



Students grapple with excitement, anxiety of choosing a college

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# The Quill

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Robbinsdale Cooper High School

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## SENIOR TAKES THIRD AT STATE TOURNAMENT

Folake Olusesi (12) closed out her high school wrestling career with a podium spot at state

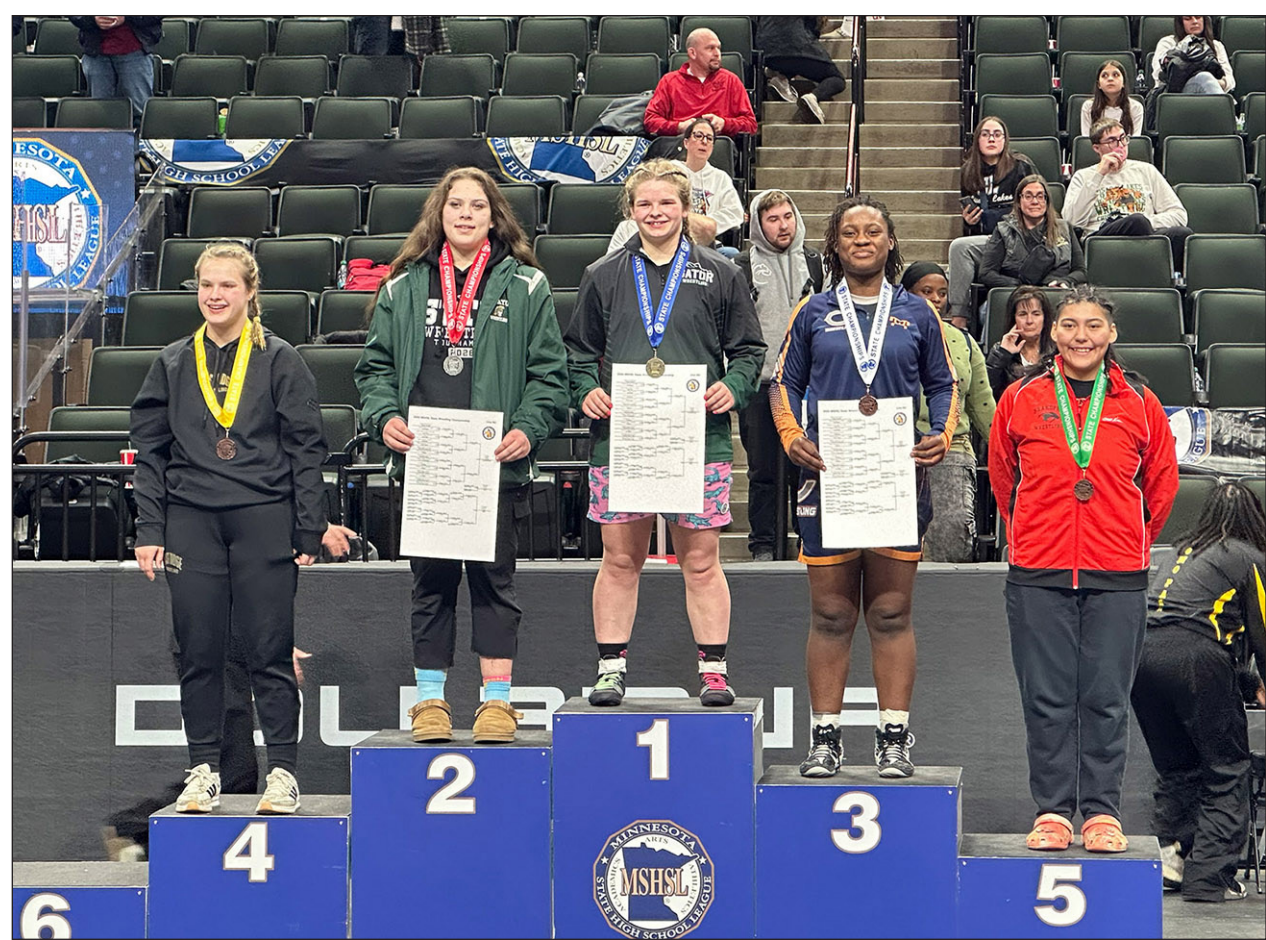


Photo by NEEL ALLEN

Folake Olusesi (12) is part of a growing number of girls wrestlers taking part in the sport at the high school level.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON  
Quill staff writer

Folake Olusesi (12) capped off her high school wrestling career by earning third place at the state tournament on February 28.

The journey to the podium was anything but easy. In the days leading up to the tournament, Olusesi was dealing with

physical challenges that could have slowed her down. Instead, she pushed through them with determination.

"Physically, preparing for the state tournament was rough for me as it meant I had to deal with both of my ankles being taped within the week for the state tournament," Olusesi said. "Though my ankle did hurt a good amount, the pain was not

bad as it was more so of a mind block for me to be able to keep going whenever I got random sharp pain in my ankles."

Despite the discomfort, she stayed focused on competing at the highest level possible. Olusesi credited her coaches with helping her maintain the right mindset during difficult moments.

"Physically and mentally, I

was encouraged by my coaches that not all practices will go the way I want," she said. "They told me to push myself in the room where there isn't a final decision towards my season based on those actions yet."

Like many successful athletes, Olusesi said some of her biggest growth came from challenging matches earlier in the season. One moment that stood

out came during a tournament match against East Ridge.

"A match that helped me grow as a competitor during the season was a match against East Ridge at the East Ridge tournament," she said. "I was winning but lost with around 30 seconds left on the clock."

The loss forced her to re-think how she approached certain situations on the mat.

"This match made me look at wrestling from a technical point," Olusesi said. "In situations, you work toward wrestling smart in your advantage, and in some cases that means not wrestling or engaging with the opponent like this match was."

Those lessons became valuable later in the season, especially when facing strong opponents at the state tournament. At the state tournament itself, Olusesi faced difficult moments that tested her composure. According to Cooper wrestling head coach Neel Allen, her ability to respond to adversity stood out.

"The thing that sticks with me about Folake's performance at state was her response to adversity," Allen said. "She had some calls not go her way in her second match, which led to the arena erupting and coaches from the top teams in the state questioning calls."

Instead of letting the situ-

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## Prom committee finalizing plans for 2026 event

This year's dance, which is open to juniors and seniors, will take place on May 9 at the Leopold's Mississippi Gardens

By ELLA VAN MASSENHOVE  
Quill staff writer

Cooper's prom will take place on May 9 at Leopold's Mississippi Gardens from 7:30-11 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$50 per person and \$100 for a couple. There is no entry into the event after 8 p.m.

After the prom committee's selection and the vote by juniors and seniors, the theme for prom was chosen and announced on April 8.

"This year's theme is going to be Midnight in the Enchanted Garden," IBMYP Coordinator Andrea Obranovich, who is part of the staff organizing the event, said.

According to Obranovich, the prom committee plays an important role in putting together the event, ranging from the decorations used in the venue to how the schedule for the evening runs.

"The committee gives suggestions to our decorator for the room decor, helps to choose a dessert menu and puts together a suggested song list. They also help to plan promotion of the prom through posters and social media posts, and to sell tickets ahead of time," Obranovich said.

Obranovich said she had a lot of fun working with the students who are part of the committee.

"It's a great mix of students who are easy to work with and listen to each other. They also come prepared with ideas and notes, which is amazing," she said.

One member of the prom committee, Mariah Washington (12), joined it because of her love for organizing and decorating events. She said she enjoys being part of the group because she is "surrounded by other motivated students who want this prom to be amazing." Also, she said they all work as a team and make sure everyone's ideas are considered.

As May 9 approaches, Washington said she is set on making the evening



Photo by ANDREA OBRANOVICH

Many Hawks attending prom are wrapping up the process of finding their outfits.

unforgettable. She added that she is determined to put her all into decorating the venue to give it a great atmosphere.

"I am so excited for the students to see how beautifully it will be decorated. I think the color scheme is so pretty and we will have so many beautiful decorations. Also, [for] the tickets, we spent some time trying to find the perfect design and color. I think the prom committee did an amazing job choos-

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## App designed to inform users of school security issues

Cooper is making use the Raptor app, which allows communication about emergency events like drills, lockdowns

By TESSA LENOCH  
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale Area School District implemented the requirement that all teachers and staff utilize an emergency communications application, the Raptor System, five years ago. Beginning last school year, staff and teachers were able to load the Raptor System app on their personal devices in order to monitor safety situations and take attendance during emergency situations and drills. As of this school year, the Raptor System has been successfully implemented and is being used to keep emergency situations and drills well-monitored by staff and teachers.

Assistant Principal Ned Nelson, who has helped oversee the system's implementation at Cooper, said there are two main functions to using Raptor.

"The Raptor System is made up of two

parts: Emergency Management and Visitor Registration. The Emergency Management aspect allows administrators to notify staff of emergencies via email and their mobile device simultaneously. The Visitor Registration part of the system is used to check in any person that is not a student or staff member. Their IDs are scanned and they are given a visitor badge with their picture printed on it," he said.

The app has been used to keep actions by staff and teachers consistent and clear during any security situation.

"Any time there is an emergency or an emergency drill, we use the app and teachers are notified either on their phones or on their computers. During an emergency, staff can use the app to communicate directly with the admin team. It also is used in situations when we are not able to make an announcement using the PA system," Nelson said.

Some students have been concerned about be-

ing kept out of the loop, especially when it comes to security measures like the Raptor System. Nelson said there are specific reasons why these systems remain accessible only to staff and teachers.

"Right now, there are no alerts that students can receive. That is intentional to keep safety procedures and notifications during emergencies confidential. As for staff, we are able to send messages during emergencies and we are notified when emergencies are happening and have ended," Nelson said.

According to AVID coordinator Amanda Lieser, the Raptor app has brought with it some benefits and issues.

"I don't use the app day-to-day. It hasn't seemed to be working 100 percent of the time, which is frustrating. However, last year, we had a number of fire alarms go off, and the app was help-

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## STATE

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ation shake her confidence, Allen said that Olusesi used it as motivation.

"Folake responded by pinning several opponents that previously defeated her earlier in the season," Allen said.

Olusesi said that regaining confidence after a tough loss was one of the most important adjustments she made during the tournament.

"An adjustment I made after losing a match I should have won, which was a setback, was me believing in myself," she said. "Being able to pull through against one of my toughest opponents ever showed me that I could do the same for the other tough opponents I would be wrestling later in the tournament."

When Olusesi secured her third-place finish, the moment carried a mixture of emotions. Not only had she reached a major milestone, but she also realized it marked the end of her high school wrestling career.

"I was excited not only because I won third place, but also because I won it against East Ridge and ranked higher than I did last year at state," she said. "I was more so just excited to be done with my high school wrestling career, making it a bittersweet moment for me."

For Olusesi, the accomplishment meant more than just a medal.

"I was also glad to make my people proud of me," she said.

The result matched the expectations Olusesi had set for herself earlier in the season. While the road to state was mentally challenging, she felt the outcome reflected the work she had put in.

"It fits perfectly for my goal for this season," she said. "I expected this year to be harder on me, and it was mentally as I doubted myself because I could not just rely on being strong. I had to be able to wrestle to my best regardless of who it was I was up against."

Watching Olusesi grow over the course of the season and her career was Allen. He said her development has been especially noticeable in her mental approach to the sport.

"Over the course of the season, I've seen Folake grow mentally and continue to embrace the role of team captain," Allen said.

While some leaders are outspoken, Allen describes Olusesi as someone who leads primarily through her actions.

"Folake isn't necessarily a vocal leader, but she is a doer," he said. "There were several occasions throughout the season she was asked to wrestle boys or bigger girls."

Allen also said he believes a difficult moment earlier in the tournament ultimately fueled her performance.

"After she was snubbed in the quarterfinals, that lit a fire in Folake," Allen said. "She then realized that it wasn't a coincidence that she was, at that point, a two-time All-State athlete."

Olusesi's accomplishments have also placed her in a unique position within Cooper's wrestling program.

"In my tenure at Cooper, I've had the opportunity to coach quite a few wrestlers that have qualified for state, wrestled collegiately, and even an All-American at Luther College," Allen said. "Folake is the only athlete to qualify for state three consecutive years."

Olusesi's commitment to the sport was evident early on. When she first joined the team as a sophomore, she made a significant personal decision.

"When she first started wrestling as a sophomore, she gave up Step Team to be more dedicated on the mat," Allen said.

Allen also noted the broader impact of Olusesi's success in a sport that has been rapidly growing for girls across Minnesota.

"She is one of the trailblazers in female wrestling in the state and for putting Robbinsdale on the map for female wrestlers," Allen said. "Over the past four years, there has been growth from roughly 250 females to close to 2,000 in the 2025-2026 season."

For Olusesi, representing Cooper at the state level has been one of the most meaningful parts of her wrestling experience.

"Personally, for me, it means a lot to know I can just do this just because I tried it out," she said. "Being able to represent Cooper in this light for three years consecutively makes me even happier to bring upon a good representation of what the Cooper students are capable of and what I am capable of."

## STATE

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## Hawks place in BestPrep contest top 20

The theme of this year's project, which was worked on during AVID classes, revolved around financial literacy



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Ellen Hakala (10) and Adelina Carscadden (10) are the latest Cooper students to be honored by BestPrep.

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES  
Quill staff writer

Two Cooper students are earning statewide recognition after placing in the top 20 of the 2026 BestPrep Student Spotlight Competition, an achievement that highlights not only their academic strengths, but also their creativity.

Ellen Hakala (10) and Adelina Carscadden (10) were among more than 200 Minnesota high school students who submitted projects responding to a prompt centered on financial freedom. The competition, sponsored by ECMC Group and hosted by BestPrep, challenged students to define what financial freedom means to them and explore how financial literacy can impact both individuals and communities.

The top 20 winners were recognized at BestPrep's Educational Forum on February 11 at the Minneapolis Convention Center, an event that brought together students, educators and business leaders to discuss economic and social issues.

For Hakala, the inspiration to participate came from both her classroom environment and the encouragement of others.

"I was inspired to submit my work to BestPrep mainly by the former Cooper AVID students who had placed in previous years, along with my AVID teacher, [Amanda] Lieser," Hakala said. "The way she spoke

about everyone in the classroom having an equal opportunity to share the concept of being finally free, and what it means to us, honestly made me really interested."

Although the topic of financial freedom was initially unfamiliar, Hakala embraced the challenge by writing an essay that combined personal reflection with research.

"Believe it or not, the topic of financial freedom is something I really didn't know, and still am learning, anything

**"I felt so uneducated with the topic even with the research I had done," Ellen Hakala (10) said. "But coming out of the project, I learned there was no right or wrong experience; it was purely how you could represent your own experiences and connect that to the outside world."**

about," she said. "Despite this, I wrote an essay answering the prompt based on my experiences as a whole along with family experiences, and I also did research."

One statistic in particular stood out to Hakala during the process of working on the project.

"I found out over 77 percent of Americans aren't financially stable, and knowing this only made me more engaged in the topic," Hakala said. "I wanted to dive deeper."

Hakala's essay centered on the idea that improving financial literacy can strengthen entire

communities.

"My main thought when creating my submission was, 'If more people learn how to deal with a financial crisis, communities will generally be happier as a whole,'" Hakala said.

Even with a clear message, Hakala found the writing process challenging at times.

"One of the most challenging parts of writing this essay was connecting it more personally to me," she said. "I kept replaying the prompt question in my mind and had trouble putting what felt like the right words down."

Hakala said she also struggled with self-doubt regarding her knowledge of the topic.

"I felt so uneducated with the topic even with the research I had done," Hakala said. "But coming out of the project, I learned there was no right or wrong experience; it was purely how you could represent your own experiences and connect that to the outside world."

When Hakala learned she had placed in the top 20, the recognition came as a surprise.

"I was really shocked and almost overwhelmed in a good way," she said. "I was really happy someone read my writing and felt it was good enough to place."

Hakala said she believes the experience may shape her future plans.

"This experience could influence my future goals of going to a four-year college and possi-

bly spark interest in what major I choose," Hakala said.

Meanwhile, Carscadden's path to the competition was a bit different, but equally meaningful. She said her classmates played a major role in encouraging her to submit her work.

"Mainly, all my friends were my inspiration, because it was like a grade for AVID, so they just brought me up to submit my work," Carscadden said.

Instead of writing an essay, Carscadden took a creative approach by crafting a poem accompanied by artwork. Her submission told the story of a character facing financial hardship and eventual recovery.

"It was a poem about this guy who got kicked out of the house and had no money," she said. "Then he got into a bad drinking problem and was homeless, and then he finally started to realize how to bring it back up."

Carscadden's narrative followed the character's journey toward financial stability.

"He ended up buying a house and just being good at financial things," Carscadden said.

Combining poetry with visual art added an extra layer of complexity to Carscadden's project.

"I had a drawing with it too, so drawing that and knowing how to put the poem all together was probably the most challenging part," she said.

Through the process of working on the project, Carscadden gained a deeper understanding of financial literacy.

"I learned a lot more about financial literacy, especially when I went into the competition," she said.

Much like Hakala, Carscadden was surprised by her success.

"I was really excited," Carscadden said. "I wasn't really expecting it because there were a bunch of submissions."

The experience has already begun to influence how Carscadden thinks about her future.

"The project really inspired me by knowing what to do with my money now and how to save up," she said. "This will be helpful when I go into college."

Both students' achievements reflect the broader mission of BestPrep, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preparing students for success through business, career and financial literacy education. Since its founding in 1976, BestPrep has served more than 1.8 million students and teachers through hands-on programs and real-world learning opportunities.

## Seniors begin making final college decisions before deadline

Most post-secondary schools in America ask accepted students to notify them of their choice no later than May 1

By CARLIE JONES  
Quill staff writer

Members of the Class of 2026 who are planning on going to college right after graduation are currently in the process of selecting the school of their choice. As they prepare to move on into life after high school, two college-bound Hawks, Alexander Mathis (12) and Gideon Wilson (12), reflected on their college-search process in hopes that their experiences can serve as an example to other seniors who are in the middle of the same process and to juniors who may just be starting their journey toward college.

Mathis said he started taking his college plans seriously in his junior year. After participating in the district's HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) tour experience and visiting the campuses of Howard University, Coppin State University, Morgan State University and Norfolk State University, he realized his true preference to attend a

HBCU school. Additionally, he said he wanted to pick a campus that featured a good community, friendly people and programs that benefitted his career interests.

"The biggest factor was location, weather, how big the school is and the programs they had," he said. "[I also considered] if they are private or public and looked at their graduation rate."

As he narrowed his choices of college, Mathis said his next task was writing his application essay. Mathis said that writing his essays about his journey and goals helped clarify his future ambitions.

"For me, I was really stuck about writing something personal or a surface level, but when I started to dive deep, there was this question that stood out to me: 'Tell us about a time things didn't go your way.' So, I put my life story into it because they wanted to know about me. My essay is about moving to the U.S. and the difference between living here and there and how much I want

to have a better life," Mathis said.

In order to pay for college, Mathis said he has had part-time jobs since he was in tenth grade. Working since sophomore year to save for college has given Mathis confidence about his financial future.

"I saved a lot for my college tuition, and based on my academic success by going to class and getting good grades, I should be able to get a scholarship, so I'm not really worried about it," he said.

Mathis' advice to other students working on their own journey to college is to be prepared.

"Plan early, stay patient and consider all options," he said. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."

Much like Mathis, Wilson said he paid close attention to what each potential college prioritizes when considering the schools he might attend. Specifically, he looked at the majors they offer, their campus life and the quality of their teaching.

"I also was mindful of the

costs, especially for further-away colleges, so I am looking for the ones that are closer to home or within Minnesota," he said.

As he has worked on his applications, Wilson said his mother and his uncle have been chief role models. Inspired by his mother's assertion that college is an opportunity, Wilson said he tried to write his application essay in response to a prompt that allowed him to discuss his personal values. Meanwhile, Wilson said his uncle has a master's degree, which has motivated him to apply to well-respected schools.

Overall, while he admits to being nervous about navigating his upcoming college journey, he said he is also excited. He said other seniors and juniors can enjoy a similarly successful path to college by following some straightforward advice.

"Keep your grades up, get those recommendation letters in early, and stay focused, just like you would in high school," Wilson said.

## Taking extra math classes a good idea

Although only six math credits are needed to earn one's diploma, enrolling in additional math courses can be beneficial

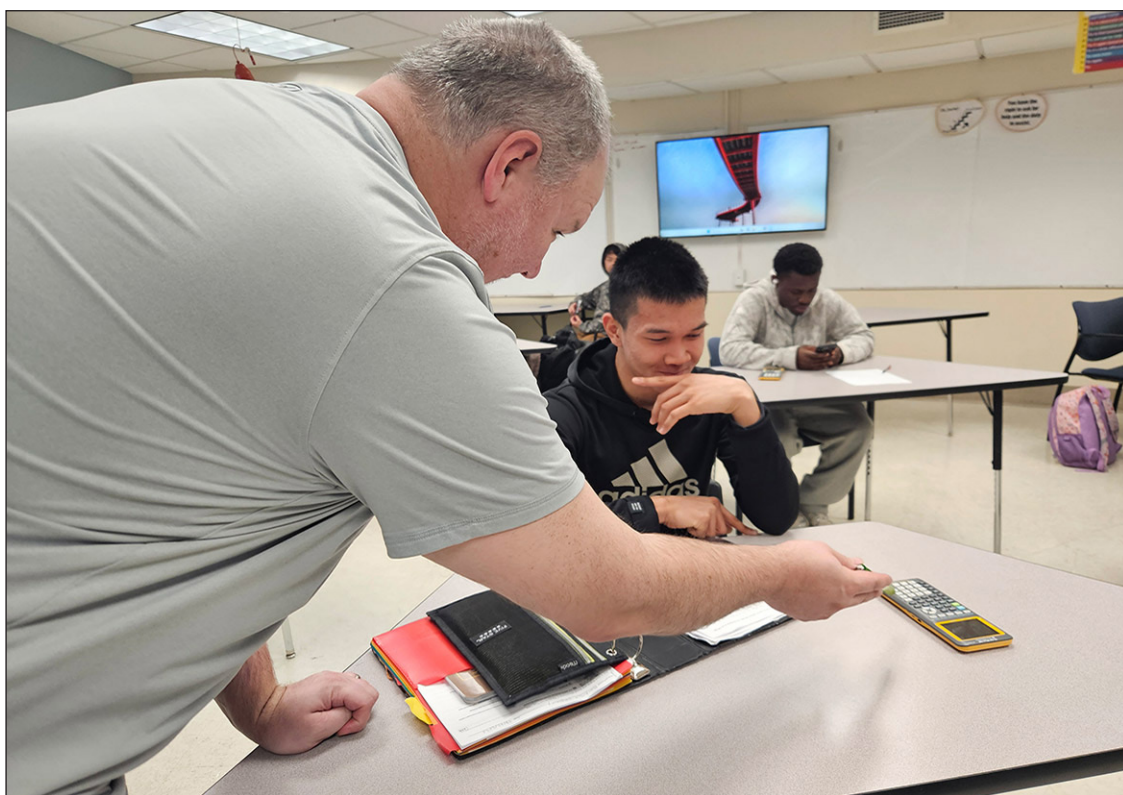


Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Timothy Darsow consults with students doing work in his sixth period IB Math SL class on March 13.

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES  
Quill staff writer

I hate math. I find it annoying and confusing. I get so frustrated when math is on my homework list every night after school. However, despite all my dislike for math, I do understand the importance of it. They would not require math as a core class if it was not important. Tim Darsow, a math teacher at Cooper, helped me understand some key components about the importance of math. It is with his insights that I want to explore the many benefits of taking math all four years of high school.

First, there have been multiple studies that have shown if you take four years of math, you are more likely to be successful in college. One study from the Mathematical Association of

America (MAA) makes a bold claim: "Does this one factor really hinder a student's likelihood of reaching the goal of earning a bachelor's degree? Yes, in fact, it does." The study then proceeds to back this up by showing that California seniors who took four years of math had increases in college attendance. Similarly, an analysis from the REDEE Center found that "the choice to take a senior-year math course increases the chances that a student will earn a bachelor's degree within six years by an amazing 15 percent." Clearly, these are convincing statistics about the importance of taking math.

Second, some colleges now require you to take four years of math to get accepted. As a result, it is important to research the colleges you might attend in order to make sure your math

credits align with the school's requirements. It is extremely important to give yourself the opportunity to attend any school you might like. By doing something as straightforward as taking math all four years of high school, you can help solidify your path into college.

Third, math is a subject that develops skills beyond understanding numbers and how to manipulate them. According to Darsow, math helps you learn how "to think and to analyze" information. He added that this skill is widely applicable, even in seemingly unrelated situations like figuring out whether information you see in a meme is trustworthy or not.

Darsow makes an excellent point: math is always about questioning the "how." Let us say your peer gives you the answer to a math problem. How

do you know the answer is right? How did they get their answer? How do you know the information that is being given to you is not false? Sure, you can just take the answer and move on with your day, but should you really just accept everything at face value without question? Math makes you look at each step you are taking and defend why you are taking that step. As we grow older, it is important to build the critical thinking skills that are at the heart of any math class.

Unfortunately, one reason many students avoid taking more math classes than they are required to is due to the stigma surrounding math. According to Darsow, "society tells us that only smart people can do math." Clearly, this is an opinion with which he strongly disagrees. Upon reflecting on this stigma, I realized that Darsow is correct. Most students I know share the opinion that only naturally smart people do great in math, science or engineering. In reality, success in math class is more about the hard work one puts into the learning process. Sure, one person may grasp a math concept faster than another, but that does not mean that the latter person cannot learn the concept. There have been many times in my math class when the "smart kid" is stumped by a question that is quickly and correctly answered by someone unfairly labeled as "not smart."

Overall, it is extremely beneficial for students to take math all four years of high school. It has been proven by multiple studies that our performance in college increases based on our math experiences and that taking math classes gives us more opportunities when it comes to selecting colleges. Perhaps most importantly, math helps us build our critical thinking skills. While math can be hard, we should not choose to avoid the hard things just because they are uncomfortable for us. We all should take on the challenge of extra math classes.

### From the Editors

## Too many Hawks are dismissive about attendance

With summer nearly here, it is time to get serious about coming to school

One of the most important things students can do to reach their goal of having a successful school year is simply attending school every day. By attending class regularly, or by checking in online on a day when you might be home with an illness, students are more likely to keep up with daily lessons and assignments and take quizzes and tests on time. Most students who have poor attendance are likely to be behind in classes and could possibly end up failing. Just by being present at school, students can learn basic skills such as communicating, being on time and dealing with deadlines. These are skills that will lead to great success in the real world after high school.

Students may have really good reasons for being absent and this is where communication plays a big role. A student's absence may fall under two categories: excused or unexcused. An excused absence is normally when the student has a doctor's appointment, is dealing with a family emergency or is coping with an illness. In order to get the absence excused, a parent needs to contact the school's attendance office. Additionally, a doctor's note may be needed upon the student's return to school depending on the situation.

In contrast, when a student chooses to skip or miss school because they did not feel like being at school that day, the absence will be unexcused. This type of absence will be added to the student's permanent attendance record. When a student misses more than 10 days of school in one month, and these absences are all unexcused, the parent or guardian will typically be contacted by the school about the child's absences. The student may even be ordered to juvenile court for truancy.

What happens if you attend school every day but somehow you see absences on your attendance record? If this happens to you, the first thing you should do is talk to your counselor or check with the attendance clerk. When you look at your attendance record and you see more than three or four tardies, that may explain why you have an absence.

There are also excused and unexcused tardies. If you are late without a pass and arrive at class more than 10 minutes after the bell, then it is simply an unexcused absence. If you were in a meeting with your counselor or missed your school bus, those would be considered excused tardies only if you get a note.

Most students may not understand that attendance is an important requirement to move on to the next grade level. Without enough hours of presence at school, the student may not get their credits because some lessons require the student to be at school. Absent students are required to make up any missing assignments on their own and they will not have all the time in the world to do so. It is also the absent student's responsibility to talk with all of their teachers to see if they missed anything. This is why it is important to make sure you are at school and on time so that you will not have to worry about any missing materials.

It is also important to keep in mind that proper attendance is about more than just showing up physically. First, it is about getting to school on time so that you learn the importance of punctuality and do not miss important information in class. Similarly, attendance includes actually

**ATTENDANCE**  
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## Choosing a college leads to excitement, anxiety

Many seniors are facing the stress of making "the right choice" when it comes to selecting their college for next fall

By DIANA SANCHEZ MORALES  
Quill staff writer

Choosing a college is supposed to be one of the most exciting moments in a student's life. However, for many students, including myself, it feels more stressful than exciting. I remember sitting at my desk scrolling through dozens of college websites, trying to imagine my future, but instead feeling confused and anxious. Everyone kept asking, "Where are you going to school?" as if the answer should be simple. In reality, choosing a college is overwhelming because of financial pressure, high expectations and the fear of making the wrong decision.

One major reason choosing a college is so difficult is the cost. College tuition is expensive, and for many students, money becomes the most important factor in their decision. Instead of focusing on what school feels right, students often have to choose based on what they can afford. This affects not only students



Photo by AMANDA LIESER

The college fair on October 28 gave Hawks a chance to check out schools.

but also their families, who may feel stress about paying for tuition. Because of this, what should be an exciting decision turns into a financial burden, making the process much more stressful than it should be.

Another reason choosing a college is difficult is the pressure one

may receive from other people. Parents, teachers and friends often have strong opinions about where a student should go. Some expect students to attend prestigious universities, while others push for schools close to home. This pressure can make students feel like they are not choosing for them-

selves, but for others. As a result, students may doubt their own choices and feel anxious about disappointing the people around them, which adds even more stress to the decision.

Finally, there is the fear of making the wrong choice. Many students feel like this decision will determine their entire future, which makes it incredibly intimidating. Questions like, "What if I don't like it?" or "What if I choose the wrong school?" can cause constant worry. This fear can prevent students from feeling confident and excited about their decision, even after they made it.

In the end, choosing a college is both exciting and overwhelming, but the stress surrounding it can become intense. Financial concerns, outside pressure and fear of making mistakes all contribute to the struggle. Schools and communities should do more to support students during this process by offering better guidance and reducing unnecessary pressure. Choosing a college should be about finding the right fit, not about fear or stress.

## PROM COMMITTEE FINALIZING PLANS FOR 2026 EVENT continued from page 1

ing," she said.

The prom is far from a last-minute event, which is why Obranovich always books the venue a whole year ahead of time. To choose a venue, the organizers try to strike a balance between cost and attractiveness. They also need to make sure their reservations are made on time, since other proms and weddings are also looking for venues.

Even if the staff likes the idea of changing the venue often to give the students different kinds of

experiences throughout the years, this year will be the second one that prom is held at Leopold's Mississippi Gardens.

According to Obranovich, the biggest challenge faced by the organizers of prom is to make sure that students are aware when tickets must be purchased and what forms need to be completed in advance, especially if they are inviting someone from another school.

To keep people safe during the event, Obranovich said several mea-

sures are taken.

"Every prom guest that does not go to Cooper needs to have paperwork signed by their school stating that they are in good standing to be able to attend prom. All the regular Cooper school rules apply at prom, including the use of chemicals or alcohol. We have a lot of chaperones at prom as well. However, Cooper students always rise to the occasion and we have never had anything but a fun and safe night at a Cooper prom," Obranovich said.

Elena Sobrecueva (12) and Mathilde Klausen (12) are two Cooper foreign exchange students who said they are excited to experience an American prom.

"We are looking forward to wearing beautiful long dresses and heels, taking pictures with our friends and enjoying every part of the day, from getting ready together, to dinner and, finally, dancing the night away. It's a dream experience we will never forget," Sobrecueva said.

## APP DESIGNED TO INFORM USERS OF SCHOOL SECURITY ISSUES continued from page 1

ful in keeping us up to date on what was going on," she said.

Social Studies teacher Chris DiSalvi said that while useful, the app can be difficult to navigate.

"I wouldn't say it has been easy. We have never had formal training on the app, so I am still figuring it out during drills. I would like to learn more about how to use it effectively in case of a crisis," he said.

Nelson noted that the system is always evolving and improving, and that building administrators are working together with staff and teachers to ensure that the Raptor app is performing as expected.

"We are always looking for ways to improve things. When we receive feedback from staff, the admin team passes that feedback on to the district," he said.

Overall, the Raptor app's im-

plementation, while not always perfect, has led to an overall increase in safety for students and staff.

"I think it is a good tool to have, especially in case of a crisis. However, it is hard to tangibly measure how much safer it has kept us because we haven't had such a large crisis that required school-wide communication on the app," DiSalvi said.

Meanwhile, Lieser said the presence of the app is helpful from an emergency communication perspective.

"I think safety has been improved overall with the app because we didn't have a system of communication previously that every staff member had access to. This has been helpful so everyone knows what's going on, not just the staff with walkie talkies," Lieser said.

## Attack on Iran is a senseless waste of lives

Trump's latest war of choice brings with it zero advantages, countless drawbacks

By BRAYLON NIX  
Quill staff writer

Israel and the United States launched surprise airstrikes on multiple sites across Iran on February 28, ultimately killing Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini and numerous other Iranian officials. Iran responded with missile and drone strikes against Israel, U.S. military bases and U.S.-allied countries in the region. In the weeks that have passed since this initial attack, the war between the U.S., Israel and Iran has continued with more bombs and more deaths. This is sickening to me for many reasons.

First of all, I think U.S. soldiers are being used as cannon fodder. While the government says they care about the troops, they really do not. It is typically the case that when soldiers come home from war with PTSD, no one will care for them. As past wars have shown, many of these soldiers end up homeless or killing themselves. In fact, veterans make up 11 percent of U.S. homelessness. My fear is that the aftermath of the war in Iran for our soldiers will be similar to what was seen after the Vietnam War.

Aside from the impact on soldiers is the impact of the war on Iranian civilians. Perhaps the worst event so far is the U.S. bombing of a girl's primary school in the southern Iranian city of Minab, which killed around 150 people and wounded around 100. Many students are among the dead, which is sickening. Kids are dying and no one in our government seems to care. In the end, the kids' lives will be nothing but a statistic and the government will say, "We are sorry, but it had to happen." They are not really sorry because it is not the children of the billionaires who are dying.

Of course, this war is not just affecting the U.S. troops and Iranian civilians, it will now affect U.S. civilians. The White House recently said that a military draft is a possibility. This is important because a draft can be used to force people to fight in a war of choice because the people in charge of our government see Iran as an "imminent threat." For those Americans who might say, "This does not matter. We should be proud to fight for our country," what will you do if you get drafted? Will you still say everyone should be drafted or will you say that process is unfair and unjust?

Ultimately, this war is terrible and unnecessary. The U.S. troops are being used as cannon fodder, kids are being killed and people who want no part of this war will potentially be forced to fight. If you think this is unfair, do something about it. Contact your representatives and speak out against it every chance you get. When they call your name, will you want to fight?

## Security practices improving at Cooper

Whether it is scanning IDs or making use of restorative sessions to avoid fights, the school is feeling safer

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES  
Quill staff writer

I will always remember the time in my sophomore year when there was a week of incidents during which weapons got into the school. Specifically, there was a toy gun, a real gun and a machete. This stretch of days caused anxiety for not only the students but for the staff as well. Nothing is worse than feeling unsafe in an environment that is meant to be secure. Thankfully, though, the security in the building has improved and changed throughout the last two years I have been here.

Two years ago, the school started to require students to scan in, which was an important step in making the building more secure. I remember that most of my peers were annoyed. The first attempt to do the ID scan was a disaster, of course. Scanners were not working, people were forgetting where their IDs were located, people did not know their student numbers and lines were long and not moving. However, after everyone got the hang of it, the process starting running a lot more smoothly.

The move to a scanning system was intended to make sure that anyone who does not belong in the school does not enter and roam the halls. According to Head Principal Shaunece Smith, "We found that was an area that seemed a little loose for us, so we made that change to ID scanning a few years ago." I agree that the move to a scanning system has been beneficial and it has helped administrators address incidents when outside students try to get in the building.

Another strategy that was increased this year to improve security is the use of restorative practices. These practices include using restorative conversations in order to reduce conflict and resolve conflicts before they become larger issues that can have an impact on school security. According to Smith, these practices "have reduced the numbers of fights here at Cooper." For that reason alone, the impact of restorative practices has been a positive one for making the



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Hallway supervisors like Sean O'Toole (left) have been more visible throughout the current school year.

school safe.

One reason restorative practices can help make the building safe is that they focus on repairing harm. These practices were first developed by the Legal Rights Center, which describes their importance in this way: "We envision a world in which all youth, particularly Black, indigenous and youth of color, are valued as integral members of their communities and are not pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline." This philosophy is an important one that reinforces why restorative practices are important and why their use at Cooper has aided school security.

Thanks to Cooper's decision to implement these practices, students generally feel more comfortable talking to staff members when an issue arises. When comparing my freshman year to my senior year, the number of fights has gone down a lot, which can be linked to the expanded use of restorative

practices. Ultimately, when a student feels heard, they are less likely to act out and pose a threat to building security.

Another aspect of the building's improved security is the increased number of security educational assistants (EAs) in the hallways. According to Smith, these staff members "know our kids, so they notice someone that

they see a disruption in the hallway. The security EAs are the eyes and ears of the school, which I find really reassuring from a safety perspective.

All in all, I believe the security in the building has gotten better and we need to give the Cooper administrators and staff members credit for that. It is not easy to keep an eye on every single student,

but they do a pretty good job. At the same time, I think it is important that Cooper students also help protect the safety of the school. Students need to speak up when something is wrong. If you hear that someone is planning something dangerous that is going to harm

themselves, someone else or all of us, you need to say something. You can tell an adult that you trust, approach one of the school's resource officers or leave a tip on the Say Something website. Every student has the power to keep the building safe.

doesn't look like our students. Usually, they are dead on." The presence of the EAs helps keep the building safe because they let the principals know if they see a person in the building who does not belong here, if they see a conflict brewing between students or if

themselves, someone else or all of us, you need to say something. You can tell an adult that you trust, approach one of the school's resource officers or leave a tip on the Say Something website. Every student has the power to keep the building safe.

## Problem of discarded trash needs to be addressed

Student mobility during the day, especially during the lunch period, is leading to garbage being left around the school

By JA'LAYIAH MCCLINTON  
Quill staff writer

Littering at school does not just affect you, it affects everybody around you. We come to school every day, and nobody wants to walk into a dirty, messy classroom, cafeteria, hallway or bathroom. A clean space represents a fresh start; it is like you are walking into a new day ready to focus. When the school is littered, it can mess with your mood and make you feel unmotivated. It may even make you feel like you would rather just go back home.

Our environment really does affect how we feel and that does not just apply to our time at school. When things are clean, it feels like a reset or a clean slate. Tidy surroundings help us think more clearly, feel better and even be more positive throughout the day. In fact, I remember on one occasion helping a teacher clean



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

If Hawks would throw out their own waste, this issue would immediately go away.

up her classroom. It not only brightened the room, it even made me feel a little better about being in class.

However, when trash is everywhere, it gives off more negative energy. If you look around

the school after breakfast and lunch, there are wrappers and discarded food scraps everywhere. These items can be seen not only in the hallways and classrooms, but also in the bathrooms, which adds more to the dirty aspect of

those rooms. Seeing these items around the school makes me feel less motivated to be here and a bit disappointed in my classmates.

Ultimately, the problem of trash in the building is not even hard for students to fix. There are trash cans all around the school, including in the hallways and inside classrooms. It takes just a few seconds to throw something away, but it makes a big difference for everyone else in the school. At the end of the day, cleaning up the trash around school is about respect for yourself, your school and the people around you. If we all do our part, we can create a better environment that actually makes us want to be here.

So what can you do to help? Pick up trash when you see it, remind your friends to do the same and help keep your classroom and school tidy every day. Small actions add up to a cleaner, happier school for everyone.

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# Film adaptation of *Medea* is iconic

Starring legendary opera singer Maria Callas, *Medea* is a historical drama that brings an ancient tale to life



Photo by SAN MARCO SPA

Maria Callas is consistently compelling in *Medea*, her one and only foray into making a feature film.

By TESSA LENOCH  
Quill staff writer

“It’s a movie about a woman who beheads her brother, stabs her children and sends her lover’s wife up in flames. For Maria Callas, it’s natural.” This is the tagline of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s 1969 film *Medea*, an adaptation of the iconic ancient myth. A faithful retelling of the story, the film is dramatic, artistic, meditative and bubbling under the surface with an ancient evil.

World-renowned opera singer Maria Callas plays the titular role of Medea, starring in her first and only screen acting role. Throughout the film, Callas communicates with her eyes, often moving

through the plot in silence. Each moment Medea is on screen, it is as though she engulfs the screen, creating a dark void that both strikes fear and lures viewers into a trance. Words always seem on the tip of her tongue, restrained like the violence and anger that emanates around the character and the plot as a whole. Medea is a force, and she is treated as such, both by the film itself and every character around her. The score surges with her, the land moves with her, the characters fear her. Callas’ opera experience and lack of other credits makes it seem as though she is specifically designed for this role and she owns it entirely.

At the same time, the film is

sometimes confusing, especially for those unfamiliar with the original myth. Some reviews even characterize it as a “tough watch,” remarking on its slow pace and dream-like sequences as drawbacks. However, I fully disagree with this analysis. I recommend viewers be familiar with the myth to enjoy the movie to its fullest, but I found its pace to be perfect. It often lingers on shots, whether they be of the environment or of the faces of characters, which allows viewers to fully sink their teeth into the beautiful landscapes and subtleties of each actor’s performance. The score hums in the background, absorbing new noises seamlessly and slowly

drawing in more, thereby building suspense that leads to jaw-dropping crescendos. The film is also cruel and unforgiving, much like the societies it depicts, conveying the story at its most simple level. There is no time or patience for fluff, nor will there be long expositions delivered by characters staring into the camera. Instead, Pasolini hints at the plot and the story’s metaphors through the lens of the camera itself.

Lastly, the costume design is downright jaw-dropping. The performers are draped in intricately sewn fabrics and detailed bronze jewelry. Each costume looks straight out of a strange combination of a history museum and a runway. As a result, every frame of the film is worthy of a pause and an analysis as the costumes change from scene to scene. Costume designer Piero Tosi explained that the various environments of Colchis and Corinth were assigned their own color schemes, and the costumes follow those guidelines in order to create more cohesive environmental storytelling and emphasize the differences between the two societies. Deliberate decisions like these help add to the film’s impact.

Some students at Cooper have read *Medea* through their senior year college-in-schools English class. It is this group of seniors that might appreciate the artistry of this film. However, even if you have never been forced to read the play, I recommend giving it a chance and then watching this film adaptation. Its cinematography alone is enough to make it worth it in the end. I give *Medea* four stars out of five.

## Independent film *Terrifier* packs a gruesome punch

The original 2018 movie helped turn Art the Clown into a horror movie icon

By ANGEL JARQUIN RAMIREZ  
Quill staff writer

One great horror movie many people have not seen is *Terrifier*. The director of this movie is Damien Leone and the studio that released it is Dark Age Cinema. The movie first debuted on October 15, 2016 at the Telluride Horror Festival. *Terrifier* was eventually widely released in 2018. In my opinion, no young kids should watch this movie because it has so much gore in it. However, if you do love gore like me, then I recommend you watch it.

Let me begin by saying this film is one of my comfort movies. Given its subject matter, I do not know why, but it just is. Overall, I think this movie falls somewhere in between good and bad because there are some parts in the movie that are truly gut-wrenching. Despite that, it is a movie I enjoy watching again and again.

The main characters in this movie are Art the Clown, Kanell, Scaffidi and Catherine Corcoran. Art the Clown’s main goal in the film is pretty much just to cause pain, instill maximum terror and perform mutilations for his own amusement. The story takes place on Halloween in the year 2017 in Miles County, New York.

One aspect of the movie that I enjoy is the characterization of Art the Clown. For some odd reason, the way in which his character is designed intrigues me. He is so nonchalant yet so terrifying at the same time, which is a tough balancing act to pull off. In many sequences, he does not even talk, but he still communicates through his actions.

A second character I find interesting but underdeveloped is Steve, the pizza shop worker. He is the first character to be killed in the movie, but it bothers me that Art has no reason to kill him. Given the fact that Steve did nothing to Art the Clown, this murder seems more arbitrary than the others in the movie.

Another character I am fond of is Victoria Heyes. She is a college student that later gets decapitated by Art the Clown. Although she only has a little bit of screentime, her character makes an impact on viewers. I enjoy seeing her on screen when I re-watch the film.

As I stated earlier, you should only see *Terrifier* if you can stand watching gore. This whole movie is mainly about gore and the special effects look pretty believable. If you cannot stand gore, I do not recommend watching this movie. I rate *Terrifier* four out of five stars.

## STATE

continued from page 2

Olusesi’s dedication to wrestling has come alongside a demanding academic schedule. As a diploma candidate in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, Olusesi has had to carefully manage her time during the busy season.

“Being able to balance an all-IB class load during this time is tricky for me, as I have a ton more schoolwork than usual,” she said. “I usually just do them as they are due and communicate if I need extra time on work if necessary.”

Olusesi emphasized that communication with teachers was key to staying on top of her responsibilities.

“Lucky for me, this time for state, I didn’t have a hard-deadline summative,” she said. “But I still needed to communicate as to why some assignments might be late around that week.”

Although her high school wrestling career has come to a close, Olusesi said she is not ready to leave wrestling behind completely. Instead, she is considering new opportunities to continue developing in the sport.

“My goal is to consider freestyle for girls,” she said. “Depending on how that goes and if I like wrestling outside of the Cooper program, I most likely will consider committing to a college for wrestling.”

# Fans of pro wrestling will enjoy inventive *WWE2K25*

The 2025 release gives players the chance to enter the ring as any of their favorite WWE competitors

By ANGEL JARQUIN RAMIREZ  
Quill staff writer

*WWE2K25* is a recent video game designed by Dino Zuconni. The game’s creative director is Lynn Jinks, the gameplay developer is Bryan Williams and the gameplay designer is Cornell Gunter. The studio behind the game is Visual Concepts, which released the game on September 6, 2025. I chose to review this game simply because I have loved WWE since I can remember and I still do to this day. In my opinion, you should give this game a chance because not only can you get to customize your own wrestler, you can do many other things like win championships, put opponents through tables and make your opponents bleed. This game is a good way to get your anger out and it is fun to play against other people online if you have PlayStation Plus, which is on PS4 and PS5.

The main characters of this game are the wrestlers. The goal of each wrestler is simply to defeat



Photo by 2K

The game accurately recreates the signature moves of each wrestler.

their opponents, win matches and win championships. The matches take place wherever and whenever you choose. You can compete during the daytime or nighttime in *WrestleMania*, *Smackdown*, *Raw*, *King of the Ring*, *Queen’s Crown* and more.

One aspect of the game that

I enjoy is the ability to customize your wrestler. For example, I have a customized Jennifer Santos who I like using because she never gives up. While she has lost matches against other opponents, the character never gives up no matter what she faces.

A second WWE wrestler I

have used in the game is Rhea Ripley. Much like my other customized wrestler, Ripley never gives up in the game and she is fierce and brutal in her matches. In effect, Ripley as a wrestler in *WWE2K25* is exactly like her persona in real life: totally dominant.

A third WWE wrestler that I enjoy utilizing in the game is Rey Mysterio. Although he might be shorter than the majority of his opponents, he never gives up nor backs down. Much like the other wrestlers in the game, the attire his character wears in *WWE2K25* is exactly like it is in real life. I have always loved Rey Mysterio and the video game does the real wrestler justice.

Overall, *WWE2K25* is a good game to release your anger. I love the WWE video games simply because they are just so fun to play. I rate this game four out of five stars because there are some times when the game makes me super mad. However, I still recommend giving it a try. I think any kind of player would like this video game.

# *Monday's Not Coming* delivers satisfying thrills

Tiffany D. Jackson was inspired to write the novel following news stories about the disappearance of Black girls in the U.S.

By JA'LAYIAH MCCLINTON  
Quill staff writer

*Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany D. Jackson is a young adult novel about a girl whose best friend mysteriously disappears. The novel was first published in 2018 by Katherine Tegen Books and earned positive reviews. In interviews, Jackson said the story was inspired by numerous disappearances of black girls across the United States. If you are looking for a book that keeps you on edge from begin-

ning to end, *Monday's Not Coming* is truly unforgettable.

The story follows a young girl, Claudia, whose best friend, Monday, suddenly stops showing up to school. At first, it seems like a normal absence, but as days turn into weeks, things do not add up. No one seems to be looking for Monday except her best friend and that is when the real journey begins.

As she searches for answers, Claudia uncovers pieces of Monday’s life that were hidden beneath the surface. Through diary

entries and memories, secrets slowly come to light, each one more unsettling than the last. For example, there is a moment when Monday shows up to school with unexplained bruises and another involving a tense interaction at a party with someone connected to her disappearance. Incidents such as these hint that something much deeper is going on, which keeps the reader engaged.

This book does an incredible job of building suspense. This is especially the case when Monday suddenly stops showing up

at school. At first, it seems normal, but her friend soon realizes something much more sinister is happening. Determined to find the truth, Claudia sets out on her mission to discover what really happened to Monday, which keeps the suspense going.

Overall, *Monday's Not Coming* is a powerful and haunting read that stays with you even after you finish it. If you like mysteries with deeper meaning and unexpected twists, this is definitely a book worth picking up. I rate this novel five out of five stars.

## TOO MANY HAWKS ARE DISMISSIVE ABOUT ATTENDANCE continued from page 3

going to your classes when you are in the building instead of wandering around the hallways. By attending class and doing so on time, you will be able to get your daily assignments done, get good grades and earn your credits

toward graduation.

School attendance is an important factor for any student who is trying to reach the goal of having a successful school year. If you are ever absent for personal reasons, make sure you

have a parent or guardian contact the school or bring in some sort of note when you return. Students should try their best to be at school and in class before the bell rings every day. Additionally, students should show up ready to

work, because what is the purpose of going to school if you are not going to do any work? Finally, make sure you are communicating with your teachers and getting your work done if you are ever absent or tardy.

## Premier Performers

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

### Damaris Pineda

By TYLER GOODMAN  
Quill staff writer

Damaris Pineda (12) has spent the past four years involved in choir and theater, activities she said helped her grow both personally and artistically.

"I joined choir because I love singing," she said. "I was going through a hard time and choir gave me something to focus on."

That sense of purpose quickly turned into a passion. Over time, choir became a place where Pineda could express herself and push her musical abilities further. One of her favorite parts of performing is the feeling of making music alongside others.

"I enjoy the community that choir has given me," she said. "I love the vibe that you get when you're singing with a bunch of people."

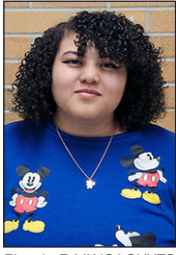


Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

Pineda added that she appreciates the chance to grow as a performer.

"I like how I can improve within the music and challenge myself by creating solos," Pineda said.

One memory stands out among the many moments Pineda has experienced in the arts: earlier this year, her choir class performed with an orchestra for the first time.

"It's been a long journey and seeing where I am and seeing where I was is so amazing," she said.

Outside of choir, Pineda has also found creative freedom in visual arts classes.

"My favorite memories are the times I would sit in the art room working on projects, listening to music and talking with friends," she said.

Next year, Pineda plans to attend college and pursue a career as a psychologist or social worker.

### Shiloh Hartman

By TYLER GOODMAN  
Quill staff writer

Shiloh Hartman (12) has been involved in choir, painting and other creative outlets during her years at Cooper. Hartman currently participates in both Chamber Singers and Bella Voce. She has also been involved in theater in the past and is currently taking a painting class. Of all these many activities, she said that choir has been particularly meaningful.

"I started doing choir for an outlet for the creative energy that I have," Hartman said.

One of the aspects she enjoys most about choir is the challenge that comes with learning new music.

"I enjoy challenging myself and learning different languages, which we sometimes have to do to sing certain

songs," she said. "I also enjoy learning how to sing better."

Some of Hartman's favorite memories come from performing at special venues. Each year, for example, choir students have the opportunity to perform at Orchestra Hall.

"My favorite memories would probably be the fall concerts at Orchestra Hall," Hartman said. "We go there every year and we get to partner with Armstrong."

Hartman also contributes to the choir program as a choir assistant, helping wherever needed in the choir room.

Outside of school, Hartman enjoys reading, working at her job, and continuing her painting at home. After graduation, she plans to attend community college before transferring to a university to study wildlife biology.



Photo by T. GOODMAN

### David Palma Juarez

By TYLER GOODMAN  
Quill staff writer

For David Palma Juarez (12), choir has been a defining part of his high school experience. What started as a simple interest in music during ninth grade has grown into four years of performances, friendships and memorable moments.

"I started as a freshman because of my interest in music," Palma Juarez said. "When I sang in middle school, no one really saw the choir, but in high school, people actually take it seriously."

Beyond the music itself, Palma Juarez said he values the connections he has made through choir.

"I have enjoyed meeting new people and being able to sing," he said.

Performing in front of an audience has also been a highlight of choir. Pal-

ma Juarez said concerts create a special atmosphere that makes the hard work worthwhile.

"The energy of the live audience is always fun to experience," he said. "I enjoy going out to perform at concerts."

As the school year continues, Palma Juarez is looking forward to making the most of his final performances as a high school singer.

"We have a number of spring concerts and performances that I am looking forward to," he said. "As a senior, this will be my last chance to sing at high school."

Outside of choir, Palma Juarez said he enjoys subjects like chemistry and math and appreciates the teachers who make those classes engaging.

After graduation, Palma Juarez plans to attend a technical community college and pursue architecture.



Photo by T. GOODMAN

### Noah Heap

By TYLER GOODMAN  
Quill staff writer

Noah Heap (12) spends much of his time creating music both inside and outside of school.

"I'm currently involved with my own guitar class, which is Guitar Cafe, and I also do arts at home," he said.

Heap's interest in music began early.

"I've been active for a very long time, since I was a little kid," Heap said. "I started doing it because it's where my mind wandered and I just wanted to discover things."

That curiosity continues to drive Heap's creativity today.

"What I enjoy the most about making music and playing guitar is probably picking up on something and having a rhythm and getting in the flow state," he said.

While music is central, Heap also

explored theater for the first time this school year, adding another layer to his artistic experience. Heap was part of the cast of the winter musical, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

"My favorite memories from theater are probably getting to know the people in there," he said. "They're all really good people and they're really funny."

Outside of the arts, Heap enjoys writing lyrics and exploring ideas.

"My hobbies are making music and trying to figure out different philosophies," he said.

After graduation, Heap plans to attend North Hennepin Community College before transferring to a university. No matter where he goes, music will remain part of his life.

"I definitely plan to continue my art-related activities and try to post the music I make," he said.



Photo by T. GOODMAN

## Jazz groups shine in March show

Yearly performance puts spotlight on musicians in Cooper's various jazz ensembles



Photo by KENDALL CARSCADDEN

Under the direction of band teacher Markus Hahn, the concert took place March 26 in the school auditorium.

By TYLER GOODMAN  
Quill staff writer

The Cooper jazz bands performed their combined concert on March 26, featuring several songs played by both Jazz 1 and Jazz 2. While the jazz bands had their own set lists, they also had solos done by multiple performers.

This concert was not the first time the jazz bands performed their music. In fact, they performed some of the same songs at the Pops Concert earlier in the year.

Many students like the Jazz Concert because it gives every member a chance to present what they have learned to an actual audience.

"It gives every kid a chance to show off what they have learned about solos and the different style of music that jazz is," JJ DeGroot (10) said.

Soloing and demonstrating what students learned is not the only thing the musicians liked about the show. One student, Zach Cummings (10), said he enjoyed the individual songs played at the concert.

"I enjoyed the Jazz Concert

very much. My favorite part was definitely the last song Jazz 1 played, 'Sing Sing Sing,'" he said.

Students are not limited to being in only one of the jazz bands that played at the show. Some students like DeGroot and Cummings said that they enjoy being in both bands. Specifically, DeGroot said that he enjoys being in both bands because it gives him different opportunities in each context.

"Being in both jazz bands is a blast," he said. "It allows the people in lower parts in Jazz 1 to take the lead in Jazz 2 and can allow you to learn another instrument if you wanted to."

Cummings said that being in both jazz bands is a unique experience because of the level of music played in each band. Additionally, he added that doubling on instruments was part of the appeal of each band.

"Being in both jazz bands is a unique experience because in Jazz 1, we play harder music and have longer solos, while in Jazz 2, I play a different instrument than what I started on," Cummings said.

Because many students in

Jazz 1 choose to play a different instrument in Jazz 2 for a new experience, the concert provides a chance to showcase various talents.

"Doubling instruments is difficult because you have to often times learn a whole new clef, which changes a lot of what you know about your primary instrument," Cummings said.

While doubling on instruments in jazz is not required, some students said that it can make every day in band more interesting because at some point your main instrument can get boring. One student doubling instruments, DeGroot, said that everyone should try doubling because it can bring "a breath of fresh air to band."

Most students in jazz recommend that band students join either jazz band because it is something new to try and it culminates in events like the Jazz Concert. For DeGroot, playing at concerts or at locations outside of school is an experience that he finds enjoyable.

"In Jazz 1, you get to play for so many different things throughout the year, which is always a blast to be at," DeGroot said.

## Hawks take part in district orchestra concert

The annual festival is designed to show elementary school musicians what they can do in the future

By TYLER GOODMAN  
Quill staff writer

Cooper orchestra-related groups such as Chamber Strings and Concertino joined their counterparts from Armstrong and other district schools for the Orchestra Spring Festival on March 7.

At the annual Orchestra Spring Festival, students ranging from fifth grade to high school get together to perform. However, according to orchestra student Robert Nichols (12), they were not performing just to perform, they were doing it to show the younger musicians "what is possible if they keep playing."

According to Cooper orchestra director KC Thompson, this concert provides a glimpse of the entire district orchestra program.

"[It is an] annual orchestra showcase of talent, from beginners all the way to Chamber, our top high school group," Thompson said.

While the high school musicians were performing to an audience, the main focus was to show the fifth graders from across the district what is possible if they really try and push themselves as performers.

"It also gives our fifth graders, the beginning group, a chance to see where they will be in middle and high school,"

Thompson said.

This concert was different from previous ones due to the fourth grade orchestra students not being present. One student in Cooper orchestra, Mattea Heap (10), not only attended and played at the festival this year, but also when they were a fourth grader, which was their first concert at the time.

"I was really excited and bittersweet about it because it's my second time performing with Chamber Strings," Heap said. "I, as a fourth grader, did attend

"It's truly special to play new music," Thompson said.

Over the course of the event, there were hundreds of district students performing. While this made it more fun for the students, it also required more effort because you have to work together with those hundreds of other people.

"Having over 350 string players play at the same time is a huge feat that students take on," Thompson said.

According to Nichols, the festival went well and left many of the attending audience members entertained.

"The spring festival went really well. All of the parents left with smiles on their faces," he said.

Additionally, Heap said they were surprised by the quality of the performances of the eighth and

"I was really excited and bittersweet about it because it's my second time performing with Chamber Strings," Mattea Heap (10) said. "I, as a fourth grader, did attend that concert as my first concert and I remember hearing the better ones play, and I'm just like, 'Wow.' Now, I'm one of the better ones."

that concert as my first concert and I remember hearing the better ones play, and I'm just like, 'Wow.' Now, I'm one of the better ones."

At the festival, the orchestras play songs ranging from pop to classical to other genres. This year, Thompson said many of the selected songs were more exciting.

"This year, we played a lot of high-energy, rhythmic pieces," Thompson said.

In fact, one song performed by Chamber Strings was special because only two other orchestras have ever played it.

ninth graders. "The ninth and eighth graders were actually surprisingly amazing and a lot of people were commenting on how well they played despite being so young," Heap said.

For Thompson, this was her first year attending the festival. She said she looks forward to the chance to be involved again next spring.

"I am proud of the work our string students put in and I look forward to next year and the growth that happens between now and then," Thompson said.

# Dignity is great entryway into manhwa

Fans of Japanese manga will enjoy this excellent example of the growing South Korean manhwa movement



Photo by MANTA

*Betrayal of Dignity* is a historical drama and romance that transcends the limitations of both genres through its stellar storytelling.

By JURIA VANG  
Quill staff writer

*Betrayal of Dignity* originally started as a novel but got turned into a manhwa, which is a Korean version of manga. The novel was written by Kimpa and illustrated by Spi, while the eventual manhwa was released in February 2023 and published by Ridi Corporation. I chose to review this work because it is heart-wrenching. You can feel what the main characters are going through as you read. The two main characters in the story are complex and the plot is compelling. The protagonist is not just another helpless female who deals with a male character with a horrible attitude; instead, she is a strong-willed woman who dives head first into a marriage to salvage her family's title and whatever is left of their wealth. Plot elements like this make *Betrayal*

of *Dignity* more than just a basic romance manhwa.

As the story begins, Chloe Verdier, a crippled noble lady, and her family welcome Damien Von Thisses and his army into their home while they rest and heal up from battle. To save her family from crumbling, Chloe starts to find husband candidates for her sister, Alice Verdier, but ends up being the one getting married while her sister runs off with a stable boy. Chloe's new spouse is the cruel and arrogant duke, Damien. Damien tries hard throughout the story to overthrow his insane cousin, who is king of Swanton. Most of the story takes place within the Von Thisses household and is set in historical times.

*Betrayal of Dignity* puts together two complicated characters, Chloe and Damien, which intensifies the plot. As the exposition moves toward the rising action, it seems as if the story might be soft and calm; however, it is soon the case that everything comes crashing down. If you were to look at a plot structure diagram, you would expect to see a mountain shape, but *Betrayal of Dignity* ends up shaped more like a trapezoid given the many bumps in the plot. I think this is what gets many readers hooked on the story. Instead of the author trying to drag out the story, *Betrayal of Dignity* builds character development in quick and unexpected ways.

Adding to the impact of the story is the thoughtfulness with which the author designs the characters. Specifically, Damien Von Thisses is a complex character who coerces and manipulates Chloe Verdier into marrying him but intends on treating her well. Of course, this is not revealed right away, which at first makes you think he is a horrible and arrogant guy. In reality, Damien was raised by a loving mother, is cousins with the emperor and experienced no real traumatic issues during his upbringing. However, he is not good at communicating with Chloe because he was never focused on building any type of romantic relationship in the past. Although the way he shows his affection toward Chloe is very subtle, he would go absolutely berserk if anything even slightly negative were to happen to her.

While Chloe is the main character and we primarily get to explore her thoughts, the book benefits from the fact that we get a chance to see what Damien is thinking as well. The third-person point of view allows us to switch between Chloe and Damien. Being able to know more about what is on Damien's mind changes the way the reader sees him. While at first you might not think that Damien is a character that would have thought through all possible scenarios, he truly is the mastermind behind everything. Thanks to this approach to the novel's point of view, *Betrayal of Dignity* come together perfectly in the end. Ultimately, readers come to understand why Damien does what he does.

*Betrayal of Dignity* may be the best manhwa I have read. It features desire and desperation within the context of two realistic and sophisticated characters. This book is definitely a must-read if you are into romance and drama mangas and manhwas. Usually, the beginning of many books can be boring and take a while to understand, but everything about *Betrayal of Dignity* is easy to read and smooth for the brain to consume. I give this book five out of five stars.

# Friend or Foux is an underground rap masterpiece

The 2019 release cemented Lancey Foux's status as an icon of the U.K. music scene



Photo by PSYKE

Foux effectively explores identity issues through his experimental sound.

By MANAL BARE  
Quill staff writer

Lancey Foux, a pioneer of the U.K. underground rap scene, released his album *Friend or Foux* in 2019. Blending experimental, punk-inspired melodies with sharp storytelling, the project explores personal identity, the pressures of being the child of immigrants and the tension between love and isolation. *Friend or Foux* stands as a unique and influential body of work that not only helped redefine the U.K. rap scene, but also shows how personal identity and experimentation can come together to create art that leaves a lasting impact.

Lancey proves himself as a raw storyteller throughout *Friend or Foux* by constantly reflecting on his personal identity. As the child of Black, Ugandan immigrants, he uses his music to show how he embraces his roots. On the track "Raining Red," he expresses this responsibility with the line, "And my parents immigrated, I can't f\*\*\* up the plan." This reflects the pressure many first-generation children of immigrants carry. Lancey shows that he understands the weight placed on him and embraces carrying it through his art.

At the same time, he creates a contrast by showing his inner struggles with identity, opening with, "All this blood in the air, it's raining red." After this, he states one of the album's themes out loud: "There's a war between you and you." Ultimately, this shows the tension between his confidence and self-doubt.

Lancey also does not shy away from exploring the themes of love and isolation in *Friend or Foux*. The track "Better Alone" is a great illustration of this exploration. The repetition of, "I know I love you, I'm just better alone," captures a painful kind of honesty through which he admits he cares for someone but still feels the need to isolate himself. This track reveals an inner conflict between wanting love and protecting his own peace.

At the same time, he ties love to loyalty and responsibility with the line, "I can't feel like the man till I feed my bros." For him, love is still about sacrifice and making sure the people closest to him are taken care of. What is more, he reflects on his growth with, "I've been living without a plan and I made it work." This shows that even without certainty, he pushed through with his loved ones in mind. Together, these moments show that love in Lancey's music is deeply tied to his identity.

One of the most important things about *Friend or Foux* is the impact it has had on the U.K. underground scene. The album is known as a breakout project that brought Lancey recognition. By pushing a new, genre-blending style, he challenged what U.K. rap could be and inspired many other performers. Today, his influence can be heard in newer artists across the scene, many of whom give him his flowers and recognize his impact. Lancey has become an extremely respected figure in the industry for his work. Overall, *Friend or Foux* is not just a breakthrough project, it has become a body of work that shows how experimentation and personal identity can be transformed into art that reshapes an entire scene. I give this album five out of five stars.

# Beef successfully merges tension with humor

The Netflix anthology series, which originally debuted in 2023, just released its second season on April 16

By BRAYLON NIX  
Quill staff writer

The Netflix series *Beef* is a dark dramedy that explores how a single moment of anger can spiral into life-altering consequences. The story for season one of the series, which came out in 2023, centers on two strangers, Danny Cho and Amy Lau, whose lives collide after a tense, road-rage incident. What begins as a brief confrontation quickly escalates into a prolonged and obsessive feud, as both characters become consumed by resentment and the desire for revenge.

As their conflict intensifies, the show delves into their personal struggles. Specifically, the viewer learns more about Danny's financial instability and Amy's pressure-filled thirst for success. This exploration soon reveals the deeper themes of stress, identity and emotional isolation. Their rivalry begins to impact not only their own lives, but also the people around them, leading to increasingly reckless and destructive decisions.

Steven Yuen, who plays Danny, gives an amazing performance. You can feel his need to prove himself to



Photo by NETFLIX

Amy Lau and Danny Cho are played by Ali Wong and Steven Yeun.

his brother, Paul. At the same time, he is also dealing with his obsessive need to seek retribution against Amy.

Also great in the show is Ali Wong, who plays Amy. Wong is consistently convincing as a struggling mom who has a failing marriage. Her best performance throughout the entire series can be seen in the final episode.

Blending humor with psycho-

logical tension, *Beef* examines the consequences of unchecked anger and the hidden pain behind everyday lives, ultimately portraying how two individuals from very different backgrounds can become mirrors of each other's inner turmoil. One scene that captures this mix of humor and tension is when Danny yells, "That's not nice. It's not nice to do that." This sequence and line of dialogue became

a social media meme and the scene is just hilarious.

On the more serious side are separate scenes featuring the Danny and Amy characters. One is the scene when Danny, at his lowest point, cries in church as he finally lets all of his feelings burst out. In my opinion, it is the best emotional scene in the series.

Meanwhile, there is a great scene with Amy and her daughter June that also sparks an emotional response from the viewer. In the scene, Amy reminisces about June's birth. "I wish I could go back to that place," Amy says, showing the vulnerability at the core of her character.

Overall, I love how *Beef* blends comedy and drama so well. If you want to check out season one of this show, you should do it now because you can then move into season two of *Beef*, which came out on April 16. Keep in mind that it is an anthology series, which means that new characters and situations are introduced in season two. One highlight is that Oscar Isaac is in the second season, so viewers are guaranteed an amazing performance. In the end, season one of *Beef* deserves four out of five stars.

# Maid is a must-read for fans of historical romance

*The Count's Secret Maid* offsets an occasionally slow-paced plot with compelling characters, excellent illustrations

By JURIA VANG  
Quill staff writer

*The Count's Secret Maid* is written by Baek Joo Ah and was first released as a novel in 2020 before it was adapted into a manhwa. I chose to review this book because the main character is realistic. Paula is seen as an "ugly" character by almost everyone around her and has a difficult upbringing. I think people should read this novel if they want to experience a truly realistic romance between two leads that are of different social statuses. This is a fairly well-constructed book because of how much thought is brought to each character. However, the plot can be slow-paced and frustrating at times.

The story takes place in a

large and old mansion, where a girl named Paula is sold off to take care of a blind count named Vincent Belunita. While Paula tries her best to be a good worker, and is genuinely good at her job, Vincent just wants to be left alone in a dark and dingy room. The story is set in a historical, fantasy world where nobles have a lot of power over their servants.

One element that is good about this book is the characterization, especially when it comes to Paula. Even though she is easy going, Paula is not a doormat who will just let everyone step over her. Before she is hired by the Count's family, her family, especially her father, is cruel to her. Therefore, the Count's mean words do not phase her. She continues to endure the treatment and works hard. Ultimately, Paula is an

understanding character who does not belittle Vincent for being unable to see.

Although this is a fairly well-constructed book, there are some bad aspects about *The Count's Secret Maid*. The primary issue is the plot structure. It takes forever just to move from one part of the story to another. I can understand taking your time to let the story play out, but one scene is often spread across three or four chapters. Even if the plot structure is a hassle, everything is easy to understand. However, if you enjoy fast-paced stories, this one would not be for you.

In contrast, an element I enjoy is the illustrations, which are dark and heavy. Everything is super gray, which gives the reader

an eerie feeling and helps give an understanding of why Vincent is so depressed. Additionally, this art is a reflection of how Vincent feels, inside and out. This creates a strong, sad atmosphere, which could be a turnoff if you are an emotional person because there are very few happy moments shared by the main characters.

In conclusion, *The Count's Secret Maid* is a story with great characters but a slow pace that might not be for everyone. The highlight of the story is the Paula character, who helps the reader look past the slow plot and sometimes "angsty" artwork. You should read this book if you love historical romances that make you cry, but skip it if you want a fast, action-filled story. I give this book four out of five stars.

# Hawks enjoy esports success

The second full season of Cooper's esports squad has seen the team claim multiple victories



Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Key players in this year's lineup include (from back left) Leland Johnson, Ryan Phan, Caleb Flores and Tue Leela Lor.

By BRAYLON NIX  
Quill staff writer

While many students think of sports as something that happens on a field, court or track, another kind of competition has been growing steadily at Cooper thanks to the school's esports team.

Coached by science teacher Caroline Sutliff, the esports team has already experienced major success, including a championship season in one of its primary games.

"Esports are school-based teams, just like athletic sports teams, who compete with other high school teams playing online video games," Sutliff said. "Each team has a game day once per week for their title. They play from home on their own equipment and communicate via the team Discord."

The Cooper esports team competes in the central U.S. division, meaning their opponents come from a wide geographic range.

"We play teams from states from Wisconsin down to Tennessee and over to Texas," Sutliff said. "At the end of the season, the top teams play a tournament to determine the winner of the division."

Although the program is relatively small, it has already made a big impact. One of the team's biggest accomplishments came during the fall of 2025.

"The *Marvel Rivals* team won the Central League for the fall '25 season," Sutliff said. "They are working toward that goal again, but on a better platform with better competition."

Currently, the team consists of just ten players spread across two teams competing in *Marvel Rivals* and *Super Smash Bros*. Despite interest from other students, building complete teams has been a challenge.

"We only have 10 players on two teams this year," Sutliff said. "There were plenty of people interested in participating, but not enough with similar interests to form full teams."

Still, the program continues to grow thanks to the enthusiasm of students who helped build the team from the ground up.

"There were a few students in my science courses who were players and who brought it up," Sutliff said. "After some investigation, we found that there were free online platforms set up for this

purpose, so we jumped."

One student in particular played a major role behind the scenes.

"I remember Leland Johnson (12) being a behind-the-scenes force researching platforms and getting the team Discord put together," Sutliff said.

The early days of the program saw success across multiple games.

"That first year we had highly successful *Valorant* and *Rocket League* teams with players who ranked highly in our Midwest leagues," Sutliff said. "We had great chess players too. We had a really good *Rainbow Six Siege* team as well."

While some people assume esports is simply playing video games for fun, team members say the experience is much more structured and competitive than that. Ryan Phan (12), who competes primarily in *Marvel Rivals* and plans to also compete in *Rainbow Six Siege*, said the biggest difference is teamwork.

"Playing with my esports team allowed me to communicate new tactics and how we could all improve as a team and individually," Phan said. "This is different from how I would play at home because I tend to meet someone once and never see them again the next game."

Being part of a consistent roster means teammates learn each other's playing styles and strategies.

"I understand my team and how they play being on the esports team," Phan said.

Another *Marvel Rivals* player, Caleb Flores (12), agreed that communication and coordination make the experience very different from casual gaming.

"One of the major differences is having people that you can communicate with, think of team compositions and grow as a team rather than individual players," Flores said. "Playing on my own is tough on some days because of having random people ruining or making playing that day much harder than it needed to."

Another team member Tue Leela Lor (11) also said teamwork plays a major role in the competitive esports environment.

"Being on the esports team feels different because I have a team to communicate with and have them not argue with me," Lor said. "It is also different by being able to practice with a team and build around your team instead of trying to adjust to your team mid-game."

According to Sutliff, the skills students gain from esports go far beyond gaming itself.

"They are learning teamwork, communication, critical and strategic thinking, creativity, sportsmanship, collaboration and leadership," Sutliff said.

She also notes that esports often connects closely with academic skills in science and technology.

"There is a great deal of technology and STEM skills," she said. "Players analyze game data, statistics and strategies."

Team members agree with Sutliff that those lessons have already made an impact on their lives.

"Being on the team allowed me to work with others academically, become more social talking to people, and I've become more positive at home as well," Phan said.

Flores said the team has helped him become more comfortable interacting with others.

"Being on the esports team has helped me be more comfortable talking to new people," Flores said. "It helped me improve on skills that I was lacking in, as well as giving feedback to my teammates."

Lor also highlighted the friendships he has built through the program.

"Being on a team impacted me personally by allowing me to connect with those from different grades and build bonds with those on the team," Lor said.

Despite its early successes, the program still faces challenges, especially when it comes to recruiting enough players to fill out complete teams.

"Finding enough players to fill a team is our biggest challenge," Sutliff said. "It's frustrating to be a single player short and not be able to play."

However, she has ambitious goals for the future of esports at Cooper.

"I would like it to grow," Sutliff said. "Now that Mr. Hoffman has joined the team, we have an experienced player who can really coach as well."

Ultimately, Sutliff hopes esports can become as established as other school athletics.

"I would like to be like some of the other schools in the league who have strong, nationally-ranked teams every year and build it into a varsity sport," she said.

# Cooper Competitors

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

## Griffin Gilmore

By MARIAH WASHINGTON  
Quill staff writer

Griffin Gilmore (12) has made the most of every season during his time at Cooper, building a well-rounded athletic experience that spans the entire school year.

In the spring, Gilmore takes the field for baseball, a sport he has dedicated years to playing.

"I have played baseball for all four of my years at Cooper and four years in elementary," he said.

Gilmore said he first joined baseball on the suggestion of a friend. Since that time, Gilmore said he has learned that the impact of baseball goes beyond wins and losses.

"I like making new friends and bonds, and also getting more confident," he said.

Gilmore said he values both his personal growth as a player and the progress of his teammates.

"I enjoy improving and seeing myself grow. I also like seeing everyone else grow and improve," he said.

Outside of baseball, Gilmore spent four years playing football in the fall and took on a new role this winter as a manager for the girls basketball team.

"Nobody understands how much work the girls put in at practice and in the classroom," he said.

Looking ahead, Gilmore plans to attend Augsburg University to study business and marketing. He will also continue his football career at the collegiate level.

"They gave me an opportunity to play there and I can't imagine not playing football in college," he said.



Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

## Kelando Roberts

By MARIAH WASHINGTON  
Quill staff writer

Kelando Roberts (12) has been on the basketball court for more than half of his life. Roberts said he first picked up a basketball when he was 10 years old and the sport quickly became something he wanted to pursue seriously. Since then, he said basketball has remained a constant in his life, both during the school season and beyond.

One of the main things that keeps Roberts motivated is the thrill of matching up against other players and teams.

"What I enjoy most about playing is competing," he said.

However, Roberts said his love of the game is not only about the scoreboard. Some of his favorite

memories come from the moments he shares with teammates before the game even begins.

"Hyping my teammates up before the game is one of the highlights of being part of the team," he said.

Basketball continues to play a role in Roberts' life outside the school season as well. During the fall, he spends time traveling for basketball, gaining more experience and competing against different teams.

Meanwhile, in the classroom, Roberts said he enjoys math, a subject that matches his straightforward mindset.

"I like adding up numbers," Roberts said.

After graduation, Roberts said he hopes to continue his basketball journey at the college level. Roberts plans to pursue Division II basketball.



Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

## George Robinson

By MARIAH WASHINGTON  
Quill staff writer

George Robinson (12) serves as the varsity captain of the boys volleyball team this spring, guiding his teammates both on and off the court.

Robinson is now in his fourth year playing the sport. He said he first picked up volleyball as a freshman, drawn in by the "community that surrounds it."

That sense of community remains central to his experience. Whether it is competing alongside "friends [he] doesn't get to see a lot," or celebrating their shared victories, Robinson values the relationships as much as the results.

Some of his favorite moments come after the game, especially "the bus rides after a win," which provide "some of the most fun [he has] ever had."

Robinson's commitment to volleyball extends throughout the year. Outside school, he competes in national AAU volleyball across the other seasons.

His leadership does not stop with the boys program. In the fall, Robinson also contributed to the volleyball community by managing the girls team.

Off the court, Robinson balances his athletic pursuits with academics. His favorite class is AVID, where he appreciates the strong sense of camaraderie among classmates. When he is not playing volleyball, he enjoys unwinding with video games.

Looking ahead, Robinson's volleyball career will continue at the collegiate level. He has committed to William Penn University, which has the NAIA's number-eight-ranked men's volleyball program.

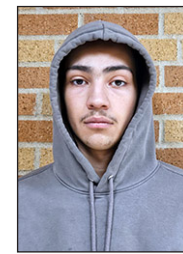


Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

# Minnesota Wild aiming at Stanley Cup run

The team's objectively impressive roster is occasionally guilty of inconsistent play

By ELLA VAN MASSENHOVE  
Quill staff writer

The Minnesota Wild have had an up-and-down season but they still managed to make it into the playoffs, which started on April 18. At times, they look like a strong team, but they also struggle to stay consistent from game to game. The team has had some good games, defeating teams like the Tampa Bay Lightning, Vegas Golden Knights, Utah Mammoth, Chicago Blackhawks and Dallas Stars, but they have also lost to the St. Louis Blues, Colorado Avalanche, Philadelphia Flyers, New York Rangers and Toronto Maple Leafs. The good moments will come in handy when the squad faces some of those opponents in the playoffs.

Offensively, the Wild are led by Kirill Kaprizov, who has more than 70

points this season and is the team's best scorer. Mats Zuccarello also helps a lot with more than 40 assists. Even with these strong players, the team does not always score when they have good chances. This has cost them some important games. When they are playing well, they can compete with top teams, but they will need to be more consistent

## Commentary

to move through the playoff bracket.

On defense, the Wild have been uneven. The goalie, Filip Gustavsson, has been playing well, but the defense in front of him sometimes makes too many mistakes. This has put a lot of pressure on him during games. The team's success in the playoffs will hinge on them keeping the scoring of

their opponents to a minimum.

The largest issue the Wild still has problems with is finishing games. They sometimes lose focus in the third period and give up easy goals. They also depend a lot on their top players, and when those players are not playing well, the whole team struggles. Playoff success will depend on them developing late-game consistency.

In contrast, one ongoing, positive point is the team's effort. Even when they are losing, the team keeps fighting and tries to come back. This shows good team spirit and determination, which may give them an edge in their playoff matchups.

In conclusion, the Minnesota Wild have a lot of talent, but they are not consistent enough. If they can improve their defense and score more on their chances, they could finish the season with a run for the Stanley Cup.

By MARIAH WASHINGTON  
Quill staff writer

Tacarie Siner (12) is a competitor on the Hawks track and field team. He has been involved in the sport since he was in middle school.

"I started running track in eighth grade because I wanted something to do going into high school," Siner said. "It has become my passion ever since."

That early decision has led to a decorated high school career filled with memorable moments. Among those moments, there is one that stands above the rest for Siner.

"My favorite memory is the state meet last school year," Siner said. "I finally broke 11 seconds in the 100-meter dash, which has been a goal of mine since ninth grade."

At the same meet, he also helped

break the school's 4x100-meter relay record and placed fourth in the 200-meter dash. All of these achievements reflect Siner's individual dedication and interest in team success.

"It was a great experience," he said. His relationship with his teammates is the primary element Siner values most about track.

"Some of my closest friends I have met through track," he said.

Outside the spring season, Siner competes with his AAU track team in both fall and winter. Meanwhile, in the classroom, Siner said he enjoys advanced weight training and AVID, noting

that the latter has helped him with track while the former is "helping [him] prepare for college."

Looking ahead, Siner plans to major in accounting and hopes to continue running at college.

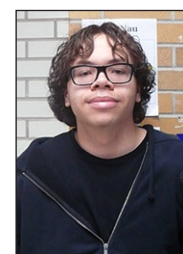


Photo by T. GOODMAN