



THE BRYAN HIGH ORATOR

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MASKS and SANITIZERS and BEARS OH, MY!



Photo by | Keyana Burries

Students welcomed back to major changes amid COVID-19 pandemic, notifications of positive tests announced

Justin Diep
Copy Editor

Students were welcomed back on Oct. 19 on the district's 3/2 Family plan. Students were greeted by their teachers like always, but that was about all that was normal.

From one-way hallways, to desks being separated and all facing one way, to only having one student per table at lunch, there were several changes.

"I like how the school is trying to keep us socially distanced," sophomore Alexander Varela said. "Although I don't like passing periods because we are all still crowded going one way in the halls."

While several layers of precautions were in place, such as mandatory masks/face coverings, social

distancing, frequent hand-washing and sanitizing as well as strict disinfecting routines, parents still ended up receiving an email notification the next day that two individuals had tested positive for COVID-19. They received another email six days later, Oct. 26, notifying them that another individual had tested positive.

"I appreciate them trying to get us back in school because it's way better for us to learn," sophomore Francisco Bautista said. "But it's too risky now and puts us at risk of getting COVID."

Initially, just over 300 students decided to opt into full remote learning prior to the start of second quarter. Since then, a growing number of students who came back on the 3/2 plan,

have switched back to strictly remote learning. The school currently has over 600 students who are remote only.

The drastic increase of positive COVID-19 cases in the state could account to so many students' return to remote learning. Junior Marcos Montejano is one of those students.

"I don't want to risk getting COVID and spreading it to my family," Montejano said. "I would rather wait for it to be safe for the entire district to be back in-person."

For the fourth week in a row, both the State of Nebraska and Douglas County posted record numbers of new COVID-19 cases. The state recorded 5,796 new cases last week, up from 5,570 the week of Oct. 11, according to the

COVID Tracking Project.

Staff members have also expressed their concerns for a return in person, but overall have expressed their happiness in being able to see students again. Social studies teacher Thomas Allen understands the risk associated with returning but is trying to remain positive.

"It might not be the best thing for everybody to come back," Allen said. "I just want to see you guys. I want to see the students. That's what makes my job, having students."

And while the school has had a few reported positive cases, they have followed the district's plan.

If a staff member or a student tests positive for COVID-19, the district will engage their contact tracing team to identify

who needs to be quarantined. Students who are found to have COVID-19 symptoms at school will be moved away to a designated location to be picked up to hopefully help reduce spread.

"If someone is found to be in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, they will receive direct communication from district human resources or health staff," Bridget Blevins, Supervisor of External Relations for OPS said. "A general advisory will be sent to the staff and families in a school to ensure they are aware."

Staff and students who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be ordered to stay home to recover. It will be assessed on a case by case basis if teachers will be able to teach while

they are quarantined.

"In partnership with district contact tracers, OPS will work with staff members to identify next steps if it is determined quarantine is necessary," Blevins said.

OPS's plan for a return during second semester will be decided later in the year on what return model we will be using.

"That will be dependent on health conditions in our community," Blevins said. "As second semester approach-es, we'll absolutely share those updates with our staff, students, and families."

It will be up to the Department of Education at the national and state levels to decide if students will take statewide required assessments this school year.

EDITORIAL



UNDER PRESSURE

Teachers' mental health put to test amid pandemic expectations

"My husband was fired because of COVID so I have felt trapped since I am now the sole paycheck."

"Many students are failing and I can't reach them. I feel like a failure this year."

"Teachers always overwork, but this has multiplied our overload. Early mornings, late nights and no sleep."

These are just some of the comments made by Bryan High teachers regarding this school year and teaching through this pandemic. COVID-19 has made life rough for everyone; there have been constant changes and learning to adapt to the new world, but this has been especially challenging for teachers.

A survey was sent out

to all Bryan High teachers. Fifty of them responded and out of those 50 teachers, over half of them admitted to having at least given serious thought into leaving teaching and switching career paths since the start of the pandemic. That's 26 teachers our school could potentially lose this year.

It goes without saying that losing that many of our teachers would be detrimental to our school. We have so many great teachers and to have them leave, well, it doesn't just hurt the school district, but it hurts us as students and it hurts future students.

Think of your favorite teacher. Think of all of the memories you have of them. Now, imagine going

to school and them not being there anymore. That teacher could be one of the 26 on the verge of quitting.

If all of these teachers leave, who is going to be there for us? Yes, the district can hire new teachers fresh-out-of-college, but how would they compare to the teachers who have been here for years and built the bonds with us students already, who bleed green and gold, and have the experience under their belts to make us feel more confident?

Part of the reason why teachers are contemplating leaving the profession they love is because they are starting to feel disposable. However, Omaha Public Schools isn't the only district making teachers feel

this way. It is a nation-wide situation.

Locally, teachers have been attending OPS Board of Education meetings and utilizing their union, the Omaha Education Association, to voice their concerns about the stressful conditions they are under due to the pandemic. At a board meeting on Sept. 21 teachers voiced their thoughts on the return of students.

"What bothers me the most is that teachers are going to end up making all of this work," teacher Katie Wiig said. "We're going to sacrifice our health and we're going to exhaust ourselves to the point that we are more susceptible to illness because we can't bare the idea of not being enough for kids."

Teachers are scared, they are putting their lives on the line for their profession. They're expected to be around students and other staff, with vague information about contact tracing and quarantining.

Teachers need more support from their districts and need to feel valued. Communication needs to be better and there need to be realistic standards. They are just humans and shouldn't be expected to be superheroes.

We students also need to do our part. We need to actually do the work and pay attention so our teachers don't feel like they are failing us and themselves. We are the reason they continue to go through all of this. We owe it to them.

EDITORIAL

Now is not the time to be selfish

From a young age most of us were taught there is no "I" in "team." That if we worked together towards a common goal, we would be able to achieve it.

This ideology was obviously lost during the pandemic. We saw the Karens protesting wearing a mask because "it's their body, their choice" but then would be the same people complaining on Facebook later that night about not being able to go to the movies or eat inside a restaurant. They were also the same people leaving bad Yelp reviews because a store made them wear a mask to enter.

They would complain that this pandemic is going on forever but it's because they wouldn't take any of the safety precautions that were recom-

mended so we wouldn't be stuck in quarantine forever. They were so quick to complain but they were focused on the "I" not the team. The same thing happened with Gretna High. Parents and students were focused on how they wanted to have a homecoming and they deserved to have a homecoming regardless of the pandemic and the school canceling it due to safety reasons. They had their homecoming dance anyway and have seen a surge of 40 plus positive cases that they were able to trace back to the gathering according to WOWT.

If Gretna would have just accepted the fact they would have to miss out on homecoming this year and just be sad over it like the rest of us, there

wouldn't have been a spike in cases. They were focused on themselves and were incredibly selfish and complicated things for the rest of us. If we could all just learn to work together to achieve a goal it wouldn't be a problem. Once we start focusing on the bigger picture instead of the little corner we contribute, we will be able to advance as a society.

We have a bigger effect on the world than we think, if just one person gets the mentality that "oh I'm just one person I don't need to do anything" it will have a trickle effect and eventually no one will be working towards the goal. We need to realize we all play a significant part in ending this pandemic and in the world in general.



BLM worth fighting for, making changes

Keyana Burries
Editor-in-Chief



Windows down, music blaring and it is just one of those nights that feels like it is going to last forever. Nothing feels better than this, then it happened and the color drains from my face and I feel like I can't breathe, those red and blue lights make me wonder if I will make it home.

I sat and remembered everything my parents taught me. "Hands where they can see them. Never, and I mean never, talk back. Talk them through every movement you are going to make before you even think about moving."

The police officer approached me asking a thousand questions a second but I can barely process one of them. The pounding in my chest and the bright flashlight in my eyes, I don't think I'm even breathing anymore. I somehow hand him my license and insurance and explain to him why I don't have license plates on my car just yet. He looks disgusted but goes back to his car to check my information anyway.

He told me I would get a warning but I'm free to go on with my night; I finally took a deep breath as he walked away from my car, once he finally left I started balling my eyes out because tonight I wasn't the next one.

This is why I fight alongside of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. I am tired of losing my breath every time I get pulled over. I am tired of fearing that my little cousin with the too big of attitude's face will be plastered on the 6 o'clock news.

I'm especially tired of the racial injustice African Americans encounter everyday, especially in

our justice system.

We need to reform our justice system so racial injustice won't occur. Police officers should have more extensive training than what is in place. Currently they only have to go to at most a 16 week training course according to CBS, News.

Police officers should have take classes similar to a social worker. Such as social welfare policy, human behavior and the social environment. They need classes like these so they know how to handle the public, especially people who differ from them.

They can't learn the protocols and standards of being a police officer and learn how to handle and deal with the public properly and safely. Imagine trying to learn all of this in 16 weeks at most, its simply not possible and shouldn't be the standard.

In Sweden they have a two and a half year program for the Swedish National Police Academy, where they take classes from various staff members. According to Public Citizen, Sweden only has six cases of police brutality compared to the United States's 1000 plus cases. If we just reform and properly educate our police officers, we can lower our police brutality rates and have a safer country.



Photo courtesy of Ashley Roth
Photo illustration by Keyana Burries

Protesting in favor of the Black Lives Matter movement on May 29, people gather along 72nd and Dodge Streets to peacefully protest against racial injustice.

Nebraska Supreme Court makes bad call, removes medical marijuana from ballot

Sophie Bacon
Reporter



The Nebraska Medical Marijuana Initiative garnered thousands

of signatures in hopes to have medical marijuana on the ballot in November. Governor Pete Ricketts and the Nebraska Supreme Court shut the idea down as soon as they could.

"There is no such thing as medical marijuana," Ricketts said in a press conference.

He also stated that the measure is unconstitutional as it violated Nebraska's "single subject ruling" which prevents activists from putting multiple issues into a single yes-or-no question for voters to address.

Marijuana has been

used as medicine since 500 B.C according to History.com, for things such as epilepsy and numerous mental disorders.

Since the prevention of it being on the ballot, a legion of people are going without the medical care they need. Most medications cause terrible side effects that are harsh to deal with and often create problems bigger. Medical marijuana should be an option of treatment for patients with chronic illnesses.

Keeping medical marijuana illegal doesn't benefit anyone. All it does is keep sick people, who could benefit from it, sick and in pain.

One of Ricketts's concerns with medical marijuana is that people will misuse the drug and that it will lead to recreational use. The reality of this situation is Nebraskans

who want to use marijuana for recreational purposes already know where to find it. They are already getting it and abusing it. Ricketts and the Nebraska Supreme Court are just preventing people who truly need it for medical purposes from receiving it.

He also believes that it's addictive. While that is true, people are more likely to get addicted to other substances such as prescribed medicines. People become addicted to coffee and that's completely legal.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, only 30 percent of those who use marijuana will have some degree of marijuana use disorder.

Another issue that people have with medical marijuana is the possibility of an overdose. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention a

fatal overdose is highly unlikely. They also state that using too much marijuana will just intensify the normal effects of marijuana such as anxiety and paranoia.

The legalization of medical marijuana would help Nebraskans who struggle with incurable or chronic illnesses. It would create more jobs since people would be able to grow marijuana and then sell it for medical purposes. People who would self-medicate with marijuana would have their medication regulated, therefore making it safer for everyone involved.

Nebraskans who need it for medical purposes shouldn't have to take the risk of jail time because politicians don't agree. It can do more good for chronic illnesses than harm; it can change the way of medicine.

Proper LGBTQ+ representation needed in shows

Lia Becker
Reporter



Netflix has cancelled 19 of its original shows, leaving shows on cliffhangers and viewers confused and frustrated.

The popular streaming service is notorious for having shorter shows in abundance to manage their want for variety and money, only keeping shows alive when they go mainstream. With COVID-19 at the heart of the decision, both "I Am Not Okay With This" and "The Society" were discontinued.

Both shows feature LGBTQ+ characters, which has made LGBTQ+ viewers upset because it's important to see proper inclusivity, and it's sad to see that taken away.

Shows often misrepresent sexuality and gender

identity. A gay character is added as a joke or an afterthought that sooner or later makes a statement about their struggles, which falls flat.

An example of this is Kevin Keller from "Riverdale." The writers acknowledge his role as the gay best friend but don't use it in a constructive way, he's conveniently there and conveniently gay. It's bad writing and bad representation and overall boring, which is infuriating.

In "I am Not Okay With This", I love the way they portray the main character, Sydney. Her whole struggle with her sexuality adds to her story instead of just seeming like an afterthought.

In the end, fans often can't bring their Netflix show back; I just hope someday we'll have more realistic LGBTQ+ characters, because I want to feel seen.

The Orator
Omaha Bryan High School

The Omaha Bryan High School Orator prides itself on being a credible, student run, news and entertainment source for its readers. The staff strives to uphold the principles of journalism in all of its publications.

The Orator is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA), the Nebraska High School Press Association (NHSPA) and the Journal-

ism Education Association (JEA).

It is both a state and nationally recognized student newspaper which has won several awards including placing four times in the NSPA Best of Show Tabloid newspaper 16-pages or fewer contests, multiple NHSPA Cornhusker Awards and numerous individual awards through JEA, NSPA, NHSPA and UNO.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of The Orator staff and do not necessarily represent the opinion of Bryan High School nor the newspaper adviser. Signed columns are the opinion of the author alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of Bryan High School or The Orator staff.

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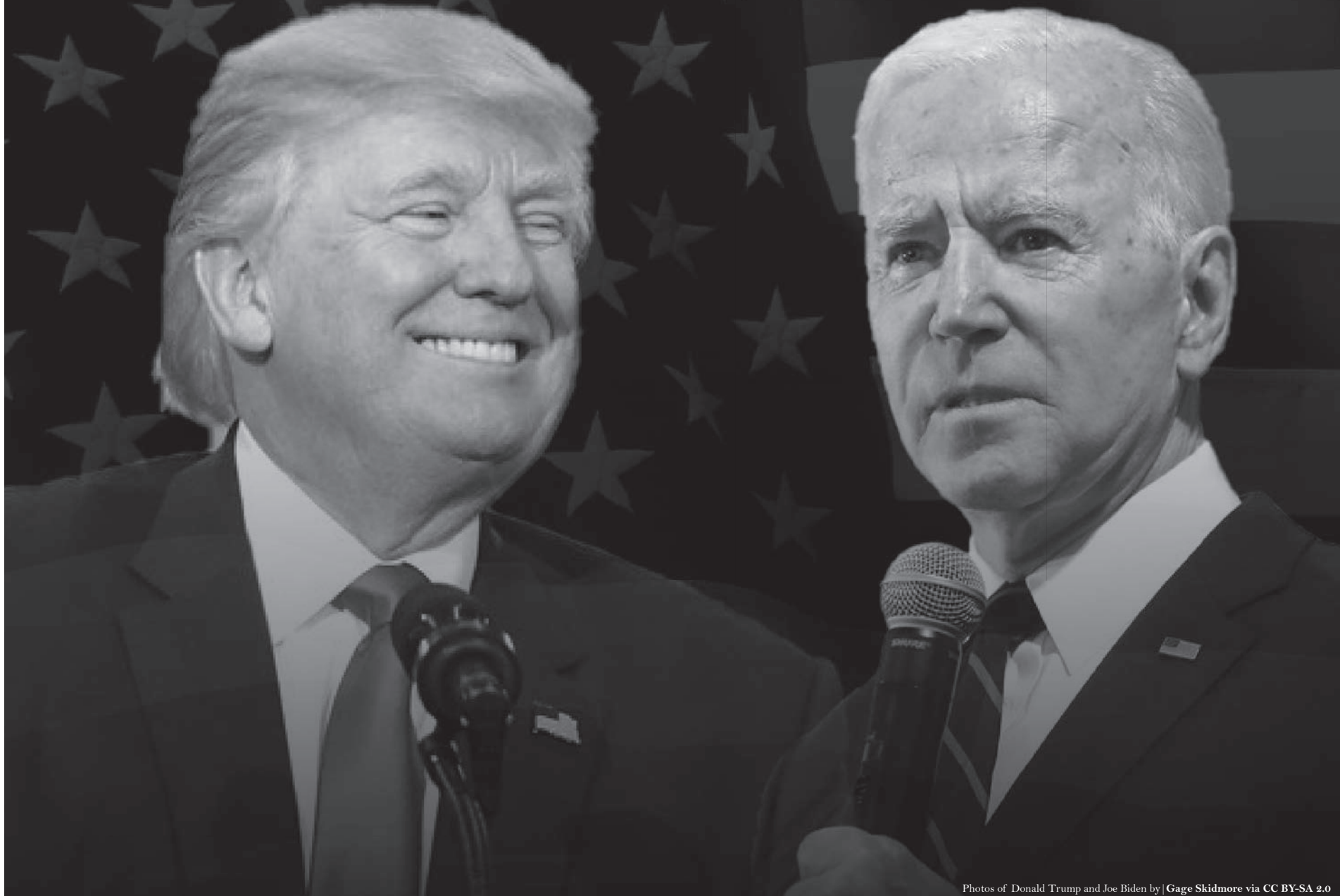
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ELECTION 2020



Photos of Donald Trump and Joe Biden by (Gage Skidmore via CC BY-SA 4.0)

Country, state sees record voting rates, students join in

Amber Roth
Copy Editor

With the 2020 election only four days away, the presidential campaign trails are headed into the final leg of the race as voters are casting their ballots to select who will be president, and for some first-time student voters there are mixed emotions.

The presidential campaign got heated and intense during the first presidential debate on Sept. 29, and students noticed it. Senior Sophia Rubenstein was disappointed in both candidates and was left with many unanswered questions after the debate.

"It was like watching two kids throw sand at each other in a sandbox," Rubenstein said. "Both were unprofessional and rude to each other, from name calling to rude remarks."

With Rubenstein and many others waiting for more answers, they waited in anticipation for the second debate, but it was postponed due to republican candidate and current President, Donald Trump being diagnosed with COVID-19. However, the final debate was held on Oct. 21. The debate had more regulations such as microphones that were muted during the two-minute response times for the person who was not supposed to be answering and the

removal of audience members who didn't wear a mask.

"I think that it did go better than the first debate in that there was less yelling, and it was more clearly shown the candidate's opinions and views," senior Parker Poledna said.

Whether it's because of safety precautions due to the pandemic, because voters are more passionate about this election or because of some other reason, there has been a record number of Americans casting their votes early.

According to TargetEarly2020, voters in Nebraska have already cast 42.7 percent of the total votes (including mail-in, early voting and election day votes) in the 2016 general election. Mail-in and early in-person ballots returned in the state as of Oct. 25, were at 360,748, a 168 percent increase from the same time in 2016.

Omaha is considered to be a battleground city because it will decide who gets the electoral votes for the entire state. Because of this, Trump visited on Tuesday to try and sway undecided voters.

He has been focusing his campaign on ways to improve the economy and creating a vaccine for COVID-19 which he hopes to begin distributing by end of the year and having 300 million doses available to the people by beginning of 2021.

One of the president's support-

ers, junior Tobin Wingender, said he would vote for Trump if he was old enough, because he supports some of his policies that he believes can help boost America's economy.

"He hit record low unemployment rates for different races and genders, along with the tax cuts and jobs act which allowed most Americans to have a tax cut and allowed more jobs to be created to help lower and middle class," Wingender said.

His competitor, democratic candidate, former Vice President Joe Biden, has been focusing on reforming the criminal justice system and raising taxes for people who make more than \$400,000 a year. The goal for Biden's tax plan is for the government to have more money to spend on things like climate change, education and childcare.

Leaning against voting for Trump, senior Mariam Zahid said, that "the most important issues for me would have to be someone who has experience, has data to back them up, doesn't push the media away and someone who will also bring racial justice."

Students old enough to vote will get their chance to cast their vote on Nov. 3, and won't have to miss school to do so. Nov. 3 and Nov. 4 are non-student days. The days will be used for professional development and work days for staff.

What else is on the ballot?

Here is a look at the legislation that will be on the Nov. 3 ballot in Nebraska. There are six issues in total to vote on. Four items were removed off the ballot, those issues were mainly about medical marijuana and taxes.

- Amendment 1** - Repeals language allowing slavery or involuntary servitude as criminal punishments.
- Amendment 2** - Allows Tax Incremental Financing for 20 years for extreme blight.
- Initiative 428** - Limits the interest rate that payday lenders charge to 39 percent per year.
- Initiative 429** - Changes the constitution to allow statutes authorizing games of chance at licensed racetracks.
- Initiative 430** - Authorizes games of chance at licensed racetracks and establishes a governing commission.
- Initiative 431** - Enacts a tax on any games of chance operated at racetracks.

Metro line headed to O!

Photos courtesy of Omaha Rapid Bus Transit

Top left: Stationed at 24th and Dodge, this ORBT stop will allow more frequent stops than the previous buses.

Top right: The ORBT bus stop at 10th and Douglas provides riders better and faster transportation around Omaha.

Bottom right: The ORBT stop at 72nd and Dodge will offer riders an opportunity for free transportation until March 2021.

Bottom left: Starting Nov. 18, the new ORBT bus station at 19th and Douglas will begin operation.

New buses to offer better rider experience

Justin Diep
Copy Editor

To better serve the transportation needs of people in the Omaha area, a new high-speed bus service will be launching Nov. 18.

The Omaha Rapid Bus Transit (ORBT) will replace Metro's route two along Dodge and Douglas Streets that connects Downtown Omaha and Westroads Mall.

"After years of study and public input, the bus rapid transit system was identified as a locally preferred transit option," Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert said. "It will connect

riders to jobs, schools, medical center, services, businesses and shopping." ORBT will launch with free fares to everyone until March 2021.

"We are so excited to launch ORBT this fall and be able to provide our riders with a chance to try the system for free for four months," Metro chief executive officer Lauren Cencic said. "As we prepare to integrate ORBT into our bus network, we will be providing opportunities to help current and new riders feel comfortable using the system."

Major improvements to the ORBT system will make the rider's experience

better than the previous old Metro buses the city had. The stops are more spread out, allowing stops as frequent as 10 minutes. Wi-Fi will be available at all bus stations and on-board the buses.

"The idea was let's upgrade the transit environment there and provide a better transit experience for both our current riders and a way to attract future riders," Metro community relations manager Jason Rose said. "A lot of ORBT's elements that you'll see like the upgraded stations and the bigger buses and the new technology. Those are all intended to make the trip

more appealing and a lot faster for riders."

Studies from 2013-2016 conducted by both Metro and the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency; which is a regional council for the Omaha-Council Bluffs area, showed the Omaha area needed to improve its current system and that Dodge Street was the perfect place.

"We call it the

spine of our network," Rose said. "It's the backbone of all of our routes right, there's major destinations, major nodes of activity happening on Dodge Street and it was harder to get to and

less appealing to get to."

As of right now, there are not any official plans drafted to expand the ORBT system, but there are talks of expanding it in order to make it a regional high-speed bus service for the entire Omaha area in the coming years following the launch of the ORBT.

"Ultimately we're hoping to make a more connected region," Rose said. "So, we see this first ORBT line as just that as the first line, but then we're hoping to sort of expand from there with north-south connections east-west extensions to make a bigger regional network of ORBT."

Former Bear runs for OPS School Board

Keegan Korf:



Photo courtesy of Keegan Korf

- Paid maternity/ paternity leave for teachers
- School board rep. for every OPS high school
- Wants all schools in OPS to be equally successful

Oluowatobi Noukpozounkou
Sports Editor

Running for a seat on Omaha Public School's board of education to become subdistrict seven's spokesperson Jane Erdenberger and Keegan Korf will be the main candidates.

Subdistrict seven is one

of the nine subdistricts in OPS that the board of education consists of. The election for the seat will be on Nov. 3.

Korf taught English for three years at Platte view high school, she then went to our school to teach English. After that she worked for the district in the technology department for

four years then resigned to work in the nonprofit world.

Issues Korf will focus on if elected are getting a student school board representative from every high school in OPS, create a policy that allows teachers paid maternity/paternity leave and see each school in OPS become equally as

Jane Erdenberger:



Photo courtesy of Jane Erdenberger

- Spending more time at PTO meetings
- Schools are equipped to teach ESL students
- Make sure students have a place in the education system

successful as the others. "Students are number one always," Korf said. "Y'all have a voice and you need to have a voice in your own education, and I think that that gets overlooked, especially from the perspective of our high school students."

Erdenberger is the other candidate for this seat.

She is currently retired, but worked as a cooperate finance lawyer for 22 years at Kutak Rock LLP. After she retired from there, she went to North high school to teach social studies for 16 years, finally retiring two years ago.

Erdenberger will focus on: making sure schools are equipped to teach Eng-

lish as a Second Language students and giving non-traditional college bound students a place in the education system.

"I expect to be much more present at each of the schools as an opportunity for people to feel like they can communicate with the school board," Erdenberger said.

E-LEARNING

ALASKA OR BUST

Junior takes advantage of remote learning first quarter

Olouwatobi Noukpozoukounou
Sports Editor

For some people, COVID-19 has taken a lot, but for others, the pandemic has created many new opportunities for people instead of taking them away. For one junior, it created an opportunity for her to live in Alaska. She got to experience beautiful hikes and Alaska's wildlife all due to COVID-19.

Up until the start of second quarter, Junior Isabel Stewart was in Anchorage, Alaska doing online classes via an iPad. She would not have been able to do her classes if it weren't for her senior Army instructor for JROTC, Major Eric Hendrickson who was in support of her temporary move to Alaska.

"I thought it was interesting," Hendrickson said. "The way we are on virtually you can be pretty much anywhere in the world it doesn't really where you're at as long as you can connect."

Stewart was in Alaska to visit her older brother who is currently stationed there for the Air Force and she thought that she would never get the opportunity to go and stay there with him again. She stayed with her brother, his wife and their puppy, every day with her brother, his wife and their puppy.

"It was amazing living

at 4:40 a.m., while other students started class at 7:40 a.m. The hardest part about the

timed and all that while she [was] in Alaska."

With all that being said, there were still some good aspects to the whole situation. Stewart got to go to on hikes that had beautiful scenery and wild life. At one point she even encountered a moose.

"I decided to take it [the chance to go to Alaska]," Stewart said. "I have gotten to see more of the world and get an experience that I normally would never get. As well as see a whole lot of nature such as mountains, lakes and oceans."

Stewart returned to Nebraska on Oct. 3. She was a bit nervous, because she had to fly for 12 hours by herself. Overall, she was sad to leave Alaska, but she was also excited about seeing her friends and family back home that she missed while living in Alaska.

whole trip to Stewart was not being able to see her friends, like junior Ruby Nelson, every day. Not getting hands on experience in her classes was also bothersome.

"I'm really happy for her and glad that she [got to] spend time with her brother and sister-in-law," Nelson said. "The hardest part for me [was] not being able to see her and spend time with her but we definitely still Face-

Alaska is three hours behind Nebraska, so she started class

Photo courtesy of Isabel Stewart
After climbing four hours to the top of a 2,500 ft mountain with her brother, Junior Isabel Stewart takes a seat on some rocks and stares off in the distance reflecting on her journey. "When I finally reached the top I was like hallelujah, because my legs were burning," Stewart said. "I felt accomplished when I got to the top. The view was unreal, it was absolutely beautiful, one of the prettiest views for sure."



Petting her bearded dragon, Apollo, in her room, sophomore Macy Hutfless enjoys quality time with her exotic pet that she got on July 19 to have a friendly companion during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sophie Bacon
Reporter

One common feeling among many people during the global pandemic was the feeling of extreme sadness and loneliness. To cope with these feelings, many people bought pets. Having a furry friend, or in this case an exotic pet, helped sophomore Macy Hutfless through the pandemic.

"I didn't plan on getting a new pet, but I walked into Pet

Smart and saw him in the case and just knew I had to have him," Hutfless said. "We had a staring contest and I knew this breaded dragon was going to be my forever friend."

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), has reported a 500 percent increase in foster applications through their Los Angeles and New York offices since March 15, according to Vox.com.

"I'm not surprised with the rise in adoptions, a pet is the best thing to get anyone through a pandemic," Hutfless said. "They will lay with you and you can pet them. They are a huge stress reliever."

Sophomore Jessica Conway also got a pet, a rabbit.

"I adopted a bunny because I wanted something to keep me busy," Conway said. "It was kind of a quick decision and I didn't fully know what I was getting

into, but it has been a great learning experience."

According to a study done by the Mental Health foundation in the UK in 2011, 76 percent of people who owned pets, specifically a cat, reported being able to cope with every day life much easier because of their pet.

"I want a thousand more bearded dragons," Hutfless said. "If I had the room or the time to raise them I would have so many more pets."

Acne on rise due to mask wearing

Victoria Besta
Reporter

Some individuals label acne as one of their biggest insecurities. For many, this insecurity has been amplified due to the pandemic requiring them to wear face masks daily. Boys Town West surgical nurse Kaylene Hrubsky believes face masks have had a significant impact on people's skin.

"I have seen studies done that show what bacteria builds up inside the mask after just being worn for a few hours," Hrubsky said.

Everyone's skin is different, but more oily skin will often have more issues with face masks since air cannot reach people's face; Skin type is important when considering skin care products, and it's recommended that people take the extra step to ensure they have clean skin.

Doing research on skin care products for certain people's skin type is important to help reduce dry skin, oily skin or redness. Cetaphil, a popular skin-care brand, for example, has a cleanser that is non-drying and non-irritating to skin, according to ChemistDirect.

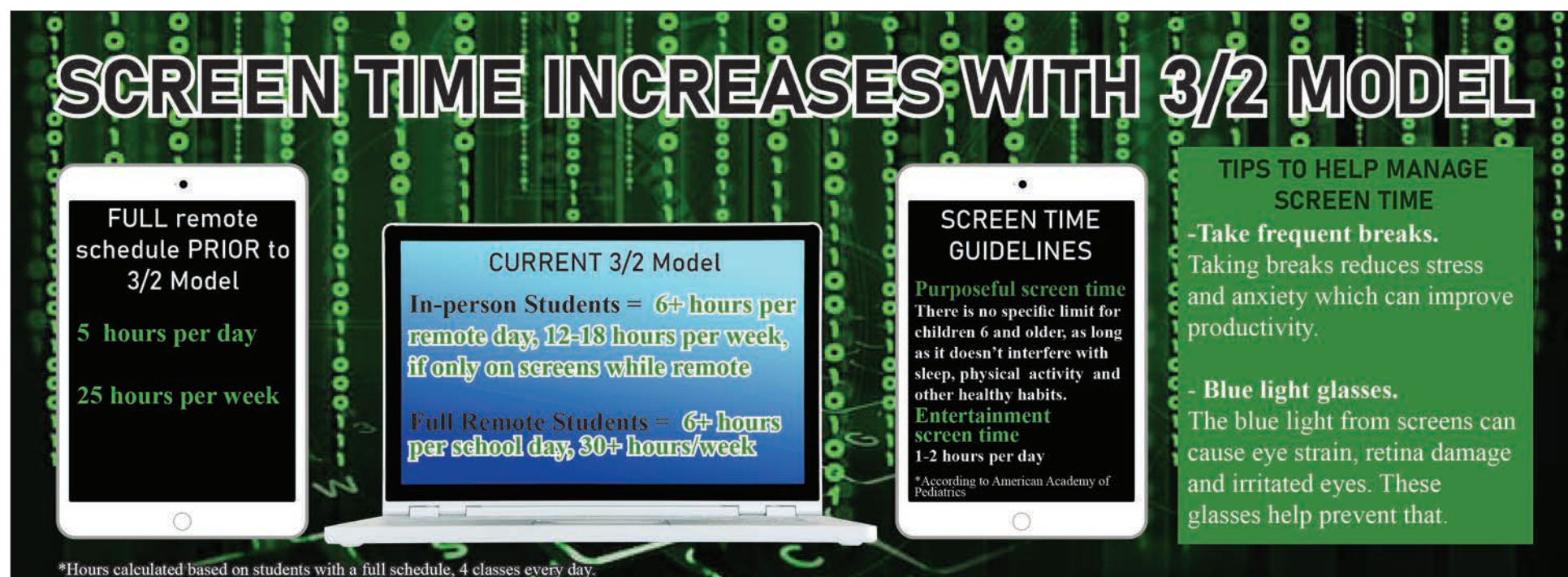
"Periodically wipe your face with a cleaner/chemical that would dry up the oil but other than that I suggest Cetaphil as a good product," Hrubsky said.

Senior Jordan Wattles has struggled with an increase of acne because of wearing a mask. She wears a mask when she plays volleyball and now must wear one even more, because school has returned to in-person learning.

"It has been a huge struggle for me," Wattles said. "I have switched up my skin care routine and have gotten more masks to make sure I'm not using the same one constantly. I've researched a ton about my skin type to make sure I'm doing everything possible to reduce my acne."

Making sure people wash their face before and after wearing a mask is extremely important to reduce oil build up. Cloth masks are suggested because people can wash them whenever they please, but it is recommended to wash masks everyday if possible. Keeping people's face and face masks clean will help with bacteria.

"If you are wearing a cloth mask, I would suggest a cotton blend," Hrubsky said. "In the clinical areas we are not allowed to wear cloth masks at all. The general public can wear cloth masks and that does not help control spread. Many are unsanitary when it comes to face mask, you wouldn't wear dirty clothes over and over."



Students react to extended screen time, potential negative effects on teenagers

Lia Becker and Amber Roth
Reporter and Copy Editor

The first quarter of the school year kept students and teachers confined to tablets and computers for up to seven hours a day in order to prioritize the health of families during the pandemic, but does not include time spent online completing assignments.

Because of online school, students are spending almost quadruple the amount of screen time the American Heart Association recommends, which is 2 hours a

day. This extra screen time can have negative effects on students physically and mentally.

"Online school doesn't allow the students the outlet they get from attending (in-person) school," mental health practitioner Mike Green said.

Many students are also becoming more aware of how online school affects them personally.

"To be honest, online school makes your anxiety 10 times worse because you are basically teaching yourself even though

you don't understand it," junior Caydence Volene-English said.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU) ran a survey from late April to early May. The results showed that more than 50 percent of students felt they needed mental health support since schools closed in March.

Despite being online for such a long period of time, some students find online school easier than in-person learning. This is due in part to the many different tools students have available

to make learning easier. For example, the chat function in Microsoft Teams allows kids to participate more in class.

"The overall impact of online school is that I feel more social than ever," junior Grady Bazzell said. "I feel pretty neutral about it, it's nice, but it's still school."

Even with the chats, some students fall behind, whether it be because of internet difficulties or anxiety that keeps them from receiving help they need.

"I really don't know if a student is struggling because I

usually can key in on that when I'm in the classroom," forensic science teacher Michelle Potter said.

With the partial return to in-person learning, students and staff will be able to socialize more in a restricted setting which could be beneficial to students' education and staffs' teachings.

"I've realized now that school is truly a place to escape and be with people and be happy with rather than at home being on an emotional roller coaster 24/7," junior Katherine Palacios said.

"Essential" teenagers share work experiences

Victoria Besta
Reporter

Living during the pandemic has been different for everyone of all ages, but especially teenagers. While some teens picked up a new hobby, others were out working to make living during the pandemic easier. Three students who worked hard during the pandemic all had very different experiences, but they all agreed that their work was very rewarding in the end.

"I was never scared of working because Walmart has taken all the proper safety precautions, they made sure people were social distancing and wearing masks," junior Deshawn Pluth said. "The pandemic made working easier in the long run because it was easier to connect to customers because we had something in common right away, living during a pandemic."

Senior Isabella Carbajal felt as though working in the middle of a pandemic was like living inside a movie.

"I want the world to go back to 'normal,' but the more it continues, the more afraid I am that life will remain the way it is now," Carbajal said.

Carbajal started out as a barista at Dunkin Donuts, but



Making a blizzard at her work on Oct. 25, sophomore Natalie Besta starts her shift at the Dairy Queen on 72nd and Q.

shortly after switched jobs to become a cashier at Walmart. She transitioned from Dunkin Donuts to Walmart when her parents started having concerns about her safety.

"The hardest part was remembering that life isn't like it was before," Carbajal said. "While the pandemic has been taxing on me, I feel like it has done some good. Workplaces are now being properly cleaned and sanitized and workers are being monitored for signs and getting their tem-

perature taken." Sophomore Natalie Besta, a crew member at Dairy Queen, said she felt overwhelmed when wearing a face mask at work, because it made her feel overheated and it made doing her job more difficult for her.

"It was hard to stay motivated because everything was so new and scary," Besta said. "Working during the pandemic has made me grow up and realize that people are being affected by my actions in the workplace."

Yes, you can still get in trouble for that E-learning disciplinary actions in effect

Dallanara Sibrian-Miranda
Reporter

Remote learning has been a huge change for students and teachers alike, which has called for a change in the school's disciplinary system.

"Students can still be suspended from their virtual classrooms, but we try to utilize Remote Reflection Time or Remote SSC (Student Success Center)," assistant principal James Cunningham said. "Administrators also talk with parents, send e-mails to students, or request virtual meetings with parents and students."

While being remote has cut down regular negative behaviors over all compared to regular years, there have been some instances where discipline has had to happen with remote learning.

"I have had a few students that have un-muted and played music during class," Hazuka said. "The music kept playing so I removed them from the meeting. I had a conversation with them about what had happened and the consequences for continuing the behavior."

English teacher Christine Thye has only dealt with a few instances of students doing

things that were very minor. "A few times I have had to remind students to keep their language positive, school appropriate and focused in the chat," Thye said.

Teachers are able to monitor students' activity in online classes, so they can see if someone is absent or left the meeting.

"If a student is skipping class, we would get a phone call from the parents or an email from the teacher," Cunningham said. "They would be marked as truant (Someone who stays away from school with no explanation)."

If a student were skipping too much, they would then be sent to remote reflection time, or remote Student Success Center (SSC).

"All violations of the Student Code of Conduct are subject to disciplinary action," Cunningham said. "The disciplinary action is outlined based on the violation level."

Because of remote learning, it is difficult for students to receive their punishment for violating the rules, because they are not there in-person to receive their punishment.

"Sometimes it takes a bit longer to investigate a serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct," Cunningham said.

Susnjar wins Coach of the Year

Athletic department unveils new award, promotes excellence

AWARD

Angel Garcia
Reporter

To help improve sports teams with competing and self confidence, the athletic department has a new award. "Coach of the year" was awarded for the first time to head wrestling coach Jason Susnjar. Athletic director Ryan Murtaugh helped create the award this year.

"I was shocked and extremely happy, I was happy for our team," Susnjar said.

Murtaugh wanted this award to help motivate all of our athletic teams and just reassure them of all their hard work.

"I thought it would be kind of a great tool for the coaches to reward them for all the effort and time that they put in each and every day in regard to working with our student athletes," Murtaugh said.

Throughout the year, each coach will be evaluated according to seven different criteria. The seven criteria are being a great recruiter for their team, ties to a strong youth program, high expectations for student athletes, being

a great developer, being a great role model, having a program that is financially self-sufficient and lastly being an overall successful team.

Only coaches who fit all or most of the criteria move on to the final stage, then one coach out of them all will be chosen and awarded the coach of the year award.

"We've got some great coaches here at Bryan and it was kind of stiff competition," Murtaugh said. "But in the end, I felt that coach Susnjar, in terms of criteria, was able to check off each and every box."

Along with the title Susnjar also received a plaque with his picture on it, that is placed adjacent to the competition gym under the heading "coach of the year."

"I think he deserved that award more than most," senior Jake Schoenauer said. "He can push someone to be the greatest they can be. If you want to succeed he would push you to that goal, he's a tough coach but can make an average athlete into much more."



Photo courtesy of Ryan Murtaugh

Left: After being awarded Coach of the Year, head wrestling coach Jason Susnjar poses with his plaque for a photograph outside the gym in August. Top right: Watching a match on Jan. 28, head wrestling coach Jason Susnjar watches as one of his wrestlers competes against Lincoln North Star at the home invitational. Bottom right: Talking to junior Tobin Windgenger about his upcoming match at State on Feb. 20, 2020 head coach Jason Susnjar makes sure Windgenger's head is in the game.



Photo by Stevie Hall

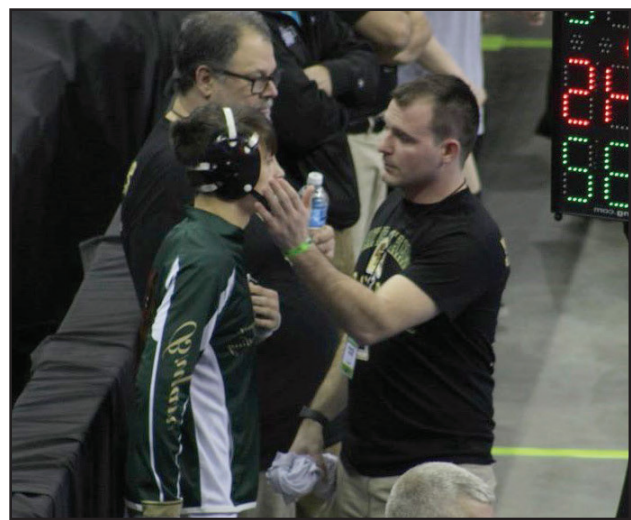


Photo by Madison Howard

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VOLLEYBALL

GIRLS TAKE SPORTS INTO OWN HANDS



Photo courtesy Jordan Wattles

During a league game versus Northwest High School girls on Oct. 9, senior Madeline Gates gives a double thumbs up to her teammate senior Kaitlyn Schwenn to reassure her that she doesn't need to worry. "I was just really excited to play and that we had some fan support," Gates said.

Volleyball players create league to deal with cancellation of fall sports

Sophie Bacon
Reporter

Since Omaha Public Schools canceled its fall sports season with the slim possibility of bringing them back in the spring, the volleyball team received an opportunity to play one last season together as a team.

The Volleyball Academy, an Omaha based business that provides volleyball programs for all ages, reached out and provided the option for a league for all the schools left without a season because of COVID-19.

"When I heard that fall sports would be cancelled at OPS, but all other school districts were playing, I knew I had to do something to make sure our kids could play,"

parent Lisa Carlson said. "And selfishly as a parent, I wanted to watch my daughter play." "After reaching out to various clubs in Omaha, we had two clubs that were willing to work with us because they were sympathetic to the challenges we were facing."

When Carlson spoke with Deb Grafentin at The Volleyball Academy (TVA), she let her know that as a graduate of Northwest High School, she wanted to help the OPS athletes. Together they came up with a plan and she reached out to all head coaches to get a parent contact at each high school.

"Through the work and dedication of parents throughout this city, we are giving our athletes an opportunity to continue playing throughout the fall which makes

everyone involved happy," Carlson said.

The volleyball team jumped at the idea and messaged everyone on the team to see who would be interested in playing. Players had the option of practicing with TVA at their facility for some extra skills training or just practicing with the entire team on a sand court.

"I like practicing with the team, and this is such a fun way to still enjoy the game," sophomore Jessica Conway said. "But I dislike how we have to practice on sand courts. It's pretty different from the real thing. We kind of have to modify the way we play on sand and then change it for when we play on the actual courts."

The pandemic caused most ath-

letes to scramble to find previous year's game tapes to post to college recruits. This year hit hard for many seniors possibly looking for scholarships for volleyball, so this opportunity was a "no brainer" for senior Jordan Wattles.

"Playing in this league will help me get more film for coaches to further evaluate my ability to play in college," Wattles said. "Plus, it gets me more time in the court, otherwise the last game I played was in March so that's 9 months ago, so it keeps me in the feeling of playing games."

To be a part of the league, players had to pay a fee of \$50 and sign COVID-19 release flyers. The team is comprised of 8 students and they meet every Friday night with the season ending Oct. 23.



Photo courtesy Jordan Wattles. After just receiving a pass, senior Jordan Wattles sets the ball for sophomore Sophie Bacon in an attempt to score a kill against the opposing team on Oct. 9.

Winter sports season given green light, pre-season cancelled

Amber Roth
Copy Editor

Despite the 2020 fall and spring sport seasons being cancelled, Omaha Public Schools (OPS) has elected to let student athletes participate in winter sports.

The decision came after much debate on whether it was safe for student ath-

letes and coaches to return to having practices and games and how to keep everyone safe.

"We will have safety procedures for all athletes and coaches, similar to the safety procedures that are mandated during the day," athletic director Ryan Murtaugh said.

These restrictions include everyone must wear

masks while practicing and social distance whenever possible, everyone must bring their own water bottle and be in groups of 25 or smaller for each sport.

"I think it's a good idea if everyone plays their roles and keeps their masks on and their six feet distance," junior wrestler Yusuf Mohamed said.

"Sports are going on right now around the world with a pandemic going on and some of us count on sports for a brighter future and to stay out of trouble."

Because of the pandemic, athletes will not be allowed to attend any out of state competitions. As of right now, the district is not sure whether they will limit competition to state-

wide, or just in the metro area. The most important thing to them right now is keeping the athletes and coaches safe.

"We will do what we have always done," head varsity wrestling coach Jason Susnjar said. "Make the athletes aware of what the expectations are and follow suit. I think our wrestlers know if we want

a season, they will have to follow the safety protocols put in place."

The district is hopeful that spring sports who usually condition in the winter will be allowed to practice prior to the start of the winter sports season on Dec. 16. They are also hopeful that winter sports will be able to condition prior to their season.

Athletes sound off about fall sports being canceled

Nate Reisis
Reporter

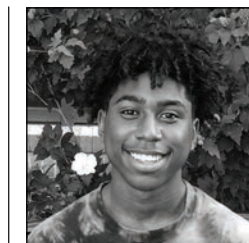
The start of the school year is usually filled with activities and the excitement for the boys and girls of fall, but that excitement was lost as Omaha Public Schools made it official that there would be no fall sports for student, at least not until possibly spring.

While the cancellation was intended to keep student athletes safe, some students and their families were upset about the cancellation and some even switched school districts to be able to play somewhere else.



Sophia Rubenstein
Senior, tennis

"I understand how fall athletes feel right now about losing their season. I practiced playing tennis five to six days a week during the summer. I feel like I really improved from it, and I was trying my best to prepare for my senior season."



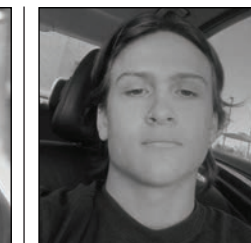
Darwin Loftin
Senior, basketball

"It sucks, we could've played without fans. For them to cancel it completely is really sad, especially for seniors. If OPS isn't going to make a change then we got to. (In regards to students switching districts to play)."



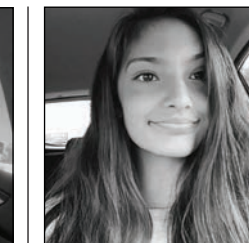
Alondra Escobedo
Junior, softball

"I feel like it was a good idea, as much as I wanted to play, the safety comes first and people should understand that. They made a good decision, the pandemic won't go away unless we all self distance, and I get that people wanna play."



Tobin Windgenger
Junior, football

"I think the cancellation of the season is kind of dumb, I know so many seniors counting on this season to help have a last chance to play and maybe get recruited. I think OPS' decision was stupid, the rest of the state was allowed (a season)."



Reni Cimatoribus
Sophomore, cross country

"I was sad because we couldn't compete and be a team together because the season was cancelled, but I understand due to the circumstances. I think they made precautions they felt were needed to keep us safe and healthy."

Teacher to drop rap album

Clawson collaborates with Twin Cities rapper, creates third album

Dallanara Sibrian-Miranda
Reporter

Inspired by his mentor Carnage the Executioner, a rapper from Minnesota, social studies teacher Nicholas Clawson is creating a rap album titled "Antifaux 1.0" without help from a record company.

The rap album is political in nature and discusses many different current events happening in the world.

"We take aim at white supremacy in all its forms, including Neo-Nazism, and sort of breaks down some of the stuff that's gone down over the years," Clawson said.

Clawson did not work alone on this album, he had help from Carnage, producers and DJ Chris Brennan. This is Clawson's first collaboration, but his third album overall.

The album will have two versions. The first will have five songs and the second version will have

12 to 15. The first album will release in November and the second in February. They will be available on platforms such as Bandcamp and YouTube. Clawson and Carnage started seriously working on the album in 2019.

"We've been chipping away at it for a few years now, but we didn't start really pushing hard until the past six months or so, when we knew the time was coming to drop it, which is just before the election," Clawson said.

With the production of an album, there can be struggles with balancing life and work and this has been no exception.

"I already have a day job, so it doesn't make or break me if the project sells well or not," Clawson said. "There's a great freedom in that."

However, because Carnage makes most of his living off of music alone, Clawson feels pressure to get the album out there

for him, but also because Clawson is getting older. "I'm approaching middle age, and I don't want to turn 40 and look back at my life thinking I didn't utilize the tools I had to make music and leave that sort of mark on the world," Clawson said.

Clawson first learned how to rap throughout his middle and high school years. He studied music nonstop, memorizing and mimicking some of his favorite songs. He even set up an amateur recording studio in his basement to get him started.

"The funny thing is, I didn't have a computer or any sort of editing system, so we'd all have to land our verses on the same take," Clawson said.

"One person would do their verse and then pass it to the next person. If anyone messed up on any of their verses, we'd have to start all the way back at the beginning and record again."

THEATRE

The show must go on

Drama department moves fall play online



Using Flipgrid to complete his audition in his room Senior Richard O'Connor auditions for any role for the school's fall play "The Ghost of Moments" on Oct. 2, using a monologue he chose.

Dallanara Sibrian-Miranda
Reporter

To avoid spreading droplets, germs and illness, if they were to perform on stage and project their voices, the drama department is producing their fall play, "The Ghost of Moments," virtually. It will stream Nov. 20-22 online, pending school board approval.

The play is about ghosts and how everyone has ghosts that haunt them whether that's a real spirit or an imaginary one. The characters must decide whether to run away from the ghosts or hunt them

down. "I'm excited for my roles because it's a big change from freshman year," sophomore Austin Diep said. "I only had a few lines and now I am a lead which is scary but also exciting."

Tickets will be available virtually, at bryandrama.booktix.com. Once purchased, a link will be given to watch the show. Tickets for the show will be \$5 for an individual streaming ticket and \$15 for a family streaming ticket, which is for more than three people.

"If we can't do the show virtually, my current backup plan is to perform

outside in the grassy area next to the softball field," Drama teacher Jodi Hazuka said. "It would kind of be like Shakespeare on the Green. People could bring blankets or chairs to sit and watch the show."

The cast list for the show consists of nine actors playing a total of 14 different characters. The show is monologue and short story based so there are no lead parts. However, the majority of the actors have been involved in drama for several years. They are joined by first year actors, freshmen Olivia Wallace and Kristy Strangoheer.

Arts Calendar

Here is a look at Arts and Entertainment events and releases coming up.

MUSIC

Ashnikko, Demidevil
Releases: Nov.13

Releasing her third extended play (EP), Ashnikko's EP will have 10 songs. The EP's first single "Cry" features pop singer and producer Grimes. The album was delayed due to shipping issues.

Sam Smith, Love Goes
Releases: Today

Rethinking their album due to the global pandemic, Smith delays their third album. They remade the album to have a laid back yet impassioned feel to it. There are many songs about love, loss and heartache which has become Smith's signature.

BOOKS

"Not Quite Out" By Louise Willingham
Releases: Nov. 1

This story screams out to all the romance fanatics. There's everything a good love story needs in this new release. There's the drama, conflict and the dark past. Not to mention the additional LGBTQ+ representation in this novel, with the two main love interests being bisexual and gay. This novel has all the components for the perfect romance story, especially if they enjoyed stories such as "Hot dog Girl" by Jennifer Dugan.

"Renna's Crossing" By Geordie Morse
Releases Oct. 29

For anyone who was obsessed with the Harry Potter series and wants a new coming of age wizard book, this is the story for them. It tells the story of a young girl finding out she is a wizard, navigating her new world. She is forced to decide who can she trust and there's many challenges and twist and turns up ahead for Renna Porter, the main character of "Renna's Crossing."

AROUND TOWN

Free Friday Family movie nights at the Orchard

Located at Ditmars Orchard and Vineyard on 19475 225th St., starting at 6:15 PM, enjoy the scenic views and sunsets while watching a family friendly movie. Guests should bring their own chairs, blankets and bug spray. Social distancing is requested. Cost: Free

Omaha Farmers Market:

Located on 1011 Jackson Street Omaha, NE 68102 goes from 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM.

Browse around a wide range selection of fresh produce, along with a wide variety of specialty items. Cost: Free

Fontenelle Forest gives visitors a "rush"

Olouwatobi Noukpozounkou
Sports Editor

By walking across bridges or climbing across rock platforms, visitors are able to enjoy up to 2 hours and 40 minutes of fun at TreeRush Adventures at Fontenelle Forest.

TreeRush is a ropes course that was brought to Fontenelle Forest in 2019. It opened on May 29, and is located at 1111 Bellevue Blvd N, Bellevue, NE 68005. Tree Rush has seven different courses at four different difficulty levels, yellow being the easiest and black being the hardest. They plan on closing on November 29, 2020, due to it not being safe to climb during the winter season.

"It was a new experience, I've never been on a ropes course before," junior Jose Hernandez said. "I'm glad I did go because it was pretty fun."

They have two parks: TreeRush and KidRush. For the TreeRush Park, it costs \$46 a person for ages 12 and up, and \$39 a person for ages 7-11. For the KidRush Park, it costs \$12 a person from ages four to six.

"At first I thought it was a little pricey but after I did the courses, I saw that it was reasonable for what you got to do," visitor Georgianna Cimantoribus said. "It was amazing and challenging. I was surprised to see old people and kids there, I had no idea that it was a full course."

TreeRush has set up some guidelines to follow to prevent the spread of COVID-19,

visitors will have to stay six feet apart from other groups. They require visitors to wear masks throughout the site, but if people do not have a mask, they will provide one for them.

They have reduced the number of people who can make a reservation during each check in time, and they have sanitation stations at the area where you would first start each course. There are waivers each person must sign before they are allowed to climb that relate to COVID-19.

"We shut down for a month to get ready for COVID-19," course manager Joseph Henry said. "We did research and came up with a plan and we've had good success with it."

Some of the things visitors will be able to do on the courses are zip-lines, walking on bars of wood suspended from ropes, crawling through a tunnel made of wood, jumping from a high platform to the floor and much more. After a tutorial of how to use the equipment, visitors will have all this accessible to them.

"I was surprised by how smoothly everything went," Hernandez said. "At first, I expected the staff to be by your side the whole time you were on the courses, almost like they would be holding your hand and walking you through each step."

They are open Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. On Saturday they are open at 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. They're closed Monday-Wednesday.

Photo by | Olouwatobi Noukpozounkou

Climbing on one of the bridges that are on the rope course, junior Jose Hernandez couldn't stop himself from looking down. "I felt really nervous," Hernandez said. "All I was thinking about was falling off."



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Senior sells artwork as a fundraiser for college

Makenna Smith
Reporter

Using acrylic paints, and an assortment of different brushes and a canvas, senior Sophia Rubenstein painted it all and has created a business out of it. Rubenstein said art impacted her life by bringing many different opportunities, such as starting her own business. She started selling her paintings to help save up money for college. The pricing of each painting varies on the size.

"Art has always been one of my favorite hobbies, because it simply brings

me joy," Rubenstein said. She has painted a wide range of art, such as a portrait of Billie Eilish, to paintings of The Simpson's. Rubenstein has painted it all and has created a business out of it. Rubenstein said art impacted her life by bringing many different opportunities, such as starting her own business. She started selling her paintings to help save up money for college. The pricing of each painting varies on the size. "It's been going pretty good," Rubenstein said. "In fact, I'm almost up to

\$2000 added up from the last couple months."

Rubenstein just always had a natural hand at art, which was noticed by the people around her since she first started on her artistic journey.

"I noticed Sophia had talent from the time she could hold a crayon, she started off pretty early with patterns, then her sketches of people were way more advanced for a child three years of age," Rubenstein's mom Gina Todero-Lewis said. "I have always encouraged her to try new things and supported her creative side."



Photos courtesy of | Sophia Rubenstein

Top: Working on her latest piece of Marilyn Monroe for her easel on Oct. 16, Rubenstein starts the outfit of Monroe for her latest commission. Bottom Left: Painting Tom and Jerry just for fun, but later for a commission Rubenstein used acrylic paint to produce the piece on July 6. Bottom Right: Getting a request of a painting of Marilyn Monroe, Rubenstein uses acrylic paint to produce the piece on Sept. 30.



NEBRASKA OFFICIALS COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACROSS THE STATE

Justin Diep
Copy Editor

Garnering over 3.4 million posts on Facebook, the #saveourchildren and other hashtags alike have gained nationwide attention to shed light on the issue of human trafficking.

“No matter how many times people say posting about save our children won’t make a difference, it will because actions and words make a difference in this world,” sophomore Dana Salazar-Salcedo said.

Officials here in Nebraska say they are aware of human trafficking in the state and have been combatting it for years.

“We do know sex and labor trafficking happened regularly in Nebraska and not just in the big cities, but across the state,” Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF) Coordinator Glen Parks said.

The Nebraska Attorney General’s Office who

oversees the NHTTF said since 2016, 48 cities and towns including ones in the Omaha area and across the state had at least a preliminary investigation into cases of human trafficking.

“Some of these turned into convictions,” Parks said. “Some others, after initial investigation, were closed due to lack of evidence, but they all began with enough evidence and credibility to justify an investigation.”

It is unclear how big of a problem child trafficking is, as the FBI nor the Omaha Police Department (OPD) have exact statistics regarding trafficking. OPD said they are unaware of any children going missing under suspicious circumstances, currently.

“Specific statistics regarding the number of children that are trafficked sexually in the U.S. remains difficult to calculate due to misidentification of minor children

as adults, varied classification of criminal incidents by local law enforcement particularly those incidents involving a child and extra measures taken by traffickers to ensure minors are not contacted by law enforcement,” Omaha FBI Public Affairs Officer Amy Adams said.

Shared Hope International, a nonprofit dedicated to preventing sex trafficking and to restore and bring justice to victims of sex trafficking, gave Nebraska a grade A for response and prosecution in 2019. It was an improvement from the F the state received in 2011.

“This is the result of teamwork,” Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson said in a press release. “The legislature has provided improved laws in efforts to deter traffickers and protect victims. The Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force partners have worked hard to



Infographic courtesy of | Nebraska Attorney General’s Office
Here are cities in Nebraska where human trafficking has been spotted and then reported to The Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force from 2016 to Oct. 13, 2020.

address trafficking across Nebraska. I am proud of our state and am grateful for the tools we now have to confront human trafficking in Nebraska.”

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services defines human trafficking as the recruitment, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining

a person for a commercial sex act or for labor and services using force, fraud or coercion.

People who have encountered a human trafficker, are a victim or have any information regarding human trafficking are encouraged to call 911 if it’s an emergency or the National Human Traffick-

ing Hot line at 1-888-373-7888 or text “HELP” to 233-722.

Photo by | Justin Diep
Having painted “Save our children” on top of the South Omaha Silos located near 35th and Vinton street to spread awareness about child trafficking on Aug 30, 2020.



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