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# Purple Press

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## Cam makes state tournament

*Meeting a goal three years in the making, Cam ended wrestling season 23-3*

**Clara Plumstead**  
Staff Writer

Did you know that girl's wrestling has taken off as one of the fastest-growing high school sports in the United States? Cam Sisson, a senior at OWL, knows all about that—and she's just accomplished her three-year wrestling goal: to qualify for the Minnesota state tournament.

Cam came close to reaching this goal in the last two years, but this season it finally all came together. The final match at the section meet was against a wrestler from Stillwater who had posted more than 20 wins.

"I pinned her in the last period," said Cam, "and then I walk off the mat and find that her dad's the Gophers head-coach for wrestling. So it felt

good."

The feeling of reaching her goal, she elaborated, was very satisfying. She knew, even going into what turned out to be her final match, that she had already qualified, win or lose.

Because she she had already defeated the third and fourth place wrestlers, she would qualify for state regardless of

the outcome. This "lifted the weight off my chest for that last round."

Ending the regular season with 23 wins and 3 losses, Cam was set to open the state meet against a 27-3 opponent, who she said had more experience than her due to her participation in club wrestling. Still, she said, if she didn't place at state, she wouldn't be

upset, since getting into it at all was her original goal.

Being a girl on a nearly all-boys team, Cam reflected that she has confronted a significant amount of trash-talk. As a captain, she can sometimes be challenged by younger team members, even though they are often different weight-classes than her, so her competition doesn't span to

them. Despite the drama, most of it is just competition within the sport. Cam concluded, "I do have a lot of support within the team."

Having met her goal, Cam enjoyed her state tournament experience at Grand Casino arena in Saint Paul, winning one match and losing two. Several OWL students made the trip to spectate.

## Spring musical: Cinderella is set to dazzle



Purple Press Staff Photo

**Greta works with actors during a Cinderella rehearsal.**

*The musical has themes of transformation and visualizing a better future*

**Kate Houle**  
Staff Writer

The prince is giving a ball! For the first time in three years, OWL theater is putting on a musical. The magic of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella will be coming to the OWL stage on April 22nd, 23rd, and 24th at 7pm.

Cinderella is the story of a mistreated young girl who dreams of escaping her villainous stepmother and stepsisters. When the royal family announces a ball that every maiden in the kingdom is invited to, Cinderella gets a chance at her happily ever after with a little help from her imagination and some

impossible magic.

OWL will be performing the youth edition of the original Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, which is different from the animated Disney movie. The music in the show was written for a 1957 TV special starring Julie Andrews, and has since been used in multiple movie and



Purple Press Staff Photo

**Ares performs a scene as the Herald.**

show adaptations, including the 1997 Brandy movie OWL is taking inspiration from.

The last musical OWL theater produced was Anastasia, which was in the spring of 2023. Usually musicals are performed every two years, but because of OWL's collaboration with Mixed Blood Theatre last year, the

schedule was moved around. Anastasia and Cinderella share many things in common, from an imaginative leading lady to copious amounts of formalwear, but the theater board was drawn to Cinderella because of its nostalgic music style, technical creativity, and

**Cinderella, 7**

## School in Spain

**Noa Calzada Villanueva**  
Staff Writer

One big difference that people can find between countries is in schools. I know that they might seem similar since all of them have the same purpose: educate kids for their futures. But what are the differences between teaching systems in different countries?

I can make this comparison between OWL and a school in the north of Spain where I have been studying my whole life.

My school is called Urkide. It's located in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain. It is a trilingual school. Students there start learning Basque, Spanish, and English when we are two years old. When we are three years old, we start something like kindergarten. This lasts three years and we learn things like letters and how to write and read. We also learn how to use things such as craft materials or table cutlery.

Then we start primary school at the age of six and start learning things like maths, science, history, music, religion (where we learn about multiple religions and human values), gym, tutoretza (something like crew), robotics, and art. Primary school starts at 9:00am and ends at 5pm. Kids can eat at school or go home and come back. Our lunch break is a two hour break. Every kid eats the same at the same hour in the different canteens the school has, separated by grades.

We have weekly schedules. Every day of the week is different, but we have repeated

**School in Spain, 7**

## What is the Mock Trial team all about?

*Melita breaks down how the competition works, from direct to cross, and why you should join*

**Melita Allen**  
Staff Writer

Imagine you just found out that you didn't get a role in the school play! Whatever shall you do? Perhaps there is another afterschool activity where you can play a role, memorize lines, and have a bunch of fun? Well, have you ever heard of Mock Trial?

Mock Trial is an

extracurricular activity where people go to court. Sort of. It's a mock trial, so mock attorneys and mock witnesses participate in a mock trial.

There are a few different roles in Mock Trial. You could be one of six attorneys and witnesses, a bailiff, or a time keeper. "[The attorney] is there to question their own witnesses, to get their side of the story out, and then

to question the opponent's witnesses to make them look bad, attack their credibility, or make them say stuff that would go up against their case. When you ask your attorney questions, that's called a direct examination. When you ask the opponent's witnesses questions, that's called the cross examination," explained

**Mock Trial, 2**



Akira Mally

**The Mock Trial team after their first win in January.**



## 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](mailto:leo.bickelhaupt@spps.org). The opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily represent those of OWL staff or administration.

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# Students prep for regionals

## History Day participants are polishing projects

**Rocio Hernandez**  
Staff Writer

On February 4th, many OWL students gathered to present and perform the projects they had been working and getting critiqued on for months. Nearly 200 participants took part in the school competition, and 70 of them advanced to the regional competition, which will be held on March 28th.

The students at OWL who are in 6th, 7th, and if they aren't in AP US History, 11th graders, are required to participate in History Day and create an exhibit board, website, documentary, performance, or paper about the topic they chose. Topics are chosen based on the History Day theme that changes yearly and rotates around 12 different themes, with this year's theme being

Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in history.

I talked to History Day veteran Charley Cheatham about the History Day process and where it goes from here. This is Charley's fifth year doing History Day, and she has qualified for nationals twice. Her topic this year is the Ladies Home Journal sit-in, which was a protest that took place in 1970 at the Ladies Home Journal headquarters.

"So right now we're working on our research, but we're gathering more primary sources and mainly focusing on the performance aspect of our project. We have so much information, and we have a couple more interviews coming up, which will be informative, but we really want to work on making our performance



very good to watch. It's harder for performances, because sometimes it can come across as a TED Talk where you're just spewing information at the audience. So we're working on talking to and getting more primary sources from people that were actually there so that we can have a more personalized project that really speaks to the judges," said Charley.

Students who advance past regionals will compete at state on April 19th, and the top competitors at state will qualify for the national competition in Washington DC in June.



Purple Press Staff Photo

OWL students judge school History Day in February.

### Mock Trial, 1

science teacher and Mock Trial coach Akira Mally.

Everyone is graded by their performance on a scale of one to ten, and the side with the most points at the end of the round wins. This season is the first season the team has scored perfectly. "I got a ten on my cross examination, and then we had two witnesses to also get tens, and that's never happened before... it's pretty cool," said 11th grader Aria Kulseth.

At the beginning of the season, the team gets case materials that tell them the rules of mock trial, the roles, and the characters. Witnesses memorize their characters, and respond to the attorney's questions as that character. The topic of debate changes every year, with this year being about defamation.

The team had a really great season this year, winning every regular round, but losing at regionals against one of East View High School's teams. Even so, the team feels they did really well. 9th grader Cooper Small said, "I think it's a huge improvement from last year. We got a bunch more people, new attorneys and new witnesses. So that was really exciting...I think also we just improved greatly in our skill, our witnesses and attorneys...every facet, I think we improved in."

Akira said he saw a lot of growth and improvement, especially with some of the newer members. "We had a few new people on the team, and they all really rose to the occasion, and the growth that I saw in them throughout the season was just amazing," he said.

The team had a really great time this year, and a successful one too. "It's a

little disappointing that we didn't go to state, because we really thought we were state material this year. But I think we know where we need to improve, and we'll make those improvements next year. It's only been a week since the season ended, and I'm already excited about next year," said Akira.

Next year, the team plans on splitting into two different teams, which some other groups do as well if they're too big, and hope to potentially go past regionals and to state.

Mock Trial helps you with a lot of life skills, like public speaking and forming arguments. "I don't think, personally, I'm going to be an attorney in the future, but it's really helped me with public speaking. I'm not great at it, but I used to be a lot worse. So it kind of forces me to get out of my comfort zone," Aria said. "You learn how to deliver a direct and cross examination as well as an opening or closing statement. You also learn how to object and to better your argument skills," said Cooper. The team would love some new members, so if you're interested, make sure to talk to Akira.



Akira Mally

Mock Trial attorneys at the Ramsey County Courthouse.

# Boys Swimming

**Erik Imholte**  
Staff Writer

The HUMWOW boy's swim team reportedly has a chant they do before every event to hype themselves up, but 10th grade swimmer Emmett Salminen refuses to tell us what it is.

The boys swim team ended their season on February 20th at the section finals meet, which took place a week after the conference meet. After a long season of training hard in the pool and working together, OWL swimmers, 10th grader Noah Linstad, 10th grader

Emmett Salminen, 10th grader Rowan Simmers, and 11th grader Lucas Rounds, all competed at sections. Each swimmer competed in a variety of individual and relay events.

Lucas said he likes swimming in the relays the best. "You go faster because people are waiting for you," he said.

Noah added that "It's a really good way to stay active." He said that "Everyone on the team is really close."

# Girls Basketball



Purple Press Staff Photo

Members of the Hawks basketball team pose together.

**Leo Bickelhaupt**  
Staff Writer

The girls varsity basketball team ended their season after losing a close game in the playoffs to Mounds Park Academy. It was their second game against Mounds Park this season, and the game was on the road.

Players for the team called the season a success, given that they doubled their win total from last year.

OWL players on the team included 9th graders Lauren Harris, Isabella Cooke, and Lily Koering, 11th grader

Demiyah White Colvin, and senior Sylvia Canon.

About playing for the Hawks, Lauren said, "I like the community. The team was a family, we weren't just friends."

"The team worked really well together. Everyone was encouraging. We cheer for everyone, win or lose," said Lily.

"When we win, we are always happy for each other," said Demiyah.

# Boys Basketball

## Purple Press sports desk

The boys varsity basketball regular season ended on February 27th. Simon Casper celebrated senior night by scoring eight points in a victory over Community of Peace Academy. The section tournament, which starts on Saturday, March 7th, will likely start off with the Hawks as the 4th seed, opening with a home game against Concordia Academy. This year's team has made some noise in the conference, winning the most regular season games since 1978.

Simon initially faced

the prospect of sitting out this season. A serious shoulder injury had doctors recommending a surgery that would have sidelined him until late spring. However, he opted to postpone the surgery until after the season so he could finish out his senior year. An aggressive physical therapy regimen made it possible for him to recover from the injury and enjoy his final season with the Hawks.



Purple Press Staff Photo

Swimmers dive into the pool for a race.



Roman Ruff

Simon Casper in a game against Central earlier this year.

# Senior Spotlight

*Khalyse Calloway*



**What pronouns do you use?**  
He/him.

**How long have you been at OWL?**  
Since junior year, so about a year.

**What are your plans for next year?**  
I would like to do something involving fitness, but probably a two year program for electrical engineering.

**What's been your favorite class in high school?**  
Math with Damon, or Strength and Fitness.

**What extracurriculars are you involved in?**  
Frisbee, BSU, Track, and Outward Bound.

**Favorite field work experience or school trip and why?**  
Fall field work last year and this year were both really fun, I got to connect with others and make friends.

**If you had a walk up song, what would it be?**  
Forever by Drake, Lil Wayne, Eminem, and Kanye West.



## That One Little Kid *Zaid Smadi*



**How tall are you?**  
4'11"

**What pronouns do you use?**  
He/him.

**What's your favorite book, movie, or TV show?**  
The Lord of the Rings books.

**Who's your favorite senior?**  
I don't have one.

**What is your favorite thing about OWL so far?**  
The classes, especially art.

**What extracurriculars do you plan on getting involved in at OWL?**  
Outward Bound.

## An interview with Cristian

*How OWL's newest exchange student is finding Minnesota*

**Louisa McAlpine**  
Staff Writer

**Where are you from?**  
The south of Spain, Andalusia. In Andalusia there are eight provinces. I live in Malaga, and within Malaga I live in Marbella, which is on the coast by the beach.

**What school did you go to last semester?**

I went to Robbinsdale Cooper High School in New Hope, MN.

**Why did you switch to OWL?**

I was living with a Venezuelan host family so I really only spoke Spanish, and that wasn't what I wanted.

**What do you like to do outside of school?**

Rugby is my main sport and I've done rugby since I was five years old. I love to watch soccer and I support Barcelona. I also like hiking and camping.

**Why did you want to do the exchange program?**

A friend of mine went to Texas and he told me it was great, so we got the money together so I would be able to do this.

**What do you miss most about Spain?**

I miss my grandma. She's 82 but we're really close.

**What's the biggest difference between highschool in Spain vs. here?**

The teachers. Here they care about you and want you to succeed. In Spain they send a lot of homework and they don't care. In Spain everything relies on the big tests. Like homework doesn't count for anything.

**What are your plans for after high school?**

I have to do another year of school in Spain. I don't want to go to college, I want to go to a trade school.

**What's your favorite food you've had in America?**

I really liked Famous Daves, and American breakfast.

**Do you have any words of wisdom for OWL?**

This saying that my dad says, "those who have never had to hide have had lots of time to do so."

## Subjects as colors: a divisive topic

*Melita uncovers why people associate certain colors with words*

**Melita Allen**  
Staff Writer

Funny how some problems can cause inspiration. Like recently, I was trying to figure out what school subjects I should assign to what colored folders, and all my friends had different opinions. It got me thinking: what colors do people assign to what subjects? I intend to find out.

Not surprisingly, Reddit has about A BAJILLION controversies on what colors the subjects are. I was surprised to find that most people couldn't decide what color math is. I thought this was obvious (red), but a lot of people on the internet thought blue. This is probably because blue is associated with knowledge and logic, as well as trust and loyalty, but I still wasn't sure. I wanted to see what people, specifically at OWL, thought.

First off, I wanted to know why people associate colors with subjects, or colors with anything, so I talked to art teacher Kent Miller who said "well, I think colors are associated with emotion, right? So I think people have an emotional response to a subject, and then that's where they get the color connection. I think it [also] has to do with people's personalities, and it can tie into the person's mood or feeling at the moment."

Most people I interviewed said that they thought that the color they picked was assigned to that subject just because it felt right. Some people said because of the colors of the Schoology folders. The wall color of a teacher that teaches that subject could also play into it.

This experience could also come from synesthesia. Synesthesia is a neurological phenomenon where our five senses "cross paths." It's basically when you experience one thing, like sound, and see another thing, like colors. So when we think of subjects, we could see colors we would associate with them, or even sounds or smells sometimes.

To figure out what people thought the subject's colors were, I made a survey, and here are the results.

Starting with math, most people picked red— 11 to be exact. Blue was the runner up, but only three people picked that color. Someone said black, which wasn't even an option, but I can see why they might have said that. Black is negatively associated with coldness or menace, and people (tend to) be afraid of math.

Next, science. Ten people said green, probably because of the association with things like acid, chemicals or plants that you might find in a science lab. Blue was second, again, with

six people saying science was blue.

English had a little more mixed opinions. There were no ties, but six people said yellow, five said green, and four said blue. 8th grader Ian Compton said, "ELA is yellow because paper has a yellow-ish tint to it sometimes, and it just feels like yellow."

History (social studies) had even more mixed results with five people saying orange, four people saying purple, and three people saying red and blue.

Lastly, art. Eight people said purple, and half as many said red (didn't expect to have to be doing math, did you?). I was mildly surprised that only one person said yellow, as it is associated with creativity, but I probably wouldn't have picked that as well.

In the additional information column, someone said that crew would be yellow and theater would be purple. 8th grader Sam Jarvis said, "AVID feels orange and crew would be a neutral gray. Not because it's boring, but because it's very neutral." She also said Spanish would be chartreuse.

Maybe this story has helped you determine what colored folders to put all of your notes in, or maybe it was a waste of your time. You might be thinking, but I don't associate



Noa Calzada Villanueva

### Upcoming Events

**March 10th:** ACT & PTO Meeting

**March 12th:** Crew Parliament Field Trip

**March 18th:** Blood Drive

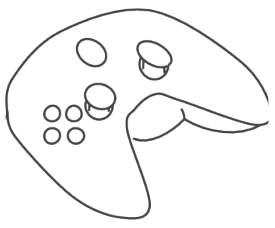
**March 19th:** STEM Day

**March 20th:** No School

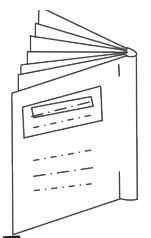
**March 28th:** Regional History Day Competition

**April 3rd:** Last Day of Quarter 3

**April 4th - April 12th:** Spring Break



# Reviews 'n' stuff



Cecilia Mason

## Local thrift store worth your time

*Nine Lives makes second hand fashion fun and sustainable*

**Zania Hierlmaier**  
Staff Writer

When I think of empowerment, my mind visualizes a woman with honey eyes donning leopard print on a Sunday afternoon. Her name is Roxanne Sanchez. She owns enough cat artwork to fill a small museum, and has a smile that will light up any room.

I think of a small store that's tucked on an angled street in my hometown of Saint Paul, Minnesota. It's called Nine Lives, and is filled with clothes holding pasts engraved in slightly unraveling stitching.

I think of the way sunlight reflects through the windows adorned with "Saint Paul Strong," the smile of a woman who has found a dress made for queens, and how I can strategically organize racks like there's not a war outside.

At Nine Lives, the secondhand clothing store in West Seventh where I've volunteered for the past six months, I can be the girl who expertly folds patterned scarves. I can learn how to measure an inseam while discovering the magic of a space rewriting the meaning of secondhand.

### The woman behind it all.

Nine Lives is co-run by Roxanne Sanchez, a woman with a dream to make secondhand fashion fun and accessible. Growing up wearing secondhand as a necessity, Roxanne has made it her mission to uplift women with clothes at affordable prices. She also knows a thing or two about fashion waste after working in the film industry for many years. For Roxanne, clothes have more than one life, hence the name Nine Lives.

Roxanne founded a store where leopard print adorns the racks, and stories are entwined in colorful fabric. In other words, Nine Lives isn't a traditional secondhand store.

### Secondhand is chic.

The community at Nine Lives is composed of strong women with even stronger values. As a volunteer, I see this firsthand. Customers come to Nine Lives to find fashionable pieces without a budget being a barrier. Nine Lives provides women in the community with outfits to prepare them for new jobs and internships. For Roxanne, her favorite moments in the shop are when she dresses someone for free, and a few weeks or a month later, they come back to shop and spend their hard earned money.

### Nine Lives is a store for every kind of woman.

A woman walks in with her dog in her coat. Two friends reunite after being separated by thousands of miles. Three daughters try on a vintage wedding dress, the veil covering their eyes.

Every time I volunteer at Nine Lives, I see how fashion brings people together. It's in the laughter in the dressing room, and encouraging comments about a shirt. It's how, without fail, you'll walk out of Nine Lives's jingling door with a smile on your face.

### It's more than a thrift store.

A couple picks up a bag of groceries from the pantry. A woman donates melted crayons for children who can't step outside. I count donations, and then count some more.

### These stories sum up Nine Lives. Sum up Saint Paul.

For the past few months, Minnesota has faced struggles with ICE enforcement, and Nine Lives has stepped up for their community. After seeing many of their customers unable to shop, Nine Lives began collecting donations for their food pantry, and even started an art supply drive out of a brewery. Food shelves can't buy coffee in bulk,

**Nine lives, 7**

## Muppets special deserves all the hype

*"Extraordinarily good" recent episode lives up to original show*

**M Lind**  
Staff Writer

It's time to play the music; it's time to light the lights. Now, 45 years after the show's original run came to an end, it's time to meet the Muppets once again, on the Muppet Show tonight.

Regardless of whether or not you've watched any of their media, chances are you've at least heard of Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, Gonzo the Great, Fozzie Bear, or the two old guys who heckle from the balcony (their names are Statler and Waldorf if you weren't aware). Originally created for occasional talk shows and Saturday Night Live segments, this all-puppet cast gained fame through the original run of The Muppet Show, a sketch comedy variety

show featuring celebrity guest stars and a seemingly endless number of puppets. The show, created by Jim Henson, ran for five seasons between 1976 and 1981, before it ended to make way for longer Muppet films and spin-off shows.

Disney purchased the Muppets in 2004, leading to several years without any major Muppet media. But the characters were brought back by a movie titled The Muppets in 2011, bringing the Muppets to a new audience in addition

to their old ones. Since then there's been a variety of short-lived shows such as an ABC parody of The Office, a short streaming-based mini-show, and a full spinoff about the in-universe band, the Electric Mayhem. However, the original Muppet Show that first led them to fame has remained distant from the revived characters, until now.

February 4th saw the release of a new Muppet Show special, marketed as a revival of the original series. Featuring guest star Sabrina Carpenter (and additional appearances from actors and comedians Seth Rogen and Maya Rudolph), the special serves two purposes. Firstly, the new episode functions as a celebration of the show's fifty-



Noa Calzada Villanueva

**Muppets, 6**

## Making a case for being pretentious

*Maybe pretentiousness isn't as bad as people make it out to be*

**Theo Pennington**  
Staff Writer

Picture pretentiousness – your friend who only listens to underground indie, the guy who insists a completely silent four hour Polish film from the 40s was a masterpiece, your classmate who won't shut up about how this generation lacks media literacy, that's pretentious, right? But how?

Pretentiousness is defined as "the quality of trying to make yourself appear or sound more important or intelligent than you are." It is the performance of intelligence, pretending to like something you don't to appeal to other people. The definition of intelligence is "the ability to learn, understand, and make judgments or have opinions that are based on reason."

If you are pretentious, your opinions are primarily based on image, not reason.

Another word associated with pretentiousness is snobbishness, even though they are very different. A snob is defined as "a person who has extremely high standards, who is not satisfied by the things normal people like." Despite the difference, pretentiousness has become synonymous with snobbishness, even though they are very different. If a die hard traditional jazz fan hates on Taylor Swift, they may be snobbish, but not pretentious.

A snob is aware of their snobbery, they believe that they are superior to someone else because of what they like; a pretentious person pretends to like things to seem more intelligent than they are.

The jazz fan is aware of their perceived superiority, but they aren't faking it. Because of this lack of distinction, people with genuine critiques of mainstream media have become grouped in with the people who dislike the mainstream simply because their tastes are more niche.

I believe pretentiousness is not inherently negative, but there are obviously negative sides to it. By trying to act as something you're not, you may actually be limiting yourself. If you drop something you love to replace it with something considered more intelligent, are you actually growing?

To be pretentious you are pretending to know what you are talking about, you're putting on a performance of intelligence, so, how do we

determine what is or isn't a performance? Maybe the definition of pretentiousness has shifted to no longer be about the person's actual intelligence, but what we expect it to be based on factors outside of their control.

Picture a middle class 19 year old, super into fine arts, loves earl gray, and spends all his time in art galleries. Pretentious. Now, picture a 50 year old man interested in all the same things, and it's no longer pretentious. Because it's what is expected from him.

Is there really anything wrong with pretentiousness anyway? It's just the "fake it till you make it" mentality. There's nothing wrong with dressing nice for a job interview, even

**Pretentiousness, 7**

## An unexpected, gory horror favorite

*Jae finds that 'Don't Let the Forest In' is a "masterfully done" book*

**Jae Lind**  
Staff Writer

When I find a book to read on Libby with no prior knowledge, my expectations are low.

I was scrolling through some tags that seemed interesting, and hey! Pretty cover! I read the description. Seemed fine, not amazing. Put it on hold, and the book came quickly. I was not expecting something very good- I just wanted a semi-decent, entertaining enough read to last me until I found something better. Just something to kill some time.

What I ended up reading was one of the best books I have ever read.

Don't Let The Forest In by CG Drew follows Andrew Perrault, a high school senior at Wickwood Academy boarding school. Andrew fills his time writing fairytales-

dark, twisted ones that don't always have a happy ending. He writes them for himself, but also for Thomas Rye, his closest friend, an artist who draws the monsters that live within Andrew's stories. But Andrew's twin sister (and the only other friend he has at Wickwood) Dove has been keeping far away from both Andrew and Thomas. Andrew doesn't know why Dove is ignoring him, but finds himself relying even more on his relationship with Thomas, but something isn't quite right... Thomas arrived at school with blood on his sleeve. His parents are mysteriously missing. And, strangest of all, the monsters that used to cover his sketchbooks and schoolwork are gone. Thomas hasn't drawn a single thing since they arrived at Wickwood.

One night, when Andrew catches Thomas sneaking out into the off-limits forest,

he follows. He finds Thomas fighting monsters— but not just any monsters, the ones from Andrew's story that Thomas drew. And they want to get into the school.

If you are a fan of psychological horror books, Don't Let The Forest In is perfect. Despite it being CG Drew's YA debut, the book is masterfully done. Each line is written with so much care, creating not just an interesting story to read but a beautiful one. You can tell just how much time was spent on making sure each word is perfect, and it really pays off.

If I had to describe this book's genre, I would probably say 'botanical body horror.' This is, understandably, a weird string of words but it does make sense in the book. If you are squeamish when it comes to blood, or descriptions of, lets say, plants growing inside

living people, maybe stay away. But if you always find yourself looking forward to the gorier bits in books, then this should be perfect for you! If you are unsure whether or not you will be okay with reading it, the book has a list of content warnings at the front which are helpful to understanding what will be within the pages.

Another exciting detail is



**Don't Let the Forest In, 8**



Roman Ruffi

Danny Hobday catches a frisbee during a game last year.

## Love for the game is key to frisbee

*OWL ultimate players weigh in on what makes a good team*

Atom Pliner  
Staff Writer

Last year the OWLs frisbee team, the Manatees, went to nationals, and lost the semifinal by one point to the team that won nationals. That made me ask, what does it take to make a good frisbee team? Danny Hobday? Peak athleticism? Strict coaches? Or just a pure love for the game?

The first concept I wanted to explore is the culture. After interviewing all of the current Manatees captains (who were all on last year's team), this might be close to the answer. When asked what the most important thing was, all three captains said a love for the game. The seniors that year had been so in love with frisbee that almost their entire daily routine was oriented around it. If they had a day off instead of playing video games or doing homework, they would meet up and play frisbee. This led to stronger game sense and better and faster players. Since they had loved it from middle school this allowed them a lot of time to practice together and build good team chemistry.

The next concept is how we could have had a golden generation. Almost every single player last year was good enough to be an MVP of their own team. For example Danny Hobday and Joe Lodahl, who both graduated last year, have made team USA, which is the 20 best players in the US. This is amazing because that means that our school alone had two of the 20 best players in the US, both in the same grade. Most schools would be lucky to even have one player in the top 20 yet we had two. I believe that this truly proves the idea of a golden generation because not only were these two extremely good, other team members at the time could contest their greatness. This essentially means that we had an entire generation of people who could have possibly made the cut for team USA.

The third concept is the huge number of seniors last year who were playing frisbee

specifically. Usually with frisbee a lot of people will quit by senior year, but not their grade. They all pushed through, and if one of them got significantly better than the others, they would help the others to get to their level, like steel forging steel. Instead of having only a couple of good players like other schools, almost our entire team was full of D1 level competent players. The love for the game also contributed to the team's team spirit. Because of how they played just for the love of the game, even if they were losing by a wide margin, they would keep their spirits up and have a comeback. This made the Manatees almost invincible and created a space where everyone was uplifting each other.

The fourth and final concept is how the frisbee coaches also greatly contributed to the team's strength. Having strict coaches led to an overall more conditioned team with better ideas of how to use the games' different strategies. The coaches probably also fed the seniors love for frisbee and created a feedback loop of conditioning and winning, and because everyone on the team was so conditioned our team almost outran and jumped every other team, along with having extreme game sense, high verticals, and great spirit.

A team like last year's has occurred before, as when Tom Hobday was a senior they had a similar team that was also extremely competent, but they were affected by the COVID pandemic. This devastated the team and shattered a lot of their dreams, and ultimately led them to play not as good of a season. I believe that even if COVID hadn't happened they still couldn't have rivaled the generation we had last year. To try to replicate this team again we would need three big factors; a large group of kids in 6th grade who have an extreme passion for the sport, a good strict coach, and at least one kid who's willing to go above and beyond and bring his friends with him.

## Could Hytale game replace Minecraft?

*The recently released indie game has sparked hope among fans*

Nikolai Stricklan  
Staff Writer

Minecraft as a franchise – yes it's a franchise, remember Minecraft: Dungeons and the movie – is one of the most beloved franchises ever, and the Minecraft game has been a fan favorite for more than a decade. Something about this blocky, sandbox world pulls in fans young and old, and of many demographics. One of the fan favorite features of Minecraft is that it is multiplayer. Players around the world are able to play with friends, or servers, and that brings me to the main point of this article: Hypixel.

Hypixel, which started as a company running the most popular Minecraft Java edition server, wanted to make their own game for a long time, and in April 2015, their dream came true. They had an open

opportunity to make a game.

Hypixel, now Hypixel Studios, announced Hytale for the first time on December 13th, 2018, immediately pulling the attention of video game fans everywhere, including Minecraft fans. As Hypixel continued development, troubles arose,

mainly not having enough funds to continue the project in a timely manner, nor pay developers, and thus, Hypixel Studios was sold to Riot Games in April 2020, and Hytale along with it. As Riot attempted to revive the game, many employees of Hypixel jumped ship, mainly to find a

project that would actually be able to support them and their families.

And due to all of these troubles, Riot announced the cancellation of the project in June 2025. And thus, Hytale was dead, the game fans had been hyping up, and supporting for a decade, was gone. Many fans stayed around, hoping the game would be revived, or just to say goodbye to the project, but the world kept spinning.

Until August 13th, 2025, when the ORIGINAL FOUNDER of Hypixel, Simon Collins-Laflamme, or just Simon as he's usually called online, announced that they were in active negotiations with Riot to reacquire Hytale. This was a huge spark of hope for fans, but even with

Hytale, 7



Noa Calzanda Villanueva

## Kingdom Come is the best game of '25

*KCDII's history and plot makes for an entertaining video game*

Norman Simon  
Staff Writer

It's 1403 and you are in a castle besieged by the enemy. As the smell of gunpowder wafts through the air you try to use a polearm to push the enemy's ladders off the wall and then you see them come in from another side of the castle. For the next hour you fight for dear life until you see your fathers army charge the enemy army.

Kingdom Come: Deliverance II, or for the purpose of this article KCDII, is an action roleplaying game that was released in 2025 by Czech game developer Warhorse Studios, who was also behind the original Kingdom Come: Deliverance which released in 2018. It was published by Deep Silver, and was announced in a video that was filmed at a church in one of the important towns set in

the game. It was released for the PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, and Windows in February 2025. It is \$59.99 on Windows and \$69.99 on console.

KCDII is about Henry of Skalitz, who is the page of Hans Capon. They are sent to be an envoy to a lord who is on the other side of a succession war for the crown of Bohemia. They are attacked by bandits and only Henry and Hans escape alive and they have to survive and get to the lord's castle. KCDII is set in 1403 in the area around Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg in game), which is about 50km east of Prague. It also has a part set in Czech paradise in northern Bohemia.

The gameplay aims to be immersive by having Henry be written like a normal person in the setting, rather than someone important. It also has a very complex and unforgiving combat system which makes you think

about where to strike and to block. It also has minigames for sharpening swords, blacksmithing, and alchemy. The dialogue is written to sound like real people and the characters in KCDII feel like real people who existed.

This game in my opinion is the best game of 2025, because of the way the world draws you in. It is akin to Skyrim where you spend a lot of time outside of the main quest. The story is very good and didn't peter out in the middle. The side quests are different in that they feel like people put a lot of effort into making them interesting.

The immersiveness is also really good, where it is playable to casual gamers and not too serious. As a history lover, I also really like that it had a lot of real history tied to it, and it is really cool that most places in the game are from the real world. It made me want to visit the Czech Republic and got me

more interested in this part of history. I highly recommend this game to people who like games like BOTW, Skyrim, AC, and Witcher 3. The fact that just looking at the artwork of it makes me want to play it should say enough about how good this game is.



Epic Games

## Leverage is 'peak cinema' and hits hard

*The show brings expert criminals together for the greater good*

Kaden McNamara  
Staff Writer

I don't think it's very controversial to say that the rich and powerful are terrible people. I mean, looking at most of the unfortunate news in this country nowadays, most of it comes from the same group of rich and powerful. However there's not exactly much any of us can do in reality to take down these problem causers, but we can certainly live it out in fiction! Thus I introduce to you what is one of my favorite TV shows of all time: Leverage. With five seasons, 77 episodes, and the sequel series Leverage: Redemption, that has another three seasons and 39 episodes (almost all of which is on YouTube for free), there's plenty to enjoy.

Primarily written by Chris Downey and John Rogers, Leverage is a show that uses the "monster of the week" format, like how Scooby-doo has a different monster in a different place each episode,

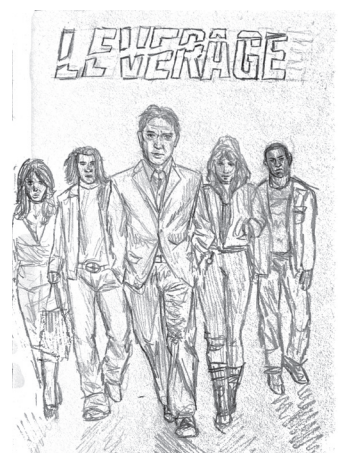
except these 'monsters' are the rich and powerful. In this Robin Hood-esq heist show we follow the team of Nathan Ford (played by Timothy Hutton) an ex-insurance investigator who became an alcoholic after the company he worked for let his son die by not paying for his cancer treatment, Sophie Devereaux (Gina Bellman) an incredible conwoman and art thief who has stolen some of the best pieces of art in the world, Eliot Spencer (Christian Kane) maybe the most feared muscle for hire in the entire criminal underworld, Parker (Beth Riesgraf) infamous thief who has stolen from practically every country just for the thrill, and Alec Hardison (Aldis Hodge) genius hacker who can hack into pretty much anything he can get his hands on. While Redemption swaps out Nathan Ford and Hardison for two new members of the team, Breanna Casey (Alyse Shannon) Hardison's Gen Z

younger sister who is eager to prove herself and wasn't told the less enjoyable parts of the job and Harry Wilson (Noah Wyle) a lawyer who used to get the usual targets off the hook for their crimes but is working on redeeming himself from that life.

When it comes to the episodes themselves, they're some of the best I've seen, from the usual episodes like the Gimme a K Street Job, to episodes that break from the mold, like the Rashoman Job or the Carnival Job, all of which hit very hard, and are very good in execution. In terms of character development, Leverage has some of the best banter between its protagonists I've ever seen, which hooked me one the series from the very first episode, as well as some of the best written character arcs I've seen, from perhaps the single best autistic character in television, to the single best way to work around an actor's pregnancy when that wouldn't

work for the character.

Overall, Leverage and Leverage: Redemption are some of the best written TV shows that I have watched in a long time, and would highly recommend it to anybody who is unhappy with the state of the world, or really just anybody willing to watch what is undeniably peak cinema.





IMDb

## Return to Silent Hill is a disaster

*The movie is confusing and lacks meaningful connection*

**Maren Sletten**  
Staff Writer

Guess who has an opinion... me! Welcome back to Maren Sletten reviews, where I went and watched something so you don't have to. When I was offered the opportunity to go see Return To Silent Hill (2026), written and directed by Christophe Gans, and produced by Victor Hadida, the circumstances weren't the best but I was excited none the less. I had enjoyed watching playthroughs and theories on the games, even played a few myself, so I was hyped enough to have a decent amount of optimism going into it with high hopes from previous experiences with the franchise.

With concessions bought, we found our seats, and watched the trailers with skepticism, interest, and mockery before the lights began to dim, and that usual burst of adrenaline formed under my skin as the theater's surround sound system kicked in, and goose bumps sprouted as my anticipation built. Finally I chanced a glance at my fellow movie goers and I prepared to lock in to experience what should be a thought provoking, opinion changing, horror inducing, R rated movie. The credits rolled followed by a title card slammed down from the heavens as the movie opened with a bold departure from the source material, and though I wanted to hold out hope I instead had to fight back insult after insult as judgy scrutiny rendered my viewing experience a torturous hour and forty five minutes I will never be able to get back.

I am an opinionated person. I got my hopes up, I love this franchise, and to have one of my favorite games turned to trash under the steady hand of Christophe Gans. I regretted watching it entirely.

Return To Silent Hill is a movie adaptation of the video game Silent Hill 2 (2001) following the main character James Sunderland (played by Jermy Irvine) who is "a broken man who receives a mysterious

letter which calls him back to Silent Hill in search of his lost love. However, he finds a once-recognizable town and encounters terrifying figures both familiar and new, and begins to question his sanity." James is joined by many characters noticeable for their appearances from the game like Mary Crane (Hanna Emily Anderson), Eddie (Pears Egan), and Laura (Evie Tempelton). The movie's abysmal runtime gives us no time as watchers to connect with these characters in the way we would playing the game, making it hard to find meaningful connection.

The movie starts in Silent Hill with James meeting Marry. The movie fails to tell us he then leaves Silent Hill because something happened to Mary that isn't explained until an hour later. We get flashbacks interspliced with confusing story beats that leave you with a headache. The acting was a bit stilted, sometimes comical when you were supposed to be feeling terror. Mary is hard to connect with, I found myself hating her, when we as a watcher are supposed to be deeply connected to her because of her connection to James. Laura is a blink and you'll miss her character, only being in two scenes that I can recall, alongside Eddie, who despite his actors phenomenal performance is only on screen for five minutes before he disappears without any explanation.

I found myself hating all of the main cast and almost rooting for the monsters that have more screen time than a named character like Eddie. As the story progressed they started dropping hints that whatever happened to Mary was the influence of a demonic cult that works out of Silent Hill. This led to a hair pulling exchange between James and Mary while I—knowing the game—raged about how religious imagery had nothing to do with the narrative of the story and was added in for some

**Silent Hill, 7**

## Great restaurants in Saint Paul area

### Zelda James gives a comprehensive overview of the best of the best

**Zelda James**  
Staff Writer

There was always a restaurant that I loved, with the food I would have eaten until I was sick, or that restaurant that felt welcoming and fun. I have loved food for a while now, and I believe I like good food, but it can often feel like I am eating the same three things over and over again. If you would like to try new food and new restaurants I have some recommendations for you.

Some of the things that I believe makes a restaurant great are the food being good, the service should make me want to go back and not get so annoyed I would rather eat the table than sit there, the building should be at least decent for the restaurant, and the price should be worth it.

Afro Deli is everything I think a good restaurant should be. The food has very vibrant flavors, and it's not something that I believe I've had a lot of. The food, according to the Afro Deli website, is a mix of American, Mediterranean, and African food all in one restaurant. I've not had food to compare it to, but all I know is that the food at Afro Deli is great. There is also the great bonus that the food looks like what the photos on their website show, since it's very disappointing when they don't. The service is amazing, the workers, at least from my experience, are friendly and the food is made very quickly. The buildings that I have been in and seen have all been clean and colorful, it doesn't feel like you are being rushed out of the building, and the space itself feels friendly. The prices feel reasonable for what they taste like, around \$12-\$15 per meal. All of this makes this place such a great place to eat

at. I will always recommend the Afro steak dinner, it is both an amazing experience and it represents everything I love about Afro Deli. If you want to try an appetizer that is both great and weird, try the sweet plantains. Afro Deli also has a program where they help feed people in the metro area, which is an amazing program.

Keeping on the Mediterranean theme, Black Sea is a Turkish and Mediterranean restaurant. The food is very filling and very delicious and I can't place my finger on why even while I was eating it, there is just no way I could describe the reasons why I love this food so much. The building is small, is a little out of the way, and in a weird place, but it serves

spicy chicken, it is a chicken donner cut into thin slices on pita bread served with lettuce, tomatoes, and onions, and a side of rice goes really nice with it. The meat is covered in a special hot tomato sauce, but if you don't want the spice they have a non spicy version.

If you want to try a restaurant with more meat oriented dishes I recommend Firebox. The food is amazing, the brisket is tender, very filling, and if you get it in a sandwich it is amazing, even without their great BBQ sauce. The building itself is fine, it always has sports playing on the TVs, and is not that crowded, but there is nothing all too special about the building itself. It is also not in the most popular place. It is near an apartment



Afro Deli

them well. The service is solid and reliable. The price of the food is around \$10, and for how delicious and filling it is, \$10 is a great deal. I find this restaurant very confusing to write about because it doesn't sound like much, but it is a restaurant where their main strength is in their consistency, and when that is for really good food it really matters. I recommend #24b known as

building and a car repair shop, and it is just a strange place for a restaurant. The service is good, the food will take a little longer than the previous two restaurants, but it is understandable. The brisket is so good I am fine waiting there for longer, and the people working there aren't awful, it is just an understanding of getting people the food they ask for and that is a respectable

### Muppets, 4

year anniversary. Secondly, it's also a potential pilot for a continuation of the series - if the special gets enough viewership and is received well enough, it's possible that a full revival of the series could follow.

The main plot of the episode (as much as any Muppet Show episode can have a plot) follows the Muppets attempting to put on another new variety show in their old theatre. But they are, of course, Muppets, so clearly something is going to go wrong. It seems that Kermit, in his eagerness to recreate their glory days, has accidentally approved every single Muppet's act for the show. While he attempts to make the difficult choice of who to cut, Miss Piggy clashes with Sabrina Carpenter for stealing her look, and hordes of Muppets await the chance to perform one more time. But even if disaster strikes, as always, the show must go on!

The defining factor of any Muppet Show episode is, of course, the celebrity guest star. The classic Muppet Show had one guest star per episode, who'd provide a central thread tying the whole episode together. This special

had three celebrity guests, although the focus is clearly on Sabrina Carpenter as the episode's official guest star.

I personally am not exactly well versed in Carpenter's discography, but the two songs that she performed for the show worked quite well and meshed wonderfully with the Muppet chaos around her. Additionally, while their roles weren't nearly as large, Maya Rudolph had a minor subplot in the audience worth a few laughs, and Seth Rogen, despite being an executive producer on the show, isn't immune to Muppet interference. It's hard to say more without spoiling the comedy to come, but

none of the special guests felt irrelevant or shoehorned in.

But this is the Muppet Show, not the Human Celebrity Show, so how are the Muppets themselves? Good news: they're just as chaotic, funny, and entertaining as they've always been. Just about every major Muppet is back, and a number of obscure ones too (multiple times it turned out that what I thought was a new puppet was actually like the Beautiful Day Monster that turned up twice in 1976 or something similar). Most of the main cast got at least one in-sketch appearance, and those that didn't still appeared in backstage segments. There's

not enough time in the episode for every major Muppet sketch to come back, but the ones that did appear, including a brand-new Gonzo daredevil stunt and fan-favorite science segment Muppet Labs, which fit in as well as ever.

And honestly, "as well as ever" is a very fitting way to describe this new episode. The special is extraordinarily good at feeling just like an original episode of The Muppet Show that just happens to be produced in the 2020s— and for a trial revival like this one, that's the greatest compliment I could give it. It doesn't matter if they're singing the Beatles or "Blinding Lights," the Muppets have proven that they work as well now as they did 50 years ago. As of the writing of this article, it remains yet to be seen whether Disney will approve another full season of The Muppet Show, but I'm certainly hopeful. The special is the most sensational, inspirational, celebrational, Muppetational event I could've hoped for, and I am pleased to say, this is what we call The Muppet Show.



## School in Spain, 1

classes each day and every class is one hour long. Sometimes we have the same class back to back. For example, in fifth grade, I had two and a half hours of maths class every Friday morning for a whole school year. We start the day with a one hour long class, then a half hour one, then we have a 30 minutes break to have a snack and play with friends on the playground, then we have two one hour classes, then we have our lunch break (as I said some kids go home but the usual at this age is to stay), and to finish we have two more one hour classes.. Each day we have a total of a minimum six different subjects, all of them in the same classroom (except gym), and with the same people. The teacher comes to us, rather than us going to the

teacher's room.

Remember that my school is a trilingual school? This means that some classes are taught in Spanish, others in Basque, and others in English. For example, math and Spanish are in Spanish, history, art, music, religion and Basque are in Basque, and science and gym are in English. Robotics is in English and Basque, and tutoretza (crew) could be in any language, depending on who your tutor (crew leader) is. If they were a teacher of a subject in English they would give this class in English, if they were a teacher of a class in Basque, they would give this class in Basque. Same with Spanish. Most of the time, it was a mix between all the languages though.

We start high school when we are in seventh grade. When

we change to high school we can choose an "optative" that can be French, German, or a science related subject (I choose French).

In seventh grade we have some changes in the subjects. Instead of general science we have biology and geology (in English). Robotics changes to only Basque, and we have the optative. In high school, we only change classrooms for the optative.

We start school at 8am and finish at 2:20pm. Most people go home to have dinner since we don't have to come back later, some others stay and eat the school lunch because they have extracurricular activities at the school.

The next year, 8th grade, is a very similar year. The only difference is that instead of biology and geology we have

physics and chemistry (both are the same class). Then, in 9th grade, we have both biology and physics and chemistry. By the way, physics and chemistry is another subject in Basque.

Then, 10th grade is different. In this grade you have to pick between more subjects. The first pick is between economy, Latin, physics and chemistry, and biology and geology. We have to pick two out of those options. If you want to work in something related to science you have to pick physics and chemistry because if you don't you won't be able to study this in the future. The next choices are French (if you took the class before), German (same as French), art, and technology. The last choice is extra maths, philosophy, and the science related subject.

The next two grades are the

hardest ones. These years are known as Bachillerato and are the grades that determine if you can study what you want to study. You can pick between four types of bachillers: arts, science, letters, or a mix between science and letters.

You want to be a doctor? Then you have to study the science bachiller. Do you want to study animation? Then you should go to the arts.

A huge difference that I have noticed between OWL and my school in Spain is that in Spain we have a week of very long exams at the end of each quarter, and at the end of the year. Some subjects have a very long exam that can last more than two hours about all the things we have learned throughout the school year.

Another difference that you can notice is in how strict the

school is. My school in Spain is much stricter than OWL. The teachers are friendlier at OWL than in Spain in general.

From my point of view, school here in America is more fun and less stressful than in Spain. It is easier and I prefer the way the teachers teach here at OWL, using tests and projects more, rather than a class with the same 30 people looking at a blackboard and copying everything the teachers says in an hour, then going home and do three pages of homework, and two weeks later doing a full exam of that unit.

I like things about both schools, and I want you to value the one you have, since, in my opinion, it is a great school where you can learn a lot of things surrounded by great people and teachers.

## Hytale, 5

this good news, as the month passed, there was no new news. But as the year was ending, on November 17th, 2025, it was confirmed that Hytale was saved, and even announced that early access should start early 2026, (which we know now started in January of this year.)

So, Hytale is now released in early access, and the main question is simple— will it replace Minecraft? Probably not. And I have proof, which will be listed below in order of strength of the argument.

Reason one: They're different genres. While both games are cube based creative games, Hytale has many RPG aspects that veer from what Minecraft turned out to be. While Minecraft has more open ends for lore and story, Hytale, even in early access, has many signs of a more clear cut story. For example, we've already been shown things like dungeons, new dimensions, and bosses, while in Minecraft, we only have two dimensions and two bosses.

Reason two: Availability.

While Hytale devs have stated the interest of console and mobile ports, Hytale is stuck to PC, while Minecraft has many console, mobile, PC and Handheld ports. Until Hytale is more widespread, it will never surpass the availability of Minecraft.

Reason three, and the strongest reason: Minecraft is too big to realistically take down. Being realistic, this is an indie game vs a game with a multi million dollar company behind it, an insane amount of funding, and multiple installments in a franchise. While this is not impossible to think about, with indie games like Hollow Knight being able to revolutionize a genre mainly dominated by companies like Nintendo, or games like Undertale being able to surpass Triple A games while only being made by one man with a computer.

I think that third reason sums up my opinion on this topic, as much as I love and prefer Hytale, unless a miracle occurs, it's never going to surpass Minecraft.

## Pretentiousness, 4

if you wouldn't normally look like that. You find new things to enjoy by trying them out— if someone trying to come off as smarter starts watching black and white movies, they might grow to genuinely appreciate and enjoy them.

How do people really judge if someone is pretentious? How come a normal person being intelligent is a performance, and a wealthy person being intelligent is genuine? In Dan Fox's book "Pretentiousness: Why It Matters" he states "Calling a person pretentious can be an informal tool of class surveillance, a stick with which to beat someone for putting on airs and graces." The idea of pretentiousness has become a way to keep lower class individuals in their place, to keep them dumb and ignorant by convincing them that having an interest in film, art, literature, and politics is above them, and if they do enjoy those things they are just pretending to.

## Cinderella, 1

timeless themes.

"Cinderella is all about open transformation and being able to imagine a better future for yourself," explained theater teacher and director Rebekah Rentzel.

Actors are imagining their futures onstage in the musical theater class, which cast members are required to take. There are around 30 students acting in the show, including a 20 person ensemble. They work on learning their lines, choreography, and songs with Rebekah and music teacher Greta Cina during classtime, and will later start incorporating technical elements during afterschool rehearsal.

Design crew consistently meets after school, but does not take part in the class. They work on tackling some of the unique challenges this show brings, like transforming rags into riches and pumpkins into carriages. The most difficult part of producing musicals at OWL is the large amount of people and sets that need

to share the small amount of space backstage, so working out who and what is onstage when is a big focus of the rehearsal process.

The cast and crew will spend the next couple of months bringing the world of Cinderella to the OWL stage, and are confident that the magic of the story will captivate audiences in April.



Purple Press Staff Photo

**Rebekah blocks a scene for OWL's spring musical.**

## Nine lives, 4

but Nine Lives donated 200 pounds of coffee after a week of collecting.

**That's what empowerment means to me.**

Nine Lives is not a big box thrift store. It's also not a curated vintage store. It's a non-profit, and keeps the lights on through purchases and donations. Every Sunday, when I step inside Nine Lives to price clothes with a rickety tagger that continuously pricks my finger, and dress mannequins in orange sweaters and shimmery skirts, I smile while praying for no empty-handed customers. This is the reality for many small businesses in the Twin Cities and around the country. So in the words of Roxanne, folks need to come to the shop, and SHOP! Be a part of something bigger, save your money, and support a woman in iconic leopard print.

## Silent Hill, 6

reason! The movie tries to take itself seriously, tries to make itself about grief and moving on, but instead of interpreting James's breaks from reality as him battling his own inner demons of depression or mental illnesses, it is instead misconstrued throughout the film, making the nightmare sequences pointless and hard to distinguish between reality and James's perceived insanity that they try to insist is real experiences and not hallucinations at all.

Are they his interpretation of reality? Is he hallucinating?? What is going on!?! The movie misses the whole point of the franchise. It's like someone ran the plot of the game through ChatGPT and said make a movie script and this is what it choked out. It felt disrespectful to the creators of the games, it felt disingenuous, it felt like they vaguely understood the point and without any of the input or care of an actual fan, and didn't have nearly enough passion to create something as deep as a Silent Hill movie, especially when it covers deep topics that need to be handled with care. I left the movie theater feeling my time was

wasted, and happy I didn't have to pay for it myself. The movie would have been more impressive if there wasn't a studio funding it. If it was an independent project by a fan who loved the franchise—even if misinterpreting the story or trying to put their own spin on it—it would have made more of an impact on the Silent Hill community. Instead it butchered the franchise and made me frustrated with the results.

It's hard for me as an enjoyer of the game to sit down and watch it play out on screen, cringing through the story as it's jumbled and messed up into something unrecognizable. When you try and take a game like Silent Hill, which has an average play through time of seven to nine hours depending on how determined you are in completing it with every ending, and exploring every avenue of interest. Though playing it casually can be around two to three hours that's still a longer run time than your average movie and trying to condense it to an hour and forty-five minutes means you lose important plot points and details that ruin the story the game worked so hard to tell, especially when

marketing it to movie watchers who might not ever play the game. I shouldn't have walked into that movie theater with high expectations. I shouldn't have put any faith in the film industry when everything seems to be going downhill and refusing to make any real thought provoking media.

Have some people enjoyed it? Maybe. Have some people loved it? I'm sure. Could you find it entertaining? Absolutely. But is it a good movie? No. The CGI looks fake, you can tell they aren't physically in some of the environments, the monsters look cheesy in the realistic environments that seem to emulate the game but fail to look impressive when a real person is walking through the computer generated setting, the story is disjointed and broken into confusing pieces that we get no background too, they turn characters that are very meaningful in the game into sloppy renditions that just feel like easter eggs for the video game enjoyers to find, there's background character after background character that vanishes without reason or explanation, and they're missing information that leads to you puzzling into a

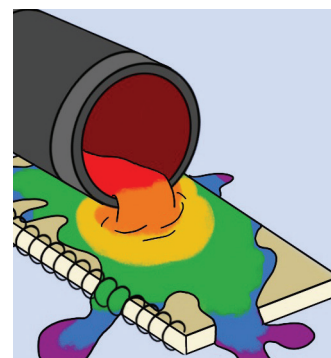
brain aneurysm. Though it may have a banger soundtrack that's because most of the music used is ripped from the original game! And plot holes!! So many plot holes!!!

There are better movies in theaters right now, ones that have climbed to the top of the box office and actually deserve to be watched—Iron Lung, Send Help, Solo Mio, Shelter—I made the mistake of seeing this garbage so you don't have to make the mistake of seeing it in theaters. The game Silent Hill walked so Return To Silent Hill could trip and fall face first into an active volcano. If you have ever had your favorite book turned into a movie you will immediately sympathize with my plight. The movie was artistically interesting, the lighting of the film had its moments, the art displayed throughout really powerful, but where this movie falls through is the story. There were points when I was impressed with the cinematography, sure. But for the most part I was cringing at how the monsters looked fake, waxy, made by a dude with Blender and a dream. Silent Hill as a franchise is thought provoking using imagery and story telling to

deliver an insightful narrative on inner demons and the way trauma, grief, and depression can swallow one whole shown through clever game design, and of course, survival horror. Return To Silent Hill is a horrible film, and I beg you not to waste your money by going to the theaters to see it.

## Colors, 3

colors with subjects, and that's ok. Kent said, "I don't think it really matters all that much. You know? I mean, I think it's important to stay consistent, but I don't think it really matters all that much. Honestly, not really sure why we even [use different] colors. I just use white folders all the time."



Brian Blakely

**OWL parents grab food from the cafeteria.**



Brian Blakely

**OWL student organizers give a speech.**

#### Don't Let the Forest In, 4

that, in a book about a person who writes fairytales and a person who draws monsters, you actually get to read the fairytales and see the drawings. The book is interspersed with Andrew's fairytales, reflecting different aspects of his life. While some are obvious, others aren't, and each one is like a different puzzle to solve. Thomas' drawings of the monsters they fight also appear, and the artwork is simply stunning. It is so well done, despite being only black and white, but it conveys the emotions of the monsters so well. At first I was a bit skeptical with the illustrations mid-page, but they end up making it so much better. You can imagine the weird monsters as they fight them, or

you can see them. Also, a quick note on the difference between the ebook and hardcover copy- the stories are simply in the ebook like any other page. For the hardcover, they are in a different font. In white. On black pages. It's weird and fits perfectly. I assume this is the same per the paperback, though I have not seen a copy.

Also, CG Drew can write a twist. Well, not exactly a twist, per se. The whole book you know something is wrong. But when it is finally revealed, it is the perfect mix of "I should've seen that coming," and "what the heck? Where is this coming from?" I have never read a book with a reveal where it both makes you think both of those things. It comes from nowhere. It was glaringly obvious the whole time. I love

it. Due to this, future read throughs are just as good. There are so many little details I missed the first time around that point to the twists. It is also a book you can heavily interact with, not everything is explained in the end. While this may irritate some people, it is something that I ended up really enjoying. I can continue to read this book and figure out what's going on past the first time. It isn't just a 'one and done' book.

A possible turn-away for this book does come in the writing style. CG Drews has a very unique writing style, including some weird formatting. Why? Because it's neat and builds suspense.

If you want a book where the words descend one per line,

or letters jump to a single line below and while it is perfectly legible, it isn't something you'd normally see, this book has it. These segments are used to build suspense, to create more emotion than initially possible in simple paragraph-only formatting. While this probably doesn't work great for every setting, it is perfect for this book.

When it comes to the end... I apologize for being vague, but I don't want any spoilers! CG Drews writes a satisfying ending. I have come across too many books/movies/TV shows that prioritize a perfectly happy ending over a satisfying one. I would much rather a character (or two... or three... or all of them...) dies and have everything fit the tone than have everyone

survive and be happy.

If you have read Don't Let The Forest In and enjoyed it, then I have to recommend CG Drews' other book, Hazelthorn. It hits all the exact same genre and atmosphere as Don't Let The Forest In, while still retaining a unique identity. Other authors who write the same specific genre can often fall into a repetitive streak, but Hazelthorn does not do this. While I didn't know what I was getting into with Don't Let The Forest In, I did with Hazelthorn, and thoroughly enjoyed leaving post-it notes every few pages with my theories. Some were right (kind of). Most were very wrong. Not to mention, Hazelthorn is set in the same universe as Don't Let The Forest In! Laurie, a side

character in Hazelthorn, used to attend Wickwood Academy.

CG Drews has two more books announced. You Did Nothing Wrong, their adult debut coming out March 17th and Scorpion Deep, another YA novel coming out October 27th. And they're just getting started... CG Drews has books scheduled to release until 2028, with two every year. So if this is the kind of genre you like, you're set with books for a while!

Overall, Don't Let The Forest In is an incredibly well-done book. It is rooted in a rather simple plot, but plays with perspective, formatting, and what makes a horror book. It is unlike anything else I have ever read, and hopefully it hits all of the points you want for your next read.

## OWL African American Culture Night was a huge success



August Seru's dad gives a speech during the presentation.



Students enjoy food at the culture night.



Students and families eat together at the event.



OWL parents grab food after watching the presentation in the auditorium.



Senior event organizers Khalyse Calloway and Titus Galbreath give a speech during the auditorium portion of the event.