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# Minority males making a difference

DUSTIN FITZPATRICK  
FEATURES EDITOR

The word spread quickly when the aroma of pizza filled the air around the auditorium where a group of minority students were meeting for “Make a Difference Monday.”

In the auditorium lobby, the room as set up with two big circles of chairs, one inside the other. Assistant Principal Deirdre McKinley then gave all the students handouts explaining why they were there and the main points that were to be discussed. Minority males students were brought together to discuss school achievement and to encourage attendance. After the discussion, McKinley had everyone find a partner that they did not know and face their chairs toward one another.

“We need to speak the truth, stay engaged, you may experience some discomfort because you do not know them,” McKinley said.

Each person talked uninterrupted for five minutes and discussed what happened in their day and what they did right that Monday.

Make a Difference Monday is a program headed by McKinley with the help of ELL instructor Nancy Sivils and counselor Tory Juarez.

“Make a Difference Mondays is just one avenue to reach out and address the needs of our male students of color. Male students of color are asked to do three things on this day: come to school dressed as if they were going on a job interview, be on time to class,



Counselor Tory Juarez speaks to the boys in making a noticeable difference as the example about respect. Each student talked about times when they gave and received respect.

*Photo by Cameron Sada*

stay engaged, and participate in class discussions,” McKinley said.

In the meeting, she stressed the importance of this program and explained a little about the inspiration for it. McKinley went to a conference in California called Courageous Conversations about Race.

“They gave us a list of questions to answer on white privilege. You

can score a 5, 3, or 0. The lower your score means that race has a higher impact on your life. Based on your score, they put you on a color line against the wall. They had questions like: ‘because of my race or color, if a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven’t been singled out because of my race. If you put a 5 there, it means this statement is often true.

If you put a 3, then it is sometimes true. If you put a 0, then it is not true. My score was a 33. As they put us on the wall, the lighter skinned you were, the higher the score, and they were first on the wall,” McKinley said.

McKinley came back to Neb. and decided to start a program to help minority males at East.

Though there are some people

who do not necessarily know if the program will work, counselor Tory Juarez has a positive outlook about it.

“Well, unfortunately, we are still going to have kids that it is not going to touch. If we can just touch a few out of the 50 that attended, even if it is just one, it will be worth it,” Juarez said.

As word got around about the program, other students began to formulate strong opinions about it.

“People are going to get really mad because the people who aren’t minorities get upset because so much attention is paid to the minorities just because they are minorities. There are people from every ethnicity that struggle through school, it has nothing to do with race and ethnicity,” junior Allison Lariviere said.

Other students also agreed to with Lariviere and said that the meetings appeared to be little discriminative and sexist because they focused on minority males and no one else.

“I think it is a good idea and I think it is a step in the right direction, but I think it is unfortunate that we have to designate a day, a color of skin, just to get kids to go to class and get their work done. There are very low achieving white females; there are very low achieving white males. I would be fine with the way it is, but I think they should open it up to others who want to be a part of it. Anybody can encourage other kids to go to class,” Leth said.

*See Make a difference: Page 3*

## Bellevue Fire Department moves forward in becoming a union

KATIE KEEFER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Bellevue firefighters officially voted in favor of becoming a labor union on October 24. Eligible members approved the Bellevue Professional Firefighters Association (BPFA) to move on to become an official bargaining unit.

“We think that having an organized voice for employee bargaining will mean a stronger and more efficient Bellevue Fire Department that will better meet the needs of the citizens of Bellevue for emergency response and emergency medical services,” President of the BPFA, Ben Heller said.

Part of becoming a more efficient and safer department comes with negotiations with the city. It is the intent of the BPFA to discuss certain aspects of the job with the city.

“It is our intention to negotiate with the city over safety wages and benefits applicable to our members to ensure that individuals doing firefighting work for the city of Bellevue are compensated fairly; that working conditions are safe and that we are meeting the needs of the citizens to serve the community in the best manner possible,” Heller said.

The safety for the citizens of Bellevue and the firefighters is a main concern for the BPFA. The associa-

tion wants to ensure that workers are being protected and compensated fairly for their dangerous line of work.

As for the safety of the citizens of Bellevue, that relies on the proper staffing of the department.

“The employees and city are doing everything they can to ensure appropriate staffing within the fire department,” Heller explained. “It has been a transition for everyone to go from volunteer-only firefighters to a paid professional staff.

We will continue to work with the city to make this transition as efficient and responsible as possible, given the constraints imposed by

the danger of the work we are doing.”

In the future, it is possible to see the department transition into a full-time department and with that, quite possibly attract more workers.

“When it becomes apparent that the city is better served by full-time employees of the fire department as a whole, that may be something we will consider and I would assume the city consider as well,” Heller said. “We do think that in order to attract the best staff to perform these jobs, the wages will have to be in line with those paid to comparable workers.”

As of now, the BPFA looks for-

ward to approaching the city and discussing wages and the terms and conditions of employment and they hope to do so in terms of arm’s length negotiations rather than in the media, Heller explained.

The association also looks forward to the future of the department and how this new union will affect the city of Bellevue.

“We think having established terms and conditions of employment controlled by an agreed upon contract, will give the city and the employees some certainty in two processes: how the job is done and how employees are treated,” Heller said.



# OCCUPY OMAHA: protesting company greed



Metro residents brace themselves against the cold temperatures in downtown Omaha near 24 and Leavenworth streets to protest against the corporate greed that they feel is present in the city. Occupy Omaha meets every Wednesday and Saturday to discuss plans to be recognized and heard. *Photo courtesy of Running Giraffe Media*

CHRISTINE BLAIR  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Occupy Wall Street is an organized movement that protests the greed of corporations, social and economic inequalities and the influence big business has on America and started on Sept. 17. The idea was started by the Canadian-based Adbusters Foundation, who advocated peaceful demonstrations on Wall Street in order to protest the influence corporations have on democracy on their blog.

Occupy Wall Street has started numerous amounts of Occupy protests all over the world ranging from the Netherlands to Omaha. Occupy Omaha was started on October 10 after a Facebook event called for a general meeting and it has gained growing support all over the metro area.

Omaha residents Tyler Kelley and Adam Fangman have continuously participated in Occupy Omaha's meetings called General Assemblies and even have facilitated one. Fangman participates in the marches that take place around downtown Omaha and describes them as peaceful.

Kelley said that protests and marches are for public display in order to recruit and educate the citizens of the metro area.

"People hold signs, talk with passer-bys and workers, chant slogans, and wave at cars who honk their horns at us or flash the peace sign," Fangman said. "Occasionally, someone will give a little speech, for example when we march past a bank."

Though, for the most part, the protests have been peaceful with only subtle opposition, some have tried counter protesting only to fail.

"The Tea Party tried to stage a counter protest at our first march, but it was a failure," Fangman said. "The police estimated that a thousand of us marched, but you could count how many Tea Party counter protestors there were on one hand. They had more 'Don't Tread On Me' flags than they had people to hold them."

Occupy Omaha has also faced opposition from the government and the police, who accuse protestors of trespassing and other minor offenses.

"Individual police officers

have mostly been very kind, respectful, and supportive of us," Fangman said. "One of them even told us that they had to kick us out of our camp because 'people who make more than us' told them to."

Kelley said that his experience with opposition has been mostly from those suffering from ignorance about the movement.

"People seem to want a solution from anyone highlighting the problems," Kelley said. "We also have to deal with the stigma of being 'jobless hippies just looking for a handout.' We are not that at all. Most of us have jobs, families, and go to school. We are the working class."

So far there has been discussion within Occupy Omaha on what they exactly want to achieve through this movement and opinions vary across the members in the group.

"In my opinion, we really do not need 'demands.' I think the true purpose of a movement such as this is the dialogue," Kelly said. "The fact that people are talking about income inequality, the corruption of government officials by private money, and the

ridiculous practices of businesses putting profit over people is the success of these protests."

Occupy Omaha has a very wide demographic appeal; it unites hundreds of people across many different ideologies. Fangman works with the American Party of Labor and has seen various other groups support marches and assemblies such as the Industrial Workers of the World, Forward Equality and Nebraskans for Peace.

As the cold winter months typical of Midwest weather sets in, general assemblies have moved to being held indoors, but there are no actual plans for encampment just yet and numbers of supporters who attend meetings and marches are dropping.

"However, every week we see new faces; new people who are just learning of our group," Kelley said. "Our numbers are growing in support, even if that is not manifested on the sidewalks of downtown every weekend. We have over 7,000 'likes' on the Facebook page and many people saying that they wish they could join us."

There has not been a permanent camp site for Occupy Omaha since protestors were disbanded and three were arrested in the empty lot near 24 and Farnam streets, but the movement is making progress for finding a consistent spot.

"We hope to come to an agreement with the city in the coming days and weeks to find ourselves a permanent occupation site. We would need a source of electricity, heat, and other amenities to make living outside during the winter months a possibility," Kelley said.

Those wishing to support Occupy Omaha can visit their website [occupyomaha.info](http://occupyomaha.info) in order to learn more information. General Assemblies are held every Wednesday at 7 p.m. and every Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at a location that is disclosed on their Facebook page every week.

"We've raised awareness and created a movement that is by, for, and of the people," Fangman said. "These are important achievements. We have many projects in progress right now, and we get closer to our long term goals every day."

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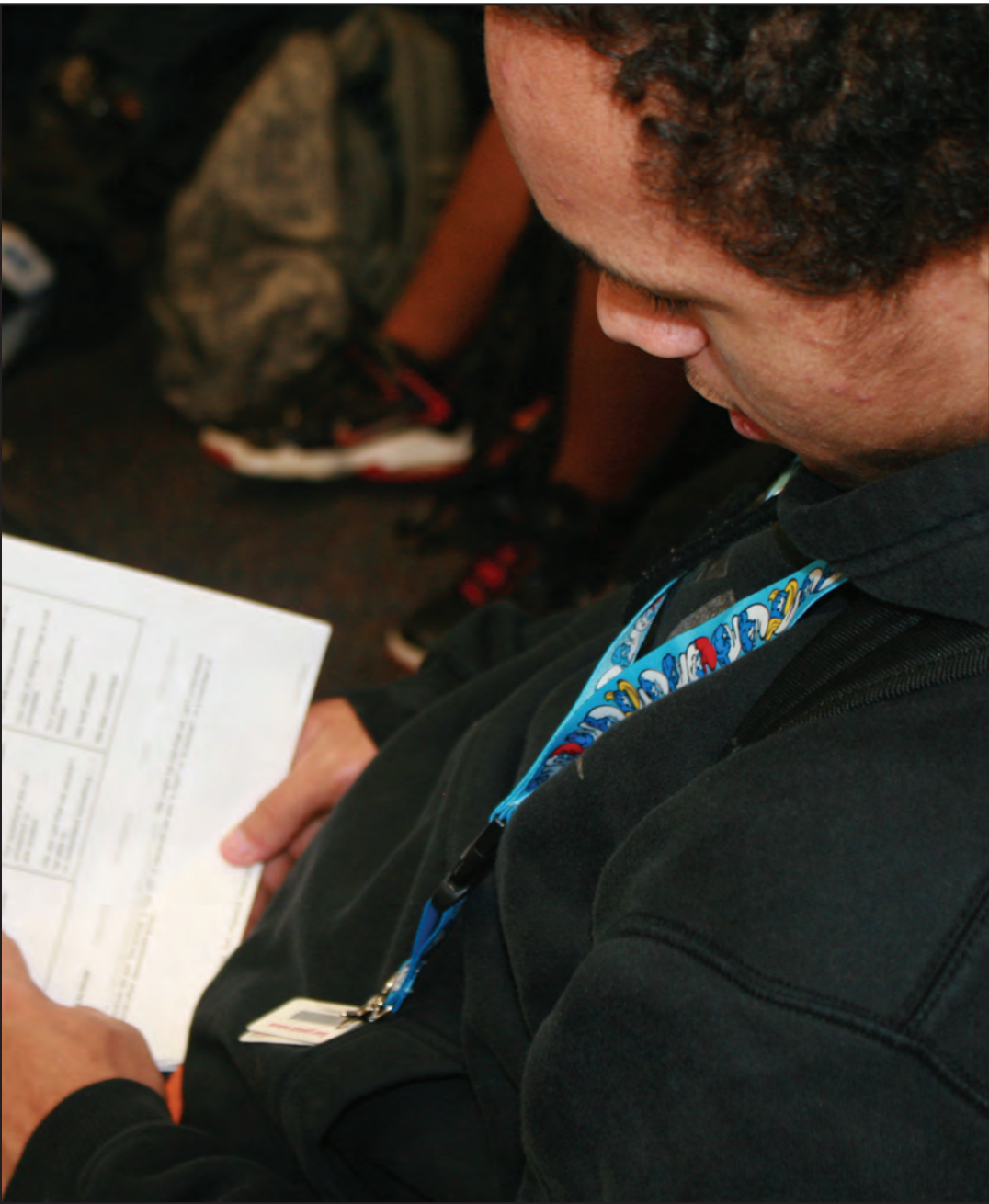
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# Make a difference: helping minority males



The Make a Difference Monday group meets every Tuesday. The students are advised to make good decisions such as being respectful. Counselor Tory Juarez spoke mostly about being respectful to everyone, no matter who they are. On the left, junior Jake Cloyd looks over a sheet of paper handed out for students to review. The paper included the definition of MANDATE, a lesson plan for that day, and an explanation about the purpose of the group. In the two photos on the right, students are gathered at their weekly meeting to discuss problems in their lives and how to change for the better. *Photos by: Cameron Sada*

*Continued from Page 1*

Lariviere shared the same viewpoints with Leth.

“They should just include everybody that is struggling to get through school. I am sure that there is a white kid that has the odds against him. So why focus on just the minority part of it?” Lariviere said.

However, McKinley defended her reasoning for why she is focusing on minority males.

“Something out there is not bringing our minority students up to par. If there is a white student in poverty and a student of color in poverty, they [the students of color] still achieve lower. Minority students are lower than white students. So I chose to start with the male students because the data shows that male students of color are lower achieving in school,” McKinley said.

The problem with achievement can be seen by looking at the 2010-11 math scores from the state tests of white students compared to students of color.

According to [www.reportcard.education.ne.gov](http://www.reportcard.education.ne.gov), white students in the eleventh grade in this school achieved an overall score of 48 percent proficiency. In the district, whites scored 58 percent, and in the state, white students scored a 62 percent of proficiency.

By no means are these scores high, but they are higher than the scores of blacks. Blacks in this school scored at 26 percent proficiency, in the district it was 35 percent, and in the state the score was 19 percent proficiency.

The differences are not as drastic as with the math scores, but there is a difference nonetheless. Some students brought up that it is sexist to focus on minority men and not minority women. McKinley said that it was

because statistics showed that minority men are the ones who are most behind. However, there is a difference in 2011 high school graduation rates not only between minority men and women, but between male and female students period.

For male students in the school, the graduation rate is 80.36 percent. In the district, the rate is 85.87 percent. In the state, the rate is 83.12 percent. For female students, the graduation rate of the school is 86.46 percent. In the state, the graduation rate is an 88.54 percent.

After seeing these scores, there is one question that comes to mind: What is causing minorities to score lower than white students?

“I think a lot of it has to do with their home environment. There is not the stable life that they have had in the past. They come from single parent households or both parents are not educated enough. Both parents have to work which leaves the child home alone. Family dynamics are not the way they used to be, therefore, the kids do not get the assurance, self-confidence, and support they need,” Juarez said.

Juarez also said that he agreed with McKinley on why they are focusing on minority males for right now and he has his own thoughts on people feeling excluded.

“There are other activities that other students can take part in. You do not have to be Latino to be in Latino Leaders. You do not have to be a minority in to be in Diversity Club. The reason why we have not targeted females is because they are a different population and have different needs. We targeted minority males because their needs tend to be more immediate. They have a higher drop out rate and lower tests scores,” Juarez said.

Due to the restrictiveness of Make a Difference Mondays, arguments have ignited among some students. One argument got so

out-of-hand that the three students had to be sent down to McKinley’s office. One of these students was junior Ashlee Moser.

“I think white people and females need to be involved too. It is everyone’s problem; it is not just one race’s. Everyone drops out. Some people are going to like [Make a Difference Monday] and some people are going to go against it because it is sexist and in a way racist because they are leaving out one race,” Moser said.

After going to McKinley’s office, Moser joined a discussion over Make a Difference Monday.

Moser and junior Jenny McCauley asked what the meaning of the group was and McKinley said explained how she is trying to get the male’s self-esteem and then will focus on the females and eventually bring in other students as well, according to Moser.

One student who is involved in the program and said that he understands the way females and white students might feel excluded is junior Ramon Carias.

“For those excluded, I understand their opinion on this. I believe that it should be shared with everyone. I do not think it is necessarily a good thing to identify minorities’ problems without realizing the majority goes through similar things. Creating tension of this sort is dangerous and separating the minorities from the rest of the school could bring a bad image,” Carias said.

Another issue that some students have complained about is the fact that the minority men were served pizza at the first meeting and wings from Buffalo Wild Wings at the second meeting. Some question how these things were paid for.

“The program is not funded yet. I did this out of my own pocket. My mama always said ‘the way to a man’s heart is to his stom-

ach.’ The second time B-dubs (Buffalo Wild Wings) actually donated their food after they heard about the program,” McKinley said.

However, some consider it bribery to get goodies such as these things to reassure that kids come.

“I do not consider it bribery because some still choose to come. All I was trying to do is whatever is possible to get kids to come. I am inviting them to the program and making them feel welcome,” McKinley said.

Make a Difference Monday” is not the only program out there working to make a difference in the test scores and achievement of minorities. A national program that focuses on the same goals is called Higher Achievement.

Higher Achievement, founded in 1975, focuses on middle school children that live in at-risk communities. It is a rigorous after-school and summer program that works on closing the achievement gap.

According to the website [www.higherachievement.org](http://www.higherachievement.org), on average, 95 percent of Higher Achievement scholars who complete the program advance to top academic high schools and 93 percent advance to college.

From fifth through eighth grade, Higher Achievement scholars spend 650 hours a year learning an advanced curriculum that is aligned to state standards. This commitment is in addition to attending school for the standard 900 hours a year.

Despite the amount of criticism that Make a Difference Mondays is getting, senior Dante Wess still tries to keep his views on the positive side.

“I think it will help somebody. I do not think it will help everybody, but it will help somebody. Some people need more support and they will not admit it, but by doing this, we are helping them,” Wess said.



# East's hunt to find permanent German teacher

JEREMY CASSIDAY  
SPORTS EDITOR

In the last semester, the foreign language department has gone through four German teachers. After German instructor Pat Branson's, retirement at the end of last year, the next German instructor in line, Christopher Brown, made it one quarter before resigning.

The district then followed with a previous temporary replacement teacher, Amanda Georgian, on a week-to-week substitute teacher contract. However, then, the administration has hired a full-time teacher, but for next semester. With three weeks remaining in the first semester, Branson returned to close out the 2011 year. In 2012, there will be a new teacher.

The hunt for the next teacher lead East to hire Andrea Turner full time for second semester. She will start after the first semester has ended and will hopefully be able to stay with and continue the German program. Such a problem might seem stressful for some administrators, but Principal Brad Stueve took it in stride.

"I don't know that it raises my stress level as far as everything else I have to deal with," Stueve said.

As for the German program at Bellevue East, Stueve is looking to keep the momentum that the German program had previously.

"I'd like it [the German program] to stay as strong as it was



The previous temporary German instructor, Amanda Georgian, helps a student with a homework assignment. Georgian was the second of four teachers to teach German this year after Frau Branson retired at the end of last year. She was the teacher until a permanent teacher was found to take over the class. *Photo By: Morgan Barrett*

when Frau Branson left it," Stueve said.

Head of the Language department, Piper Marsh, was also a little worried about German.

"It's something that I think people are concerned about because it was a very strong program," Marsh

said.

However, Marsh does have confidence in the foundation built by Branson in her last year with the new curriculum.

"Each [teacher] can put their creative spin on it, but there's a strong foundation that's been built

already and planned for ahead of time," Marsh said.

There were interviews with teachers not only from Nebraska, but all over the nation before Turner was hired.

Even with the hiring of a full-time teacher, Marsh wants to make

sure the program remains strong.

"In the name of the holy Frau Branson, stay in the program," Marsh said. "Work together...to make sure that you're learning the material you need to know and keeping each other encouraged, and not dropping."

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# GPS changes allow students to get more help

JOSCELYN RAGONE  
WEB EDITOR

At the beginning of the year, changes were made to guided personalized study (GPS). Students were assigned to a GPS that was also their seventh hour class. Now, almost at the end of the semester, many more changes have been implemented yet again.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday's, math teachers collaborate. Then on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the math teachers stay

in their classrooms and offer help to those who need it. It used to be that no student was allowed to leave their GPS. Now students are allowed to leave, with a pass, to go get help from specific classes.

"I feel like it's a lot more controlled than last year, and it's kind of a happy medium between what it is now, and how it was at the beginning of the year," said junior Matt Holtmeyer.

Teachers have noted that with the ability to leave class, responsibility is a must on the students' parts.

"Depending on how students treat the situation, if they can do it responsibly, not skipping class, getting to where they need to be, the new GPS changes will be beneficial," math instructor Robbie Stapleton said.

Some students recognize that the changes are better than the way GPS operated at the beginning of the year, but they still are unhappy with GPS overall.

"I'm still not a fan of GPS itself, at all. But I think that students should be allowed to pick the GPS class that they would want

to be in.

Also, students should be allowed to leave GPS to go to electives any day that they would need to. As for the kids who skip, they should be punished individually, not everyone else," sophomore Randi Knox said.

Whether or not these changes will stay as they are, or continue to evolve is still in the air. Students grades, attendance, and student state test scores, are all just a part of the factors that could contribute to more changes.

## NEWS BRIEFS: Updates on school, nation, and the community

### Libya loses Qaddafi and seeks new leadership

Libya is an oil-rich nation that had been under the erratic leadership of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi for over forty years. Recently, a six-month struggle removed him from power in Aug. 2011. Col. Qaddafi was killed on Oct. 20 after fighters battling the remnants of his fallen command finally handed over control of his hometown Surt. The country was formally declared liberated three days later, beginning the process of creating a new constitution and an elected government.

Many of the local militia that helped overthrow Qaddafi abandoned a pledge to give up their weapons in early November.

The militias are one of the most immediate

issues facing Libya's new provisional government, the Transitional National Council. Reports of sporadic clashes between citizens as well as vigilante revenge killings, many civilian leaders along with some fighters, say the militias' shift from resisting surrendering weapons to actively asserting a political role poses a challenge to the authority of the council. The council has pledged a "constitutional declaration" that after the selection of a new government within eight months, which will oversee the writing of the constitution. Abdel Rahim el-Keeb was voted as prime minister by the members of the council.

### Chieftain theater awards

Chieftain Theater brought home four awards after going to two play contests. The first contest was in Kearney on Nov. 15. There, the intermediate theater class, brought home Best Comedy for their show of "Cut" by Ed Monk. The advanced performance studies classes brought home the award for Best Drama.

A week later on Nov. 22, both theater classes brought home two awards from Lincoln High School. Intermediate theater students received the Best Comedy award a second time for their show. Students in advanced performance studies received the award for Most Creativity.

### Forensics ranked in the top

First semester was good for the Bellevue East forensics team.

At the Papillion - La Vista Invite, junior Christian Rush, won first place for humorous interpretation and sophomore Nate Crawford won third place in extemporaneous speaking. Senior Charisa Martin won first place in humorous interpretation at Millard South, Rush placed second in the same category, and Crawford placed sixth in extemporaneous.

Martin, sophomore Gillian Toppa, freshmen Josh Fluellen, Ben Hoffman and Daniel Brinkman all won second place in oral interpretation of drama at Millard South.



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The January issue of the Tom Tom will be completely online. Be sure to check it out at [my.hsja.org](http://my.hsja.org).



# A normal day in the life of a dean



Susan Jensen is the dean for the students with the last names beginning with P through Z. Photo by Cameron Sada

MCKENNAH OTT  
REPORTER

When people think of a high school dean, they might think of a big, burly guy with ruler in hand, patrolling the halls, and giving all the kids who are loitering after the bell rings detentions. However, for East, that is not the case at all.

East's deans are very friendly, fun loving people who keep the school safe to ensure that all students get the education they deserve.

Susan Jensen is one of those friendly and fun loving deans. For four years, she has been a dean at Bellevue East.

Everyday, starting at about 7:30 in the morning, Jensen is in the school preparing for a new, adventurous, spontaneous day.

Monday mornings are set aside for all the deans to meet and prepare for the week.

Then, every morning, Jensen and her fellow deans supervise passing periods.

The rest of the day usually consists of meetings, disciplining, and even more supervision. Sometimes their routine does not go according to plan and then the deans have to improvise.

"Everyday is something new," Jensen said. "It's fast paced and different everyday."

The deans' day ends around 4:00 p.m. when they leave school and go home to their families.

Being a dean has its ups and downs. It takes a special person to be able to discipline others and to make sure they do not take things personally.

"There are days when you see the same kids that are getting in trouble for the same reason over and over," Jensen said.

One thing kids may not realize is that deans do much more than just disciplinary things. Deans are there to answer questions, show support, and are there if a person needs someone to talk to.

There are many reasons as to why people want to become deans. Jensen had wanted to work in a school since she was a child.

Jensen's father was the superintendent of her school district growing up and she had always been in close proximity to a learning community.

Eventually, Jensen accomplished her dream of working in a school.

It took lots of education. In fact, Jensen has a master's degree in educational leadership.

"My favorite part about being a dean is working with kids and my coworkers," Jensen said.

Deans are a major part of a school. They keep people safe and everything running smoothly. They are there to talk to people, help people when needed, and discipline students if necessary.

"Being a dean is lots of fun and something new and exciting happens everyday," Jensen said.

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# Bull riding: the experience of a lifetime

NICOLE BARTLETT  
OPINION EDITOR

Ever since the very first time junior Sage Faust got on top of a bull and soon after got bucked off, he fell in love with the sport of bull riding.

Faust became interested in the sport because his dad rode bulls also and encouraged him to the same. His mom was also a roper and both parents, together, influenced Faust to get involved in the aggressive sport.

“Once you [bull ride], you get hooked. The adrenaline rush is amazing and you feel good when you get off [the bull],” Faust said.

According to [www.pbr.com](http://www.pbr.com), bull riding is a sport that many kids and adults participate in nation wide. A qualified ride is eight seconds. The clock starts when the bull’s shoulder goes past the gate and stops when the rider’s hand comes out of the rope, and the rider touches the ground or the rider’s free arm touches the bull.

The practices for the rodeos not only take place the day of the rodeo, but multiple times throughout the duration of the week.

Every night Faust practiced on “The Mighty Bucky,” which was his manual bull in which he had to use his individual strength to move and turn the bull.

Usually every other week Faust would practice his techniques and movements on real livestock to ensure accuracy for when it came time to be in the spotlight at the next rodeo.

“My favorite rodeos are the high school rodeos because they are a lot of fun and you get to meet a lot of people,” Faust said.

At these rodeos he has the chance to ride against people his own age while getting the

chance to talk to other riders that are just like him.

Together they share a bond that others may not understand.

“My best rodeo was in Kansas City; I did really well. It took a lot of practice and thinking about what I was going to do,” Faust said.

This year Faust went to Southeast Texas Bare Back Riding School just north of Houston, Tex. for four long days.

At this school, there were a few pro bull riders who led the instruction such as Clint Cannon, Kerby Cannon, and Heith Ford.

Throughout the four days, Faust learned about spurring [using spurs to anger the bull by kicking it] and the perfect timing for it, tying down knots and a lot more information about pro bull riding.

“There is a lot more involved [with bull-riding] than I thought. I learned that you have to keep track of rodeos that you enter and the ones that you don’t enter,” Faust said. “I also learned more about how they are judged and how important it is to try and improve to get to the top.”

Along with learning about spurring and the deep things about pro bull riding, Faust also learned about actually riding the bull.

“Being aggressive is important. It is a fight for eight seconds and you have to be aggressive the entire ride,” Faust said.

Faust feels that bull riding will be a life-long growing adventure for him and he hopes to continue for the rest of his life. a tradition from both sides of his family.

“I want to go pro someday. I love bull riding more than anything and I want to continue to do it as long as I can,” Faust said.



Junior Sage Faust rides his bull at a competition. The rider must stay on the bull for a total of eight seconds for the ride to qualify. Photo courtesy of Sage Faust

# Black Friday deals bring out the crazies: A personal insight into the holiday shopping experience

MCKENNAH OTT  
REPORTER

Every year, on the day after Thanksgiving, crazy shoppers go out to all the stores to get great deals on the most wanted merchandise.

On Black Friday, people stand in line for hours just waiting for stores to open their doors so they can get their hands on those newly reduced-priced items. This year, I was one of those crazy shoppers.

My grandma Judy, my aunt Debby, and my mom, Michelle, and I went on the shopping adventure of a lifetime. To prepare us for our mission, we piled on coats, gloves, hats, scarves, and even packed a blanket.

We set off from our home in Bellevue to venture out to “no man’s land.” We piled into my grandma’s silver Chevy Venture and hit the

road to officially begin my first Black Friday endeavor.

We made our way to West Roads Mall in Omaha. Our first stop (my shopping crazed grandma chose) was Younkers. We waited there, in the cold, for two hours. Finally, when the big, glass doors opened at midnight, a stampede of people rushed into the neatly organized store.

My goal was to get a pair of Emu boots that were 65 percent off, and, of course, the shoe section was like a zoo!

Boots and heels were flying in the air and boxes were all over the floor. People were fighting over a 15 dollar pair of leather boots.

All I was thinking was, “Really people. Is it worth getting a bloody nose or a busted lip over a pair boots that were ridiculously cheap?”

I quickly found myself answering that ques-

tion with a definite yes.

Going into my Black Friday experience, I knew that there might be some unwanted confrontation, but I quickly realized that you had to fight for what piece of merchandise you wanted.

A girl, whom I have never met in my entire life, insisted that the boots I had searched for were stolen from her. I denied the accusation and turned to walk away when she pounced like a cat.

She quickly had her scrawny hands on my box of boots trying to pry them from my hands. I instinctively pulled away and ran to my grandma’s shopping cart. I put my coat over the shoebox at the bottom of cart to camouflage the wanted item. I prevailed in the battle of the shoes.

After our experience at Younkers, my fam-

ily and I made our way to Perkins at five in the morning. That, in its self, was a crazy experience.

Our waiter, Eric, had a bloody nose while serving us our food. He happened to be the only waiter working, so of course, he did what any struggling waiter would do. He stuck a rolled up napkin into his right nostril and continued to serve the waiting customers their food. I, personally, had a hard time eating after seeing that happen.

On the way home from our adventure from Black Friday shopping, I realized that this crazy day of shopping wasn’t about just getting the best deals.

To me, it’s about being able to spend time with the people in my family that mean the most to me and having the memories that will last a life time.

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# Cadets work hard to prepare for inspection

DUSTIN FITZPATRICK  
FEATURES EDITOR

The squeaking of black shoes, the disbursement of blue uniforms throughout the school, and the clicking of heels are signs that it is the weekly inspection for the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) cadets.

“The inspection is to see how our new cadets are doing within our corps and how they are adapting to the uniform and to make sure the old cadets are following up on the standards,” senior Alixe Rowe said.

JROTC has an inspection every Wednesday with certain routines that they normally follow, but there was one that got more attention than the others during the week of Oct. 24 to 28.

“Oct. 24 to 28 week’s inspection was important to the corps because the man, Col. Lawhorn, inspects how the corps is run and based on his inspection, they decide whether we get to have a JROTC or not. We are all confident we passed though,” senior Ruby Arroyo said.

Other student cadets also thought the inspection was successful.

“I thought it went really well. It was really stressful leading up to it, but it all came together,” senior Rebecca Bagwell said.

What makes this inspection so important is the fact they had someone come from outside of the school to perform the inspections, and a decision is made based on what is seen during the inspection, the inspector decides whether or not East will have a JROTC.

For the special inspection, Bagwell “reinforced people to get their speech done and get the staff’s pictures done. The 14 main leaders had to prepare a speech and Power-

Point over what we do,” Bagwell said.

The preparation also makes this inspection different from the rest because the PowerPoint was something they did not normally do for the weekly inspections.

Though the weekly inspections are not as in depth, they are just as important and there are certain things that make for a good inspection.

“Being prepared, knowing what you are going to say, practice, practice, practice, and cooperation and dedication to getting your part of the inspection done,” Bagwell said.

Bagwell’s position is group commander. She commands 185 cadets in the corps, which is the highest level of leadership in the corps. She intervenes when things do not go right or when there is a need for help. Bagwell basically oversees everyone.

If a person passes the inspection, they receive a merit; however, if they fail the inspection, something else occurs.

“If you did not wear the uniform on Wednesday, the cadet would get five demerits and they would have to wear the uniform the next day. They would get a slip saying if they failed to wear it two more times, they will be likely to be removed from the corps,” Rowe said.

Not only are JROTC students undergoing inspections every Wednesday, but they are also preparing for the drill season this year.

“I am not participating this year, but they have already started working on their routines and looking sharp doing it. There are three teams: Unarmed, Armed (with rifles), and Color Guard (flag detail),” Rowe said.

Each team has subdivisions between them, like the armed team has two divisions. One division is the regulation division where they follow all the rules and

march in a box and are judged based on that. The other division is the exhibition division which is where they twirl and throw rifles. Each rifle weighs about 8 and a half pounds according to Lt. Col. Bill Steele.

A student involved with the drill team is Bagwell, and she looks forward to this season.

“I love drill season. I guess it’s just fun. We are learning the routine now and we are going to the competition in January. There are about eight competitions in January,” Bagwell said.

Each team also has two commanders. For the Armed team, junior Ryan Jones is the Armed Regulation commander and is not worried about this drill season.

“We will succeed because of our tradition of excellence. Plus, we practice Tuesdays and Fridays from 6 a.m. until 7:30 a.m. and on Wednesdays from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m.,” Jones said.

The commander for the color guard team, junior Alyssa Tackett also has a positive outlook for this drill season.

“(Color Guard) should do very well. We practice once a week which is less than the other teams, but we do a lot for the community (Color Guard wise) and we practice very hard to meet military standards. I have a lot of confidence in my team,” Tackett said.

Tackett also believes something else will come from this year’s drill season.

“I look forward to representing the colors of our nation well and to upholding the good standards set by Air Force Honor Guard while keeping it fun and interesting,” Tackett said.

The Color Guard drill team participates in many events throughout the community.

“We do Color Guards for the Bellevue Senior Citizens Center, the Senator’s Congressional Awards Ceremony, and the 2011 College World Series,” Tackett said.

Senior Weston Secrist is the commander of the exhibition division for the unarmed team and he has confidence in his team.

“This season is looking very promising; we still have a lot of work to do, but we are headed in the right direction. The members on the team are what make drill team worthwhile,” Secrist said.

Another person who is looking forward to drill season is Steele himself.

“We are going to work as hard as we can and wherever that gets us that is where we are going to go. The important part of drill is about how you learn to work with others. It is not winning trophies. What I look forward to most is if we work hard and work together for a goal, we will achieve it,” Steele said.

There is only one thing that Steele is really worried about for this drill season and the students involved.

“I am worried that they will not have fun. If they have fun, we can do anything. If we went to Nationals, I think we would do okay. We went to Air Force Nationals and we placed fourth overall,” Steele said. “It is a matter of trust. They trust me to do things and I trust them to do what they are supposed to do. If I ever get to a point to where I do not trust somebody, they get kicked off the team.”

For those students who are interested in joining JROTC, there are some things that they students should know.

“They need to be disciplined and understand that we are like a family. The corps is a serious program with rules, but it is also a place where we can have fun,” Arroyo said.

ZOEY BRENNAN  
NEWS EDITOR

In honor of late custodian Al Smith, Bellevue East’s JROTC created a shadow box on Veteran’s Day.

Smith’s rank was Sgt. 1st Class. He had served over 20 years in the United States Army.

The idea for the shadowbox was brought up by the cadets and several other people at Smith’s funeral, after seeing all of his ribbons displayed. It includes everything from the beginning of his military career through when he retired.

The box consisted of Smith’s rank, medals he earned, and badges and insignia that defined who he was in the military.

“It [the box] was a token of our appreciation,” junior Nicole Herndon said. “We figured that he did so much for us that we were going to do something special for him and his family.”

JROTC Instructor Lt. Col. Bill Steele was in charge of directing JROTC students to help out.

The box was on display in the lobby in the front of the school. Two cadets had guarded it every hour to honor the display, as well as to keep it safe.

While on display, students were able to walk by and view the box.

“We had a lot of teachers and students come down to see the display, but I don’t think they understand everything on display, they saw another side of him [via the display],” Steele said. “Some were surprised and everybody who saw it put their own relevance to it. It not only honored Sergeant Smith, but also all of our veterans, too.”

Overall, the box was meant to commemorate the Smith’s service. The box now resides with Smith’s family for their keeping.



Members of the JROTC guarded the Shadowbox on Veteran’s Day. The box was created to pay tribute to Al Smith, a custodian at Bellevue East who passed away on September 26, 2011. Smith retired from the military before coming to work at East, and after his passing, East wanted to remember him. Photo by McKennah Ott



# Your rights as a U.S. citizen

*Everyday people are getting arrested or taken to jail for committing crimes, but even though a person commits a crime, they still have rights as a citizen. These are rights that you should know just in case you get involved with law enforcement. Information gathered from [www.legalanddrew.com](http://www.legalanddrew.com), [www.minimum-wage.org](http://www.minimum-wage.org), [www.kimoracochran.com](http://www.kimoracochran.com) and [www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org).*

•**Right #1:** The court says that students have the right to sit silently during the Pledge of Allegiance. As long as you do not disrupt the pledge, you may refuse to participate.

•**Right #2:** School officials can search your locker only if they have “reasonable suspicion” that it contains a prohibited or illegal object.

•**Right #3:** You have a constitutional right to remain silent when questioned. Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law.

•**Right #4:** In Nebraska, a student may be expelled for use of violence, force, threat or similar conduct, willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing, attempting to cause

injury, and sexual assault. Before you can be suspended for more than ten days or expelled from school, you must be provided with adequate notice and the ability to request a hearing to determine whether you committed the offense.

•**Right #5:** The state of Nebraska’s minimum wage is currently \$7.25 and you should report if you get paid less than that.

•**Right #6:** You have a right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you.

•**Right #7:** School attendance by a student is required, and the school can take action against you if you miss school and the absence is unexcused.

•**Right #8:** No warrant, No

ntry. If police arrive to your home requesting to search it, you have the right to decline, unless they can provide you with a search warrant signed by a judge.

•**Right #9:** Under federal law, your employer does not have to provide lunch or coffee breaks. Also, your employer

does not have to pay you for lunch breaks that you are given.

•**Right #10:** A student can participate in a “day of silence” as a way of expressing their opinions, but teachers and other staff at the school can require you to participate and speak in class.



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## Odd gifts to give someone



An example of an odd gift that was given to forensics instructor John Campbell is the knee patch that was sewn into the shorts he and his brothers received from their mother. *Photo by Cameron Sada.*

ANDREA VELLANI  
REPORTER

With the holidays coming up fast, now is the time for gift shopping.

Many websites offer new and unusual gift ideas, including some that are rather strange. The trend of giving odd gifts is a unique way of giving something special to someone exceptional.

Current trends, such as Coach purses and apple-themed objects, may be the cool thing to give, but may lack a personal touch that could make the gift extraordinary.

Although gift cards are a simple way to give, sometimes this may seem lacking in effort or sincerity. For this occasion, a more personal, odd gift would be appropriate.

“Unique gifts are more memorable,” forensics instructor John Campbell said.

Campbell recalls some odd gifts he received in past years.

He and his brothers grew up with the original Star Wars Trilogy, and one year their mother gave them jean shorts with Darth Mal knee patches. Other years, when he was younger, his grandmother would give him gift-wrapped smoked oysters and grape jelly in a can.

Sophomore Mike Deitering recalls his own odd gift experience. He gave his mother’s boyfriend one year a Spongebob hot cocoa set.

“He laughed, but knew it was a joke,” Deitering said, “We later had some hot cocoa together.”

Probably the most bizarre of gifts of all are the bacon flavored products. Popping up everywhere, these odd products are a way to cater to a group of people who just genuinely love bacon.

From jerky to jellybeans and toothpicks, bacon as a flavoring is becoming a very common product.

According to Campbell, bacon flavored products are “off the charts.”

“There are very few products and activities that bacon doesn’t improve,” Campbell said.

However, not all people are fans of the new bacon phenomenon.

“I think they are a little bit weird,” science instructor Phil Alcocer said. “I’ve never really bought any. I’m not a fan of artificial flavorings.”

There are several websites that sell only bacon products, including air fresheners, dental floss, gumballs, candy canes, soap, lip balm, cake frosting, lollipops, yogurt, Spam, brownies, bubbles, gummies, salt, Diet Coke, and even tattoos.

With the holidays right around the corner, considering which gifts to give this year can be a challenge.

Luckily, the possibilities abound when shopping for unusual and odd gifts, which may make the recipient as happy as the person who gave it.

## Stacking transcripts: classes that prepare students best for college

ANDREA VELLANI  
REPORTER

Colleges are becoming more competitive for applicants. The classes taken during high school help prepare students for their college years. Grade point average (GPA) and class difficulty are factors that determine a student’s preparedness for college.

“While college entrance requirements vary across the state and nation, from public to private institutions, the most common thing that is desired is for the applicant to be well rounded, in grades as well as in extra-curricular activities,” Christina Bladow, freshman at Creighton University and graduate of Bellevue East, said.

Knowing the standards for college entrance is essential before judging college preparedness. Although not all colleges and universities share the same standards, most colleges require a certain GPA.

Another major requirement comes in the forms of classes taken in high school. It is not uncommon for requirements to include a certain amount of English, math, science, and history courses. Usually, more than two years of a foreign language are favorable.

Although some institutions do not require it, having a high SAT and ACT score will help students with potential scholarships.

Some less inclusive schools may require a student to have graduated in a certain class percentage, such as in the top tenth of the class.

Some students find the easiest way to

enter college is to take lower level classes that they excel at. Taking easy classes may make it easier to boost GPA, but the classes may lack actual college credit. A common trait of many students trying to get into college the “easy way” is that they take the bare minimum requirements.

Higher-achieving students take all tests (ACT, SAT, etc.) offered to them and usually take more classes than required. They may have a lower GPA from challenging courses, but the AP classes apply to college, so these students do not have to take the same classes in college.

“By definition, standard classes are the bare minimum. I feel that AP classes go beyond this minimum and provide an environment that is beneficial to individual growth and allows the students to become more well rounded,” Bladow said.

Although students can enter almost any state college right out of high school with a good GPA, a student who did not take AP classes would have to take prerequisite classes that may or may not apply to the major of choice.

Although a student who took AP classes may not have as great a GPA as a student who took easier classes, the student will not have to waste time with boring classes. If all goes extremely well, the student who continues worked as hard as they did in high school may be lucky enough to graduate early.

“Advanced placement classes provide wonderful opportunities for students and I would highly recommend taking them during high school.” Bladow said.



# Gizmos and Gadgets: Technology's impact

## Benefits and drawbacks of technology



Senior Robert Hidalgo (left) enjoys using computers to find websites that enable him to read without restrictions, whereas senior Michael Huber (right) feels the burden of technology when having to repair his vehicle. *Photos by Cameron Sada.*

MCKENNAH OTT  
REPORTER

Over the past 30 years, technology has drastically changed, which has not only helped us, but has also disabled us from using our own brain.

In school, at home, and in the work place, people have been relying on technology to make things easier and faster, like looking things up on the Internet and using applications.

A simple, but effective and easy-to-use piece of technology is the calculator. The calculator helps us with figuring out difficult mathematical problems on a math test or homework assignment, but it disables people from performing simple mental math functions and making them rely on technology. The calculator has made it harder for people to learn basic math because people can simply press buttons.

Lumosity, a brain research website, has completed studies on how the brain functions, reacts to

certain things, and which part of the brain is used effectively. Lumosity has researched how technology has affected the brain.

“Better problem solving skills can help you make quick, accurate decisions. Users that have trained their problem solving skills have reported a better ability to make mental estimates, comparisons, and calculations, not to mention more efficient thinking overall,” Lumosity said.

Lumosity partners with universities such as Harvard, UCSF, Columbia, and Stanford for research purposes. They also work with prestigious health care groups such as Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Abbott.

Another piece of technology that has affected people are cell phones. Cell phones are great for staying in contact with friends and family.

They can go on the Internet, send text messages, and can call people from thousands of miles away. They are widely used for emergency situations, too.



Phones can be a problem, though. Cell phones distract students from their schoolwork in and out of class. They keep teens from doing homework and they distract workers from their job.

Television (TV) is also an invention that has positively and negatively affected people's lives. TV is great for watching the news and educational television shows. Shows that real situations (not reality TV shows) help explain other ways of living and help us understand other cultures and beliefs.

The disadvantages to TV are that it causes laziness and it makes people lose brain cells. A study in 2005, which was published in the Archives of Adolescent and Pediatric Medicine, showed that children who watch TV regularly scored lower on math tests than average children. Also, kids that have a TV are a lot less likely to go outside to play and be active.

Video games also have positive and negative aspects. Certain game systems, such as the Wii,

Playstation Move and the Xbox Kinect, are great ways to stay active while still having fun.

The systems use people's bodies as the control to jump, walk, run, and move. The Wii and the Playstation Move uses hand motions to move a remote like a pointer. The Xbox Kinect does not use any controller, only people's bodies.

Game systems such as the Playstation and the regular Xbox use controllers and do not require physical movement.

They create addictive games such as the “Call of Duty” and “Modern Warfare” series. These addicting games keep people indoors, instead of being active outside. The less active people are, the less calories get burned. The extra calories get stored in body fat.

Even with cons, technology has drastically changed life for the better. Medicine, science, and communication have all been improved and have changed everyone's life.

## Differences between Generations: How the times have changed from then to now

BREANNA HOLLIS  
REPORTER

What would life be like without all of the technology American society has right now: iPods, qwerty keyboard phones, touch screen computers, linked computer screens, phones with GPS [Global Personal System]? It would be a life where instead of sitting on the couch and watching favorite TV shows, families listened to stories on the radio.

Generations ago, Americans did not have as many technological devices as they do now.

Sixty-six year old Doris Miller, grandparent of East junior Dustin Fitzpatrick, grew up in a time where technology was not as prevalent as it is now.

“[We had] a black and white television, a radio and a newspaper, if you could afford it. We had pay phone booths and we had party lines where everyone could join the conversation. We had rotary phones where you had to spin the dial to call people. We didn't have a computer. We had one TV in the whole house and we didn't have radios in our rooms,” Miller said.

Times have changed from then to now. Starting from a 27 ton computer that filled up the entire room, computers are now sit on a desktop and are faster than ever before. Instructor Stephanie Goltz has experienced the changes in technology during her lifetime.

“Now cars have computers or televisions with navigation. Instead of writing letters, we're using Facebook and emails. It's affected me in just about every way possible. I have an automatic coffee maker so my coffee is ready for me by the time I wake up. My car has navigation



Above left is an old TV from the 1960's with a modern flat screen TV from 2011 on the right. On the bottom left is an old phone from the 1960's with an iPhone 4 to the right.

and satellite radio. At school, the computers help a lot. Also, the cooking, cleaning the house, the ability to write and change things, save, and reprint things; the speed of everything is done faster allowing us to do more. Everything has changed,” Goltz said.

The technology change started affecting the rich before the poor people in the communities. Now technology affects many people throughout the entire world in all the different social classes. Librarian Shannon Collin talks about how her experience with technology has

is constantly changing and is used a lot more today than ever before.

“They use it everyday, anytime, especially us students. We use it at whatever chance we have. We go on our phones when the teacher's aren't talking, when they are talking, during the passing period, just all the time,” junior Taylor Nekola said.

Technological improvements have enhanced people's ability to communicate.

“I can remember my first year [at college]; I checked my e-mail maybe once every month. And now I check it once or even twice an hour. So I think that's probably when I first realized that there was going to be a change in technology. I think it makes our lives easier,” Collin said.

Everybody has different thoughts about the technology changes that are always occurring. Their feelings depend on their specific generation and the way they feel about technology and how it has affected them personally.

“The difference was great for me. But what about the generation before mine? They had cars, but very limited. If they had electricity, it was limited. No telephones, no flying, and no television. Only radios. When I think of all the things my mom saw - I am speechless,” Goltz said.

Most grandparents do not feel they need the technology or need to learn how to use the technology because they grew up without it. Only if they needed it, would they learn about it.

“Only if it is essential and required for an activity would I learn how to use it. But if it is not, then I have to have an interest in it,” Miller said.

## Technology in school changes for the students

KATIE KEEFER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Today it is necessary to keep up with the latest technology trends. Within six months to a year, new technology can become obsolete. Bellevue East and the rest of Bellevue Public Schools (BPS) try to stay updated with the ever-evolving world of technology.

The majority of the technology in the schools is either HP laptops or desktops, but there are also smart boards and clickers around the district. According to the BPS Director of Technology Greg Boettger, the laptops usually last three to five years and desktops last five to seven years. Updates depend on whether or not the computers can still perform the way students and teachers need them to.

Bellevue East alone has 375 desktops, laptops, and netbooks. This means that there are approximately four students per computer.

More classes are relying on technology to aid the learning process. For example, teachers use the clicker system to test students' knowledge and use the computers to aid in research for class projects. BPS also uses technology to keep parents updated on their child's progress through PowerSchool.

Technology is a major part of everyone's life whether he or she realizes it or not.

“Today's students have had computers and mobile technology as part of their life since they were born,” Boettger said. “Technology also allows students the resources that a textbook does not. It allows for creativity, expansion of knowledge, and interactivity that a book cannot give.”

Junior Alex Nguyen appreciates technology and its benefits.

“Technology has helped me immensely. From online resources, to spell check, I don't think we would progress as far as we did now [without technology],” Nguyen said. “Internet online databases help me find information so much easier.”

Students no longer have to go to libraries to do research; instead, they can find information without opening a book.

“Technology has affected my learning because a lot of things that would require gleaning information from a textbook can instead be found through a simple search on a web browser,” senior Ryan Everson said.

Taking notes in class is even easier thanks to the media carts that most teachers have. Nguyen likes the media carts because the carts make it easier for students to see and take notes and the carts allow teachers to show examples without wasting paper with handouts.

Technology does have its disadvantages. Some people have become too reliant on technology and face-to-face communication has been hindered.

“I do think we rely on technology too much. Instead of calling each other, and hearing the other person's voice, we text,” Nguyen said. “The technology we use is only as smart as those who use them.”

Another con is the fact that everything nowadays can be typed.

“I've been doing a larger number of typing assignments which take away the importance of good penmanship,” Everson said.

## computers

Sophomore Chrystal Russel enjoys multimedia and the ability to multi-task.

“The thing I like most about computers is that I can listen to music and play games all at the same time,” she said.

Aside from the benefits, Russel knows that technology inside of the school district is different than being home.

“The thing I hate most about the computers is the fact that there are restrictions to a lot of websites,” she said.



## television

Freshman Shannon Smith watches television once or twice a day in order to unwind from her busy schedule.

“If I find time to watch it. I'll normally watch it after a long day of school or after coming home from sports,” Smith said.

Smith enjoys watching certain types of shows like mysteries because they interest her and she stays entertained by them

“I like to go to the basement and watch my shows so that nobody will bother me,” Smith said. “I also will work on my homework and watch TV so I can multi-task.”



## cell phones

Junior Carter Gillete uses his cellphone on a day to day basis for a wide variety of tasks.

“I use my phone to play games, call people, get on the Internet and for an alarm clock in the morning to get up.”

Gillete knows that without his phone, his schedule for the day would be hectic.

“I'd say it makes it so I'm not bored during the school day and so I get to school on time,” he said. “Sometimes I won't pay attention because I'm too busy playing on my phone.”





# East's Olympic Alumni

JEREMY CASSIDAY  
SPORTS EDITOR

Bellevue East has had its share of famous athletes: Matt O’Hanlon, safety at Nebraska, Buddy Carlyle, former pitcher of the New York Yankees, and dirtbiker Brian Deegan, to name a few. Now East will have one more member to add to the celebrity list – Matt Senske, member of the U.S. bobsledding team.

Senske was a star for the Chieftain football and track team, earning all-state honors for football as a junior and senior, and qualifying for state track in both 2002 and 2003. Then he played for the Nebraska football team as a backup fullback, earning his varsity football letter in 2007.

Now, at age 27, Senske is an Olympic hopeful for the United States bobsledding team and has been training and preparing for the 2014 Olympic team.

“I thought my athletic career was done until this opportunity opened up,” Senske said. “I have always loved sports and competed in a bunch of them throughout my life. This was an opportunity to keep competing that I couldn’t pass up. It’s also great to be a part of a team again and work toward a common goal.”

Bobsledding was an entirely new endeavor for Senske. He learned of his opportunity to begin the sport from current 4-man bobsledding gold medalist Curt Tomasevich.

After doing a bit of research, Senske learned enough about bobsledding to be prepared to race.

First of all, bobsledding is a two or four man race with a driver and either one brake-

man who doubles as a pusher, or a driver, two pushers and a pusher brakeman combo person.

A pusher is someone who pushes the sled at the start of the race in order to gain the right amount of momentum at the start of a race. The driver steers the sled with two rings attached via pulleys to the skis. The brakeman pulls the brakes at the end of a race to stop the sled. The entire team will also lean with turns accordingly to make them easier to take.

“I push in the number two spot in a four-man sled. That is the guy behind the driver on the left side of the sled when you’re looking from the back,” Senske said.

Senske has been training about five days a week since he started his time as a bobsledder.

“In season training isn’t a whole lot different than out of season training except it’s less weight and no sprints. Out of season consists of sprinting and explosive lifting 3 days a week, as well as abs and other light running in between. We don’t have sprints in season because we get our sprints in when we are pushing the sleds at training during the week. Our schedule is also adjusted for race days so we don’t have to train before or after we race,” Senske said.

The winter Olympics give Senske two chances at a gold medal: two-man and four-man events. He’s not guaranteed a spot on the Olympic team yet, but Senske is hopeful for a chance at Olympic glory.

“I always dreamed of representing USA in the Olympics one day,” Senske said. “No matter how distant a goal may seem, it is possible to accomplish that goal one way or another.”



From front to back, Jay Noller, Matt Senske, Jeremy Ware, and Hiter Harris IV sled down the track at Lake Placid. *Photo courtesy of Matt Senske*

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## SPORTS UPDATES

JEREMY CASSIDAY  
SPORTS EDITOR

### WRESTLING

Bellevue East Wrestling is looking to follow up its most successful season in history this year. After taking second in the Metro tournament and winning four other tournaments some would say this year is a rebuilding year. Not head coach Todd Porter.

“Our motto is Chieftain pride doesn’t rebuild we reload,” Porter said.

East took third out of ten teams in their first tournament of the season and is looking forward to keeping their 23-1 record against Bellevue West intact at the Chieftain invitational.



Senior Justin Nawrocki trains at practice to prepare for the upcoming meet. *Photo courtesy of East Yearbook*

### BOYS BASKETBALL



Senior Kang Char lays the ball up during practice. Char has been a powerful force on the court so far this season, dominating in the paint. *Photo by Morgan Barrett*

Boys basketball opened up the season with two wins and a tournament victory at Ralston and Mount Michael. They’re 3-0 to start off the season, with their third win coming against Omaha South, 54-49.

“It’s too early in the season to really know where we are. We played pretty well the first two games, but we’ll really be able to tell where we are in the weeks to come,” head coach Tola Dada said.

Hopes are high for the team this year after a tough season last year.

“We’ve had our good days, we’ve had our bad games... When we get to the point where every practice is a great practice, then we can become the team we want to be,” Dada said.

The effort has been there with the team and with the start of any season always being the most difficult, this is a good sign. On top of that, this is Dada’s first year as the head coach of the Chieftain basketball squad.

“I knew what the responsibility was when I accepted this position,” Dada said. “It’s been great so far.”

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Girls basketball also has some very high expectations coming off a state championship last year in a thriller against Bellevue West.

“Practices have been great...[we’re] trying to get everything in before we get to our first game,” Head coach Scott Jensen said.

So far the girls are 1-0 (as of December 10), having opened their season up extremely strong against Omaha South with an 83-46 victory.

The Chieftains retain almost all of their starters and are expected to do extremely well this year and another title year probably wouldn’t surprise anyone.

“Athletically and talent-wise, we definitely have that chance,” Jensen said. “First of all, you need to stay healthy, second of all you need chemistry within your team and people to work well together and third of all you need to get some breaks, stay away from injuries and things like that.”

The girls are looking forward to playing West this year, seeing as their only last year was an early-season loss to Bellevue West.



Senior Ally Pilmaier works on her jump shot. She is one of many returning varsity players and is looking to have a big impact on this season. *Photo by Morgan Barrett*

### FALL SPORTS STATE RESULTS

Girl’s volleyball travelled to Norfolk this year for the state tournament. Matched against Burke, the Chieftains put up a great game, but eventually lost in the fifth and final round 15-13 with no help from the referees.

This year was a lot more exciting than last, having previously lost at state in three straight sets to Marian. Hopefully, the girls can continue the tradition of being a great team and getting to state again this year.

Miranda Keeler qualified for girls’ golf, placing 15 out of 75 competitors.



Junior Shelby Quinn sets the ball for senior Kayla Blackwell. *Photo by Morgan Barrett*



# Huskers to Capital One bowl, face Gamecocks

JEREMY CASSIDAY  
SPORTS EDITOR

For the fourth year running, Nebraska somehow managed to pull off a disappointing nine-win season. I really shouldn't feel disappointed, what with the entry into a new conference and all the changes that comes with, but something just feels so disheartening about the three losses Nebraska faced.

For one, the loss at Northwestern was absolutely, ridiculously bad. There was no reason for a loss to a team that earlier in the year couldn't have pushed around an elementary school kid. We were out-matched physically and turnovers were a major problem. The game was reminiscent of last year's 9-7 loss to Iowa State, when the Huskers were plagued by no less than eight turnovers. What's worse, I expected a loss like this.

Last issue, I had predicted a loss to Minnesota. This year that would have been almost impossible, considering the Gophers are 0-5 away from home and 3-4 in their own stadium. Instead, this year's story of inspirationally bad play was against Northwestern. There's really no other way to describe it – it was just plain-old bad. And it always seems like there's at least two or three of these games every season, no matter how promising the team looks.

The other two teams Nebraska suffered losses to, Wisconsin and Michigan, were much more believable – if unnecessary – losses. Both of these teams had legitimate shots at the Big Ten championship, and Wisconsin actually did make it. Michigan



The sea of red at Memorial Stadium prepares themselves for a game with the pre-game marching band performance. *Photo courtesy of Shannon Suver*

was one place behind Michigan State in the legends division, and Nebraska wound up one place behind Michigan.

These losses, however, were more examples of just poor play by Nebraska. They're a good enough team to beat basically anyone when they play their best. But they don't play their best more than maybe two or three times in a season, and this is what's frustrating. This season, our best came against Michigan State and Iowa, and even Iowa's game could have

been better.

This is why Nebraska isn't a relevant National Championship question – there's no real consistency with the team, which is critical to going undefeated and winning the top spot at the end of the year.

The thing about the Big Ten is that there are about sevens teams that, on any given Saturday, could easily beat each other by a wide margin. Nebraska actually holds the tiebreaker over Michigan State with a convincing 24-3 win, but thanks to their

three conference losses, place two spots behind them. Michigan State managed to beat both Michigan (28-14) and Wisconsin (37-31).

Basically, there's a lack of an obvious leader in the entire conference. Wisconsin may be a notch above everyone else, but after Wisconsin, it comes down to a week-by-week status that could put anyone above anyone with no guarantee of winning.

The problem with that is none of these teams are true national championship contenders. Yes, they are good, and they will probably float around the top ten or twenty, but none of these teams have the talent and consistency to be number one at the end of a season.

But back to the Huskers. This year they will face South Carolina (10-2) in the Outback bowl on January 2. Honestly, the odds don't look good. With their only two losses against number 7 Arkansas and a very solid Auburn team, South Carolina has had a much more consistent season than the Huskers, and with a defense similar to that of Michigan State, the odds of getting something rolling are slim. However, it has been done, and even during this season.

At the end of the year, 9-4 isn't bad. With a new conference, new play styles, new teams, new places, and new everything else imaginable, a 9 win season really isn't a bad outcome. But there's just something about not winning a national championship when it could be done with some stability from week to week that stinks.

# Hunting: More of a sport than just shooting a gun

KATIE KEEFER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

When fall and winter come around, most people start thinking about the holidays, staying warm, and indoor sports like basketball or wrestling. For some people the onset of colder weather means the start of hunting season.

In Nebraska, the deer season kicks off on September 15, and runs through December. On average, the deer season runs for 117 days each fall and winter and time is allotted for the archery and firearm seasons. Nebraska Game and Parks reports that the deer population is around 300,000 and hunters are estimated to get 90,000.

Junior Arielle Liptak enjoys hunting deer, pheasants, and rabbit and does not let the cold or the fact that she is a girl stop her from hunting.

Liptak started hunting when she was about six and fell in love with it because it is a family tradition and allows her to spend time with her dad. As a child, when other little girls were getting dolls for Christmas, Liptak got a .410 shotgun.

"My favorite memory from hunting was when I got my first deer, ever," Liptak said. "It's like a rite of passage in my family. It was challenging at first keeping up with the guys in the fields, but it's a great learning experience."

Hunting is not for everyone. Hunters spend a lot of time outdoors, starting before sunrise and ending after sunset, and after a 12-hour day, they still are not guaranteed to get a kill. They walk for miles in rough conditions just for the chance to get that one shot.

Junior Trevor Nazeck loves hunting as well. He does not mind the long hours outdoors because deer hunting is both exciting and peaceful.

"Most people don't find the drive or passion to out hunting early in the morn-

ing or they don't have the determination and patience to sit and wait," Nazeck said. "They also don't have the money, time, or interest."

It all pays off after a long day outdoors hunting and that big buck finally comes into sight. Nazeck's favorite memory is when he shot his biggest deer, a six-point buck weighing in 275 lbs. field dressed.

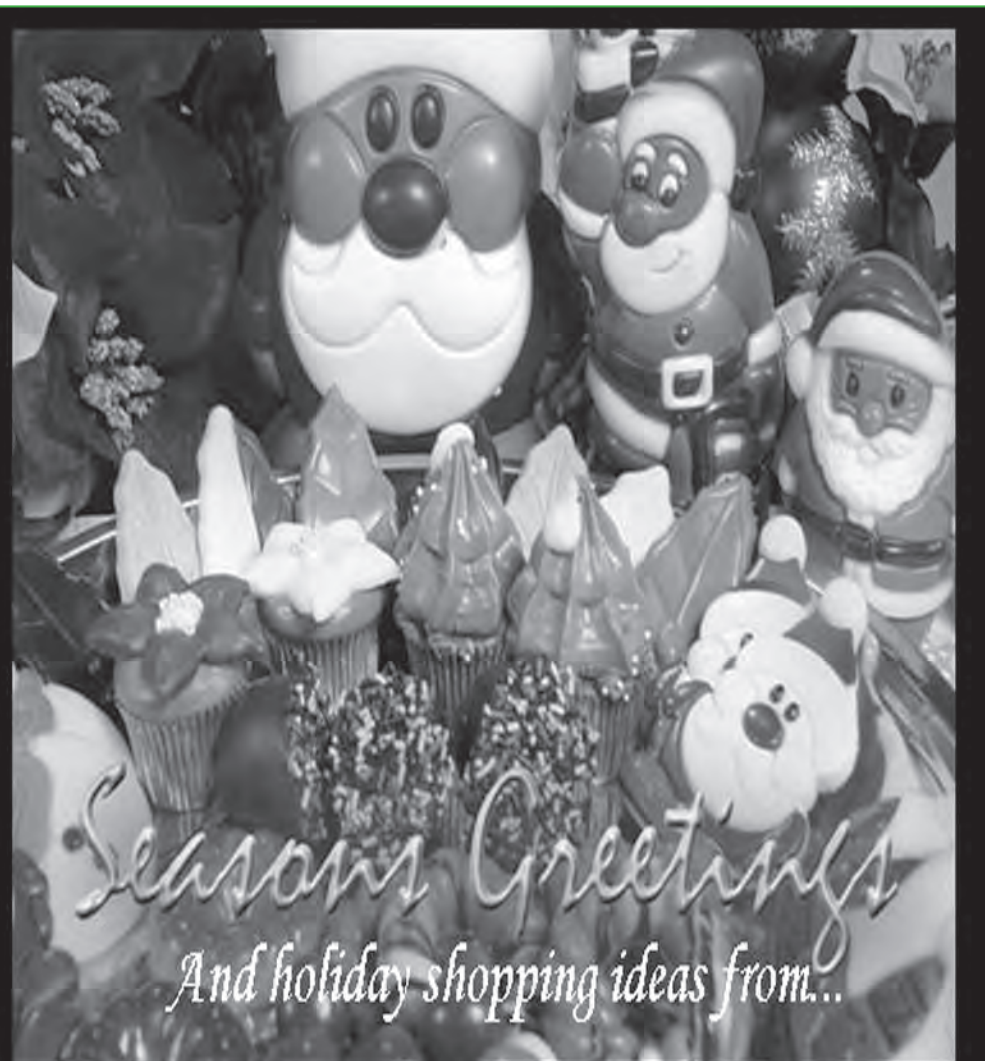
"I saw two does stand up not more than 30 yards away, then a massive six-point buck stood up right in the middle of the two. I crouched and drew my scope up on him, but I only saw a brown coat of fur in my scope. I switched to iron sights and pulled the trigger," Nazeck said. He dropped right in his tracks. I walked up and found him still moving. I had shot him just below the heart. I put one more into his chest and finally noticed how massive his body and rack was."

According to hunters, nothing beats that feeling when they finally get that kill, but hunting is more than just shooting a gun.

"Anyone can shoot an animal for sport, but it's all about using what you bag like eating the meat and stuff," Liptak said.

For those interested in braving the cold and spending long hours out in fields, pheasant season also runs through the end of January, but it is also important to wear thermals and proper hunting attire. All hunters must have their hunter's safety license as well as a hunting permit. While hunting is not for everyone, Liptak and Nazeck will always enjoy this season.

"I love the outdoors and [hunting] is really relaxing," Liptak said. "There's some days where I go out to hunt and I don't even load my gun. I just sit back and watch what's going on and I take time to think."



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# Letters to the Editor

Students and the community are encouraged to respond with concerns or comments in the form of letters to the editor in order to generate dialogue within our community. Below are letters from a teacher and a student. We hope that in reading letters like these, everyone is more inclined to respond and view the Tom Tom as a forum for student expression.

## Teacher talks about self-advocacy

After reading a previous issue’s Staff Editorial I felt obligated to be an advocate for Bellevue East. I will never fault an administration that is trying to improve their building. Teachers and administrators, yes, do have to motivate their students from time to time; that is a trend in education. But we also have a responsibility in education to teach self-advocacy and the purpose of self-motivation.

Some students have never been asked to motivate themselves in school or in their day-to-day lives; it is skills that, yes, (unfortunately) a lot of students still need to learn.

Bellevue East does have a learning path and we try to do our best as a building to help guide kids in deciding which path is most effective for them. The overall idea of creating a schedule is often what class will help that child learn the material best.

Not all students are advanced students or want the challenge of an advanced class, but the great thing about a school system is that they have a multitude of classes offered to them. I know that our students have the option of enrolling into some advanced classes, then as young adults they can make the decision on whether or not it was the right fit for them.

Some students take basic classes, not because they are trying to “slack,” but because they need more one-on-one time with the curriculum to learn it best. Is there something wrong with that idea? Makes sense to me.

Some students will have to make choices in their lives. Class selection could be seen as a life lesson. I would have loved to take more elective classes or classes that fit into my general interest area, but students need to understand that there is a required curriculum or “path” that some students may “have” to take to get a diploma or to go to college. They will face this same dilemma in the working world and in universities.

Student accountability should be taught; it’s an important responsibility for citizens of our society to learn. How best to teach it then to show how motivation can go hand in hand with accountability in both school and day-to-day life. The fault I believe doesn’t fall within a pep rally, a system like GPS, or the class you take. If anything, these are all tools that the administration is using to help prepare our students for not only state tests, but also their academic careers. These are just more opportunities to show students’ motivational skills and to teach the ideas of accountability and self-advocacy. My advice would be to not just blame the institution, but also take a look at you as a student first!

**A current Teacher, Motivator, and Self-Advocate of Bellevue East, Sara Fjell.**

# BELLEVUE EAST TOM TOM

*Founded in 1977*

CHRISTINE BLAIR *Editor in Chief*

KATIE KEEFER *Editor in Chief*

NICOLE BARTLETT *Opinion Editor*

STEPHENIE CONLEY *Adviser*

## Programs to help students

STAFF EDITORIAL

East has been helping to further the education of its students more this year than before. East’s National Honor Society (NHS) headed by counselor Sara Powell, has instituted a peer tutoring service for students who need help in any of there classes.

So far, the tutoring service has seen a great turn out for both NHS members and students who are struggling with academic success.

East has also recently started a partnership with the Nebraska Advanced Manufacturing Coalition (NAMC). The NAMC created a Dream it, do it program in order to promote a clear understanding of advanced, high tech manufacturing and its contribution to innovation, productivity, economic growth, wealth building and quality careers.

The dream it, do it pro-

gram is aimed at those age 26 and under, parents, and educators to help change the face of manufacturing and producing. It creates an engaging environment for students to match their unique interests and abilities to the career needs in manufacturing and related businesses in our regional economy.

East has also participated in the second year of the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s (UNMC) High School Alliance. This partnership with UNMC and 18 other metro-area high schools is to prepare juniors and seniors for careers in the health sciences. Though each district is given a specific number of spots and those interested must send in an application and then are picked based on lottery, it has grown larger in just one year.

East has done an exceptional job when partnering up with post-secondary

educational providers in order to further prepare its students for the real world. However, it would be more of help if students were actually informed on these programs.

The first year that the UNMC High School Alliance was created, it was mostly kept under wraps. The Dream it, Do it program has not been mentioned school wide either, but the information is mostly held with Mrs. Campbell in the career center.

A majority of the time, students will not seek out for information on these career-oriented programs if they do not believe that they exist within the school. East would have a much higher turnout for it’s educational service programs and its career oriented programs if they simply advertised better and informed the masses on a whole.

## Student shows irritation at hallway courtesy during passing periods

Yes, it’s me again. Back to complain about some other thing. This time, it’s a more universal gripe. People. Not all the people, though. Just the people in the halls. The people in the halls that get in my way, and in the way of everyone else. The people in the halls that are schmoozing their girlfriend, chatting with their buddies, or just generally being slow.

Now, I’d like to be reasonable. There is no possible way to eliminate every bump in traffic, especially not in a simple person-to-person system. But I think there are a few very reasonable guidelines that we all can take a little from.

The overarching point to make is this: hallways are just like streets. You always walk on the right side of the hallway, you wait until there’s a gap to make a turn, and you pull to the side if you’re going to stop in traffic. Very very simple rules. But even simple rules require explanation.

Bellevue East is in the heart of America. Here, if you haven’t noticed yet, we drive on the right side of the road. Thus, we walk on the right side of the hallway. I don’t know if the British walk on the left side (or if the Australians walk on the ceiling), but it doesn’t matter! I don’t really care if you’re making a left turn from the cafeteria – library staircase, merging into the ridiculous flow of traffic from the freshman commons, your immediate job is to get onto the right side of the hallway. No questions asked.

If there are people moving in front of you, do not, for the love of all that is holy, cut them off. They have the right-of-way. (More automobile terms.) But in the basic interest of fairness, they were here first, and you need to wait for an appropriate gap to get a move on. This is why the stairs up to the math wing are so clustered, no one waits for anyone. Don’t just push through the person in front of you. Have a little consideration: use the other staircase, or plan an extra minute into your travel time!

Lastly, my personally most-annoying hallway behavior: the abrupt stop. The all-of-a-sudden decision that you are now more important than everyone else in the hallway. Ultimately, most people don’t care if you want to give your girlfriend a kiss before going to class... whether or not that’s okay isn’t really related to what I’m trying to say here. What I am trying to say is, please, pull her to the side, out of the way of everyone else. Do the non-selfish thing, if you’re going to indulge yourself selfishly.

I may have lost a few of you with the car talk. Yes, you, mister freshman, moseying past the commons, taking your sweet time pushing against the traffic flow, holding hands with your bestie. Learn to drive your feet in the hall-streets, and East will be a better place for everyone.

-Sam Ervin, Grade 12

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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COMMENTS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE TOM TOM ARE ENCOURAGED IN THE FORM OF LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. LETTERS MUST INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME, GRADE, AND BE SENT TO ROOM B-03 OR DELIVERED TO A MEMBER OF THE TOM TOM STAFF IN ORDER TO BE PUBLISHED. YOU MAY ALSO E-MAIL LETTERS TO [STEPHENIE.CONLEY@BPSNE.NET](mailto:STEPHENIE.CONLEY@BPSNE.NET)

EDITORIAL POLICY

The role of the Tom Tom is not only to promote the accomplishments and highlights of the school, but also to inform the Bellevue East community of events and issues that will affect the students, faculty, staff, administration, and community. Its primary focus is to serve Bellevue East High School and cover issues that affect teenagers today. The Tom Tom does not necessarily represent views of the Bellevue Public Schools and strives to support itself through advertising. In order to achieve the optimum learning situation, as well as serve its audience to the best of its ability, the staff believes that the decisions should rest primarily with the adviser and editor, according to standards of journalism. Material judged to cause significant psychological harm, or that violates the privacy of a person, or that is libelous will not be printed. Obscenity or profanity will not be printed in the Tom Tom. Stories in the Tom Tom will be based on substantial facts with quotes clearly attributed to named sources whenever possible. The Tom Tom will not run gossip or stories or columns founded on rumor without facts. Any student appearing at a public event such as a sports event or music concert may be photographed, and that photo may be published without violating the privacy of that individual.



# What exactly is the American Dream and is it changing in our society?



BREANNA HOLLIS  
REPORTER

According to dictionary.com, the American dream is defined as the idea of freedom, equality, and opportunity traditionally held to be available to every American.

Everybody has their own definition of the American dream according to their traditions and beliefs.

“How the American dream became a dream starts back along time ago, before people actually got over here. There was a promise here.

They knew that they could get here, and work the land, and build their own business and be something. It was a vision they had. It was a dream, that they were inspired to obtain,” history instructor Martina Niemeyer said. “The first few people that came and the ones that work really hard, and who had it happen for them.

They wrote letters back and people went back to Europe, and went back to different areas of the world and they told their stories, which inquired others to dream of that.

Previously in Europe, you were born in a certain social class and you would die in that social class.

America offered something different. They offered them to rise above to who had a deferent situation if they chose to.”

However, today it seems as though the old American dream is fading. I feel people expect to get things without working for them. The American work ethic is changing, causing people to feel as though they can’t accomplish things.

But this doesn’t have to be true. Anybody can accomplish this American dream; they just have to work for it. They have to be willing to work for money to pay for what they want, and be willing to work for keeping the things they own nice.

I think that the people who are not afraid to work hard and do whatever it takes can achieve their American dream if they don’t settle.

Some people that are successful have put in the effort it takes to reach their goals. They stay long hours, do whatever they are told to do, and learn from their mistakes to get what they want. Our society rewards this behavior.

Take a look at parents. Many parents work everyday to try to earn enough to buy a bigger house, get more presents for the holidays, or just to earn more money to take care of their families. They will do anything to make themselves more successful. This is the kind of work ethic it takes to be successful in our country.

Unfortunately, the American dream is more difficult to get because you have to work harder for the dream to come true nowadays.

People want the dream, but not many

people want to work to earn the dream. This creates a challenge for many people.

“I would say [the American Dream] is reliant on loans, increasing health care, and education costs.

Although, we have good education, and we have good health care, unfortunately it is pushing a lot of people into debt with loans,” Blackstad said.

My definition of the American dream is being happy with life and how you’re living.

Whether it be living in a box with your pet rock or having the big house with the white picket fence - just being happy with the life you’re living.



# Barbie doll with tattoos possibly conveys “bad” messages



CHRISTINE BLAIR  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The older I get the less I remember about my childhood, but the things I do remember are always about goofing off at the age of four. I remember sneaking scissors into my room at night so I could cut off all my hair. I remember fighting with my two older brothers over Hot Wheels because they always gave me the ugly one. I also remember that I had almost every Mattel Barbie doll under the sun; they all looked the same, tall, skinny and with blonde or brown hair.

Until I learned how to read at the age of 5 (books became the passion of my young childhood after that), my Barbie dolls were everything to me. I would play pretend “house” and smash them all into a Barbie’s Malibu car and drive them all around the house. I’d swap clothes between all of the Barbie’s and even draw on some very chic handlebar mustaches. Barbie was just another toy from my childhood, something I would play with when I was bored; stretching my wild imagination (which I still have today).

Tokidoki design company recently collaborated with Mattel; their creation being a new Barbie doll. Tokidoki Barbie was released in mid-October for the ultimate collector and sold on barbiecollector.com. With only 7,400 units produced, it has been sold out on the online distribution website for both Mattel and Tokidoki for \$50 each. Some have even gone to the extreme of shopping on eBay for them, with some reaching as high in price as \$1,000. What is so sensa-

tional about this new Barbie doll, you may ask yourself? She is the trademarked with the look of the younger generation; complete with a pink bob haircut and upper body tattoos.

Though Mattel says that this product is marketed to the adult collector only, it still has some parents uncomfortable. Some feel that the Barbie doll will influence younger girls to get tattoos someday and that this message is wrong. Some have even stretched further on the website Ms. Twixt, which is a public forum site for moms with adolescents, by commenting “encouraging children that tattoos are cool, is wrong, wrong, wrong. Mattel, why not put a cigarette and a beer bottle in her hand while you’re at it?”

Wow. Halt. Hold it right there. I grew up with the generic Barbie doll, you know that doll who is so perfectly proportioned it makes teenage girls throw up their lunch everywhere. I certainly did not grow up with any tattooed toys, but that has not stopped me from wanting to get inked up. Some parents view tattoos as being trashy, something fit for only the degenerates of society, when in reality, tattoos have become a form of artistic expression and are even gaining mass amounts of popularity.

Now I’m not advocating for all of you to get tattoos of cuss words on your foreheads for the world to see, but tattoos have always held some sort of bad stereotypical vibe for no really good reason. A majority of teenagers get their first tattoo with parent permission at the age of 17, or wait until their eighteenth birthday to get one of their own. Times are changing and parents need to be taught that self-expression through body art is a growing trend. This form of self-expression does not deal with my own generation, but with all generations.

According to a survey done by the Pew Research Center in the fall of 2006, 36 percent of Americans ages 18 to 25, and 40 percent of those ages 26 to 40 have at least one tattoo.

In my family, it is almost like a rite of passage to get a tattoo once you’re old enough. I remember talking to my mom about it for the first time when I was only 12 or 13 years old. My mom is no degenerate; in fact she is a part-time college student who raises three kids (well, four if you count my dad). She has continuously supported my decision to get a tattoo and we are currently making plans for

me to get my first one for my birthday.

Tattoos are something that will continue to remind you of your past. Friends of mine have gotten tattoos and looked back on them saying that it reminds them of simpler times, before life changed and they had to grow up. The sentimental value that body

art has grown to have has changed the view of America.

The bad stigma behind tattoos has and always will hold with the conservative types of people, but when it comes to a tattooed Barbie, I say let the kids play...and let them keep rocking and rolling.



This Barbie has tattoos, pink hair, clothes that a Barbie would usually wear and a pet. Some parents frown upon this image and choose to not purchase it because they think it encourages children to want tattoos. Photo © www.barbiecollector.com.



# Grandma talks about her opinion on love

CAMERON SADA  
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Love is a topic that everyone has an opinion on. Some believe in a magic fairy tale like event; others believe it is just some chemicals in your brain reacting to others chemicals.

While if you ask Rosa, my grandma, she'll tell you love is something that is only there because you get pregnant. Part of being a teenager is learning what love is to you and being in relationships to learn how to be in one that will last.

My grandma did not have a boyfriend let alone even kiss someone until she was nearly 21 years old. The first person she ever kissed was my grandpa. I understand that around the time of my grandmother's youth people didn't get divorced or go around dating whomever.

They did get married younger though, but my grandma was always different. She was always stronger than the average woman.

In today's world women feel that they need a relationship rather than they need to find themselves and be their own people. I know plenty of girls who cannot

(and I mean cannot) survive without a boyfriend.

A relative of mine has gone through many different boyfriends - each had different problems that were all pretty big. My grandma always talked about how she did not need any of that and how my relative did not even know herself.

My grandparents' relationship may not have been perfect, but there was love. My grandmother sometimes goes on these cute little rants about all the things they would do back at the budding beginning of their love.

I know that when I was young I would look at my grandparents' relationship and thought it was the perfect thing. I wanted that to be how my marriage would be.

As I got older I saw there were flaws, but they had such a powerful love for each other that even through everything they stuck together.

A few weeks ago she was driving me to dance class and a Taylor Swift song came on. She looked at me as I was singing just enjoying the ride. She told me that love is nothing like how she is saying. There isn't a spark that happens when you kiss your "soul mate."



Manuel Sada and his wife Rosa Sada stand in front of a tree in 1964 talking and laughing about their day's events that would soon be tomorrow's memories at a picnic gathering in Biloxi, Mississippi. Photo courtesy of Cameron Sada.

# School lunches are being regulated more than ever by the government



ANDREA VELLANI  
REPORTER

Many students at Bellevue East, including me, are guilty of one thing; our lack of focus in the health classroom, especially when the chapter turns to food nutrients. We have been told again and again throughout our elementary years about the importance of eating our veggies and drinking our milk. Some lessons, however, require repeating, especially when the government becomes involved in our lunch, telling us what to eat and how healthy it should be.

Most of us have become used to walking in, handing the lunch lady our card, picking up a tray of food, and going off on our merry way. But do you know just how much control you have over the nutrients in your food? Is federal government intervention necessary for school lunches, or is it just an excuse for "Big Brother" to tell you what to eat?

The influence and regulations of the federal government are easy to spot; milk shakes are no longer served and fries are served less frequently than last year. Also evident is the awkward five cent raise in lunch prices. This is the result of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, which gives the United States Department of Agriculture authority to regulate what goes into a school's lunch.

Because of the new standards set at the beginning of this year, schools must provide money to fund these new "healthier" foods. Schools accomplish this by raising prices on standard lunches. To make more money, some schools overcharge some foods that are considered "unhealthy" to fund the new lunches.

The USDA is apparently very interested

in what students are eating nationwide for lunch. A law proposed for changing the weekly requirements for cafeterias nationwide includes increasing dark green and orange vegetables and legumes (such as peanuts, lentils, soybeans, etc.), while having limits on starchy vegetables, such as potatoes.

Meat and meat alternatives would be required at 1.6-2.4 oz per day, and there would be a 1.8-2.6 oz of grain served daily requirement. Of grains served, half would be required to be whole grain.

Another big regulation is what kind of milk we drink. The USDA has strict standards on fat content: "Fluid milk must be low-fat (Low fat is defined as one-percent milk fat or less, unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored or flavored)." The USDA also proposes a weekly minimum and maximum amount of calories, saturated fats, sodium, and trans-fats.

Regulation of school lunches is a divisive issue; should the government have a say over what we eat and what nutrients are in it? To some extent, yes; simple regulations prevent schools from serving dog-meat patties and five-day old applesauce served in a rusty grease-coated bucket. These are simple sanitary expectations that school cafeterias already follow gladly. It also is nice to know that some politicians have nothing better to do than to make sure you get fed wholesome foods at a good price.

However, the majority of laws passed to regulate school lunches are downright unconstitutional. Nowhere in the Constitution does it give the government power to regulate what students eat in public schools. The most that the state government (not federal; feeding students nationwide should be the least of their worries) should do is to educate and encourage students to eat healthy. Health classes already discuss nutrition and recommended serving sizes, which is as far as it should go.

Here's an idea; if we don't want some politician to force us to eat non-fat soy bars and ban potatoes altogether, we should probably listen and eat accordingly.

What I want you, the reader, to seriously think about is this; will you take on the responsibility of feeding yourself, knowing which certain foods are wholesome and unwholesome and what happens when you consume too many or too few nutrients, or do you want the government to control it for you? Keep in mind, what the government regulates almost never becomes unregulated again.

# How the Christmas meaning has been changed and perceived



JOSCELYN RAGONE  
WEB EDITOR

Snow starts to fall, trees are set up, houses are decorated, cookies are baked, choirs are seen singing carols around neighborhoods, presents are bought, and little children send their letters to Santa. It is Christmas time.

Now, I'd be lying if I were to say that I did not automatically start thinking about what I could ask for from people for Christmas at the start of December. It is just something that I have almost been set up to do. When I was five, I remember my mom telling me to go write my letter to send to the North Pole. I feel as if that was some form of subconscious conditioning to think about gifts around the holidays. I also remember my mom throwing in comments here and there about how Christmas was our time to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Celebrating his birth does not really seem like that big of a deal anymore. More and more people are focused entirely on the material part of Christmas. But it is not like he has been forgotten entirely. I still go to church on Christmas Eve, and I am reminded of why we really do celebrate. It is even

more of an example of how materialistic Christmas is when non-believers celebrate Christmas in the same way that Christians do. Which in a way is okay. Especially considering how Christmas originated from the Romans, when they introduced the holiday as Saturnalia, a weeklong period of total lawlessness. At least, that is where the idea came from.

Christians may have been the ones who deemed Christmas a Christian holiday some time ago, but now anyone can celebrate, regardless of their religion. And if you really think about it, that reason is pushed back in my mind until that church service. It is not like I do it on purpose; I just get so wrapped up in everything that the holiday brings that I tend to forget.

Which brings me back to when I was a little girl. Maybe if my mom had not had me write those letters to Santa, but instead focused more on telling me about how Jesus was born, I would be more apt to think about Christmas in a less materialistic way. But, it is not just my mom having had me

write letters as a little girl that influenced me; the media and the entire package that is Christmas played a part, too. All of the holiday movies that come out have something to do with Santa and gifts; there's always commercials on television telling you to hurry up and get your Christmas shopping done; people ask what you want them to get you as you ask them the same question in return; the list is endless.

So it is actually quite easy to see where the true meaning of Christmas could get lost. Not a lot of people and things out there preach the Nativity Story, except maybe when you go to a Christmas church service. In my family, the meaning of Christmas is not really lost, but it could definitely be polished.

If you were to ask me what I thought Christmas stood for, I would be prone to give some clichéd answer. Which probably would be along the lines of how Christmas time is the time of giving, helping others, and recognizing Christ's birth. It's a pretty good answer, I think.



# Facebook program raises awareness

MCKENNAH OTT  
REPORTER

An abundance of people use the Internet to research things, to buy things and to stay in touch with friends. Facebook (FB) is one of the most popular social networks on the Internet. FB allows people to stay in touch with friends and play games. One thing it allows people to do, but you may not know about, is how it allows people to “creep” and essentially “stalk” others.

FB, whose creator is Mark Zuckerberg, has 400 million active users. That means that an online predator has 400 million people to choose from.

Predators often use unprotected information from the Internet. Online predators look at a user’s pictures, address, family members and friends and they can even get a user’s phone number. They use all this information to track down their prey.

To try to warn people about these predators, Facebook has allowed the website, [takethislollipop.com](#), to run a program to bring awareness about online predators. The website automatically logs the person’s profile into the website, which allows the person’s profile to be shown in a simulated “horror movie.” It shows a scary man in a dark room,

on the computer, looking at the person’s real profile, real pictures and real friends.

While he’s looking at the user’s profile, he starts rocking back and forth and seems to become irritated. He looks up where the user lives and leaves to get in his car. He takes the profile picture, drives to the user’s house and the movie ends.

After the short film is over, the person looks at the screen, stunned, because it has their FB friend’s name posted on the screen with a clock winding down.

The Media Awareness Network tries to prevent online stalking from actually happening. They tell people real, hardcore facts about online predators.

One in five teenagers on the Internet have reported being solicited and only about 25 percent of them have reported it to an adult. Seventy-seven percent of online predators target kids 14 and older.

There are ways you can protect yourself from these predators. On many computers there are parental control settings and different types of parental control software, such as Web Watcher and Spy Agent.

The software can block certain websites so children can’t access them. Most blocked sites can only be accessed by a personal



[Takethislollipop.com](#) is a program that simulates an online predator stalking Facebook users. It was designed to encourage safe Internet usage. *Photo © Takethislollipop.com*

password.

With these outstanding numbers and statistics, people should be a little more cautious about their Internet use. People on social networks might not be who they say they are, but some people are not aware of this fact. People need to make sure they actually

know all their Facebook friends in person. This reduces the risk of being “stalked” by an online predator.

“The thing that we are trying to do at Facebook, is just help people connect and communicate more efficiently,” Zuckerberg said.

## ‘Gears of War 3’: Nothing new, but still entertaining

JEREMY CASSIDAY  
SPORTS EDITOR

Warning: This review contains spoilers. “Gears of War 3” [GOW3] was released on September 20, 2011 to some mixed reviews. The campaign had some weird sort of niches, where they would approach dull at times, but they never actually got boring.

Alongside those, however, there were plenty of action-packed, controller-gripping, expletive-filled moments that really fueled the desire to play.

As Marcus Fenix, you are a part of an extremely small remaining group of humans left on Earth, run by the Coalition of Government [COG], after battle originally started with the Locust. Led by Queen Myrrah, the Locust had lost their home planet and needed somewhere new to stay – Earth.

After a series of devastating losses, including the sinking of a massive city called Jacinto, in an effort to eradicate the Locust, you think you’re finally done with the Locust problem.

Then, the Lambent are introduced. Fueled by something called the “Emulsion,” the Lambent are basically terrifying glowing versions of Locust and later Humans that have been mutated by the Emulsion.

Bigger, badder, and scarier, the Lambent wreak all sorts of havoc on your cities and people start living in survival groups in ruined cities and blame their troubles on – what else – the COG. Eventually, you learn your father is being held captive by the Locust and being used to find a cure for the Emulsion, instead of being dead like you had originally thought.

The problem with GOW3 is a lack of major shock value. Everything that was used had been seen in previous campaigns. There were some good moments, and ultimately the campaign was a lot of fun, but the bottom line is there was not anything that truly surprised me – and I had never even played Gears one or two.

Another issue I had with the campaign was the monotony – a lot of it was clearing out a room, pulling a lever, clearing out another room, pulling another lever and then reporting back to whoever sent you to pull the levers in the first place. But, even through all this, I never lost interest.

Maybe it was my lack of experience with the combat system that made things interesting, or maybe it was just me not having the same amount of Gears experience as series-long players, but I never burnt out on killing Locust and Lambent over and over and over.

There is just something so primordially satisfying about watching a Locust drone blow up in a massive shower of blood after a point-blank shot with a shotgun, and Epic, the producer of Gears of War, must know this, because they rode it through almost all of the campaign.

There was not a moment that I felt took more skill or cunning than to be able to kill whatever you are facing. There was no active problem solving, and in order to have a truly great campaign there needs to be some element of that.

Overall, the campaign was fun, but not revolutionary. Worth playing, but not worth playing a second time.

The multiplayer that comes with Gears is challenging, frustrating, and fun as any multiplayer I’ve ever played. Some of the tactics used are not considered “fair,” but they are in the game and they add a dynamic that increases both frustration and interest in the game play.

There are also weekend game variants – different every weekend – that are the most fun to play. There are torque-bow (a bow and arrow with an explosive arrow that will stick to any target once fully charged) only games, sniper-rifle only games, digger (a device that launches a projectile underground and under cover set to detonate when it reaches either a target or a map boundary) only games, and so on.

These add a casual dynamic that allows all players to share one weapon equally and really removes a lot of the balance issues with the default weapons. These are my personal favorite playlists.

GOW3 multiplayer was also an absolutely massive improvement over Gears of War 2. The lag and the host advantage in Gears 2 were awful. Basically, if you were selected to host a game, you became for whatever reason a superhuman, able to absorb significantly larger amounts of damage from enemies while at the same time dishing out much more. A host with a lancer was a terrifying thing.

The problem I have with multiplayer



*Photo courtesy of the official Gears of War 3 website*

lies with the two most powerful weapons in the game – the sawed-off shotgun and the retro lancer. Both of these are close range weapons and while the retro lancer can be used somewhat effectively long range, the shots need to be timed out to allow the reticule to reset.

Compared to the other two assault rifles in the game, the retro lancer has by far the worst range, and the highest damage. At close range, the retro lancer will tear anyone with a different assault rifle to shreds.

The sawed-off, on the other hand, won’t shoot more than three feet. But get any closer (a common occurrence in Gears) and you are toast – even with a Gnasher (the regular, classic Gears shotgun). The Gnasher outranges the Sawed-off by a solid ten feet, but in order to gib (one-shot kill) your opponent, you have to enter sawed-off range and then hope for the best.

If your opponent has a sawed off, he does not even need to be looking directly at you to gib you, while you need to be aimed directly at the head or chest of your opponent to have a chance at a gib.

The Gnasher does make up for its weaknesses by out-ranging and out-lasting the sawed-off. With a Gnasher, you can take about five shots in the time it takes

your opponent with the sawed-off to shoot and reload one. The problem is, one inaccurate close-range shot is all your opponent needs to end your life right there.

My other issue with the sawed-off is not with the gun itself, but the kind of person who uses it. People who use the sawed-off as a primary weapon are the kind of people who will rush in to a group of two or three people, kill one, die, and feel like they have done a good job. And it also somehow seems to turn out that that one person in the group of three is me. Every single time.

I feel like the sawed-off should be a power weapon that is placed in a location on the map, rather than a default weapon anyone can start with. Bump the range up a bit, add two shots instead of one, and give it four rounds to use. Make it a power weapon, to be utilized by a good team but not relied upon by a bad player.

GOW3 is a solid game. The story line was easy to follow, the multiplayer is fun and exciting despite its faults, and is an excellent break from first-person shooters like Call of Duty. I would recommend it to both long-time players and people who have never been a part of Gears. Go out and get this game.



# Greyson Chance: ‘Hold on ‘til the Night’

JAYME WYBLE  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Imagine being 14 years old and having everything you dreamed of: a successful music career, tour dates, and TV appearances.

Greyson Chance got his start after his brother uploaded a video of him performing “song” by Lady Gaga at a school talent show.

He was only in the sixth grade at that time. Following that, the video became the third most popular vocal video on youtube.com; to date, the video has over 40 million views.

After an appearance on the Ellen Degeneres show, which he considers his real start, he went on to do a tour as well as appear on TV a couple of more times. His album, “Hold on ‘til the Night” was released on August 2, 2011.

After his single “Waiting Outside the Lines” debuted, it went on to sell over 160 thousand copies. Chance has also had a North American tour with Miranda Cosgrove and Cody Simpson.

Most of the songs on the CD all had the same slower tempo, piano, and meaningful lyrics. However, Chance’s album was not limited to slower ballid styles. His song “Unfriend you” has a more fast tempo, but keeps true to his meaningful lyrics.

“I don’t want to have to force you to smile. I’m here to help you notice the rainbow. ‘Cause I know what’s in you is out there.” (Lyrics from Waiting Outside the Lines.)

From my perspective, and of course, I am no music professional, but I am really big on music, his CD is a good starting

point.

Though some of the songs might not match up to the type of music high school students typically listen to, it is a great start for any music career.

I felt that his songs on this CD really reflected not only him as an artist, but also him as a person. A lot of the best music comes from artists that know how to portray themselves through their music.

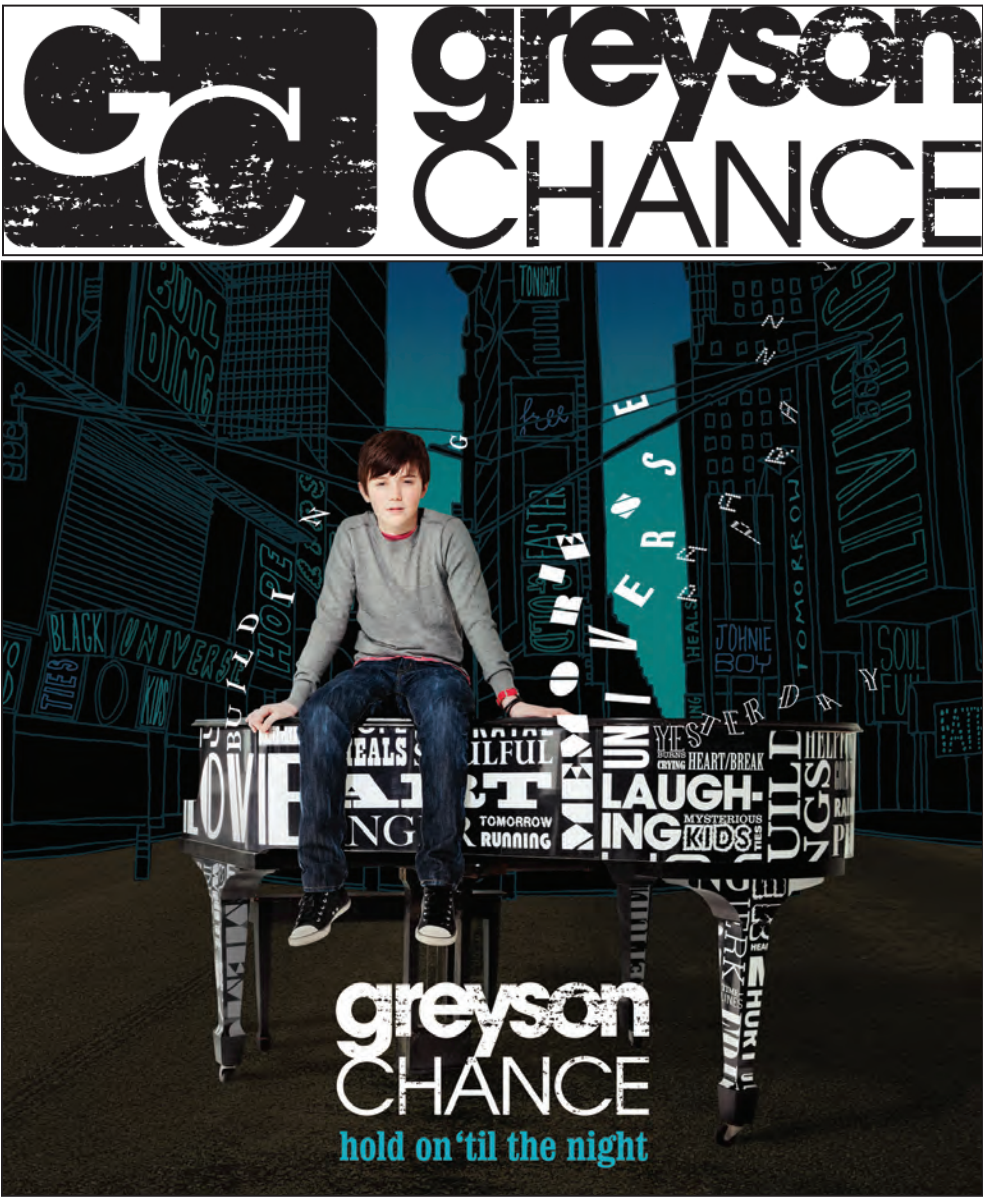
Following the release of this album, he is continuing to work on new music, according to GoMoxie.com, and will be doing another tour.

GoMoxie.com, by the way, is a site that helps get high school newspapers music to report on. (Look for more reviews courtesy of GoMoxie.com.)

The young artist continues to work on his music and push his vocals, according to his official website.

After reviewing his first album I do acknowledge his musical talent. For 14 years old, he has advanced vocal skills. Whether or not his career will continue to flourish or fizzle out cannot be for certain.

So if you are looking for some slower songs by a newer artist, give him a try.



Top:The Greyson Chance official logo. Bottom:The cover photo for Greyson Chance’s new album “Hold on ‘till the ight.” Right: Photo from Moxie photo shoot. Photos courtesy of GoMoxie.org.

# Straight edge: A lifestyle without drugs

CAMERON SADA  
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

A new music scene growing trend that is starting to evolve is the idea of being straight edge. Straight edge is a movement that is very common in the hard-core scene and follows very simple rules, which are as follows: no drinking, no smoking and no recreational drugs.

“I’m a person just like you, but I’ve got better things to do than sit around and smoke dope,” these are lyrics from a Minor Threat song called “Straight Edge.”

Minor Threat was the band that really started the whole straight edge movement. For Justice Tripp the vocalist of Trapped Under Ice, being edge is all based around the song “Straight Edge.”

Minor Threat’s songs messages speak about everything from not having promiscuous sex to staying clean of any drug-like substance,but the song that really got the movement going was “Straight Edge.”

”I think a lot of different people have different perception of what straight edge is and there is nothing wrong with that if you’re doing what’s right for you,” Tripp said. “Straight edge is not a lifestyle, it is a choice to live, a normal life, outside the social norms that are pounded in to our heads daily by the media and our peers,” according to Christopher Dryden, a 2006 Bellevue East graduate.

Along with Minor Threat, bands such as H2O have affected people’s choice to claim edge, for example Dryden.

Rather than worrying about who was hav-

ing the best party while in high school during the weekend, he worried about when the next concert was going to be.

Some people who claim straight edge are so into it that they will not even take medicine. Tripp mentions that he feels that if it is something that is going to make you better such as an anti-biotic, there is no reason not to take it, but it is all a lifestyle choice.

“Straight edge is all about staying away from recreational drugs, but I do understand where they are coming from,” Dryden said.

Straight edge is not something you can just choose to be one day to be or to become. Tripp for instance pushed away drugs, alcohol and cigarettes for years, but slowly his straight edge peers began to call him edge.

“I never discovered it. It discovered me. It was like meant for my life. I needed it in my life. I’m glad it found me,” Tripp said.

Straight edge is not just for the old. High school students also participate in the life style.

“Being edge even if you are too young to legally drink is still okay. Teen alcohol use is at record highs and peer pressure to join in is the hardest thing for a lot of teens to say no to,” Dryden said.

Dryden has been straight edge since he was in tenth grade. Dryden, along with many others, believes that being straight edge is a lifetime commitment.

“If you claim something, whether it is something to do with faith or being straight edge, why not do to it for life?” Dryden said.

Being able to claim a label can either empower you or it can guilt you into staying edge, but straight edge is not for everyone. It is a lifetime commitment.

A photograph of a young man and woman smiling and embracing. The man is wearing a tuxedo and the woman is wearing a formal dress with a corsage.

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# ‘Battlefield 3’: Tops America’s videogame world in one week of sales

CHRISTINE BLAIR  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Blood, guns, and war! Oh my! Death and destruction, filled with high action packed explosions; what more could a video game guru want out of the best selling video game of the year? “Battlefield 3” was released on Oct. 25 in the U.S. and it has topped Christmas lists everywhere for those who can’t seem to get enough of the franchise.

Electronic Arts (EA) shipped out 10 million copies to game stores across the U.S. in order to meet the demand of the game. Just about 5 million copies were sold in the first week, with 3 million of the 5 being pre-orders. The “Battlefield” franchise includes 17 titles now that all have a combined selling total of 50 million units.

“Battlefield 3” is already the most decorated game with over 60 awards including the Official Gamescom Award “Best of Show,” Game Critics Award “Best of Show E3 2011,” Eurogamer “Best of Show” and Tokyo Game Show “Japan Game Awards 2011 – Future Division.” “Battlefield 3” was the first foreign game to win this award as well.

So what is it that makes this game top dog worldwide? Simple. “Battlefield 3’s” new gaming and graphic engine, Frostbite 2, allows you to experience superior animation, unparalleled lighting and special effects, epic scale and incredible sound design.

EA teamed up with Digital Illusions Creative Entertainment (DICE) to put Frostbite 2 into the Battlefield game. This engine creates more believable behav-

ior in animations with less choppy motions, created some of the best large and close quarter online multiplayer maps and enhanced destruction on both a macro and micro level scale.

Now, the reason Battlefield 3 has become such a hit among gamers everywhere is due to the intense online multiplayer game play.

There are up to 24 players available per match on the Xbox and the Playstation 3 (PS3) and up to 64 players available on the PC in each game varying from the classic Team Deathmatch to the new All-out Vehicle Warfare. The classes have varied as well from the previous Battlefield: Bad Company 2.

The Assault class has become the most versatile out of the four classes available. Choosing the assault class comes with the assault rifle, grenade launcher, defibrillator or medical kit. That’s right. The assault class is now merged with the medic class.

Soldiers are now able to take an offensive approach on the battlefield, while also healing their teammates. This class is great for virtually all ranges in most combat situations.

The rest of the classes have been tweaked as well, with the Support class gaining the new ability to use lighter weapons and assault rifles as well as C4 explosives.

The Engineer and the recon class have also changed very little, with only gaining more active roles in their prospective areas such as land/air vehicle destruction for the engineer class and long-range engagements



Cover picture from Battlefield 3. Photo courtesy of the offical Battlefield 3 website.

for the recon class.

There are a total 24 vehicles and a total of 48 weapons that a player is able to use in the online game play modes. Each of these vehicles has their own set of unlocks such as the laser painter, guided missile and main cannon autoloader for the helicopter and beam scanning, ECM radio jammer and heat seeking air-to-air missiles for the jets. Weapons also have their own set of unlocks such as scopes, red dot, and more of a rapid fire/more ammo.

Battlefield has an extensive new networking system between the player and those on their friends list. Players are able to create their own platoon with up to 99

members.

If part of a platoon, each game played counts toward the platoon’s collective status. Players can also always constantly see the progress of their friends in the updated battlefeed section of the battlelog.

This game has definitely become my top choice for online game play. The campaign is short and to the point, which is excellent if you like to finish the game’s campaign before playing online.

This game definitely gets six stars out of five due to the insanely pretty graphics and new gaming techniques. Only the world’s most top gamers will have this game before the end of the year.



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## Thrift stores hide hipster treasures

JAYME WYBLE  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

I have never been one of those girls who has to have expensive clothes. In fact, spending money on myself gives me a stomach ache. On the same note, stores like Hollister and Pink have never really seemed to fit my personality, so that was never a problem.

My mom always jokes that I was born in the wrong time period, and maybe that is true. I spend huge chunks of time searching through the racks at local thrift stores looking for “gems” hidden among the rubble.

Old wedding dresses from the 1900’s, kitten sweaters, old sports team shirts and bad gifts from family vacations clutter the racks. That is all most people see when they look in; however, between the rejected clothing can be some of the most fashionable clothes out there.

I am a big supporter of Urban Outfitters (hipsters make my day.) In the event that you are unaware of what it means to be a hipster, let me try to fill you in.

Hipsters are considered the originals. They can be found strumming an acoustic guitar in the old market, no matter the weather. They rock things like Toms and clothes from Urban Outfitters. Typically, they like indie films and music, too.

I would not consider myself a complete hipster, but I have my moments.

Truth be told, I can spend hours upon hours in Urban Outfitters. There is a tidy line of almost eight pairs of Urban Outfitters shoes along the front of my bed and I even purchased my senior homecoming dress there.

However, I can spend equally as much time in a thrift store. Searching the racks to find treasures among the rejected clothing.

I find it funny how a person dressed all in “old school” clothes purchased at the local thrift store is almost a mirror of someone decked out in Urban Outfitters threads.

A person could not tell whether I bought

my outfit at a store like Urban Outfitters or Forever 21, or if I just walked out of the thrift store.

Looking like you walked out of the past, being “urban,” is considered fashionable right now according to big name trending lists. Chances are it will be for quite a while; the reason being that the people who loved that style to begin with are the people who do not care what other people think is cool.

The hipster style intrigues me, partly because I think it is cute, but also because it confuses me: like sweaters that look like a dress, dresses that look like shirts, and shoes that remind my mother of her own childhood.

Now, I am not saying that it is wrong for stores to make money off of this trend. I am simply saying that thrift stores should not just be looked at as just an out reach to the poor anymore. Fashion, just like history, repeats itself.

Thrift stores were originally created for people below the poverty line. Places like the Goodwill and the Salvation Army thrift store were started with the idea that people could donate old clothes so that people without much money can cloth their families.

However, as the years go by that idea is not the only one. My family is not wealthy by any means, but we do not struggle that much either. We’re pretty average. So when I go into a thrift store it is not because of the money, I simply want to sift through people’s old clothes.

High top Addidas, an off-the-shoulder sweater, a necklace I am pretty sure is from the 1800’s, black Vans, these are all things that anyone could find in a normal outfit of mine and they are all from the thrift store.

Everything in my business wardrobe (pencil skirts, dress tops, and dress pants), all came from the Goodwill. Chances are without this article none of you would ever have known this though.





# Stores that have the right gifts for the holidays

BREANNA HOLLIS  
REPORTER

The thought of giving presents and filling loved ones’ faces with joy brings happiness to some people. Some just like to go shopping. Sometimes it is the thought of walking through the automatic store doors and having the feeling of being overwhelmed because there is so much to get, then walking out with bags in both hands with the excitement of being able to say, “My list is finally done.” Getting the right gift from the right store at the right time is an amazing feeling, if the shopper is able to be successful.

Around the holiday season, however, it can be difficult to shop. With so many stores across the metro area, the choices can be overwhelming.

Not only is there a plethora of stores from which to choose, determining who to shop for and what to buy can also be confusing. Knowing for whom other people shop and where they shop can be helpful to many gift givers during this stressful time.

One shopper who is prepared for the holidays is sophomore T’eyrr Bynum. One reason she goes shopping is to let the people she shops for know that she cares.

“I shop for my mom, dad, sister, brothers, grandparents, and four friends. I shop for others because it’s not selfish and it lets others know you care. For my mom, I go to somewhere like Macy’s, JCPenney’s, or

Younkers. For my dad, I go to a sporting goods place like Nebraska Sporting Goods,” Bynum said. “For my sister, I go to Rue 21, Gordmans, Aéropostale, or Bath and Body works. For my brothers, I go to any toy store like Toys R’ Us. Grandparents, it depends. Friends, I’ll normally go to Victoria Secret, Pink.”

Bynum shops for about eleven people. According to Industry Market Trends, shoppers usually get presents for up to 14 people; whether it is friends, family, acquaintances, or co-workers. Sophomore Aneesha Kelly goes Christmas shopping for her family and friends.

“I feel good knowing that I’m doing something for someone else. I like to go to different places at the mall because they have everything,” Kelly said.

Industry Market Trends also said that some hot gifts for young adults and adults are books, CD’s, and DVD’s (58.5 percent), gift card and gift certificates (45 percent), and toys (38.6 percent). Sophomore Abby Burnett likes to go Christmas shopping because she enjoys spending money on people.

“When I go shopping for Christmas, I pretty much go anywhere. I mostly go shopping at JC Penny, Wal-Mart and Target, because they have anything and everything that I could ever need to buy for presents,” Burnett said. “I normally buy for my family and close friends. For my siblings, I’ll either buy toys or gifts. For my friends, I normally



A poll conducted by the Tom Tom shows that Walmart, Target and JCPenney are the top rated stores for holiday shopping. *Photo by Cameron Sada*

just get them little things like key chains, or candy. I just kind of get things that I know reminds me of them.”

In a poll conducted by the Bellevue East Tom Tom, some of the best-rated stores were Kohl’s, Target, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, JC Penny, and Amazon. Four out of ten people go to Wal-Mart; four out of ten people shop at JC Penny; three out of ten shop at Target.

Senior Pamela Kaye enjoys shopping at Target and Wal-Mart because those stores have what she wants, or needs to buy to give to her family and friends.

“[Wal-Mart and Target] have everything for everyone in my family. I don’t have to go to twenty different stores to get what I need. Even if they don’t have it, they have gift cards I can get,” Kaye said.

# A traditional Christmas

JOSCELYN RAGONE  
WEB EDITOR

Varying from family to family, no tradition is ever the same, particularly around Christmas. Whether the tradition is something simple, like gathering in the living room to watch a Christmas classic with the family, or something more extravagant, like getting the axe out of the garage to go chop down a Christmas tree, every tradition is important to the family that holds it.

On Christmas morning, junior Joel Wallace and his family gathered around to read the Nativity story. The tradition originated from Wallace’s parents, and he notes that it has always been something that has been read.

“I like reading the Nativity story because it keeps my heart and mind on what the true meaning of Christmas is really all about; the birth of the Christ,” Wallace said.

Throughout the month of December, Wallace notes that basketball is definitely a tradition, as well as being able to have sparkling soda, watch the movie “The Christmas Shoes,” and being around all of his family’s stockings. But one tradition that is his favorite is when his family gathers and goes to their Christmas Eve service at their church.

“It’s always nice to sing songs, see everyone dressed up in their nicest clothes, and to always hear people say ‘what a good looking family’ when they see us all. It always brings a good feeling when you get to stand next to one another and know that every single person



Reading the Nativity story is a tradition with junior Joel Wallace’s family. Many families have different traditions during the holidays. *Photo by Cameron Sada*

in the family, as well as God, loves you,” Wallace said.

Senior Amiera Rayyan also has Christmas traditions.

“We don’t really have too many traditions, but we do the basic ones - like putting up the Christmas tree and decorating it, along with decorating our home as well. We also make cookies, especially sugar, which my sisters and I decorate,” Rayyan said.

Extravagance is not really needed when it comes to family traditions, because that’s what they are; family traditions. Each family has their own traditions, and no matter how big or small, each has sentimental meaning.

“Oh, we also listen to Christmas music, of course,” Rayyan said.

JINGLE ALL THE WAY

Oh what fun to have over winter break!

Find the perfect hill and go sledding with some friends.

Go ice-skating (Tip: it is better when you go with someone cute.)

Build a gingerbread house. (Tip: It is more fun when you do not use a kit.)

Build a snowman. (Tip: Get some friends and make it a contest to see whose is better.)

Watch a couple Holiday classics (Tip: Make it a movie night with hot chocolate and friends.)

Finish your Christmas shopping and send some Holiday cards.