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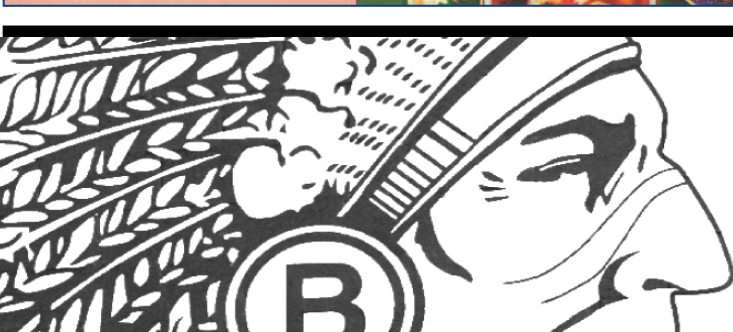




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B E L L E V U E E A S T TOM TOM

BELLEVUE EAST HIGH SCHOOL 1401 HIGH SCHOOL DR. BELLEVUE, NE (402)-293-4150 MARCH 2012 ISSUE 5 VOLUME 61

Fire destroys East student's home



Junior Michelle Hewitt received the news that her house had caught on fire Jan. 24. The fire caused extensive smoke and water damage, forcing the Hewitts to live in a rental house six months while their house is rebuilt. Top right is a picture of the house before the fire and below is a picture after the fire. *Photos courtesy of Michelle Hewitt*

CAITLYN MARTIN
REPORTER

After living in the same house for five years, it had finally started to become a home. While becoming a home took years, it took only a matter of minutes to make it unlivable.

Junior Michelle Hewitt received the tragic news that her house had caught on fire on Jan. 24. Soon the news spread throughout the Bellevue East community and concerned individuals began to take action.

As soon as he heard the news about Hewitt's house, business instructor Andrew Werner immediately started working on raising funds to help the Hewitt family.

Thanks to the efforts of Bellevue East's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Werner's finance classes, Bellevue East raised \$1,365 to help the Hewitt family.

Werner encouraged the students in his classes to donate not only be-

cause Hewitt was a finance student, but also because of the devastation a fire causes to every facet of a person's life.

Last year, a similar situation happened when the home of freshman Jeremiah and junior Zachary Stovall burnt down. The Bellevue East community came together and provided support to the Stovall family in their time of need as well.

Students, individuals, and charities provided financial and personal assistance to the Stovall family.

Unfortunately, this year, the Hewitts experienced a similar disaster.

Following the Hewitt's tragedy, FBLA and Werner's classes spread the word about the fire throughout the high school. When students and staff heard, they reacted quickly by sending in donations. Among those who donated was instructor Glen Franta.

"I donated because it was a Bellevue family that needed help and

it was one of our students here at East," Franta said.

Franta was not the only one who jumped into action after learning about the fire. When senior Riley Keene heard of the news, she asked Werner if she could help out by asking her church for donations.

"Someone in one of my classes said they were taking donations, and I just wanted to help out as much as I could," Keene said.

In the weeks following the fire, the donations continued to come in. The funds were presented to Hewitt at East's spring sports pep rally on Feb 3.

Hewitt expressed her gratitude for the funds. The donations have helped the Hewitt family get their lives back on track. Not only were monetary donations collected, but also clothing.

"It's such a blessing because we really needed it," Hewitt said.

In the wake of a house fire, it can be difficult to imagine the everyday things a family needs to

get by. Currently, Hewitt and her family are living in a rental house for the next six months while their home is being rebuilt.

"Everything on the inside was pretty much destroyed; all the rooms and items had smoke and water damage," Hewitt said.

One question that is yet to be answered for the Hewitt's is why this fire happened. Space heaters, fireplaces, and defective electrical appliances are very common causes of house fires; however, the origin of the Hewitt fire remains elusive.

"[The reason] is not exactly known. They have theories, but none of them really explain it," Hewitt said.

What is clear, however, is that all of the help the Hewitt family has received is very appreciated and Bellevue East's response in the face of tragedy reveals that students and staff are willing to come together in times of need.

"I love helping people out when

they need it. It makes me feel good about not only myself, but helping out someone who lost absolutely everything. It makes me proud that I was a part of that," Keene said.



During the spring sport's pep rally, junior Summer Hill presented her friend, junior Michelle Hewitt, with a check for \$1,365. The money was raised by FBLA and instructor Andrew Werner's classes.

Changing with technology: picking classes online

ANDREA VELLANI
REPORTER

Students can now register for classes on PowerSchool. This is a switch from last year’s registration, where counselors met with students face-to-face, one at a time, and discussed classes for the next school year. This year, students registered in the media center with all of the counselors present.

Registration took place in a step-by-step process via PowerSchool, the school’s parent-teacher-student network. Students followed instructions read to them by the counselors, starting with logging onto the network with user information provided. Next, students clicked on a link on the Power School site to register for classes. Students registered by selecting a class from a list in a specific box containing each subject. The site also included a counter that kept track of credits needed for each year. Once students selected all the classes they planned to take, the registration information was submitted.

Using PowerSchool for registration was a new idea brought up in meetings last school year.

“For me personally, just learning the new system was overwhelming enough; online registration was the last thing on my mind initially,” counselor Tory Juarez said. “We did eventually begin to toss the idea around during our counselor meetings.”

The advantage of this new method of registration is that more students get registered faster.

“I really like the registration on Pow-



Instructor Todd Porter’s American history class selects classes for the 2012-2013 school year on PowerSchool for the first time. Freshman Fritzie Buglewicz said that he enjoyed using PowerSchool rather than filling out the paper copy. *Photo by Cameron Sada*

erSchool, because it goes faster, and this is such a time consuming process,” Juarez said. “Yes, we do miss the one-on-one interaction, but students still get to ask questions and still do get the one-on-one at times.”

Despite the convenience of mass registration, some students miss the more per-

sonal method of registration.

“I’d prefer face-to-face talking with counselors first hand,” sophomore Tanner Casart said. “It’s better than having a whole class raising their hand and having only two counselors to answer questions.”

Casart explained that the new method causes a lot of confusion when students

don’t know how to use PowerSchool. However, he believes that registration on computers eliminates paperwork, which needs to be kept track of.

Since this is the first year for the new system, it is yet to be determined by faculty as more or less effective than previous methods for class registration.



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Cornerstone expands through high school

ELIZABETH MCGOOGAN
REPORTER

Cornerstone Christian School (CCS) has been around for 27 years, offering kindergarten through eighth grade. Now with a 52 percent increase in enrollment in the past six years, Cornerstone has decided to expand and add high school to the grades offered.

“We anticipate a significant increase in enrollment for this coming fall,” Cornerstone Administrator Teri Lynn Schrag said.

Three years ago, CCS began plans to expand through high school. Ninth grade is offered for the 2011-2012 school year, then tenth grade will be offered the following school year, and so on. By the 2014-2015 school year Cornerstone will offer a full high school program.

“Last spring, we made the decision to begin the high school for the 2011-2012 school year,” Schrag said.

Cornerstone has been located in the Bellevue area for over twenty years. They are currently located on 36th Street in Bellevue in the education wing of Thanksgiving Lutheran Church. As of now, Sarpy county does not have a non-denominational Christian high school.

“The current parents would like to see the school expand to a complete K-12 program,” Schrag said.

Cornerstone is currently looking for



Cornerstone Christian School, currently located on 36th Street and Highway 370, will be the first non-denominational Christian high school offering grades 9-12 (by 2015) in Sarpy county. *Photo by Dre Betts*

land to build their new facility. The location they are at now is not big enough to accommodate the expected student increase.

“We are hoping to expand on our present campus to cover the increase in enrollment for the upcoming years while we look for land and build a campus to facilitate the

K-12 program,” Schrag said.

Cornerstone offers extra-curricular activities like volleyball and color guard. As of now, Cornerstone has four high school teachers. Three out of the four teach middle school as well as high school.

“The teachers are excited to see the expansion of the program,” Schrag said.

Buffett Bill requires millionaires to pay equivalent middle-class tax percentage

MCKENNAH OTT
REPORTER

Senate Democrats released the “Buffett Bill” on Feb. 1. The bill was created to ensure that millionaires, such as Warren Buffet and Bill Gates, would have to pay a minimum federal tax of thirty percent, which is what middle class people pay.

President Obama and congressional democrats believe the “Buffett Bill” will reduce the deficit and increase fairness among Americans. Warren Buffett supports the democratic legislation in their attempt to create fairness. Some American families make minimum wage, but pay more in taxes than most millionaires.

A lot of millionaires, such as Warren Buffett and presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, make most of their income from investments. Taxes on investments are capped at fifteen percent.

The people the Buffett Bill will affect the most are people who make more than one million dollars a year, either it is salaries, investments, or both. Once the Buffett Bill has been officially approved, millionaires will have to pay a minimum of 30 percent of their income as federal taxes.

The author of the bill, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, believes all Americans need fairness in the tax system.

“These middle class families are really struggling to get by and then they find out that some people with really extremely high incomes are actually paying lower all-in federal tax rate than they are. That’s, to them, just not common sense,” Whitehouse told CNN.

Warren Buffett himself called for higher taxes on the rich. Buffett said Berkshire Hathaway would pay approximately 14 percent in taxes. President Obama will be pushing the bill between now and November of this year.

Proponents of the bill hope that it will also help straighten out the economy and give the government some much-needed money.

Republicans disagree with the new bill and believe it will stifle job creation and hurt the economy. Senate democrats have yet to decide when they will push the bill for voting in legislation. They have decided to officially call the bill “Paying a Fair Share Act of 2012”.

“Americans deserve a straight deal and right now they are not getting one from our tax system,” Whitehouse said.

Upcoming election spurs students’ opinions on voting

JOSCELYN RAGONE
REPORTER

In the majority of states, except Delaware, Nebraska, and Wyoming, turning 18 signifies the change to becoming an adult. Although the legal adult age in Nebraska is 19, when an individual turns 18, they are still granted the right to vote.

“It is important for everyone to vote, because your vote can make a difference. But, it is only imperative to register if you’re an informed voter. Personally, I registered to vote because I like politics; I find them interesting,” senior Taylor Stevens said.

When an individual turns 18, they have the right to register to vote. Some actually do and some don’t, but most young adults want to be able to finally have their say and make thier choice in the political world.

“Voting determines our future. You always hear peers down the hall talking about how the state of our government is at the time, and how they wish that they could do something. It may be a small act, but voting can change that,” senior Diamond Mcneill said.

An issue that could come up when 18

year olds vote, as well as those who are older, is that there is a possibility that they are misinformed about the political background of the candidates that are running for office.

“You need to know what is going on in the world. Blind voting does nothing but hurt us. Carefully research each candidate, find out what goals he/she wants to accomplish, and what they will do to complete it,” Mcneill said.

At Bellevue East, the ability to become informed can be done with ease, as American government is a class that is required to graduate.

“By taking American Government, you learn a lot about the structure and how the government is run. So you when it’s time to vote, you can look at the candidates and make judgments about who’s ideas that you like,” social studies instructor PK Simmons said.

While 18 is the minimum age for voting, there are arguments in favor of lowering the voting age. The possibility of being misinformed and ‘blindly voting’ are often considered against lowering the voting age.

“The voting age should stay where it

is, in my opinion. I’m okay with where it is at because if you are able to serve your country, then you should be able to vote as well. And people in a large group tend to not make responsible decisions, so why add more people who are not ready to make responsible choices into that group?” senior Kyle Kenny said.

Every person has their own opinion on voting and how they believe that their vote affects the political outcome of things. When it comes time for an 18 year old to register and vote for the first time, the thoughts of every individual are going to be different.

“I want to have a say in the next president. It’s good to get involved and know what’s going on in your country and state,” senior Sam Ervin said.

Currently, the 2012 presidential election is the hot political topic. Students who will be old enough to vote will have to make a decision on how they register and for whom they vote.

“I am going to register as an independent because I plan to vote based on the what the candidates stand for and not what party they belong to,” senior Taylor Brown said.

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Being a part of Bellevue Master's Commission



Bellevue Master's Commision Pointe Blank members perform at Bellevue Christian Center's Dig Retreat. Attendees can get involved with music, visual and media art. Photo courtesy of Michael Rabon

DESIREE WILSON
REPORTER

Looking out into the audience, Bellevue Master's Commission students stand posed on stage, ready to begin their first dance performance of the year. Adrenaline is pumping through their veins as the crowd cheers on the group of students waiting for their cue. The music starts playing and they finally show off what they have been learning and practicing for weeks on end, on top of academics and other ministries they are involved in. This very performance would set the scene for an anything-but-ordinary church service that could change lives.

"It has been really exciting to see them work really hard and also get to perform at some cool places, but at the same time, glorify God through

it," support staff member Nolan Evans said.

Pointe Blank, the Bellevue Master's Commission dance team, is a part of the creative department called Paradigm at Bellevue Christian Center. However, dance is not the only activity students are offered in Bellevue Master's Commission. Students can get involved with music, visual art, and media art as well.

"In music, we pretty much allow everyone the opportunity to be on the worship team if they want. The worship team actually gets to travel around and do worship services for different churches throughout the year, and we get to play for the ministries within our own church," Evans said. "In visual arts, we do anything from live paintings and group paintings to working with video, video editing, and photography as well.

Sometimes we even do a mix of everything."

All of this does not even begin to capture the full scale of what Master's Commission is, however. Master's Commission started out in 1985 with two men in Arizona wanting to make a difference in the world by starting a discipleship program for young adults. Little did they know, it would turn into a large, international chain of Master's Commissions all across the nation. Thus, Bellevue Master's Commission, the third oldest one, came to be in 1995.

"We're seeing a generation that loves God, loves people, and lives their purpose," Evans said. "Everything that we do in Master's Commission is wrapped up around those three things."

Bellevue Master's Commission is a ten-month discipleship program in which students learn to grow in their walk with God, serve in different ministries, and even go on mission trips. Students enter Master's Commission fresh out of high school, seeking direction and purpose in their lives and wanting to serve God. Looking back on the past couple of years, third year student Megan Gill said that Master's Commission is something much deeper than a regular church internship.

"Master's has not changed my life; God changed my life through Master's," she said. "He saved me, he found me, he became everything to me, he loves me and continues to change me and show me new things."

In addition to being a discipleship program, Bellevue Master's Commission serves as an accredited college through Southwestern Assemblies of God University. Students are offered eight classes to take over the course of two years. Some include Old Testament literature, New Testament literature, authentic Christianity, Bible study, Pentecostal history, introduction to world missions, and more. These classes are

transferable to any college as electives.

"[The academics] are really great because in Master's Commission, you learn a lot of heart related things, and through the classes you learn the knowledge part; learning how to understand the Bible and understand different perspectives," Bellevue Master's Commission graduate Randi Greco said. "They were a little challenging, but they were also totally beneficial in my walk with God in education."

Master's Commission is another option for someone after graduating from high school. Greco said that it even helped her with later college plans.

"You learn about yourself in Master's Commission and what God designs for you, and when you learn those things it is actually easier to make decisions with college," she said. "I am in school right now, and I started taking classes right after I graduated from Master's."

Master's Commission is a unique program compared to some Christian colleges. Students graduating from the program most often do not leave as the same type of person that they were when they went in.

"One of the biggest things I think people experience is a change in their character and in their integrity," Evans said. "It really establishes them as people that want to do great things in their life."

For those who want to experience what it is like to be in Master's Commission, their campus visit days (BMC Days) are held at Bellevue Christian Center from Mar. 7 to Mar. 9. The cost is \$25 and includes housing and meals. More information about the program, its history, and contact information can be found at www.BellevueMasters.com.

"Definitely be open and come check us out, because hearing about it is one thing, but seeing it in action is totally different," Gill said.

Importance of scholarships



Senior Sarah Gentes shows off her scholarship award letters for college. Gentes received a dean's scholarships, as well as others for the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Photo by Zoey Brennan

ZOEY BRENNAN
NEWS EDITOR

Paying for college is no joke, and unless a student wants to be in debt for a while, they should start looking into potential scholarships as soon as possible.

Senior Sarah Gentes knows the importance of scholarships. She started looking into them with help from her mom and the East counseling office.

"I think scholarships are important because they provide a way of paying for school, you just have to look and apply," Gentes said.

Gentes received two academic scholarships for Wesleyan University and Doane College. She also received dean scholarships from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

"[This] helps ease the financial burden," Gentes said.

Different scholarships have different

requirements. Many scholarships require extra-curricular activity resumes, as well as an essay usually from a specific writing prompt.

Most scholarships also require information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well. The FAFSA is a government application and students will need their tax information as well as that of their parents to apply.

The FAFSA not only gives financial aid to the students eligible, it partners with postsecondary schools, financial institutions, and other services in order to help students and families paying for college.

Students interested in finding out more about scholarship opportunities should visit the counseling office. East offers a comprehensive scholarship opportunity as well as listings for various scholarships available. Websites like Fastweb.com and Educationquest.org also can help students find scholarship opportunities.

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East successful at culinary competition



(Left) Senior Thomas Godwin and junior Adam Norton are preparing one of the dishes they had to make. (Middle) Senior Alicia Magnette and juniors Tyler Pauly, Hayley Jannenga, and Elizabeth Russell make up The Agitated Hot Rods team. (Right) Elizabeth Russell gathers her items that she needs together. Photo by Cameron Sada



MCKENNAH OTT
REPORTER

Three teams from Bellevue East competed in the a culinary competition held at the Culinary Institute of Metropolitan Community College in Omaha on Feb. 24 and 25. The teams that competed were D.A.T.T. Crew, Beauty and the Beasts, and The Agitated Hot Rods. The teams competed in food preparation, presentation, and taste.

Most of the teams consisted of between three and five people. Each team came up with their own menus, team names, and team poster. The East team, D.A.T.T. Crew, was made up of seniors Thomas

Godwin and David Goolsby and juniors Trey Young and Adam Norton. The East team, Beauty and the Beasts, consisted of seniors Darren Renfrow, Johanna Crumb, Amanda Lyons, and Sarah Howe. The last East team, The Agitated Hot Rods, was made up of senior Alicia Magnette and juniors Tyler Pauly, Elizabeth Russell, and Hayley Jannenga.

All of East's teams competed at different times. Beauty and the Beasts started at 9 a.m., D.A.T.T. crew started at 9:15 a.m., and The Agitated Hot Rods started at 1:15 p.m. All the teams went up against different schools all at different times so the same school would never compete against each other. The culinary instruc-

tor at East, Cathy Hansen, and the teams' culinary mentors, helped the teams reach their full potential.

Competitors had approximately fifteen minutes to prep their stations and approximately an hour to cook and plate food. If any team went over their time limit, they were deducted points from their overall score. The process of the competition was to first prepare your stations, next to practice knife skill, then to cook your meal, and, finally, the judges would judge the taste of the food and the overall presentation.

During the competition, teammates had to work together to prepare three dishes. They created an appetizer, an en-

trée, and a dessert. They created a menu with a recommended price for each meal as if it would actually be served in a high-end restaurant. After every team finished cooking, the plates of food were placed in a lobby outside the cooking area for people to view.

"Students competed against industry standards and two teams were awarded silver medals. Alicia Magnette, Tyler Pauly, Liz Russell, Hayley Jannenga and the second team of Sarah Howe, Johanna Crumb, Darren Renfrow and Amanda Lyons not only received the silver medal, but also won second place out of 33 teams. Congratulations to all that participated," Hansen said.

A day in the life of Karisa Sorensen: College of Nursing student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center



Despite her busy schedule, nursing student Karisa Sorensen likes taking time out to enjoy life. Photo courtesy of Karisa Sorensen

CHRISTINE BLAIR
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Most wonder what life will be like after graduation... what college will hold... but most do not realize how much life can change and become more fast paced. Karisa Sorensen is a student at the College of Nursing (located on the University of Nebraska Medical Center campus) and she experienced a hectic schedule change when she first enrolled into her future career.

A typical weekly schedule consists of classes, pre-labs, clinical rotations, and the

occasional day off. Each morning Sorensen wakes early in order to arrive to her class or clinical rotation on time.

"I am most definitely not a morning person, so this can be very difficult to me, and I often wake up looking like I got hit by a train," Sorensen said. "Nonetheless, I gruffly get dressed and pulled together in order to arrive on time."

The hands-on learning experience usually ends between 3 and 5 p.m. in the afternoon for Sorensen, and she finishes out her day with work and homework.

"I work about 20 hours a week at a video store to supplement for gas and living expenses," Sorensen said. "On work nights, I get home at around 11 p.m., leaving a few more hours of homework, studying or extra clinical paperwork."

Sorensen's schedule has been packed full of this routine since she first started nursing school making it hard for her to see the family she lives with.

"The nights I do see [my family], I make sure to enjoy them, even if it is just eating a quick dinner together," Sorensen said.

With a schedule as busy as Sorensen's, it can get complicated scheduling everything perfectly. Sorensen tried writing down things in a daily planner, but found she really just based her schedule off of her memory and her ability to prioritize tasks monthly, weekly, daily and hourly.

"I must have a brain wired specifically for remembering events, tests and dates," Sorensen said. "I usually just have a running list in my head of what I absolutely must get done tonight or tomorrow and what can wait for days, months or years."

Living such a hectic life can cause quite a large amount of stress if not handled prop-

erly. Sorensen generally relaxes by taking showers, watching television mindlessly and spending quality time with her puppy.

"There is something healing about the love of an animal," Sorensen said. "After a stressful day there is nothing more gratifying than a sleepy 100 pound lab/pitbull puppy cuddling in my lap."

Sorensen has at least one day a week to catch up on sleep, paperwork and homework.

"If I didn't have Fridays off, I couldn't survive," Sorensen said.

Though Sorensen leads a busy life between school and work, she still enjoys the little things at the end of her day.

"My favorite part of the day is finally arriving home after a long day of hard work," Sorensen said. "Breathing in the smell of dinner on the stove, and feeling a sense of accomplishment for the day brings so much peace to an overloaded mind."

As a work of advice, Sorensen recommends taking life slowly as possible.

"It is always important to take life one step at a time, one day at a time, even minutes at a time," Sorensen said. "There are times where it gets so crazy that you have to sit back and say, 'what should I do right this second?' If that means your mind is telling you to go grab the Doritos, so be it. Let it happen."

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EAST AND WEST: TWO SCHOOLS, ONE DISTRICT

ENROLLMENT FOR WEST

Information from National Center for Education Statistics and the Bellevue West counseling office.

Freshmen: 414
Sophomores: 433
Juniors: 392
Seniors: 413
Total: 1,652
Full-Time Teachers: 110
Student/Teacher Ratio: 16:1

Students eligible for free lunch: 181 (11%)
Students eligible for reduced lunch: 92 (6%)



CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Bellevue West’s Athletic Director, Kevin Broderick, declined giving a list of the clubs and activities offered at Bellevue West. Broderick said that West “offers exactly the same activities that Bellevue East offers. In some situations, a club or activity may not have garnered enough members, or any members, so they may be inactive this year. However, every activity we offer students is identical to Bellevue East.”



Bellevue West (right) opened its doors in Aug. of 1977 when overcrowding became an issue at Bellevue Senior High School during the 1970's. Bellevue Senior High School was renamed as Bellevue East (left) with the opening of West. Both high schools divide Bellevue into the east and west side of town, though the district lines have changed to accommodate the growing city over the past 35 years. *Photos by Cameron Sada and Macy Craig*

Despite policy differences, goals are the same

JEREMY CASSIDAY
SPORTS EDITOR
CAITLIN MARTIN
REPORTER

Clothing rules and restrictions, holiday celebrations, early out and late start for seniors are just some of the rules in any school’s set of policies.

Unless students attended both Bellevue East and West, they probably would not know the differences between the policies at the two high schools.

For most rules, Bellevue East and West are very similar. However, they do not have the same policies for everything.

While the differences between schools are minimal, students that attend one school and then the other might note that the schools differ on policies pertaining to drink bottles and Valentine’s day celebration.

“[At West] you can’t bring in flowers or get flowers delivered, but we can bring in candy,” West freshman Peyton Cutler said.

At East, the Student Council delivered Valentine’s Day carnations for students who paid for the flower along and a message.

While the Valentine’s Day difference has been around for awhile, the water bottle policy was a fairly new development for West.

“We can’t have any drinks that are colored, so the drinks have to be clear,” West senior Kitiara Nichols said. “One day we came to school and we went up the stairs and [the deans] were making people throw away drinks that weren’t water.”

Aside from minor differences in school rules, the two schools also differ in dean assigned discipline.

For example, West does not have in-school suspension (ISS). The goals behind the enforcement of policies and discipline are still the same for both schools, though.

“There is consistencies in terms of our expectations and consequences for not following those. We have ISS and they don’t, so you can hand out some different consequences, but we’re relatively similar in terms of handling consequences,” Bellevue East Dean Jon Mauro said.

While West does not have ISS, they do have what is called private dining, which is a lunch detention typically assigned in a series of 3-5 days, according to West instructor Aaron Steuve.

At both schools, certain behaviors earn specific punishments. Detentions and Saturday school are typically academic or classroom related misbehavior, such as skipping, missing assignments, tardies, etc. Suspensions (ISS and OSS)are reserved for more serious behaviors.

“We try to save the suspension stuff for behaviors that maybe are offensive to other students or to staff, something that is very out of line and just not acceptable here at school or is not going to be acceptable in the work place when you leave here,” Mauro said.

Assigning these punishments at East is not the same for every student and every situation.

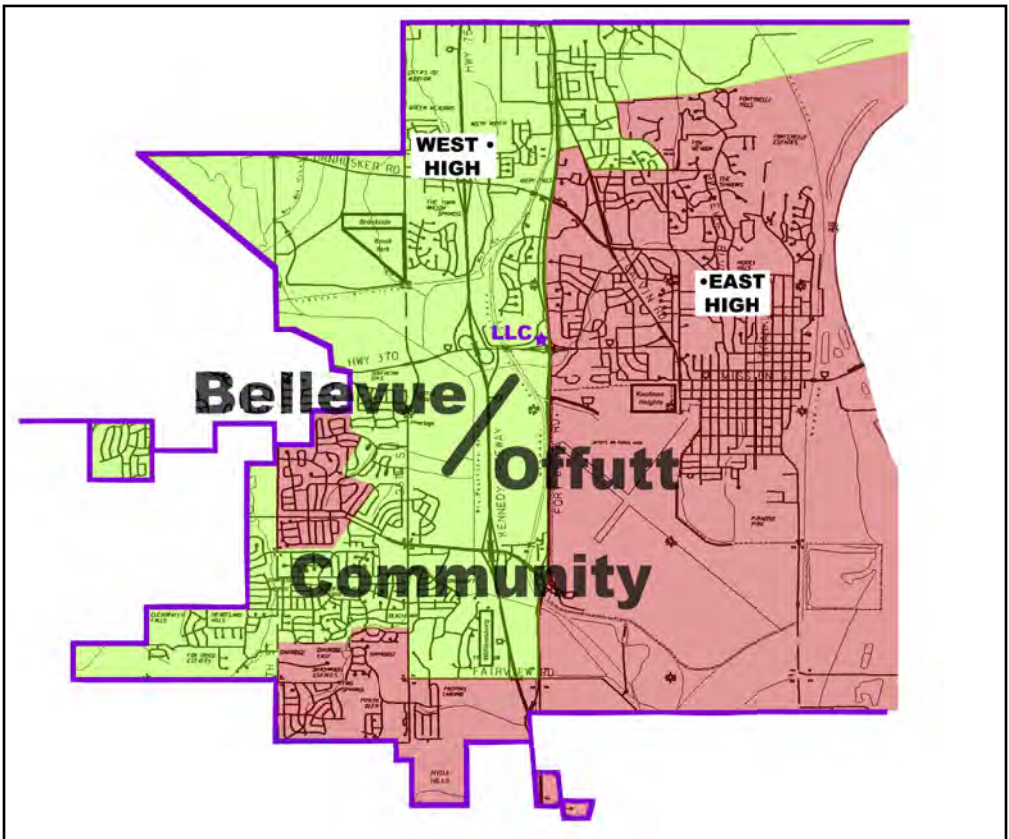
“Each case is handled more as an individual basis to that student. We want that student to be successful, so what we think would help one student might not be what would help another student, so we try to tailor it as best we can to help that individual student,” East Dean Scott Jensen said.

Even then, the deans try to be objective with their work and the punishments assigned.

“Once it’s in our office, it’s the behavior that we look at. It doesn’t really matter what teacher it came from, as far as that goes, you know we have a lot of great teachers here who do a great job with classroom management. Once it comes to us in the Dean’s office, we look at that behavior and how we can help that individual student,” Jensen said.

The only thing that might affect a punishment is the teacher that gave the referral and the recommendation provided by that teacher.

“At times teachers will give us suggestions, and we may or may not follow those suggestions. Once it’s here, I think it’s a behavior issue that’s handled by the deans and we do take into account their opinion. Sometimes we agree and sometimes we compromise, and



The district lines that divide the Bellevue/Offut community have changed with the expansion west. As Bellevue grows larger, more students are put into the East district even though they live on the west side. *Image courtesy of Bellevue Public Schools*

it’s just an individual basis on that student,” Jensen said.

Once a student lands themselves in a detention, Saturday school, ISS or OSS with the East deans, there is a different workload for the students to carry out.

With a detention, it’s basically left up to the student: to work on homework, read a book, or do something else productive. For suspensions, the teachers whose classes will be missed assigns work.

“It’s really up to their individual teachers what they assign them at that point; it’s not given by the dean’s office. We don’t give them extra work or extra assignments to do. We just like them to keep up, catch up and make sure they’re where they need to be,” Jensen said.

As for the decisions, the deans said they try to follow the student handbook very closely.

“We strictly follow the handbook. I mean, the rules in the handbook are the rules we try to enforce. That’s basically our law book for here at school, the rules that we’re responsible for following,” Jensen said.

The West deans declined to be interviewed by the Tom Tom. West Principal Kevin Rohlf acknowledged that there were slight differences between East and West, such as the lack of ISS and West’s private dining policy, and also noted that West typically sends more students to OSS due to the lack of an in-school option..”

ENROLLMENT FOR EAST

Information from National Center for Education Statistics and the Bellevue East counseling office.

Freshmen: 366
Sophomores: 369
Juniors: 375
Seniors: 354
Total: 1,434
Full-Time Teachers: 102.4
Student/Teacher Ratio: 15:1

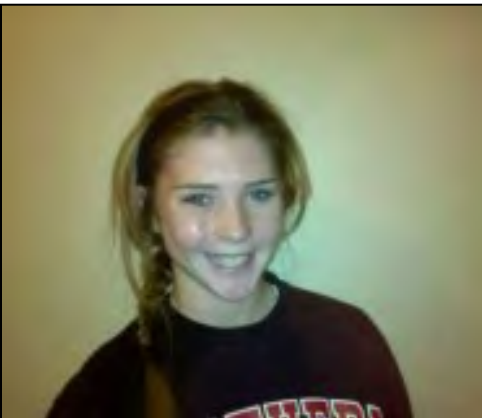
Students eligible for free lunch: 261 (17%)
Students eligible for reduced lunch: 125 (8%)



CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Intramural (sports)	Science Club	Diversity Club
Athletic training	JROTC	Skills USA
Knitting Club	Mock Trial	HAL
FEA	Art Club	Congressional Club
FBLA	GSA	SADD
DECA	Student Council	Key Club
Forensics	FCA	Strategic Games Club
Debate	Aca Deca	Bible Study
Newspaper	Culinary Arts	Youth Alive
Publications/The Image	The Furnace	Strength training
Foreign Language Clubs	Drama	Cheerleading
Yearbook	Band	Dance Team
Math Club	National Honor Society	Junior Varsity Sports
Chess Club	Step Team	Varsity Sports

STUDENT OPINION



“I really enjoy the students and staff that attend and work here. They make school fun.”
Kelsei Smith, Grade 9



“If I were to be school appropriate, I’d say the lack of respect and lack of spirit and the overall apathy from everyone [is the worst thing about West].”
Drew Schifter, Grade 11



“The education at East is much more advanced than at the school I went to in Guam. I get a quality education here at East.”
Ria Shay Pangelinan, Grade 12



“The worst thing about East is the food. It tastes like it’s been microwaved before they serve it.”
Zach Moore, Grade 10

Husker football recruits

JEREMY CASSIDAY
SPORTS EDITOR

With the football season finally over, the only thing left to do is look forward to next year. For Husker fans, a very promising recruiting class is a big hope for a more successful season.

The main talk about the recruits is quarterback Tommy Armstrong. At 6'2", and 210 pounds, Armstrong led his team to the Texas Class 5A Division II championship as a junior, and the state runner up as a senior.

Throwing for nearly 2,000 yards and a nearly 60 percent completion rate, and rushing for nearly 1,300 yards according to huskerextra.com, Armstrong should feel at home in the Husker offense.

However, with Taylor Martinez approaching his junior year, Armstrong will most likely have to wait for his run to end before stepping into the quarterback position.

The recruit I'm most looking forward to, however, is Jordan Westerkamp. A four star wide receiver according to both scout.com and rivals.com, a feat matched in the 2012 Husker recruiting class by offensive lineman Paul Thurston. Westerkamp averaged 90 receptions per year as a junior and season, over 1,600 yards per season, and snagged 29 touchdowns his senior year. Nebraska is desperately in need of a solid receiver and hopefully Westerkamp can fill that role.

Going back to Thurston, the 6'5", 274 pound offensive lineman comes out of Arvada West High School in Colorado. Ranked fourteenth nationally at his position, Thurston will most likely begin his career as guard after choosing Nebraska

over both Oregon and Michigan.

One of two Athletes, or players with no definite position and the versatility to play multiple positions on the field, picked up this year by the Huskers was Alonzo Moore. Allegedly able to play anything from wide receiver to defensive back to quarterback, the Huskers are looking for big things from this rivals.com four star recruit.

The only defensive back in this year's recruiting class is cornerback Mohamed Seisay. Coming out of Arizona, the recruit has a lot to live up to - Nebraska has had a recent history of producing NFL caliber cornerbacks. A big issue last season was the inconsistency of the pass defense. Hopefully, Seisay can bring some life to the Husker secondary.

One of the most interesting recruits this year is Sam Cotton, a 6'4", 240 tight end. Cotton is the son of offensive line coach Barney Cotton, one of three Cotton sons who will be playing together for the Huskers next season.

The rest of the Husker recruiting class is made up of LeRoy Alexander, offensive lineman Corey Whitaker, defensive lineman Vincent Valentine, Aaron Curry, Greg McMullen, and Avery Moss, linebackers Thomas Brown, Zaire Anderson, Jared Afalava and Michael Rose, and running back Imani Cross.

The only major disappointment in this year's recruiting class is the lack of a five star recruit. But those only come around once in a blue moon, and for a school like Nebraska, having several four stars is just as good. Hopefully, the extremely successful walk on program will fill in the necessary spots and lead the Huskers to a great new season.

Super Bowl XLVI reminiscent of XLII

ZACH NEWMAN
REPORTER

Another successful National Football League (NFL) season came to an end as the New York Giants won Super Bowl XLVI in a nail biting 21 to 17 win over the New England Patriots.

The same match-up took place in the 2007 Super Bowl in which the Giants also won with a game-winning catch to ruin the Patriots' chance for a perfect year as they went undefeated in the regular season. Although, no perfect seasons were at stake this year, the Giants proved to be no less impressive than they were previously against the Patriots.

Before the game, talk was much in favor of Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, as he was considered to be one of the most dominant quarterbacks in the history of the NFL. Now, after the win, the same talk has switched to New York Giants' quarterback Eli Manning.

The final drive was fired off with a 38- yard pass from Manning to Mario Manningham at the left sideline who caught it tip-toeing out of bounds. Manning then hit Manningham again, and then Hakeem Nicks for a first down to continue driving the Giants closer and closer to the end zone.

With 57 seconds left and six yards to go, Manning handed the ball off to Ahmad Bradshaw, who took it in for the score to once again beat the Patriots 21-17 and become the first 9-7 team to win the Super Bowl.

Just as at every Super Bowl, there were fans throughout the stadium on their feet, and fans in front of their television deeply upset. It turned out to be another last minute successful drive led by Manning despite the great defense just as the game five years ago.

Super Bowl XLVI also set a world record as the most watched television program, and set a new social network record for 12,233 tweets per second: some tweets cheering on their team every second of the game, and some complaining about the lack of offensive tempo from the same two teams five years ago.

But yet another Super Bowl with the Giants gave the Patriots an even bigger reason to win. According to multiple statements released by the players for the Patriots, they were determined to do all they could do to show the Giants they weren't going to be easily defeated as they were previously. But despite such determination, they proved incapable of stopping Manning and the Giants as they marched down the field in the last drive for yet another victory.

Such a loss for the Patriots and such a win for the Giants left some fans on their feet, and some like Brady who sat in disbelief when the final quarter was over. The Giants may have not had as much attention as the Patriots had at the beginning of the season, but they yet again proved to be stronger and more dominate than credited for in one of the most surprising Super Bowls in the history of the NFL, Super Bowl XLVI.

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Athletes inspired by great sports movies

EMILY GARCIA
REPORTER

A truly great movie moves an audience. People watching the movie feel the emotions of the actors, the movie makes the audience laugh and cry.

Movies that deal with adversity or over coming obstacles or having a huge comeback, would epitomize the sports movie genre.

“Great movies show how family and people deal with issues from any probable cause,” sophomore Amelia Johnson said.

Enjoying a movie is one thing, but living it and being able to relate to it makes it worth the while.

“Watching a movie that makes you laugh is the best,” sophomore Samantha Brown said.

In movies there is usually one actor that can change a person’s point of view. Whether it’s Sandra Bullock in “The Blind Side,” or Sylvester Stallone in “Rocky.”

“Watching ‘Rocky’ and seeing how hard it was for him to go through physical pain to achieve his goal was so moving,” freshman Nick Meyer said.

But some issues with sports movies are that they don’t capture enough action as one would in reality when actually watching or experiencing the sport.

“Sport movies are not as intense as an action movie or a comedy because you can’t do as much with the game or sport,” freshman Megan Bangart said.

Movies, especially sports movies give

athletes inspiration that is deep within them to better themselves.

“Watching the coach in ‘Remember the Titans,’ push his kids through the racism and team issues they had makes you realize how lucky some people are to have a person who cares about them enough to push them,” Meyer said.

From 1976 through 2004, according to www.espn.com, athletic movies were at their highest peak.

“I enjoy sports movies because not only do they show sports, but they also have a moral to it,” Johnson said.

Adding a point to the movie behind characters, helps the viewer understand more of the character of the sport.

“Throwing obstacles, or sacrifices in or around a character makes the movie more interesting,” Johnson said.

In the movie “The Blind Side,” Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock) takes in Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron), a kid living in a rough edge of town.

While living with the Tuohy’s, Michael goes through hardships of being able to play high school football.

Through his high school experience Michael realizes what it feels like to be part of a family, no matter if it is with the Tuohy’s or the football team.

Finding his love for football, Michael pushes himself to be better and to get smarter to play collage football, which in the long run led him to the NFL draft.

And that realization and the push to be a better person and a better athlete is what makes a great sport movie.

SPORTS UPDATES

JEREMY CASSIDAY
SPORTS EDITOR

SWIMMING

The Bellevue East Swim team season just ended with the boys finishing 3-5 at duels and the girls finishing 7-1, with four girls being sent to state this year. The boys are hopeful for a better season next year.

“[We want to] just improve and send more guys to state,” swimmer Jake McCain said.

The girls are 7-1 this year at duels and had a very successful season.

“We did pretty good this year, everyone had a pretty good time I guess,” Junior Michaela Sullivan said.

The swim team will be losing three seniors this year, but will be looking to improve their returning swimmers, including a very strong swimmer in junior Emmy Splichal.



Junior Diana Marcum makes her turn in the pool. *Photo by Cameron Sada*

GIRLS AND BOYS BASKETBALL



Senior Jerricka Jackson takes another jumpshot in the girls game against Lincoln Northwest. *Photo by Cameron Sada*

The Bellevue East boy’s basketball team is entering this year’s district tournament at 8-14, with several very close losses this season.

“Overall, we’ve done some good things. You know, we’ve had some ups and we’ve had some downs, but for the most part, their effort has been good. We had some games that we let slip away from us, but the guys

competed and did a lot of good things,” head coach Tola Dada said.

There have been several games this season that came right down to the wire and the boys couldn’t quite finish them off.

“We’ve had some games where we’re a few buckets away. A lot of it boils down to a few bad turnovers. If we could’ve found ways to cut those turnovers down, those are more times we got shots on goal and maybe get a few points,” Dada said.

Next year, Dada knows there is work to be done.

“This offseason is going to be big. We have a lot of players who need to get better; that’s ball-handling, that’s passing, that’s shooting, and as a program we have a lot of room for improvement,” Dada said.

Girl’s basketball this year has had a lot more success. Entering the district finals against Lincoln Southwest at 20-4, the girls have not had it easy this season.

After the loss of their star player junior Jayla Hobza about halfway through the season, and the loss of junior Taylor Silva five games later both due to injury, there was definitely room for kids to step up to their roles.

“Shelby Quinn has had to play more at the point and has done a great job handling the ball. Peyton Hagen and Sidni Trotter have done a good job at the guards,” head coach Scott Jensen said.

Jensen also mentioned sophomores Hayley Ourada and Roshawn Holly, and juniors Jeana Mosley and Jessica Vernon at the post position for doing a good job picking up the slack left by Hobza.

The girls also picked up the wildcard for the state tournament and are seeded fifth.

WRESTLING

The Chieftain wrestlers enjoyed another successful season this year, finishing this year as one of the best teams in head coach Todd Porter’s memory.

East finished 14-2 in duels, setting a school record for most duel wins in a season. Their lowest rank in a tournament was fourth, and they finished second at the Metro tournament after beating Millard South for the first time in school history.

“[It was] One of the best years since I’ve been a coach. I’m very proud of my guys,” Porter said.

The boys also performed very well at state this year. Seniors Tyler Broadway, Brandyn Burget, and Justin Nawrocki and sophomore John porter all medaled.

The team placed tenth in state and all eleven wrestlers won one match.

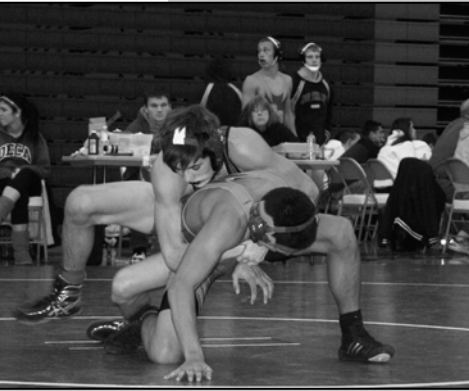
“I’ve never had a team in 30 years have every single kid, when you take nine or ten or more that won a match. We had a really balanced season and tenth in state is great,” Porter said.

All of this success, however, came with a very young and small team.

“Next year we have eight returning state qualifiers and one state medalist, and then ten returning starters so next year we’re more of a veteran team,” Porter said.

The team this year had 33 kids at the end of the season. Typically, they will have about 45 kids wrestling throughout the season.

“I hope to have a few extra kids come out next year to help us,” Porter said.



Sophomore Tim Sargert takes his opponent’s back at the beginning of a match. *Photo courtesy of Bellevue East Yearbook*

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BELLEVUE EAST TOM TOM

Founded in 1977

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Senioritis not just for seniors

Staff Editorial

As graduation draws near, it seems to be inevitable that some seniors will develop senioritis. They reach a point where they mentally check out of school and just do not care, but looking around Bellevue East, it appears that students are already checking themselves out of school and it is not just seniors. More and more students are slacking off and just want to have fun. They simply do not care anymore and are settling for the bare

minimum. They have developed student apathy. Apathy is a lack of motivation. School provides students with workloads, therefore preparing them for a job and students have people that they need to please. Student apathy is also prevalent at sporting events. Students have lost school spirit and football games and basketball games no longer have that same appeal that they once had. The student sections are bare at games because

students do not care and they have lost pride in their school. What students fail to realize is that high school is an important step to having a successful future. To get a job, a high school diploma is almost always necessary. Staying on task, meeting deadlines, being an active member in school, all of these things are important for a bright future. Combatting student apathy is important. Stay active in school activities, work hard now, and see the benefits later.

The way our generation is perceived



DESIREE WILSON
REPORTER

High school is the time that many adults look back upon fondly. New friends, new responsibilities and new identities during this time impacts how students act and who they become. Older generations, however, are not looking at us so positively. Claiming that teens have lost a sense of respect to parents, teachers, friends and even strangers. Many people have come to dislike teens and their behavior. Going to high school everyday and seeing firsthand how a lot of people act, I cannot say I disagree with the people who are disappoint-

ed in us. Seeing the way teens behave at certain points, I cannot help asking: Where did we go wrong? One of the biggest issues that I have noticed is disrespect for parents and teachers. Although we may not agree with everything they say, they do a lot more work for us than we do for them. Teens are all about expressing themselves and being outspoken, which is great, but when we express contradicting opinions to teachers and parents, we should do so politely instead of being jerks about it. And when we do something wrong, instead of having an attitude toward the ones trying to help us, an apology wouldn't hurt. Most of the time, those people have good intentions and the last thing we should do is give them a hard time about it. Another way I think we have lost respect from older generations is by the way we treat our peers. The language we use around each other is probably the biggest issue. Typical ways of speaking with each other include walking up to friends only to greet them with an insult and go off about some [bleeping] awesome thing that happened this weekend.

Swearing used to be something to gasp at, but now it is used in the most casual conversations. Maybe teens are not fully aware of this, but their friends are not the only ones who can hear them when they talk. I would like adults to look at us and see responsible, respectable people who they can trust and swearing in every other word we say is definitely not conveying that impression. Although we may not agree with everything that older people tell us, I think we should give respect where respect is due. If a teacher scolds you because you did not finish your homework, apologize and finish it. If a parent gets mad because you did not clean your room, clean it and do not have an attitude about it. If a stranger holds a door open for you, say thank you. If you feel the need to regularly swear around your friends, either stop or make sure no one around you has a problem with it. Maybe if we would take a second to consider how we would feel in their situations, we might see that they are not so bad after all, and they deserve more respect than they are getting.

State tests' importance

DUSTIN FITZPATRICK
FEATURES EDITOR

At the beginning of this year, I was saying to myself, "Gosh, it is great to be a junior." I am able to go to Prom this year; I have a full locker and I have more freedom in what classes I take. Oh, and of course, I will be graduating next year. Junior year has many advantages and privileges; however, it also has its downfalls. One of these downfalls is taking the four mandatory state tests in the areas of math, science, reading, and writing. Unfortunately, I've experienced my first state test of the year, the state writing test during the week of Jan. 23-27.

While I am not allowed to publish the state writing prompt, nonetheless, I honestly thought this was the stupidest prompt in the world. It was vague and allowed too much room for unsubstantiated opinion. And they expect someone to be able to write a full paper on it.

I found this ludicrous, unnecessary and too easy, all at the same time. Although I may have found it easy, others might not have, and that is why I think state tests are a poor way of measuring a school's educational status and it is not fair to the students who are forced to take them.

Everybody is different and they are all talented in different areas. One student may be talented in math, while another in reading. One may not be talented with academics at all and just do the bare minimum, but sports are where they excel most. Everybody is different and they all have their individual talents. So, to measure students' abilities in writing, reading, math and science and all have them take the same test is preposterous. Some students are slower than others, some students faster. One student may find the state writing test easy, while another student may find it difficult. How can someone accurately measure the abilities of the school based off of this? Everyone learns at different levels and at their own pace. This is why schools have advanced classes, advanced placement classes, regular classes and classes for people that may need a little extra help.

This school is the perfect model for what the state tests should be like. Everyone should not be given the

same test; it is just not right. If this state continues to test students and basically assume they should know some things by now, which I am sure they will, the state tests should be banished and thrown out of the system. But, if there were a way to modify the state tests to appeal more to the individuality of the student, that path should be taken.

Most of us, if not all, are not going into the same career field to be the same exact thing. Each person is going to be their own thing, so why should a mechanic have to know certain things about reading? Why should a future math teacher have to be up to par according to the state's standards, on their reading and writing skills? Why should a future pro football player have to know what the state says they should know on math and science? Each person is different, as are careers and each career requires different skills in order to excel in it.

State tests are a completely moronic way of measuring students abilities as well as the school's. Not only are people different, but schools are too. Schools and districts teach things at different speeds and at different times, so, to examine the school based on how other schools are doing and setting a standard that each school should reach is wrong. This year's junior should not be compared to last year's juniors to see the school's improvement or lack there of.

Each individual has their own talent, their own strengths and their own weaknesses, so how can the state try to loop all juniors together and classify them as the school's abilities? Juniors should not be the only group that they are basing the school's successfulness or failure on.

To expect a little over 350 students to account for the other 1,200 students learning abilities is completely ridiculous.

Either upgrade the state tests to where they actually are fair and appeal to the individuality in which everyone owns, or get rid of them, because until then, they serve no actual purpose and they help absolutely no one. As of right now though, we have no choice in whether or not we take the tests, and schools do not have a choice either. Our principal, Brad Stueve, would still like us to do our best when taking these tests.

TOM TOM STAFF

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EDITOR IN CHIEF

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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.

The battle amongst technology

BREANNA HOLLIS
REPORTER

There is a debate between people about Apple, Google, and Amazon. Apple has the iPhone/ iPod. Google has the Android. Amazon has the Kindle. Students and teachers alike are fans of each. Instructor Patty Campbell knows all about the devices and appreciates them as well.

“With Apple, I like its general programming. With Kindle and Android, I like its portability and versatility,” Campbell said.

Apple’s iPhones are like mini computers; they can be used in various ways like as a video camera, a picture camera, a media player, web browser, text messenger, and for accepting visual voicemail. It even has the option for Wi-Fi and a 3g network. The iPhone has a touch screen and a touch keyboard. The battery in an iPhone is not user-replaceable and can be charged while hooked up to the computer or via a transformer with a wall outlet.

“[It] is designed to retain up to 80 percent of its original capacity after 400 full charge and discharge cycles,” Apple stated on its website.

While still under warranty, the phone can

be returned and replaced by Apple if the battery dies quickly. In order to get music or applications, Apple’s devices use iTunes. Senior Sam Ervin owns a 160-gigabyte, sixth generation iPod classic.

“[I like] that it can hold all of my music videos, and whatever else, without having to worry about any size limitations. I’ve had it for about a year, and I bought it from Wal-Mart with a huge chunk of the cash I had saved up after my seventeenth birthday,” Ervin said. “The idea of the ‘classic iPod’ is falling out of favor even with Apple, who is pushing their iPod Touch and iPad. There aren’t any apps for the classic, sure, but its long battery life and massive storage really makes it the best choice for someone who primarily uses it for music.”

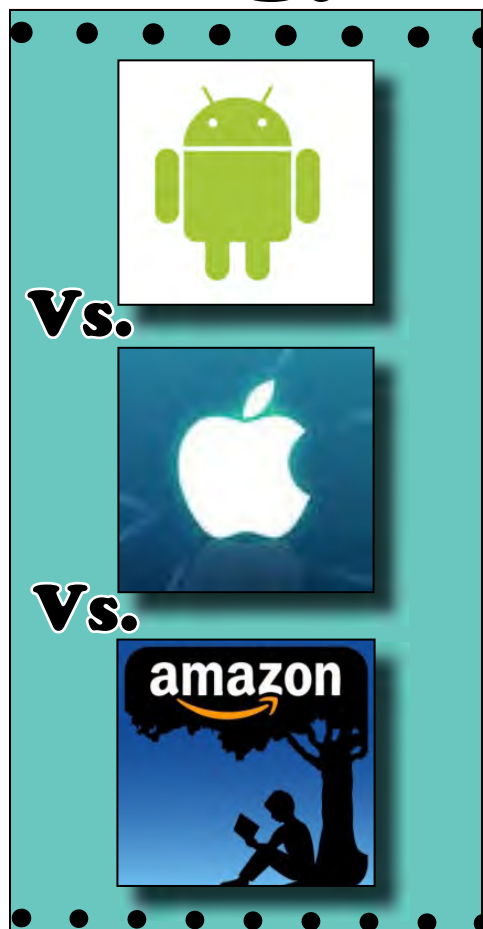
With the Android, there are many different features including handset layouts, storage, and connectivity. There is also messaging (SMS and MMS), multiple language support, web browser, Java support, media/streaming media support, additional hardware support, multi-touch, Bluetooth, video calling, multitasking, voice based features, tethering, and screen capture. Android’s smartphones use the Android Market. Instructor Nicole Janssen enjoys the Android

because it goes through Google.

“I use Google calendar to keep track of numerous sporting events like the ones here at East as well as my nieces’ and nephews’ and using Google calendar to import these sports calendars allows them to sync right to my phone and then I also can get them synced to my iPad through Microsoft exchange, so the Google calendar is much better than the iPad calendar because I have not found a way to import calendars on the iCloud,” Janssen said.

The Amazon Kindle enables readers to shop, download, browse, and read electronic books, newspapers, magazines, blogs, and other digital media through wireless networks. Most Kindles use an E Ink electronic paper, which displays a rendering 16 shades of grey to mimic reading on paper while minimizing power consumption. Junior Erik Ingram got an Amazon Kindle Fire this past Christmas.

“[The Kindle] does, well, almost everything an iPad can, but it costs a lot less. Probably the one thing I don’t like about it is that the Amazon market for apps and things is a little limited, but it runs on Android so there are still other apps out there,” Ingram said.



‘Skyrim: The Elder Scrolls’ experience

CATHY STORCK
REPORTER

“The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim” (“Skyrim” for short), by Bethesda Game Studios, is one of the most-talked-about games of the year, winning Game of the Year at the 2011 Video Game Awards. Despite having thousands of people playing and it being discussed frequently, I still had no idea what it was about or what it was like. So when I rented it from the Family Video and settled down to play it for the first time, I was in for a surprise.

“Skyrim” is a first-person adventure game set in the fantasy land of Skyrim. Players can explore this vast land at will, and do not even have to complete the main quest to advance in the game. Following the plot is optional, and the player can do literally whatever they want.

The first thing I noticed while playing the game was the graphics. The whole world seemed incredibly realistic, and it seemed like I was actually in the game. The voice acting was also very well done, which made the non-player characters seem like real people. Once I gained control of my character, I could pick what race I was, which could vary from a human to an elf, or even

animal-like creatures.

From there, I was thrown into an intense scenario involving running for my life while trying to figure out the controls. Because two separate joysticks control your field of vision and your movements, they took some getting used to, but I got the hang of it after a few minutes. Once I mastered that, I could fully appreciate the gameplay. Combat scenes were excellently done, albeit a bit gory. A small status bar let me know how much health I had left during battle. For items, just by pointing and selecting, I could pick up things that my character could use, both from people I’ve killed and from my surroundings. From a neatly-organized menu, I could equip weapons and armor I had received along the way. I could pick what I wanted to say to the non-player characters, and choose what I wanted to do; from pick pocketing to bribing to trading. Over all, the gameplay was easy to learn and simple to use.

As for the plot, the main quest is interesting and engaging from the start. If I did not want to take part in that, I could obtain other quests from non-player characters or even just wander around, exploring all that *Skyrim* has to offer. The player can shape their adventure to whatever they want, and



Photo courtesy of official “Skyrim” site.

grow in their skills along the way.

Each quest is different, and takes you all over the countryside and through dangerous dungeons to complete it. The best part about “Skyrim” is that it never ends. There are an infinite number of quests to go on, and each one is different, so there is no sense of repetitiveness. The main quest is really deep and involved; it takes you all over the map in your mission to defeat the dragon god Alduin, who is destined to destroy the world. In addition to fighting dragons, there is a civil war brewing, and you can get both sides of the story from the incredibly realistic non-player characters that assist you in your journeys. The quests in “Skyrim” are quite fascinating, and allow for hours and

hours of enthralling gameplay.

While playing “Skyrim,” I could find few problems with the game. Other than the slightly confusing controls (although that may be my inexperience with the Xbox 360 controller), the only other problem I could find was the long loading screens between changing locations. Even those weren’t bad.

“The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim” is truly an amazing game that I would definitely recommend. Gaming fans would love this game, as well as people who enjoy fantasy, action, and adventure. With its flexible gameplay, amazing graphics, and unique plot, “Skyrim” is an investment every gamer should consider.

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RaymondZendejas@yahoo.com

Keeping up with the prom hype

CATHY STORCK
REPORTER

Prom is arguably one of the biggest events of the school year, second only to graduation. All the hype leading up to the date would not be complete without the crisis of finding the perfect dress to wear. The many ways to buy a dress now, from online purchasing to old-fash-



ioned window shopping, allow for a wide range of styles and colors to be chosen. Even with these varied options, there is still the long search - sometimes even beginning in December - for the right gown.

All sorts of styles and colors are available, ranging from traditional to modern. The huge range of dresses available lets girls express themselves through unique choices. Christine, a Dillard's employee



Photos courtesy of David's Bridal official website.

at Oakview mall, said that lots of bright colors are in this year for prom.

"We have neon orange, yellow, purple, and lots of white," she said. "There's not a lot of black."

Other trends showing up are one-shouldered dresses, patterns of beading, and crisscrossed straps in the back, according to Christine. Some open-backed and strapless dresses also are popular for this year's prom. Junior Arielle Liptak said she looked through prom dresses from several lines before making her choice.

"[My dress] has a tight wire corset, a lot of beading, and it's a little poofy," she said.

Liptak got her dress from Nickwell, a custom pageant shop, but this is not the case for everyone. Senior Vicki Trojanowski said she got her mom's prom dress to wear this year.

"[My mom] pulled it out of the closet at my grandparents' house and it fit perfectly," she said.

Researching the new trends can help girls get ideas for their prom dress. Liptak said she looked through the new prom lines for this year, so she "would look kind of the same [as others], so you're not a total oddball."

While finding the perfect dress is hard enough, there is also the budget to contend with. Dresses can range from a few hundred to a thousand dollars in price.

"I did have a budget, but I jumped the bar," Liptak said. "I was given 100 dollars for the dress, and I got the other 180 dollars from my own money."

Getting a dress from a friend or relative is a different solution to the budget problem. As Trojanowski said, she got hers from her mom.

Finding the perfect dress is not always easy, so beginning to shop as soon as possible is a good idea.

"I got [my dress] earlier so I wouldn't change my mind a million times ahead of time," Liptak said.

Christine from Dillard's also said that she recommended shopping early.

"[People start shopping] from the first week of January," she said.

Both Liptak and Trojanowski had advice to give to girls looking for the right dress.

Trojanowski said that an important thing to take into account is "if you feel confident or pretty in [the dress]."

Liptak had slightly different advice for prom goers.

"Make sure [the dress] actually fits and looks good on you," she said. "Don't base [your decision] on other opinions; pick what you want."

Styles of prom dresses can vary greatly, along with colors, materials, and price. By taking all of these factors into consideration, every girl can find the perfect dress for their prom night.

Bellevue East teachers dress for success

DUSTIN FITZPATRICK
FEATURES EDITOR

Blue spiky hair, multicolored high-lights, feathers, headbands, wristbands, shirts, piercings, and tattoos are ways to express individuality among students. But, contrary to what some may think, individuality is not just for teens. Teachers also have their own sense of style; they have their own way to express themselves. Two teachers that accomplish this are English instructor Jed Givens and math instructor Shelly Leyden.

"I try to wear something different everyday. I do not usually wear the same outfit. My closet allows me to do that. I just have that many clothes I guess," Leyden said.

Leyden may be thorough when it comes to choosing her outfit for the day; however, Givens has a different philosophy.

"I try to be really practical. I care more about the way something fits and the qual-

ity of it," Givens said.

Both teachers have different approaches when it comes to choosing an outfit, but Givens stresses that there are requirements teachers must fulfill when at school.

"Dressing professionally is a requirement. Fridays are usually spirit days. You can wear jeans, but you should wear colored shirts," Givens said.

Leyden agreed that dressing professionally is part of the dress code they must follow and added that students show more respect when teachers are dressed in a professional way.

"The way you dress sends a message to anyone and dressing professionally shows that I care about the students and their education," Leyden said.

Though dressing professionally sounds like it is not the most fun, Leyden finds her own ways to add her own flair.

"I enjoy wearing scarves. From there,

whatever scarf I choose chooses my outfit," Leyden said.

Though some guys have been known for not dressing as nice as the ladies, Givens disagrees and urges that this should be important to guys as well.

"When you are in a professional setting, you should be dressing nicely. I think that appearance is impressionable, so you should always look nice regardless of gender," Givens said.

Givens' daily outfits usually consist of slacks and a button up shirt. He wears a sweater once in a while, but it is not the typical thing to find him in.

Just like teens, teachers have certain places they go to find the quality and design of clothing that fits their needs. Givens does not buy clothes that often, but when he does, he likes to hit up J Crew and buy things on sale to meet his clothing requirements. When Leyden goes shopping for clothes, she likes to go to

Scheels for her running shoes and also to Gordmans and New York and Company.

Sometimes when a student goes to Skate City, they run into their teachers and find it weird to see them outside of the school environment. They just seem different. So one may begins to wonder how teachers dress outside of school, too.

"I will wear jeans instead of slacks sometimes. In the summers, I am a lot more casual," Givens said.

When it comes to Leyden, Givens' statement is not true for her.

"[I dress like this] all the time because that really is all my closet is made up of. Teacher clothes," Leyden said.

Leyden said she influences her own clothing style, but Givens has someone that has influenced his clothing choices.

"Mr. Simmons," Givens said with a smile on his face.

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Instructors Shelly Leyden and Jed Givens both put a lot of thought into their outfits. Leyden dresses for fashion, while Givens dresses for comfort. Photos by Cameron Sada.