blanchette said. “She is very passionate and really cares that we play well.”

Also enjoying the final show as violinist Jason Yeboah (12). Yeboah has been part of the orchestra since fourth grade and initially joined because he wanted a chance to play music at school. Looking back at the final concert, Yeboah said the song from *Wicked* was a personal highlight. Now, he said he is preparing to move on with life and say goodbye to his orchestra family.

“I have nothing but great respect for Ms. Verdoljak,” he said. “She is very passionate about her music and is a great teacher.”

Band

Under the direction of teacher Mr. Hahn, Cooper’s various band groups performed their end-of-year concert on May 8 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. The band musicians performed 13 different pieces of music at the show.

“The concert was a comucopia of music,” Hahn said. “Singling out a piece of music performed as the best would be a dishonor as to how well the Cooper bands played on that Thursday night.”

Also enjoying the final show was percussionist Stella Fesenmaier (12). Fesenmaier said she first joined band in fifth grade thanks to the influence of her father, who had instruments around their home and encouraged her to play. As for her favorite piece at the final concert, Fesenmaier cited “Chicken for Jazz” because “it was fast and upbeat.” According to Fesenmaier, the final concert was bittersweet because it meant that her time with Hahn is coming to an end.

“It’s really sad,” she said. “I think I’ll miss Mr. Hahn the most and was really lucky to have him as our band teacher. He really pushed us to be the best players we can be.”

Another veteran member of band is brass player David Hole (12), who has been part of band since fifth grade. Much like Fesenmaier, he was inspired by his father to be part of band. Hole said he enjoyed playing a tuba solo at the concert and liked having one last chance to work with Hahn.

“Hahn is a very good teacher,” Hole said. “He’s nice and he’s funny. I feel like hes very good at what he does and it’s a blessing to have someone that good as a teacher.”

Choir

The Cooper choirs had their final performance on May 15. There was a 6 p.m. and an 8 p.m. show given the large number of specialty choir groups. Under the leadership of choir teachers

SPRING CONCERTS continues on page 8

Little Murders an unpredictable treat

Directed by award-winning actor Alan Arkin, this 1971 relationship film casts an unusual spell on the viewer



Photo by 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS

Actor Elliott Gould (seated) plays Alfred Chamberlin, a photographer who has found himself unable to feel pleasure or pain.

By TESSA LENOCH
Quill staff writer

Alan Arkin began his career as a director for the silver screen with his debut film *Little Murders*, which was released in 1971. Arkin would go on to act in a wide variety of movies fit for almost every group of viewers possible, ranging from *Minions* (2022) to *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) to *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006). While there is no doubt that Arkin has an impressive slate of acting successes, from my perspective, he really got it right the first time when he directed *Little Murders*.

Little Murders opens in a serene New York City apartment,

which quickly devolves into the sounds of loud fighting on the street below. Patsy Newquist (Marcia Rodd), a personified beam of positivity, has her attitude dampened slightly as she catches a glimpse of a beating happening on the street below. She intervenes quickly, only to be faced with another obstacle to her happy-go-lucky attitude when the man she has saved from this violence does not even bother to thank her before he is on his way down the sidewalk. This ungrateful nihilist is Alfred Chamberlin (Elliott Gould), a photographer who has found himself utterly unable to feel pleasure or pain. Patsy, too far gone in her optimistic beliefs, takes a liking to

Alfred, both as a man and as her new project.

If *Little Murders* was an average rom-com, anyone could guess how the next two hours of its runtime would go. However, the excitement of the film stems from its constant twists and turns. Just when it seems to follow a formulaic plot or a predictable beat, the entire movie flips on its head and changes in a blink. New characters are constantly introduced, ideologies are constantly in battle and the audience is left asking what exactly the movie is trying to say.

If any movie should be watched blindly, it is *Little Murders*. With a surprisingly recognizable cast and a plot that is exceed-

ingly unpredictable and absurd, the experience of seeing this film is more than interesting. Unlike movies such as *Fight Club* (1999) or *Gone Girl* (2014), which are known for their iconic twists, *Little Murders* offers a series of twists that often leave the watcher confused about how it got so strange so quickly, without even seeming abruptly different.

Overall, the film is strange, it is confusing, it is funny and, above all, it is crazy. I recommend you watch this movie either in one of two extremes: with all of your friends or alone in a dark room. Either way, you will find a way to have fun with it. I rate this move 4.5 out of five stars.

Movie lovers should steer clear of terrible Emilia Perez

Despite winning awards and being nominated for Best Picture, Emilia Perez is a musical without catchy songs or an interesting plot

By ROBIN JARMAN
Quill staff writer

Emilia Perez is a 2024 Netflix movie musical that is directed by Jacques Audiard, written by Thomas Bidegain and Lea Mysius, and scored by Clement Ducol and Camille Dalmais. While the movie’s production cost a modest \$21 million, it received a great deal of 2024 award attention despite only rating a 5.4 on IMDB.com. Staring Zoe Saldana, Selena Gomez and Karla Sofia Gascon, *Emilia Perez* is about a Mexican lawyer, played by Saldana, who is offered a job to help a cartel member transition from a man into a woman and retire. Saldana eventually won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for this role.

Given all that information, you would think this movie would be a pretty interesting watch, right? Well, you would be wrong because this movie is one of the most boring, unwatchable and awful movies I have ever seen.

First, despite the high-concept plot, they somehow made this movie so boring that there were times while watching it when I was falling asleep. I kept wondering to myself, “When is this going to end so I can go to sleep?” If you have trouble sleeping, do not put on white noise in the background to help you drift away; instead, put on this movie and try watching it for five minutes and you will be sound asleep. How can



Photo by NETFLIX

The film is about a Mexican cartel leader who wants to transition from male to female and then retire.

you possibly make a movie about a Mexican cartel member transitioning into a woman and running from the cartel boring? Well, somehow Jacques Audiard did.

Second, given that it is a musical, you would expect the music to be the highlight of *Emilia Perez*. Unfortunately, the film’s music sounds like dragging your fingernails across a blackboard while a baby is screaming in the back-

ground and whispering nothing into your ear. Maybe that is exactly what *Wicked* and *Hamilton* were missing because I definitely love actors whispering their songs into my ear. It must be noted that, somehow, the *Emilia Perez* song “El Mal” won Best Original Song at this year’s Oscars. That is right: a movie that used AI to “enhance” lead actress Karla Sofia Gascon’s singing voice won not one but two Oscars this

year. Overall, this movie feels like it was written by a man who just learned what trans people are and what a cartel is on the same day. This movie feels like a giant insult to not just musicals, but all of cinema. I would rather watch any Tommy Wiseau movie than waste two hours of my life watching this garbage movie again. *Emilia Perez* gets zero out of five stars.

HBCU TOUR GAVE HAWKS A CHANCE TO SEE COLLEGES continued from page 1

In addition to the HBCU visits, students taking part in the trip cited the tour of the National Museum of African American History and Culture as a highlight. The museum is set up so that you have to start at the bottom, which makes it feel like you are going back in

time. The bottom of the museum addresses issues around the start of slavery, and as you go up in the museum, you travel closer and closer to the present.

An issue the research group became aware of through visiting the museum is that the education

system does not often talk about the role of children during slavery. The museum detailed how newborns were stripped away from their mothers to be auctioned off to slave owners.

Overall, the students on the trip found the college, museum and

memorial visits to be an important experience. Interested students are encouraged to apply for this program next school year. More information about the program can be found by visiting Mr. Kek or Ms. Rich in the Cooper Climate and Culture Office in room 248.

Third *Venom* is best in the franchise

Directed by Andy Serkis, *Venom: The Last Dance* brings effective closure to the ongoing story of Eddie Brock



Photo by SONY PICTURES

In the movie, Eddie Brock (Tom Hardy) must come to terms with his relationship with Venom, the symbiote living inside of him.

By JEREMIAH HOSKINS
Quill staff writer

The movie *Venom: The Last Dance* was directed by Andy Serkis and released on October 25, 2024. I chose to review this movie because I really like the other *Venom* movies. They always have awesome action scenes and the music fits perfectly with what is happening on screen, making it even more exciting. The movie *Venom: The Last Dance* uses impressive camera work and an emotional soundtrack to keep viewers hooked. It also delivers a strong message about learning to accept yourself and grow as a person.

Venom: The Last Dance picks up after the events of the second film in the *Venom* trilogy, *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*. Eddie (Tom Hardy) is now a wanted man for the death of Detective Mulligan at the end of the previous film. To evade the authorities, he and the symbiote Venom are hiding in New York City. However, when a dark intergalactic deity and its

unstoppable army begin wreaking havoc across the galaxy in search of an energy force, Eddie and Venom are eventually forced to get involved.

One filmmaking technique that is essential in the movie is lighting. Specifically, I enjoyed how lighting is used in the fight scene at the Area 51 base because it helps make the battle feel intense and exciting. In this scene, Eddie sneaks into the Area 51 base to save someone important. The base is lit with bright, harsh lights that flicker during the fight. There are also flashing alarms, adding to the chaos of the moment. The lighting makes the scene feel more dramatic and tense. Additionally, the shadows make Venom look scarier and more powerful, while the flashing lights make everything feel dangerous. This lighting pulls the audience into the fight, making them feel like they are right there with Venom. It also highlights how secretive and high-stakes the Area 51 base is, adding to the suspense of the story.

Another important filmmaking element is music. In the final battle scene of the film, music plays a big role in building the tension and excitement. In this scene, Venom faces off against the antagonist in a massive showdown on the rooftop of a high-tech skyscraper. The fight is intense, with explosions and rapid movements as they battle for control. The stakes are incredibly high and the fate of many people hangs in the balance. The music in this scene starts with a slow, deep rhythm that mirrors the tension as the fight begins. As the action escalates, the music becomes faster and more intense, with dramatic beats that highlight each critical moment. The soundtrack even incorporates electronic sounds to match the futuristic setting of the skyscraper. This music keeps the audience on the edge of their seats and makes the fight feel even more epic. It helps communicate the emotions of the characters, from Venom's determination to the antagonist's desperation, while adding to the

overall thrill of the scene.

The main message of *Venom: The Last Dance* is about learning to accept yourself and embracing change to grow as a person. One part of the movie that clearly shows this lesson is when Eddie decides to fully embrace his bond with Venom instead of fighting against it. In this scene, Eddie realizes that he can only succeed in saving others by working with Venom instead of trying to push him away. Together, they form a stronger and more united front. This scene connects to the main message because it shows how accepting who you are can lead to growth and success. Eddie's acceptance of Venom is a metaphor for facing the parts of ourselves that we might find difficult to deal with but are essential to becoming our best selves. I agree with this message because it is important to accept all parts of yourself, even the challenging ones, to grow and

VENOM
continues on page 6

Mamma Mia! sequel mostly recaptures first film's magic

Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again follows two storylines taking place before, after events of the original movie

By YULIN VANG
Quill staff writer

Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again was directed by Ol Parker and was released on July 20, 2018. I chose to review the film *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* because it is an uplifting and fun musical that features catchy ABBA songs and a heartwarming storyline. It is perfect for a feel-good movie night given its vibrant performances and nostalgic charm. *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* explores themes of family, self-discovery and love through a joyous musical journey set to the timeless hits of ABBA.

As the sequel to *Mamma Mia!* begins, Sophie Sheridan (Amanda Seyfried) is preparing for the grand reopening of her mother Donna's (Meryl Streep) hotel following Donna's death the previous year. She is upset because two of her fathers, Harry (Colin Firth) and Bill (Stellan Skarsgård), are unable to attend the reopening, and she is having trouble in her relationship with Sky (Dominic Cooper), who is in New York City. In addition to this present-day storyline, the film also jumps back to 1979, where we follow a young Donna (Lily James) as she graduates from Oxford's New College and prepares to travel the world. As the movie jumps back and forth between present and past, stories unfold and we begin to see the ways in which the timelines intersect and



Photo by UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Amanda Seyfried reprises her role as Sophie Sheridan in the sequel.

connect back to the first movie.

In *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*, the scene where young Donna sings "When I Kissed the Teacher" uses synchronous sound

ing her graduation day with her friends. They burst into song and dance, creating a joyful and rebellious atmosphere as they take over the ceremony, highlighting Don-

As the sequel to *Mamma Mia!* begins, Sophie Sheridan (Amanda Seyfried) is preparing for the grand reopening of her mother Donna's (Meryl Streep) hotel following Donna's death the previous year.

to enhance the lively and celebratory atmosphere of the graduation, making the audience feel immersed in the moment. In this scene, young Donna is celebrat-

na's free-spirited and adventurous nature. Synchronous sound plays a crucial role in this sequence by matching the audio perfectly with the visual actions, such as the sing-

ing and dancing. This synchronization enhances the energetic atmosphere of the graduation celebration, making the audience feel fully engaged in the scene. The use of synchronous sound creates a seamless and immersive experience, drawing viewers into the joyous and rebellious spirit of the moment.

In *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*, the scene in which young Donna sings "Andante, Andante" uses asynchronous sound along with soft lighting and close-up shots to create an intimate and romantic atmosphere, emphasizing her deep emotions and connection to the song. In this scene, young Donna performs in a small, cozy setting, expressing her emotions through the song. The intimate mood highlights her vulnerability and passion as she connects deeply with both the music and her audience. The use of asynchronous sound allows the filmmakers to create a more emotionally rich experience. The music and lyrics of "Andante, Andante" convey Donna's emotions and thoughts, even when the visuals might show something different. This technique allows the audience to focus on the emotional depth of the song, enhancing their connection to Donna's inner feelings. It creates a more poignant and memorable experience for viewers.

MAMMA MIA!
continues on page 6

Netflix film *Boys* brings book series to small screen

The 2018 movie is the first entry in a trilogy based on the popular Jenny Han novels

By KYJAH YOUNG
Quill staff writer

The movie I have chosen to review is *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, a Netflix film directed by Susan Johnson and released on August 17, 2018. The movie is also the first part of a trilogy based on the book series written by Jenny Han. I chose to review this movie because it is one of my favorite romantic comedies. *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* uses art direction and lighting to help teach the audience about stepping out of your comfort zone.

The movie is about Lara Jean Covey (Lana Condor), a teenager who lives a quiet, boring high school life until some unexpected letters are released to all of her former crushes. These were love letters she had written that were meant for her eyes only, until her younger sister Kitty (Anna Cathcart) sends them out, hoping to give Lara Jean a more exciting life. At school, her world is turned upside down when the boys start to approach her about the letters. Among them are Josh (Israel Broussard), her next-door neighbor and her older sister Margot's (Janel Parrish) boyfriend, and Peter (Noah Centineo), the boyfriend of her arch-nemesis, Gen (Emilija Baranac).

One scene that really stands out in terms of art direction is when Lara Jean and Peter are at a diner. I think this scene demonstrates strong art direction because of the way colors are used in the background, which can be seen through the neon lights and retro décor. This gives the audience a nostalgic and warm feeling because the place holds sentimental value for the characters.

A good example of lighting in the film is the scene in which Lara Jean and Peter are in the hot tub. I chose this element because I think it is a great example of lighting being used effectively. The surrounding area is mostly dark, but the lights from the hot tub shine brightly on the actors, making the moment feel more intimate. In this scene, Lara Jean meets Peter at the hot tub during a school trip to a ski resort. Peter then confesses his love for Lara Jean and discovers that she feels the same. The lighting technique in this scene helps the audience connect with the characters, making the scene feel special and memorable.

To All the Boys I've Loved Before is about the importance of letting your guard down and opening up to others. A scene that illustrates this message is when Lara Jean finally confesses her feelings to Peter at the lacrosse field. She decides to be vulnerable and let her guard down, which helps them grow closer as a couple. It is a powerful moment that shows the authenticity of relationships. I agree with this message because Peter brought out a better side of Lara Jean and helped her grow as a person, something she may not have experienced had she not stepped out of her comfort zone.

To All the Boys I've Loved Before uses art direction and lighting to help teach the audience about stepping out of your comfort zone. I really enjoy this movie and always recommend it to others who are looking for a good romantic comedy to watch. I also think it offers a thoughtful perspective on high school relationships. I like the director's approach because she did a great job with casting, background sets and certain camera shots. This film deserves four out of five stars.

Premier Performers

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

Arlo Meyer

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Whether it is the smooth swing of a jazz solo or the powerful presence of a trumpet line on a football field, Arlo Meyer (12) has made music an integral part of his high school experience. As a member of Marching Band, Wind Ensemble and Jazz I, Meyer's passion for music is clear.

"I enjoy playing all of the music the best," Meyer said. "Almost all of the songs we play are great."

Meyer's journey with band started in sixth grade, and since tenth grade, he has played in Marching Band, Wind Ensemble and Jazz I. One of Meyer's standout memories comes from Marching Band when his trumpet section took the field alongside the University of Minnesota's band.



Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

"My favorite memory was Band Day when we went and played with the University of Minnesota at the Gophers game," he said.

Meyer has taken on a leadership role this year, serving as the trumpet section leader for the Marching Band.

Meyer's role as a leader will be important to the next activity Marching Band is taking part in: a trip to Washington, D.C. for the Fourth of July Parade.

"I am looking forward to the chance to travel and play in front of a big audience," he said.

Next fall, Meyer plans to attend Winona State University and major in something related to computer science.

"I don't think I will have as much time after high school for music," he said. "I have many other interests that I want to spend my time doing."

Jamvon Rush-Reese

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Jamvon Rush-Reese (12) is a dedicated member of several audition-based ensembles, including Symphony Orchestra, Concert Choir and Marching Band, Rush-Reese has spent the past four years immersing himself in the arts and building a strong sense of community along the way.

"I started doing it because I thought, 'Why not?'" Rush-Reese said. "I kind of learned that I enjoyed it and I had fun doing it."

What started as curiosity quickly turned into a deep passion, leading him to participate in multiple ensembles and even take on a leadership role as a teacher assistant for the Freshman Orchestra.

One of the things Rush-Reese val-



Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

ues most about his music experiences is the camaraderie.

"Sometimes, you can make really good, lasting connections with people you wouldn't normally get to," he said.

The opportunity to challenge himself and learn new skills is another major draw of Rush-Reese's participation in music groups.

"I love the feeling of accomplishment that comes with proving I can do something I've been working toward," he said.

Outside of music, Rush-Reese enjoys watching and analyzing films, cooking and playing mul-

ti-ple instruments, including piano, guitar, cello and violin. As for his future, he hopes to attend either Gustavus Adolphus College or the University of Minnesota, Duluth to study music and political science.

Sofie Dumont

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Sofie Dumont (12) has been a dedicated dancer since the age of four and an enthusiastic member of the school's theater program. Dumont said she has built a strong creative identity during her time at Cooper.

"I am currently involved in theater and dance, and I have previously taken art and choir classes at Cooper," Dumont said.

With 14 years of dance and four years of theater under her belt, she is no stranger to the stage.

"Both activities have been very fun," she said.

What keeps her coming back year after year is the sense of community and expression Dumont finds in



Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

the arts.

"In dance, I enjoy being creative and working with people who share the same interest as me," Dumont said. "For theater, I love performing and meeting new people each year."

Dumont does not just participate in the arts, she leads. As a staff member at her dance studio, she teaches younger students twice a week and loves seeing their growth.

"It's so cool to see kids improve their skills as the year progresses," she said. "I enjoy being a role model for the younger kids in both theater and dance."

Looking ahead, Dumont plans to major in elementary education at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls. While she is not sure how the arts will fit into her college life, she hopes to continue dancing after she graduates.

Tony Ali

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Tony Ali (12) is a standout student whose talents stretch across the stage, orchestra pit, debate floor and choir risers.

"I'm involved in choir, orchestra, debate and theater," Ali said. "I was in improv, too."

Ali said there are multiple reasons why he joined these diverse activities.

"I've done choir for about six-and-a-half years," he said. "I started because I wanted to do better in musicals."

Meanwhile, Ali picked up orchestra in fourth grade as a part of a class and later added debate and improv thanks to curiosity and a little peer pressure.

"I started debate because I was interested and I saw a poster for it. I got into improv because I kind of got whisked into it by the upperclassmen at the time,"



Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

he said.

From adrenaline-charged performances to musical precision, Ali enjoys different things about his various artistic disciplines.

"In theater, it's the feeling on stage that I like," he said. "In choir, it's nice to sing in a mass of voices. As for orchestra, I like how I'm getting better. It feels like magic playing an instrument."

Currently, Ali serves as a section leader in choir, helping elevate his peers' voices. Outside the arts, Ali said his favorite academic class is Calculus, while his favorite hobby is playing video games.

Looking ahead, Ali plans to pursue a career in biochemistry, working in labs and doing research. Still, he is not leaving the arts entirely behind.

"If I have time in the day, I intend to continue choir and orchestra," he said.

Gritty *The Pitt* is must-see drama

Set over the course of one work shift at a Pittsburgh hospital, *The Pitt* breathes new life into an old genre



Photo by MAX

Playing the central character in the series is Noah Wyle (right), who came to fame in '90s medical drama *ER*.

By SAM PETERSON
Quill staff writer

The Pitt is a medical drama that was released on Max in 2025, with its season finale having just premiered in April. The show was created by R. Scott Gemmill and produced by John Wells Productions and Warner Bros. Television. The show has multiple directors and each does certain episodes in the series. Key among the directors is Damian Marcano, who directed episodes "9:00 A.M.," "12:00 P.M.," "4:00 P.M." and "7:00 P.M." This show has one of the more accurate views into emergency room life of any medical drama and it demonstrates a perspective many do not get to see or experience. This accuracy makes the overall story more compelling and entertaining as the viewer is put into each moment of one long day.

The Pitt details the morning shift at a fictional hospital located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The 15 episodes showcase the stress, workplace drama and even mistreatment that medical workers face on a daily basis. The senior attending physician is Dr. Robina-vitch (Noah Wyle), also known as Dr. Robby, who is the main fo-

cus of the show. The season takes place on the anniversary of the day his mentor died from COVID-19. Between the high stress medical emergencies and educational moments with the medical students, Dr. Robby is trying to keep it all together and not fall to his grief.

With *The Pitt* being a show involving health care, there are a lot of scenes involving blood and injuries to the body. They are graphic and can make the viewer very uncomfortable. The first time the audience sees a severe injury is when a woman is rushed in with a broken ankle and degloved foot. Thomas Floutz does all of the special make-up effects in the series. Floutz's attention to detail makes the injuries succeed in looking realistic.

There are multiple doctors, nurses and medical students that are followed throughout the show. As each hour of the day progresses, scenes are shot with a camera that moves quickly with the characters. This is seen best during sequences when a patient first enters the emergency room. As a patient is wheeled in, and paramedics are transferring information to the doctors at the hospital, the camera moves around swiftly, focusing first on the injuries before moving

up to the medical team's faces. The intensity can be felt through each camera movement and the images upon which the camera focuses.

Each character is portrayed by phenomenally talented people. One actor who really sticks out is Taylor Dearden, who plays Dr. King. Dr. King's character is someone who is very empathetic, but sometimes struggles with social cues and skills. One aspect of her character that the show focuses on is that her sister is autistic and Dr. King has to help her. Dr. King also shows signs of being neurodivergent, which she does not seem to realize. Dearden has a respectful way of portraying this character and uses her facial expressions and tone to simulate Dr. King's emotions.

The Pitt does not rely on the drama you might see in a medical show like *Grey's Anatomy*. Instead, it focuses on the actual aftermath of COVID-19 and how medical personnel are treated. The special effects, cinematography and acting all put the viewer in intense, realistic scenarios. The show can provoke emotions that are hard to handle, but it is certainly worth the watch. I give *The Pitt* five out of five stars.

MAMMA MIA! SEQUEL MOSTLY RECAPTURES MAGIC continued from page 5

One key lesson from the film is the importance of embracing life's uncertainties and following your heart. The film encourages viewers to take risks, cherish relationships and create their own paths, just as Donna does. In the scene where young Donna decides to stay on the Greek island after meeting Sam, the lesson of embracing the unknown and trusting your own heart is clearly showcased. Despite not knowing what the future holds, Donna chooses to take a chance and build a life

in a place she loves. This decision highlights the importance of carving one's own path. I agree with this lesson because it is all about taking chances, living in the moment and following your heart.

Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again explores themes of family, self-discovery and love through a joyous musical journey set to the timeless hits of ABBA. My overall impression of the film is positive thanks to its vibrant musical numbers, stunning cinematography and heartwarming story.

The blend of humor, emotion and catchy ABBA songs makes it a delightful and uplifting experience. I think the director did a fantastic job with *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*. The direction captured the joyous spirit of the original while adding depth to the characters' backstories and creating visually stunning scenes. The director's approach brought out both the fun and emotional moments beautifully. *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* earns four out of five stars.

THIRD VENOM IS BEST IN THE FRANCHISE continued from page 5

improve as a person.

The movie *Venom: The Last Dance* uses impressive camera work and an emotional soundtrack to keep viewers hooked. It also delivers a strong message about learning to accept

yourself and grow as a person. I enjoyed the movie because the action scenes were thrilling and the story kept me engaged the whole time. The connection between Eddie and Venom was interesting to watch and it made

the movie feel more meaningful. I think Andy Serkis did a great job directing this movie. I liked how he combined the action with emotional moments. *Venom: The Last Dance* deserves four out of five stars.

CLASS OF '25 PREPS FOR GRADUATION CEREMONY continued from page 1

academics and logistics for the graduates.

"Make sure your grades are where they need to be, know who's getting your tickets and think about how you're getting there. The ceremony itself is easy; getting to that point is the real work," Mahan said.

While the focus of the ceremony is on students, the emotion runs deep for staff as well.

"It's bittersweet," Mahan said. "We're proud, but it's hard to say goodbye to students we've had for four years."

As for Smith, she is hopeful that

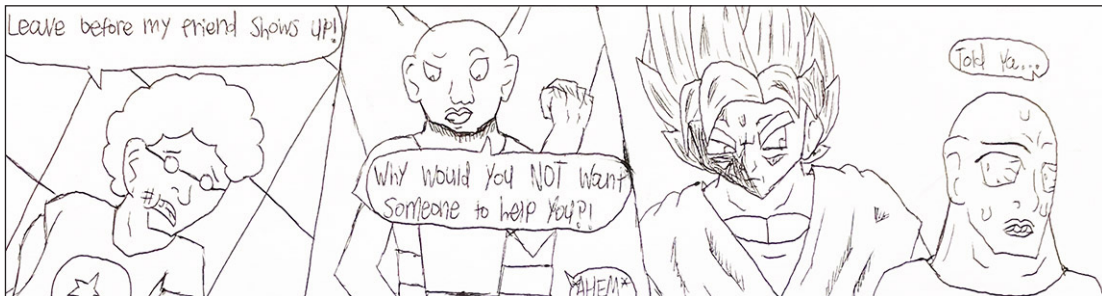
seniors celebrate themselves for their high school accomplishments.

"Graduating high school was one of the hardest things I ever did. I know how much our kids go through. I want them to be proud of themselves. They did it. No one else," Smith said.

Quill Comics Corner

Bully

By John Papenfuss



Dead takes fresh approach to zombie tropes

The South Korean series places a zombie virus outbreak at a high school, making the show a mix of horror and teen drama



Photo by NETFLIX

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

By MITCHELLE MACHARIA
Quill staff writer

All of Us Are Dead is a Netflix streaming series created by Lee Jae-kyoo and Kim Nam-su that was first released on January 28, 2022. The reason I chose to review this show is because it highlights the power of trusting one another and helping each other through difficult times. It also emphasizes that, at times, we must be willing to sacrifice our most valuable and precious things for a better tomorrow, even when it causes us pain. In this series, costume design, sound and lighting all play significant roles.

The story begins with a virus outbreak at Hyosan High School in South Korea. The infected quickly turn into human-eating zombies, which means the remaining students at the high school, including our two protagonists, Nam On-Jo (Park Ji-Hu) and Lee Cheong-San (Yoon Chan-Young), must fight for their lives while searching for a way to escape. Meanwhile, the Korean military works to isolate the outbreak and protect the country from an even larger disaster.

One important scene, in terms of filmmaking techniques, is when the science teacher visits his son in the hospital after the boy was bullied at school. In this scene, the teacher realizes that if his son continues to live, many people could lose their lives due to the zombie virus inside his body. The lighting in the room is

dim, with curtains drawn behind him, enclosing what is happening inside. The music is intense, foreshadowing that something unusual is about to occur. The darkness of the scene reflects the unbearable pain the boy is experiencing, which is mirrored in the father's eyes. It portrays how many young people are left in the dark with no one to support them, causing them to spiral into their worst selves.

ly, carrying heavy burdens with no one to turn to, until their pain transforms them into metaphorical beasts. These individuals, in turn, want others to experience the same suffering they have endured. The costume design in this show helps the audience understand that some people, especially young people, need love and support as they grow, so that they do not end up turning into monsters,

young people's flaws. It often refuses to listen to them, especially during adolescence when they are most misunderstood. At one point, students try calling 911 for help as the virus spreads rapidly, but the rescue team assumes the students are just playing a prank. As a result, the virus continues to spread and more students turn into beasts since their cries for help have always been ignored.

One of the main lessons in this show is about survival and humanity. This is shown in the scene where Nam-ra is affected by the zombie virus. Su-hyeok chooses to stand by her, convincing the others that, even though she is infected, she would never harm them. They find comfort in each other and demonstrate the perseverance of the human spirit. Despite the desperate situation, they choose to stay together and cherish the time they have left. This shows that, no matter how chaotic things get, humanity will still prevail. The relationships between characters display emotional support and comfort, which keeps them going and fighting together. The message is clear: in critical moments, humanity endures and people will stand and fight together.

I enjoyed watching *All of Us Are Dead*. All the actors perform with genuine emotion, fitting the tone of each scene. I also appreciated the acting of the zombies and the impressive costume and make-up design. It was a great piece of art. This series deserves five out of five stars.

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Another important filmmaking element can be seen when students become infected with the unknown virus that turns them into fierce zombies. In one scene, the virus spreads rapidly among students. The zombies symbolize the voices of the weak, those who have been suppressed and ignored. The costume design represents people who suffer silent-

inflicting cruelty on their peers to satisfy their own vengeful and neglected emotions. It reminds the audience to support young people as they grow, listen to them and correct them with compassion so the inner beast does not take over.

The main theme of this show is that society has failed to protect its young people. Society rarely cares and tends to focus only on

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM PROVIDES UNIQUE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES continued from page 2

classes have had a great impact on families, ranging from improved literacy skills in both children and parents, pathways to careers for the parents, increased kindergarten readiness skills and parents being more involved and confident in the role they play in their children's education.

The Family Literacy Program currently serves learners from all

around the world. As a result, the educators who work with this program must be aware of various cultural and language barriers in addition to the trauma the families may have experienced.

"Cultural barriers are broken down through shared experiences and becoming a community of learners," Cannata said. "[We also] have educators who have experience in

trauma-informed instruction and have developed strategies to respond to our learners and their needs."

Although it has enjoyed success, Cannata said that the Family Literacy Program is in danger. Although the funding for this program is not part of the \$21 million budget shortfall being faced by the Robbinsdale District, Cannata said that they were recently

told the program may be cut for next school year.

"This is leaving families shocked and confused. This program has been a lifeline for so many families," Cannata said.

According to Cannata, people interested in supporting the program are encouraged to "advocate for Family Literacy and our immigrant learners."

CLASS OF '25 continued from page 3

impending choices about pursuing further education or work is constantly on our minds. I feel stuck and unguided when making these decisions. Even now, as I am finally comfortable with my future steps, I keep thinking about how everyone was anxiously picking schools and careers. With everything now decided, I can see the pattern of senioritis kicking in.

Even though high school was very scary, annoying and at some points unbearable, I believe we should all be proud of ourselves for making it through to the other side, especially if school was something you never liked or if you struggled with mental health and took it one day at a time. For the people who are not graduating and crossing the stage because they did not earn their credits in time, that does not mean you are a failure. In your own way, even you still made it to the end. Education can be pursued again, although not in a high school environment.

I wanted to end this with something motivational and uplifting while avoiding being corny or too sentimental. While writing this, I realized that was practically impossible. This is supposed to be cringe. A final goodbye, good luck and farewell to the Class of 2025.

KEEPING FOCUSED continued from page 3

At the same time, there are many students who would disagree about the nature of summer. Having three months without school is a great opportunity to travel, earn money at a part-time job and work on projects you may have been putting off during the school year. Believe it or not, there are even some students who use summer to work ahead on school-related tasks, whether it is the process of looking into college applications or doing summer reading to be prepared for next year's classes. Whether you embrace laziness or like to get things done, summer is the time to do it.

Ultimately, it may be the case that the best plan of action is to do a little bit of both. If you are inclined to relax too much, maybe you could tackle a few tasks that would make your life easier once summer is done. On the flip side, if you are someone who is busy in the summer, it might be a good idea to kick back a bit and relax with friends and family members.

While it is important to have a good time, remember to use your summer months wisely. Soon enough, it will be time to return to school in the fall.

SECOND YEAR continued from page 2

life progresses, we adapt to the principle that life will take unexpected turns that will undoubtedly change the trajectory you have been on.

This fact of life has only made itself more apparent now. Although I have a solid plan in place for my degree and future potential jobs and internships, I am also at peace with encountering the unexpected. As I head into my second year of college, I eagerly await where life will take me next.

Thank you, readers of *The Quill*, for joining me on my journey through my freshman year of college. I could not have made it without my dumps of knowledge and information into your electronic devices.

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Cooper welcomes flag football

Team is part of new NFL effort to expand flag football as a national high school sport



Photo by JEN REID

Ms. Reid (center) celebrates a successful practice with the key players on the new flag football squad.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Under the bright stadium lights and the chilly spring air, a group of determined young women have been making history at Cooper. For the first time ever, Cooper has its own girls flag football team. At the heart of this new squad is Ms. Reid, a Cooper physical education teacher who is leading the charge as head coach.

“I’ve always loved teaching flag football in PE,” Reid said. “When I got to Cooper this year, I asked if we could start a team. Then, [Cooper Activities Director Mr.] Howard got an email from the NFL about launching a league, and it felt like it was meant to be.”

The NFL has been expanding support for girls flag football across the country and Cooper jumped at the opportunity to be part of this new opportunity. Practices began earlier this semester, with official games taking place throughout May.

The team is scheduled to play every Sunday for four weeks, with two games on each game day. The first home game day was May 4 and the team played back-to-back games at 4 and 5 p.m. in the Cooper stadium.

Though still early in their journey, Reid said the team has already formed a strong bond, sharpened their skills and created a lot of buzz around the school. But starting from scratch has not been without challenges.

“Time and weather have been our biggest obstacles,” Reid said. “We practice Mondays and Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. on the turf, and once that sun goes down, it gets cold fast. Practices fly by. There’s just never enough time.”

Despite the challenges, Reid’s energy and love for the game are contagious. She said she likes to em-

phasize more than just athletic ability. “I look for players who are coachable, willing to learn and ready to put in the work. If you give your best and practice like you play, the skills will follow,” Reid said.

In light of that philosophy, Reid said her goal for the season is not just about wins.

“I want the girls to walk away with more knowledge and confidence than when they started. I want them to be excited, excited enough to bring more girls into the program next year. And, yes, I want to win games too,” she said.

Reid said her favorite moment of the season so far was not a dramatic touchdown or flashy play, it was a spontaneous, joy-filled game in the weight room during a particularly cold practice day.

“We were playing one-versus-one, working on flag grabs. There was so much cheering that [art teacher] Mr. Molitor popped his head in. We invited him to play defense, and when one of the girls juked past him for what we thought was a touchdown, he slowly held up the flag he’d grabbed. Everyone lost it. It was a blast,” Reid said.

Helping contribute to memorable moments like this are the members of the team. For quarterback Lyviah Lee (10), joining the team was a dream come true.

“I’ve always wanted to play football,” Lee said, “so when I heard there was going to be a flag football team, I was like, I have to join for sure.”

Lee said being quarterback has pushed her to grow as both a leader and a teammate.

“I’ve learned to adapt to how my teammates play and trust them more,” she said. “One skill I’ve definitely improved on is catching and trusting my teammates with the ball.”

While Lee said that learning the game came with challenges, like de-

veloping new skills and stepping out of her comfort zone, the payoff has been more than worth it.

“I learned to try something new,” she said. “You never know if you’ll like it unless you give it a try.”

In fact, one new thing that being on the team allowed Lee to experience involved a trip to U.S. Bank Stadium.

“We got to go to Media Day at the Vikings stadium,” she said. “Getting to see some of the players was so cool.”

Another player on the squad who has been enjoying the chance to try a new sport is Arianna Brooks (9).

“I’ve always liked playing football,” she said. “It just seemed like a really fun opportunity.”

Brooks plays both receiver and quarterback but says she especially enjoys running routes. Like Lee, she emphasized how strong the team’s bond has become.

“Everybody gets along,” she said. “All the coaches are funny and the girls are really sweet.”

Brooks said she has already learned a lot about reading defenses and bouncing back from mistakes.

“Football is a comeback sport. You can’t let a bad play get to you,” she said.

According to Brooks, anyone thinking about trying out for the next year should do so.

“Definitely join. It’s super fun and the environment is great,” Brooks said.

This focus on the future is also on Reid’s mind now that the season is winding down. Reid said she has big hopes for the growth of girls flag football at Cooper and beyond.

“It’s definitely going to be the sport of the future,” she said. “We’re hoping to be officially sanctioned as a high school sport in a few years. Colleges are starting to offer scholarships. There’s a real path forward here.”

TRUMP'S TARIFFS A BAFFLING SOURCE OF CHAOS continued from page 3

at the tag of your clothes, where does it say it was made? There is a good chance it will say, “Made in China.” What do you think will happen if these tariff rates do not go down? We will have to purchase more expensive items or we may not have access to these items at all.

Chinese goods are not the only ones impacted by Trump’s tariffs. For instance, our neighbor to the north, Canada, gives us crude petroleum, petroleum gas, refined petroleum, cars, and motor vehicles parts and accessories. Meanwhile, the European Union gives us medicinal ingredients, pharmaceutical products, advanced machinery and equipment, and aerospace parts and components. Then there is Mexico, which gives us vehicles, machinery and medical devices. The list goes on and

on. Yes, we may have some of these materials and resources domestically, but there are many reasons why the U.S. needs to import these items from other countries. Now, all of this trade will be put in jeopardy due to Trump’s tariffs.

I believe that people in the U.S. forget just how young this country is compared to most other countries. We are only 248 years old, and yet, the U.S. is making demands like we are an all-powerful and untouchable country that does not need to rely on any other nation. But we do. If other countries were to cut us off completely from trade, we would quickly see how interdependent the entire trade system is. Our economy would not necessarily crash, but it would not be great. We need trade just like any other country, but

the U.S., or at least the U.S. president, is acting in an arrogant way. Adding more tariffs and starting trade wars with other countries is not how you make good relations.

All in all, I do not agree with any aspect of Trump’s tariffs. What he is doing is neither smart nor beneficial to us. Groceries and other consumer goods will cost more and it will be the common person who will have to deal with it. People who were already struggling to buy groceries will now struggle more and relations between the U.S. and other countries will worsen. When will people realize that in order to prosper as a country, we have to accept that our country is not above any other nation? Trump says he is doing this to help the people, but I do not feel helped.

SPRING CONCERTS PUT SPOTLIGHT ON MUSIC GROUPS continued from page 4

Mr. Vidal and Ms. Rowan, the various choirs sang 23 pieces in total across the two shows. One of the key songs they sang was the final number, “River in Judea.” The performance of this song is an annual tradition and used as a parting song for the graduating seniors.

One choir singer who enjoyed the final chance in high school to perform for an audience is August Dolan (12).

Dolan started choir as a sixth grader and has dreamed of making a career out of singing. According to Dolan, “I Will Tread Lightly” is the song they had most looked forward to performing at the concert.

Now that the concert is over, Dolan said they are trying to come to grips with the idea that high school is nearly over.

“It feels like it hasn’t kicked in, but,

simultaneously, it feels long overdue,” Dolan said.

Additionally, Dolan praised Cooper’s choir teachers for their expertise and support over the years.

“They are amazing choir directors, especially because they care about you not only as a student, but as a person. You can see how much they care and how much they love doing this,” Dolan said.

Cooper Competitors

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

Sherry Chan

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

For Sherry Chan (12), trying something new during her final semester of high school has led to sunshine, friendship and a growing appreciation for a sport she never expected to love.

“This is my first time playing golf,” Chan said. “I’ve been doing it for around a month. I chose this sport because I never tried golf before, so I wanted to give it a try.”

Although she has not been hitting the fairways for long, Chan has managed to create some good memories.

“What I’ve enjoyed most is the nice weather and the super nice teammates,” she said. “Our first varsity meet was also enjoyable.”

Chan’s willingness to try something new was also on display during the win-

ter sports season, which saw her join the Nordic skiing team.

“This season’s skiing was nice,” she said. “I learned a new sport and made many nice friends.”

That open-minded spirit has become a hallmark of Chan’s high school experience, one that saw her travel to the United States to be an exchange student at Cooper. Chan said she has enjoyed going to school in America and has become especially fond of her Clay class this year.

“I get to make a lot of cool projects in Clay, and both teachers are very nice,” she said.

While Chan has not yet settled on a college or major, she knows that physical activity will remain a part of her life.

“I don’t think I will do sports in school in the future, but I will do it for exercise in my daily life,” she said.



Photo by R. JARMAN

Hypnos Gorder

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Hypnos Gorder (12) is not your typical high school athlete. Splitting his time between virtual battlegrounds and quiet fairways, Gorder has found his stride in two very different sports.

“I play esports and golf as well,” Gorder said.

According to Gorder, golf was the sport that came first, and he joined the Cooper team last spring.

“I knew I wanted to play some sport, but my previous experiences hadn’t gone well,” he said.

“The coach, Mr. Bruce, is very nice and that was part of what prompted me to join.”

One of his proudest golf memories came from sinking a long putt, a moment of triumph that his coach ac-

cidentally missed.

“A coach from another school saw and congratulated me. I was very proud of that shot and it might be one of the best I’ve ever made,” he said.

As an activity, esports entered Gorder’s life more recently. After discovering the team through an interest form, he jumped in at the beginning of the 2024-2025 fall season.

“There’s a couple things about esports that I really love: it’s convenient, because we play from home. You can play a shooter like *Valorant* or you can play something as calming as chess,” Gorder

said.

After graduation, Gorder plans to take a gap year and continue exploring his passion for art. As for sports, golf may fade into the background, but gaming will remain a lifelong constant.



Photo by R. JARMAN

Anna Delaney

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

Whether she is stepping up to the plate or taking down an opponent on the mat, Anna Delaney (12) has built a name for herself in Cooper sports. A two-sport athlete, Delaney wrestles in the winter and plays softball in the spring.

Delaney began playing softball during her freshman year and has stuck with it throughout high school.

“I joined softball because it looked very interesting and fun,” she said.

Now in her fourth season, Delaney said that the best part of the sport goes beyond the game itself.

“My favorite part about softball is the community,” she said. “All of the coaches and teammates are so sup-

portive and welcoming.”

One of Delaney’s favorite softball memories comes before the games even begin.

“Before every home game, we always have a huddle to kind of prepare ourselves for the game,” she said. “It’s always so much fun and really kickstarts our game.”

In the winter, Delaney trades cleats for wrestling shoes. According to Delaney, the 2024-2025 season was a successful one.

“I ended up winning my conference for the second time in a row and I qualified for state,” she said.

Delaney’s athletic journey will not end after graduation: Delaney is committed to the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, where she will study interior architecture and compete on the women’s wrestling team.



Photo by R. JARMAN

Simon Gullickson

By MARIAH WASHINGTON
Quill staff writer

For Simon Gullickson (12), baseball has been a constant companion since he was four years old.

“I’ve been playing baseball since T-ball, which I think I started playing when I was four years old,” Gullickson said. “My parents signed me up for it and I’ve loved it since.”

That early interest in the game has carried him through more than a decade of playing, from little league fields to the pitcher’s mound in high-stakes play-off games.

While spring means the Cooper baseball season for Gullickson, he does not take the rest of the year off. In the fall, he played Armstrong-Cooper baseball and enjoyed it.

“We had a very successful season

with lots of wins,” Gullickson said.

During the winter months, Gullickson commits to daily gym sessions, focusing on strength and conditioning.

“I just go to the gym every day,” he said.

As a senior baseball player, Gullickson said he enjoys his relationship with the younger players and the coaches.

“I enjoy how it lets me be competitive and the relationships that I’ve built with players and coaches because of it,” he said.

Outside the diamond, Gullickson enjoys hanging out with friends, swimming and spending time with his girlfriend.

As for the future, Gullickson is still deciding on a college, but he said one thing is certain: “I will continue with athletics after high school because I love playing baseball.”



Photo by R. JARMAN