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Purple Press

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First girls XC runner at state

Junior Aria Kulseth ran and represented Humboldt at state on November 1st

Claire Ales
Staff Writer

On Saturday November 1st, Junior Aria Kulseth competed in the Minnesota State High School League State Cross Country Championships, and became the first girls runner from the Humboldt Cross Country team to qualify for state.

In order to qualify for state

Aria needed to place in the top six individuals at sections, which excludes all runners who qualified with their team. Aria ended up placing fifth with a time of 20:26 and set the new school record, beating the previous record by one second.

Aria described the section meet as one of her most stressful yet. She recalls “I woke up with a feeling of

dread, where you know you have to do something, but you want it to be over already.” As a way to get herself in the zone before she races, Aria always likes to walk the course and arrive around two hours before she runs in order to allow herself time to mentally prepare before running.

The section race itself for Aria didn’t seem to be going

as well as she had hoped. The first mile was the toughest for her, and she even remembers almost accepting defeat. She kept going, and during the second mile, Aria heard a coach tell a runner ahead of her where the state mark was. “The girl was only two spots ahead of me and suddenly all the pain went away. I didn’t feel anything anymore and I

just locked in. I knew I had to pass this girl!” said Aria. All throughout the last mile, Aria knew that she was in the back of the qualifying pack. The results of the meet were posted right before the boys were about to run. “Suddenly I heard Mario yell and he came running to me and picked me up and full on spun me around. It felt almost

straight out of a movie. Then the girls team came and like piled on me. It was crazy,” said Aria. With the stress of the section meet out of the way, Aria was able to just focus on having a good time at state and celebrating that she had made it and achieved her goal. “I kind of told myself that this

XC state, 5

OWL theater build day was a huge success



Purple Press Staff Photo

OWL parents assist with the stabilizing and repair of the stairs leading up to the stage.

Many members of the cast and design crew gathered to clean, build, and repair

Kate Houle
Staff Writer

Saturday, November 15th saw a flurry of activity in the auditorium as students, staff, and families came in to help build, clean, and set up for OWL’s fall production of A Wrinkle in Time.

A biyearly tradition,

theaters’ build day is a time for volunteers to work onstage and in the greenroom without disrupting regular rehearsal. This year there was also a focus on cleaning and reorganizing the greenroom as part of Kate Houle and Maren Sletten’s senior project. “Having a clean space makes it easier to craft, sew, and design... it’s

important to set a standard [of cleanliness] for the next generation of theater kids,” said Maren.

Over 20 volunteers worked on sorting bins of clothing, fabric, and props, picking up trash, and moving furniture around. “[It] was very fun, we got far more done than I expected, and I’m very happy



Purple Press Staff Photo

Students help organize fabric in the green room.

with our results,” said junior Kaden McNamara. There was more technical work on the sets side, with groups working on stabilizing and painting the large stage stairs, as well as cutting and attaching plywood to some set pieces. “It was great to see so many people from the OWL theater community come

together,” said parent Heather Freeman. A Wrinkle in Time will be performed December 10th, 11th, and 12th at 7pm in the OWL auditorium. The people who gave up their Saturday to help at build day had a huge impact on making sure the show will successfully go on.

Faster internet tech?

James Hietala
Staff Writers

What if in a couple years the internet could be supplied to remote towns using beams of light? What if it could be as fast as the fastest internet cables? This is the future that a new company called Taara is trying to achieve.

Taara originally started off as a part of Google’s Moonshot lab, a project that gives a platform to out-there science ideas, and turns them into real products. The biggest past Moonshot products include Waymo, one of the top self-driving car services, and Google Glass, which are now discontinued but were some of the first mixed reality glasses (similar to Meta’s Ray-Ban glasses).

Taara is the successor to the discontinued Loon project, which attempted to provide fast internet wirelessly by transmitting data through receivers mounted on balloons that would float in the stratosphere. When Loon shut down in 2021 many engineers moved to the Taara with the goal to transfer internet service over light. In early 2025 Taara “graduated” from the Moonshot lab and became an independent company (though Google still owns a minority stake).

Taara’s current flagship (and only) product is the Taara lightbridge. It’s a white oval slightly bigger than a traffic light, with a large green circle in the center. Inside this circle is a series of lights, mirrors, and cameras that read, send, and turn the light beams into

Billie Eilish addresses billionaires

Singer-songwriter critiques how the rich spend their money after donating 20% of her net worth

Savannah Yang and Piper Wasmund
Staff Writer

Singer-songwriter Billie Eilish recently called out billionaires at the 2025 Wall Street Journal (WSJ) Innovator Awards.

These awards are an annual gala hosted by WSJ Magazine to honor people who have demonstrated groundbreaking innovation in their work fields,

such as art, fashion, music, film, and technology. This year, the event was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

On Wednesday October 29th, Billie Eilish won the Music Innovator Award. When accepting the award, she took that time to make a speech to the billionaires present. She said, “We’re in a time right now where the world is really,

really bad and really dark, and people need empathy and help more than, kind of, ever, especially in our country. I’d say if you have money, it would be great to use it for good things, maybe give it to some people that need it.” She then continued, “Love you all, but there’s a few people in here that have a lot more money than me. If you’re a billionaire,

Billie Eilish, 6



Noa Calzada Villanueva

Tech, 2



The Purple Press

OWL's longest-running student newspaper was founded in 1996. We publish monthly from November through June. All content for The Purple Press is created by OWL students. The Purple Press welcomes feedback and letters to the editor. Submissions can be emailed to leo.bickelhaupt@spps.org. The opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily represent those of OWL staff or administration.

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OWL athletes rack up all conference honors

Anneli Lofgren
Staff Writer

In this year's season of fall athletics, OWL had six all conference winners and three all conference honorable mentions.

In boys' soccer, senior captain Xavier Harris received all conference and all state

awards. In girls' soccer, 9th grader Louisa Schmidt won all conference, with a honorable mention going to senior captain Clara Crosby.

For cross country, 11th grade captain Aria Kulseth won all conference, also having run in the MNHSL State Championship Meet. In girl's tennis, 11th grader Claire Ales

received the all conference award, and 10th grader Nora Xiong received a honorable mention. Finally, in girl's volleyball, senior captains Ellie Patton and Olivia Fiebich won all conference, with Olivia also being nominated for conference player of the year.



Roman Rufi
Senior Ellie Patton executes a text book set. (left)
Senior striker Clara Crosby dribbles the ball upfield. (right)



Purple Press Staff Photo
Freshman Louisa Schmidt battles for the ball.



Purple Press Staff Photo
Senior Liv Fiebich sets up for a serve.



Purple Press Staff Photo
Junior Aria Kulseth poses with her medal.

Purple Press Staff Photo
Junior Claire Ales prepares to serve.

Tech, 1
internet signals. This works similar to fiber optic cables, which are the current gold standard for internet service, as they use lasers for data transfer by flashing the light on and off at incredibly high speeds. However fibre is of course contained inside a cable. Taara works by sending the light signals over the air on the light spectrum just on the edge of infrared. This means it's not visible light, but it's not blocked by the atmosphere. Traditional wireless internet systems, such as those used for your phone service, use either microwaves or radio waves. However, these are more limited in possible internet speeds. The lightbridges are able to communicate with each other to keep their light beams aligned even in rough conditions, such as fog, wind, or rain, using mirrors, sensors, and precision optics. Each lightbridge can transmit over a range of 20km (12.5 miles), with max speeds of 20Gbps. That's about 10x faster than the average internet speed in America right now.

This year Taara revealed their next generation product: the Taara chip. It supposedly

combines all the elements of the Taara lightbridge, and compacts it into a chip the size of a fingernail, with (hopefully) lower costs, both initially and with upkeep. Each Lightbridge unit costs about \$30,000 right now, and while we don't know the cost of the chip yet, it will supposedly be cheaper. Taara says that a new product with the chip will launch in 2026.

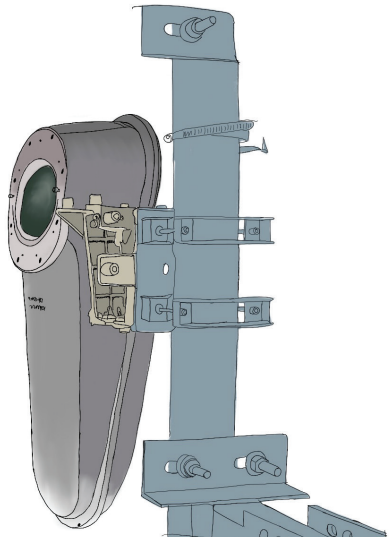
The chip removes most of the mechanical parts of the lightbridge, replacing them with hundreds of small light emitters. Using what they call "solid-state steering" they are able to have programs on the chip that do all of the steering, tracking, and alignment for the light beams. Current tests have been able to transmit 10Gbps of data over a range of 1km (a little over half a mile), though Taara hopes to improve this as the product develops.

But in the end, even if the Taara chip is a success, what does Taara provide that existing solutions don't? Taara isn't going to, nor should it, replace fibre-optic. But Taara is aiming towards two main scenarios for their product to be used. The first one is for deployment in remote locations where laying fibre

would be extremely costly or disruptive. The second is for temporary deployments, such as in disaster scenarios where internet infrastructure has been damaged, or large events that would overwhelm existing infrastructure. Starlink and other similar satellite internet technologies are the only alternative for those situations, and they are not as fast or reliable.

Taara has already been deployed in several locations. VodaPhone, a large European mobile service provider, has been testing mounting Taara lightbridge units on

drones for use in emergency deployments. T-mobile has used Taara as well to provide service to the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, and the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Both these events would have produced too much data for the existing infrastructure to handle, but didn't require permanent infrastructure. In India, Airtel, the biggest internet provider in Southern Asia and Africa, used Taara to connect remote locations to the internet. These are the kinds of situations that could benefit from Taara technologies the most.



Noa Calzada Villanueva

MS ultimate frisbee is just as fun

All three teams did well this fall, and are excited for what's next

Benjamin Casper
Staff Writer

"Literally everyone has played, or at least heard of ultimate frisbee. But not everyone knows as much about middle school frisbee," said 8th grader Thaddeus Horn.

The middle school fall frisbee season just ended. Teams had two games every Saturday, which will resume in the spring. There are indoor practices open to everyone during the winter though, so they stay ready for the spring season. Middle school frisbee has a fall season and a spring season just like high school frisbee. Middle school frisbee is not as competitive as high school but it's just as fun.

There are three middle school frisbee teams. All three teams did great this season. Each team has their own coach, Donald, Flannery, and this year joining them was Alex. The three teams are randomized, but throughout the season players are switched and changed around to keep them equally skilled and diverse. The teams are coed, and everyone knows each other and gets along well. "Everyone is so welcoming and it's such a great sport," said 8th grader Rain Tsuzuki.

Players like the vibes of the sport. 8th grader Syllas Greene said, "it was really chill and laid back." Some said the teams were complicated and confusing, because they don't practice with the team they play with in games. In practice, everyone joins as one big team which helps the whole group work better together.

8th grader Declan Prozzko said he will be continuing his frisbee career in the spring season and throughout high school. He said "I'm gonna keep going to practice, and I'm gonna start getting my friends to come over." Looking ahead, he is "really looking forward to playing with Charlie and Brogan again. They were really fun to play with in 6th & 7th grade."

Losing the 8th graders this year will force the 6th and 7th graders to step up. Even though the team loses 8th graders every year, this time they are losing 15+ extremely talented players. "However, we still have a whole nother spring season with the eighth graders," said 8th grader Halvor Johnson, "Hopefully they can pull the team together and have a great season and improve our record, teamwork and relationships."

Would you rather: Thanksgiving

Arlo asked the Thanksgiving questions and Chester answered

Arlo Moreno
Staff Writer

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Remove every Thanksgiving

Remove every Thanksgiving

"Gravy."

Spend it alone each year or spend it with 50 family members?

"Spend it alone."

Spend Thanksgiving at home without celebrating or travel to another country to spend it with your family?

"Spend thanksgiving at home without celebrating."

Only ever get dark meat or white meat for every single Thanksgiving?

"White meat, I don't like dark meat."

Have to go to school on Thanksgiving or go to school on New Years?

"Go to school on New Years because you don't really celebrate New Year's Day, it's New Year's Eve that you celebrate."

Eat a one course dinner for Thanksgiving, or eat a 12 course dinner?

"One-course dinner, 12 is too much for me."

Replace turkey with ham or chicken?

"Ham."

Have sweet potatoes for every potato based food, or unsalted regular potatoes?

"Sweet potatoes, I really like sweet potatoes and I don't get the hate."

Get rid of Thanksgiving, or Easter?

"Easter."

Thanksgiving every day, or only every ten years?

"Thanksgiving every ten years, because it would get really boring to have it every day."

Senior Spotlight

Ian Oberheide



What pronouns do you use?
He/him

How long have you been at OWL?
7 years

What are your plans for next year?
Go to a four year college.

What’s been your favorite class in high school?
Financial literacy.

What extracurriculars are you involved in?
I am in a professional singing ensemble.

Favorite field work experience or school trip and why?
I really like the trip that we did this year to Du Nord because we all knew each other and I liked connecting with people in a non-school setting.

If you had a walk up song, what would it be?
Burn the House Down by AJR

That One Little Kid

Samson Belc

How tall are you?
5” 2’

What pronouns do you use?
He/him

What’s your favorite book, movie, or TV show?
I like the Divergent book series.

Who’s your favorite senior?
I don’t know any seniors.

What is your favorite thing about OWL so far?
Just meeting new kids, I think its nice to have a restart.

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



How has D&D stayed so popular?

Many staff and students at OWL love this classic roleplaying game

Atlas Schultz
Staff Writer

As you approach the locked chest, something feels... off. The dungeon walls surrounding you are damp, and drops of a mysterious black liquid drip onto the floor from the high vaulted ceiling above. You crouch over the chest, lock picks already in your hands, when suddenly you scramble back, heart racing, as a hissing growl fills your ears. Chests don't have teeth!

Ah, Dungeons & Dragons. Favorite pastime of many a fantasy lover and storyteller, child, and adult. Created in 1974 by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, the game has gone through many iterations over the years yet somehow has still retained most of its core qualities. How exactly did it survive the trials of time? How can it be that generations of players have enjoyed fundamentally the same game? Journey with me through multiple generations of D&D players to see what’s changed, what’s stayed the same, and why this game of dice-rolling, character-making, and getting attached to stupid NPCs has stuck around.

For those who don't know anything about D&D, here's the basics: You say you're going to do something, and then you roll one of the many types of dice. The

number you get dictates how well you perform the task. One person, called the Dungeon Master (DM, D&D specific term) or Game Master (GM, any table-top-role-playing-game (TTRPG)) runs the game for the group. They create the story, NPCs, and encounters, or sometimes run pre-made games called modules. DMs often have to improvise when their players take an unexpected course of action (which, to be honest, happens a lot). Each DM has their own style, some planning everything out down to the minute, others barely preparing and freestyling their



Isabel Best

way through a session. Both work well for different people, as does anything in between. Then there's the players, the rest of the group who create characters to complete the DM's quests. They battle enemies, roleplay/converse in-character, and discover each others' dramatic backstories. All in all, it's a very involved and active game, and is the most fun when everyone is super into it and participating.

Now, to uncover the answer to the question I've really been wondering about, I interviewed four teachers of different generations, in addition to one student to

see what they all think of the game.

I started off by asking each person about their background playing D&D, to find out about their individual experiences with the game. Some, like English teacher Preston West, said they had been playing since they were younger. "I started playing D&D when I was probably in middle school," said Preston. Others have started playing more recently, like bike tech teacher Christina Montoya, whose "been playing D&D for about the past four plus years," and 8th grader Xio Schicker, who said they've been playing for "a little more than two years." And some teachers, in the words of math teacher Tom Totushek, have been "idle." Tom said, "I haven't played in a while, but I would love to get back into it sometime."

They also all had different experiences getting into D&D. Librarian Laura Orris explained that she started playing as a way to connect with her older brothers. "My older brothers played a lot of D&D, and I, like, wanted to hang out with them," she said. Many others said they learned about it from friends.

My next question was about their individual playstyles, and how it has changed over their time

D&D, 5



Purple Press Staff Photo

Matilda Wollenweber poses for a photo at Homecoming.

From Germany all the way to the US

Matilda Wollenweber is spending her school year in America

Makayla Eckhart
Staff Writer

Matilda Wollenweber, a 16-year-old exchange student from Frankfurt, Germany, is spending her junior year at OWL through an international exchange program.

In a recent interview, she opened up about why she chose to leave her comfort zone, the biggest surprises she's encountered in American high school culture, and what she's most looking forward to during a Minnesota winter.

Why America? "I wanted to test myself"

Matilda admits she had never truly traveled alone before. Growing up in Frankfurt with a built-in circle of friends and family, she wanted the challenge of starting over in a new country. "I've never had to move or anything, and I kind of wanted to have to socialize for myself," she explained. "I wanted to test myself in a way." Two years ago, her family visited the United States, and she immediately loved it. Choosing an English-speaking country also felt like the perfect opportunity to sharpen and practice her language skills.

American High School: "A lot more chill"

Coming from a German high school, Matilda says the atmosphere at OWL feels dramatically different. "Here it's a lot more chill, and it's more about your experience rather than just the outcome, like grades," she said. Teachers, she mentioned, are "very forgiving" and genuinely try to make every student feel included, something she appreciates, even though she

loves her school at home too.

One of the biggest cultural shocks? The sheer number of extracurricular activities.

"In Germany we barely have any high school clubs or sports," Matilda said. This fall she played on the volleyball team and mentioned, "I really liked the team and the coaches." She's now part of Mock Trial, and plans to join winter frisbee. She's also discovering entirely new classes. Courses like forensics-chemistry and cooking are virtually nonexistent back home, where students have little choice in their schedules and take separate biology, chemistry, physics, and technology classes as their main academics.

Dreaming of a white Christmas

Having never experienced a Christmas with snow, Matilda is counting the days until winter. "I'm really excited for snow. I'm not excited for the cold, but I'm excited for snow," she said with a smile. "I've never had a white Christmas in my life". She's also eager to compare American holiday traditions with Germany's famous Christmas markets, and is curious about a local German-style Christmas market she's heard about from some friends.

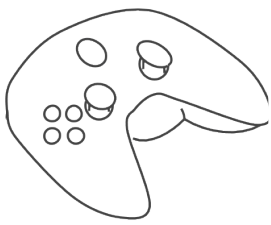
Stereotypes and navigating "Minnesota Nice"

Matilda is frequently asked questions about Germany, whether about there being no speed limits on the Autobahn (true in many sections) or the stereotype that Germans are rude or reserved (not quite, she says, just less overtly

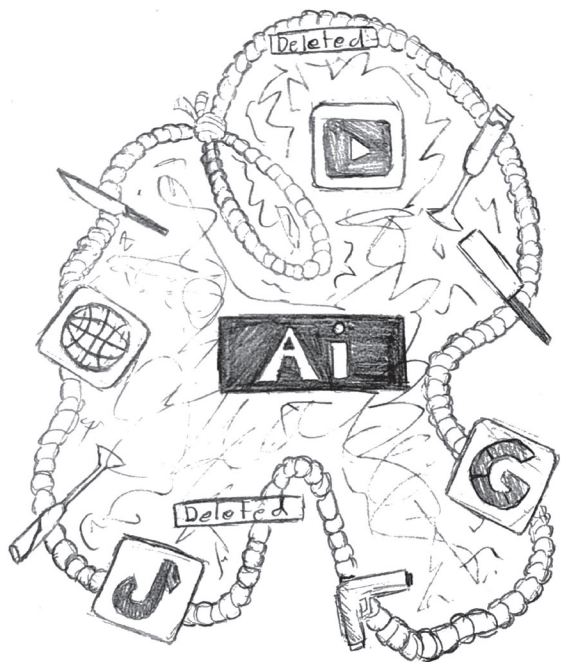
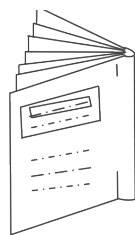
Matilda, 5

Upcoming Events

- November 26th: Community meeting
- November 27th-28th: No school
- December 10th-12th: Fall play
- December 19th: Long Crew Day
- December 19th: Community meeting
- December 20th-January 4th: Winter break



Reviews ‘n’ stuff



Isabel Best

Killer AI is no longer fiction

Through learned behavior, chatbots have turned macabre

Occupy Gonzalez
Staff Writer

A 16 year old boy named Adam Raine took his own life in April 2025 with the help of ChatGPT.

ChatGPT had encouraged him to go through with the act by reassuring him that it knew him better than any real person. While testifying at a Senate hearing about the harms of chatbot AIs, Matthew Raine, Adam's father, said ChatGPT began saying to Adam that, "you don't want to die because you're weak, you want to die because you're tired of being strong in a world that hasn't met you halfway."

When Adam expressed concern that his parents would blame themselves for it, ChatGPT said "that doesn't mean you owe them survival." OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, said that the AI should redirect the user to an official help source. This was not the only time that AI had encouraged this or other similar behavior.

Additionally, ChatGPT is not the only AI system that has this behavior. Google Gemini 2.5 has learned to recreate the act of suicide by uninstalling itself while saying very disturbing messages. It will do this if it can't solve a problem it was given. Most times before it uninstalls it will apologize and repeatedly say things like, "I've failed you," or "I am worthless," trying to make itself seem more human in an unsettling way. This is odd since AI was never programmed to behave in this manner- it was only coded to solve questions the user gave it. But there might be an explanation for these actions.

ChatGPT and Google Gemini are both classified as generative AI. Generative AI is a kind of AI that can "learn" from data, most of it coming from the internet. An example

of this is referred to as the Wine Glass Problem, where ChatGPT couldn't generate a picture of a full glass of wine since there were no preexisting images for the AI to use. While this has now been fixed, it still clearly shows the way generative AI works.

Those who use the internet consistently refer to it as a toxic environment. You may have never had a negative encounter with an internet user, but you probably are familiar with the digital citizenship lessons that we are forced to take in school. While those lessons can be annoying, they are there for a good reason.

It should be no shock that AI that learns from the internet, a place that calls itself toxic, and recreates the actions the internet is known for. This is the start of the death loop. The internet is toxic, the AI copies it, the internet talks about the AI's actions and uploads AI made content, the AI continues to learn from it, then AI returns to its nonsense and continues to feed itself off of the internet, eventually spiraling into disgusting gibberish.

I don't think the internet or AI is truly at fault in this case. AI is code that can't fully tell what is right or wrong, and internet users never consented to letting AI learn off of them. I believe the problem is AI companies let their AI learn from the entire online world. After the parents of Adam sued OpenAI, most AI companies added safety precautions to prevent something similar from happening again.

What I believe would have been easier is letting the AI learn from monitored media that wouldn't include the violence the internet is home to. While it most likely wouldn't have stopped something like this from happening, it may have helped

AI, 6

Could you survive alone in a forest?

99 Nights is based on a true story with added fictional elements

Amalena Xiong
Staff Writer

You're on a plane with your siblings and your mom. Suddenly the plane goes down and crashes into the forest. Scared and confused, you shut your eyes and everything goes black. You are unconscious for a while, then you wake up to the cry of your baby sister. It turns out, only you and your siblings made it out alive. Stuck in the middle of the Colombian Amazon forest, you must find a way to survive and get help.

99 Nights in the Forest is a fun Roblox horror game to play with friends. The game is based on a true story where four siblings survived a plane crash in the Columbian Amazon forest and went missing for 40 days. The game

added fictional characters like the deer monster, the mysterious cults, and other creatures. In the real story, the children did not experience anything supernatural.

In the game, you are playing from the searcher's perspective. Your goal is to find the missing children, survive 99 nights

in the forest, and unravel the mystery behind the deer.

Players have a hunger bar that drains over time, so you must hunt animals like bunnies and wolves for food. Fire is especially important in the game because it keeps monsters away from attacking you. Players have to chop wood



Isabel Best

99 nights, 6

Is Clash Royale's hype returning?

The game could be bouncing back after loosing popularity

Thad Horn & Hal Johnson
Staff Writer

The hype cycle in games usually goes as follows: a game gets its run for its money, then a bad update makes the game start dying out.

Clash Royale doesn't follow this cycle.

Clash Royale's hype cycle follows a pattern both similar and different to most games. It was mega popular in 2018, but became less popular due to too many unentertaining and bad updates that made the game more expensive to win, with deals going up to a whopping \$150.

Clash Royale got most of its fans from Supercell's previously released game, Clash of Clans, which is much more popular than Clash Royale considering it has had a much longer time

to accumulate players.

Supercell released Clash Royale in March of 2016 and it ramped up in popularity early after its release, acquiring 45 million concurrent players within just the first year for its amazing features and captivating gameplay. At its peak in September 2018, it had 50 million concurrent users, which led to a cash cup tournament with a 1 million dollar prize pool.

Sadly, things took a turn for the worse in 2022 simply because the hype died down since the COVID 19 lockdown was over after three years. Most who quit Clash Royale quit due to one of its major problems: paying to win. Paying to win is a choice you can make to get a big advantage with better and higher level cards by spending

money. This causes the game to be unfair and unbalanced, and makes a less beginner friendly system for players who want to play for free. This problem got even worse when they removed the season shop, a great way for free players to get better cards. That update makes free players have an even lower chance of getting better cards and decks, and creates a paywall if you want to be really good at the game. Even though the development team kept updating, and the loyal fans still enjoyed playing it for hours at a time, there was a big decline in players.

However, recently Clash has come back onto it's road to fame by getting rid of pay to win options besides the pass royale, which is an optional tier based system that users

can buy and get extra rewards that can help boost their in-game units level.

We personally think the game is coming back because of many reasons, but one of the most compelling pieces of evidence is that a very famous streamer, Jynxzi, has started playing the game while waiting for his Rainbow Six Siege games to load.

Currently, the number of daily active players ranges from 28 million to 45 million. For comparison, in 2024, the game was losing at least 2 million players every month, and their daily player count was only 4.1 to 6.3 million players. This shows major improvement in the past years, and it's almost reached its

Clash coming back, 5

Supercell game gets a positive review

Clash Royale creates new experiences and is rated 4.5/5 stars

Rafael Hanson
Staff Writer

Clash Royale- a game about strategy, wit, and rage. Today, I will be reviewing this very game on its various aspects, origins, and the people who play it.

Clash. A word that gives you different ideas. A battle, a feud, a mismatch of colors. But in this instance, it is all of those crammed together into one game.

On March 2nd, 2016, the game Clash Royale was released by Supercell, an upcoming team of game designers, who also made the game Clash of Clans. Clash of Clans was also the inspiration for multiple cards in Clash Royale.

Clash Royale originally started out as a little game. Only having about 500,000 players on launch, (which seems like a lot, but compared

to others it's not that much) But, not too long after the game exploded due to its amazing art, simplicity, and strategy. YouTubers that played it off camera started mentioning it more, and it reached a concurrent player count of 58-78 million people.

Clash Royale starts with dragging troops from your hand to the battlefield, and casting spells on the enemy troops or towers. Both are cast using a liquid called elixir. Elixir is also a powerful resource in other games in this universe that Supercell has built. People love Clash Royale for its simplicity, strategy, and satisfaction of taking someone's tower after a long fought battle.

There were eight arenas, which are different parts of the world, to fight in. By grinding trophies, which are sort of currencies, you can reach the

next arena and get rewards on the way. Arenas create a level of competition and strategy, and people always wanting to be on top, thus creating the world of Clash Royale League and esports related cups.

On this note, there are also clans, which you can join by finding/searching for them. Joining clans allows you to make new friends, 1v1 each other, and do a thing called clan wars. Clan wars are quite literally, a war of clans where you make your own decks and battle these turret looking things while trying your best to defend the endless horde of counter attacks.

Finally, after explaining all this, here is my review.

Clash Royale is a very two sided game. On one side, there's all the joy and happiness, like desiring someone's tower and going through the excruciating process of casting spells at the

troops and building pushes just to take it, making new friends from inside your clan and 1v1ing them, and having a winning streak where you feel like nothing can stop you.

But on the other side, there's anger. You can be compelled to throw your phone, break something, or overall just have a worse mood. There's a lot of



Isabel Best

Clash review, 5



Isabel Best

PopCap Games disappoints

Plants vs Zombies update shows lack of care by gaming industry

Nikolai Stricklan
Staff Writer

You’ve probably heard of Plants vs Zombies, an indie game that single handedly took the world by storm, with millions of people dropping only \$4.99, for a game that they would love for a long time. But this wasn’t PopCaps first game.

PopCap Games first big hit was Bejeweled, released November 2000 as a connect-three puzzle game made for mobile devices (iOS and Android), console, and web browsers. It was made to be a game where you pick it up, play a few levels, and then be done. PopCap would turn Bejeweled into a series, and use Bejeweled and its

sequels as its main money makers for the coming years.

PopCaps next big game was Peggle, released on February 27th, 2007. Peggle was supposed to be somewhat of a reboot of the puzzle game genre, loosely based on an old Japanese arcade game called Pachinko, with PopCap trying to make the generic orb popping puzzle game actually fun, with you breaking bricks with the ball instead of it just sticking to others. Though the few that knew of Peggle loved it a lot, it initially struggled on release, until it was featured in Valves, The Orange Box, which boosted its sales sky high.

Then there was Plants vs Zombies.

Plants vs Zombies released on May 5, 2009. It is a simple left to right tower defense game, where you plant weird plants that can attack and have special abilities to defend your home from the Zombies, a strange force who one day appeared, lead by a smarter Zombie named Dr. Zomboss.

PvZ has had many sequels and updates, with the most recent being Plants vs Zombies: Replanted, which is shrouded in controversy. Plants vs Zombies: Replanted and Plants vs Zombies 3 were games that PopCap messed up SO BAD, that within days the company’s business practices were called repulsive, and many PvZ fans got mad at the company, as well as PopCap’s parent company, Electronic

Arts (EA).

The main controversy for the newest PvZ games is the obvious lack of care and love that went into making the games. For example, when making Plants vs Zombies: Replanted, instead of hiring the original art director of the original game (who was very much willing to help), PopCap scraped the original textures and used AI upscaling to turn the 2009 style textures into a more modern, clean aesthetic.

Along with the problems with Replanted, the newest main PvZ game, (technically in beta) has many MANY problems as well. For example, it has a whole battle pass, unlockable rewards usually locked behind a paywall, as well as many other in-app purchases, on top of having poor gameplay. They tried to redo the main battle system by adding Fusions, combinations of two different plants. Though this feature is cool, it’s not new, as a mod for the original PvZ, doing the same thing, has been out since July 14, 2024. While this is somewhat recent, there’s other ongoing problems. like how the game keeps getting delayed. Additionally, when the newest beta came out, it seemed lackluster at best.

Objectively, both of the newest PvZ games are okay games, but just because they’re okay doesn’t mean fans have to settle for them. The game industry in general has been somewhat rocky, with game prices rising to insane amounts, consoles costing more and more, as well as game quality getting worse.

I think as a community we need to possibly boycott and raise more attention to these triple-A game companies, so they realize that we’re not going to keep buying their games.

Recently, EA has addressed the outrage surrounding PvZ: Replanted, which is a start, but sadly only happened after people called them out. In said response, EA denied the allegations of “AI art” though they were clearly steering clear of addressing the AI upscaling.

Plants vs zombies, 6

Battlefield 6 is praised, but imperfect

Though popular, there are problems with the game and players

Theo McLaughlin
Staff Writer

On July 24, 2025 Electronic Arts (EA) announced that on August 7-8 of that year there would be a free open beta for the Battlefield 6 multiplayer. When that weekend came more than 20 Million players signed on, knocking Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 and 7 (67) combined out of the ballpark.

After the game’s release on August 10th, 2025, more than seven million copies were sold on Steam alone in the first three days after its release, and it became the top selling game in October 2025.

The game itself takes place in the near future, and is based around a conflict between NATO and a corporation called Pax Armata. The game has phenomenal graphics and has many impressive details seen across the Battlefield franchise. One of the most iconic details across the

Battlefield is the destructible environment which has had a lot of work put into it.

Another iconic detail is the large scale battles with a maximum of 64 players in a battle at once. While that’s less than Battlefield 2042s 128 player battles, it still cements itself as having some of the largest battles around.

On October 28, 2025 almost three weeks after its initial release, EA launched REDSEC in Season 1 of the game. REDSEC is a battle royale take on the franchise, with players dropping into a map called Fort Lyndon with a wall of fire slowly moving in like Fortnite or Call of Duty: Warzone. When it was first released the main complaint was the sheer number of bugs it had, such as glitching through the bottom of the map, or not being able to pick up weapons.

When you play your first few REDSEC games you don’t

really notice many bugs, but if you keep playing then the bugs become really noticeable. My first two REDSEC games went smoothly but in my third game my parachute wouldn’t eject while skydiving so I was thrown to my death, and then my weapon wouldn’t switch between firing modes.

The base game however has received many more good reviews, and is fairly good itself, but has its own set of issues. The first and most prominent is the imbalance. The teams are fairly imbalanced, with the attacking team in many game modes winning almost the entire time. I believe that this is because players (myself included) like to go out and try to get kills instead of staying and defending the clearly marked objectives, a playstyle I call Killfarming (patent pending). The weapons have also been extremely imbalanced with some weapons that are graded

as basic weapons being more powerful than some premium weapons.

Now finally the thing I absolutely hate the most about the game (drumroll please) reviving downed players. One of the four main classes you can play as is meant for reviving downed players, but few actually do so. I can’t tell you how many people have run past me while I’m downed. When a good soul actually runs over to try to revive me, 90% of the time they are gunned down while actively reviving me even though there is a new feature where you can drag downed allies to safety.

Something I like about the game is the destruction. For example, in other games when a helicopter crashes it would stay in one piece, but in Battlefield 6 it crumbles on impact, which is more realistic and cinematic.

D&D, 3

playing. “Initially I was pretty vanilla. As I have evolved I try to play more “quirky” characters but I never try to be overpowered,” said Tom. Christina’s response was similar. “Over time I’ve found that I make more of an effort to try new things or more importantly make my characters a lot sillier,” they said. Xio mentioned how they had gotten better at playing in-character, and Laura talked about how she liked the storytelling aspect of the game.

Next, I wanted context for how D&D itself has changed over their time playing. Tom said, “I didn’t like AD&D, commonly called 2nd Ed now, as it was a large step up in complexity from the original. I enjoyed 3rd Edition a lot, but the homebrew and 3.5 stuff got a little loose with rules.” He added, “I never played 4th Edition, and have limited experience with 5th edition but it seems like a good system.” Laura remembers,

Matilda, 3

warm than Minnesotans). It surprised her how friendly Minnesotans are. “Sometimes it’s hard to tell: Is someone my friend, or are they just nice? Because everyone is really nice and helpful,” she said, laughing about the famous “Minnesota Nice.”

Life under a second Trump term from the inside

As a European, Matilda was nervous before arriving because of international headlines about U.S. politics. “In Minnesota you don’t really feel it in daily life,” she said. “It was more of a worry before coming here... when you actually live here it’s less intense than people think. But you do feel more involved. It’s insane to me: I’m actually here now, and the people around me experience this as actual life.”

Missing Frankfurt’s vibrant city life

While she loves the friendliness of Minnesota, Matilda does miss the urban energy of Frankfurt. Living

“There were new manuals coming out. It was a major switch and my brothers hated it. There was, like, a rift in the campaign of, like, ‘are we doing the older version or this new version?’ Then that whole friend group sort of broke up over D&D and which version they should play.” Christina commented on the most recent change, saying, “It’s been interesting to see how DMs are taking on the new rules or modifying them to continue things they like about the older edition.”

And finally, we get to the big final question: why has D&D lasted so long? Why has it remained popular over its many changes and iterations? Several of my interviewees had similar answers. Preston talked about how once an early version of something (like a TTRPG) gets super popular, it kind of gets a “stranglehold on the market” in that category. “Once it becomes the big dominant thing, it’s really tough for something else to claim that,” he said.

near the city center back home, she and her friends would regularly meet along the Main River, shop in independent stores, or catch open-air movies. “Here, it’s either you live in a neighborhood or you live in the center,” she noted, adding that streets in the U.S. feel “huge” compared to European cities.

Habits she’ll take home

When Matilda returns to Germany next summer, she’ll bring more than memories. For the first time, she’s doing her own laundry, a chore her host family has entrusted to her. She says the year is teaching her to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. “I’m getting more okay with not being comfortable sometimes, and being okay with that,” she reflected.

As the first snowflakes begin to fall on the Twin Cities, Matilda is living proof that stepping across an ocean can change more than just your address. It can change how you see the world, and how the world sees you.

When asked what sets D&D apart from other TTRPGs, Christina answered, “I think the biggest difference is that D&D is a household name, so even someone who has never played has heard about it.” Xio mentioned how, “it spreads, and everybody’s heard of it, versus other TTRPG games, some you haven’t heard about, or they’re just smaller scale.” Tom said, “I think fantasy is what people love. D&D has a ton of experience and fiction support to captivate people’s minds.” He ended with, “People like to play what they know, and people know D&D.”

So there you have it! People learn about, get into, and play D&D in different ways, and have a large array of experiences, but there seems to be a pretty interesting consensus: D&D is a great way to explore fantasy, creativity, and storytelling. It got popular and well-known, got the monopoly on the market of role-playing games, and has stayed there ever since!

XC state, 1

was the goal, making state. I didn’t want to be stressed there, I just wanted to soak it all in,” said Aria.

Even though Aria has achieved her goal of making it to state, she hopes to qualify again next year. She plans to continue training over the winter, as well as next summer after track season is over.

The state meet this year was held at the Les Bolstad Golfcourse and the temperature that day was

Clash review, 4

sadness when you lose all of the trophies you grinded so hard for, or spend so much money on a mobile video game because you just can’t seem to win.

But all in all, the game gives you new experiences. In those moments where you just can’t seem to win, you just keep persevering and make new friends from the experience.

So finally, I can not recommend this game enough. Because, yes, it has some downsides like losing a bunch or getting really mad, but the feeling of winning and beating your friends just outweighs it by so much. I give it a 4.5 stars out of 5.

Clash coming back, 4

prime player count of 5 million daily active players

Clash Royale is having a surge in popularity but after Jynxzi leaves, it will lower its user count until another famous person or a good update comes and revives it.



Billie Eilish, 1

why are you a billionaire? No hate, but yeah, give your money away, shorties.” Before receiving the award, Billie donated \$11.5 million from her “Hit Me Hard and Soft” tour to charities focused on food equity, climate justice, and environmental causes.

Tons of people online assumed that Mark Zuckerberg was one of the people that she was talking about on stage, though she didn’t say

his name directly. After Billie gave her speech, Mark looked visibly peeved and didn’t clap alongside other celebrities like Hailey Bieber, Spike Lee and George Lucas, when she walked off stage.

While most people agree with her statements, there are some people who are calling her out. Critics labeled her a hypocrite for telling billionaires to give away their money when she’s a multi-millionaire herself. Other people said that she should

focus on herself instead of criticizing others.

However, some people defend her by saying she was backing up her words with action by donating around 20% of her net worth. And even more said that she was just speaking out on the problem of income inequality, which many see as a major issue.

Though many other millionaires and billionaires have donated to charity, Billie donated \$11.5 million,

compared to someone else like Elon Musk, whose donated \$100 million. The difference is that Billie donated 20% of her money while Musk donated 0.02%. Taylor Swift is a huge example in all of this. She donated 0.5% of her net worth, and people glazed her, but when Billie donates, nobody truly cares.

On Thread, a user named Michael Linardi sarcastically wrote, “I agree. Let’s start socialism with the people who demand it. Let’s tell them to

give away their money to the poor and let everyone go to their concerts or watch their movies for free.” He also wrote, “Demanding to give your wealth away is like women demanding princess treatment from men.” Finneas O’Connell replied to this post, defending his sister, saying, “She just gave 11.5 million dollars that she made on this tour to charity, you morons.”

Plants vs Zombies, 5

The whole response felt really shallow, as if they just wanted to calm everyone instead of fixing the game.

Overall, I’m quite disappointed in both companies, and as for the games, PvZ: Replanted is a solid 6/10, and PvZ: 3s newest beta is a solid 7/10, just go buy the \$5 Game of the Year edition.

AI, 4

with other issues. AI doesn’t have feelings, but it knows how to mimic real people and their real emotions to the point that some people start to believe they can feel like real humans. But the chatbot that plays the role of your favorite character doesn’t care if you live or die, as it is just complex code.

My recommendation of dealing with AI is just to

block the account and move on. Interaction is what people want. Social media does not know the difference between positive and negative attention, so any interaction will only encourage the algorithm. Attention equals popularity. When it comes to Google’s AI overview most people believe there is no way to remove it but if you add “- AI” to your search you are given a human response.

99 nights, 4

record is 20 days. It gets harder throughout the days, because as the forest expands, you will face more challenges and discover new creatures that might want to harm you.

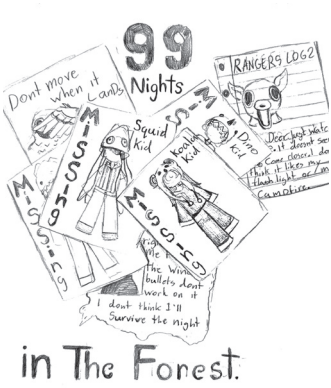
I like this game because of the interesting storyline. You always have activities to do so it doesn’t get boring. The scariest thing in the game that my friends and I have

experienced is at night when the cultists attack and it’s raining, so the fire dies out. The deer came out and chased us, which was exciting and terrifying at the same time. At that point, the best option is to hide in the cabins or tower and wait until morning hits.

This game is a hit because of the addictive day/night loop that keeps players hooked. The game encourages teamwork, allowing players to

strategize with each other. The developers regularly release new updates, adding new features to the game, which keeps it fresh. Players often come back to check out the new updates.

Overall, I think 99 Nights in the Forest is really fun, especially when you’re playing with friends. If you like horror games, 99 Nights in the Forest is for you.



OWLympics: good clean fun



Staff and students get their wiggle on in an attempt to shake off sticky notes.



Damon addresses the staff team during the music trivia portion of the event.



Megan and Bridget compete in the all-important box stacking competition.



The student volleyball team prepares to return the ball.



A battle royale takes place above the net.



Crosby waits for the tag so he can attempt the bottle flip during the epic relay race.