



BELLEVUE EAST
TOM TOM



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DECA students host a meeting with UNO Professor and Native American, Ed Zendejas to share his perspective on the use of Native imagery in schools.



Looking at it differently DECA students participate in a meeting with UNO Native American studies professor Ed Zendejas, members of the school board, and more, to discuss the Chieftain mascot. Senior Connor Leary listened to Zendejas, a person of Native American heritage, as Zendejas made his point. “[The meeting] kind of helped me see the side that the Native Americans are on, because [Zendejas] takes the more offensive side of this, and he feels offended by that kind of stuff, and it just helped me see the other point of view,” Leary said. *Photo by Faith Wer*

DECA students seek information, understanding

Cailin Tomsu
Editor in Chief

DECA seniors Avey Pokorny, Connor Leary and Luke Reestman are currently creating a project for their class. For this project the three seniors asked Native American UNO professor Ed Zendejas to speak to students, faculty and school board members.

“Our project is about educating the social culture today on Native American heritage and what they need today and how we are going to initiate a movement in order to help them,” Pokorny said.

Pokorny and her fellow group members organized a meeting to have Zendejas speak. He was asked to give his perspective on Native American

imagery used as mascots and share his experience as a Native American.

“He came in to give us information about Native Americans around this area. Most people don’t know that this school was actually a mission to get Native Americans children immersed in white culture,” Pokorny said.

Zendejas usually teaches a semester long class at University Nebraska of Omaha, but only had an hour to speak to Bellevue East in the auditorium foyer.

“He gave the people in the meeting so much more information than I would have ever expected him to. He really dove into what it means to be a Native American human being, not just ‘Native American,’” Pokorny said.

Assistant Principal Deirdre

McKinley compares hearing Zendejas speak to her experience at IncluCity camp. McKinley spoke to the teen camp attendees with a similar mindset and perspective as Zendejas.

“I think the DECA students brought him here just to get a different perspective. Him coming there as a guest speaker and telling his side of the story of how he felt about any type of Native American emblem as a mascot,” McKinley said.

Zendejas is against any use of Native imagery as mascots. He was more than happy to come speak to the students and opened himself up to coming back and speaking to a larger crowd.

“My message to them was: to me it isn’t an issue about offensiveness because being of-

fended is a subjective emotion. What is objective is the fact that Native history and culture and anything having to do with the background of my people isn’t taught in schools and that what they do when they have an Indian mascot is perpetuating ignorance and stereotypes. If you really want to honor you will educate yourself,” Zendejas said.

Zendejas works on educating all sorts of students on the cultural background of Native Americans, and what it means to be a Native American. Zendejas holds a strong opinion on the use of Native imagery in schools without proper education on the subject.

“I hope that I accomplished at least giving them my perspective on what they’re trying to do and with my educational background

I let them know what I thought. If you educate yourself about the culture and history then you should come to the conclusion that what you’re doing isn’t what you should be doing,” Zendejas said.

Pokorny and her group are working on also bringing in a different person with a different perspective than Zendejas. They are setting up ways to get their information out to the student body, including utilizing advisory time.

“I’m excited for the project to make an impact on people’s lives. We are actually writing a 30 page paper and we are 15 pages in. We’re planning on doing things in the community, using advisement time in order to present information to people,” Pokorny said.

Remembering East graduate Mycal Huff



Mycal Huff (front left) pauses for a silly photo his his drill team last year. Huff died in a car accident Oct. 20. “Mycal just radiated positivity all the time. I never had a conversation with him where I didn’t leave with a smile on my face,” 2015 graduate Desiree Wilson said. Photo by MSgt. Merlin Eudy

Samantha Collison
Editor in Chief

East graduate Mycal Huff, 19, was killed in a car crash on Oct. 20. As people look back on Mycal’s life, they think about who he was and try to find some meaning in the midst of their grief.

Lt. Col. Bill Steele was My-

cal’s AFJROTC Drill Team instructor for three years and knew him very well. Because Mycal’s death was an automobile accident, Steele wanted as many students as possible to know the importance of safety. “What we’re going to do is, for a week, have a driving safety focus here at school to emphasize seatbelt wearing and no texting

and driving. If we can somehow help change one student’s mind at this school and get them to switch from not wearing [their seatbelt] to wearing it, it’s still won’t have made the loss of Mycal’s life worth it, but it will be some good progress from it,” Steele said. Mycal had a lot of friends and was generally well-liked by his

teachers and peers. His friends say his non-judgmental attitude and loyalty made him the great friend that he was. “He was just that guy to go the extra mile if you needed it. He would give you the shirt off his back to make sure that you were warm; he would go out of his way to make sure that you were ok,” junior Thomas Trask said. Instructor Brenda Nelson was his English teacher for two years and he was a student aide for her for a year. She said that Mycal was a joy he to have in class. “He was very rarely in a bad mood and he liked to joke around with people and, of course, he got frustrated sometimes, but he really had a positive attitude. He just kept working and working and working until he got things right,” Nelson said. Mycal came from a larger family whom he loved very much and supported him in all his endeavors. Mycal had thought about several career choices, many of which had a common element. “He talked a lot about becoming a firefighter because he wanted to help people. He told me that when he lost his mom

he was so impressed with the EMTs and the firefighters and felt like they tried so hard to help him and he just wanted to be able to do that for other people,” Nelson said. Later on, he had wanted to join the military. He hit a few roadblocks along the way, but that barely slowed him down. “He and his brothers had opened up a business, ‘Huff Brothers’ Services’ where they did any kind of handiwork from yard work to house repairs. They were just starting out with the business, which is why Mycal got the new truck,” Steele said. Even though many people are sad to lose someone like Mycal so young, he lives on in the memories of all who knew him. His friends and mentors all hoped that when people think of Mycal, they are reminded to drive safely and never take for granted the lives that cross paths with ours. “Anyone who knew him was lucky to know him. He made so many people’s lives better and he made so many people feel good about themselves. I think that’s his lasting legacy,” Nelson said.

Lunches not denied for zero account balances

Tommy Casart
Opinion Editor

Unrest in the student body about a rumor that students are being denied lunches due to debt on their account has some students coming away feeling frustrated. Someone who hears these mutterings might ask why such a policy exists, and why some people are upset. According to the Director of Food Services, Mary Hansen, students are misinformed about this policy in general. “Breakfast and lunch is a prepaid program. No matter what the debt, we feed students,” Hansen said. The exact policy can be found in the Bellevue Public Schools Parent-Student Handbook for the 2015-2016 school year. It states that school meals are prepaid, which means that they are always able to be given to students, no matter what debt the student has accumulated. The policy stated in the handbook contradicts any incorrect beliefs that students are being denied lunches. The truth is though, that the processes that students go through when they have lunch debt can often cause them to miss lunch. “When a student has lunch debt, we ask the student to go and see the manager before the student gets their lunch, that way we can we remind the student that their account is in the negative,” Hansen said. While the process works in theory, many students express a concern over the time it takes to go through multiple lines. Senior Joshua Schmidt is one such student.

“It’s not worth the wait when I get denied in the snack shack,” Schmidt said. According to Schmidt, the problem is with the time constraints at lunch, not the policy. After the policy was explained to him the first time he had his snack shack transaction denied, he understood it. “I think they have that in place because the stuff in the snack shack is more expensive, so when they give you stuff out of the snack shack, it’s on the belief that you will pay them back. School lunches are already paid for, so it doesn’t really matter if you can pay for it now or not,” Schmidt said. If the problem then lies not in lunches being denied, but in the time it takes to get money on an account for the snack shack, it is possilbe that the process of adding money to an account for the snack shack could be made more efficient. One solution is for students take advantage of the knowledge that their account is becoming depleted before it really does. “If a student is concerned and their account maybe be getting low, they can ask the employee running the cash register, or kitchen manager, and put money on their account before it becomes negative, thus enabling them to eat in all areas of the cafeteria,” Hansen said. This can be done by a student at many times other than lunch, allowing them to preserve their lunch time. In any case, there are still some students who are upset about specifically the policy being unjust or immoral, but because of misinformation, frumors and hearsay result. “Usually any anger or frustration is caused by misinformation,” Hansen said.

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Dec. 19 - May 6

Bellevue East High School

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Possible school closures considered

Bobby Storck
Web Editor

The Bellevue Public Schools School Board proposed a plan for the district on Nov. 2 that involves repurposing some schools and closing others.

A series of plans and options were presented, which were voted on by the community through an online survey that was available for a week on the district website. All of the available options involved closing at least one school somewhere in the district, which made many, including instructor Amanda Messerschmitt, uneasy about selecting an option.

“I am not thrilled about any of the propositions that have been put forth. I like the idea of making some changes and using our facilities to the best of their abilities, but I am not thrilled about closing any schools,” Messerschmitt said.

Messerschmitt spoke at the community dialog meeting on Nov. 2 in the Bellevue East auditorium. This dialog presented the ideas that were later voted on by the community through

the online survey. There, she spoke on possible ways to save the district money that avoided closing any schools.

“I like the idea that I talked to some of my students about: the idea of not closing any of the middle schools and keeping those all open, but instead of making one of the middle schools into a skilled tech center, pick one of the high schools areas to vamp up and make into the automotive area, but take the other high school and those facilities and vamp up a different [tech] program,” Messerschmitt said.

Assistant Superintendent Jeff Rippe said the goal of these changes is not to close schools. The major goal is to use the buildings to their highest efficiency.

“The goal is to develop a facility master plan. [These changes] may or may not be necessary, but that will not be determined until the recommendations are complete. A part of that process is to look at current buildings to determine current utilizations and efficiencies,” Rippe said.

The district consulted Jacobs Engineering Group to find out

each building’s capacity and cost to repair. The options of the survey have been designed in response to the findings.

“The school district contracted with Jacobs to develop a Facility Master Plan. A steering committee was formed to develop this plan. Closing schools came up as options as the committee moved toward their recommendations. Final recommendations will be presented to the board on Jan. 4,” Rippe said.

One of the options involved closing Mission Middle School or Logan Middle School and turning it into a skilled tech center for high school use. Another involved closing a number of elementary schools across the city, including Central Elementary and Fort Crook Elementary School.

“I do not agree with [the propositions given by the district]. I feel like Mission Middle school is an important part of the history in Bellevue and I feel Central Elementary is a very great school that has helped many students,” sophomore Phil Crawford said.

Many students, including Crawford, believe closing

schools is a bad idea, and will lead to students being forced to go a great distance to receive an education. They understand that the district is losing money and something needs to be done, but they do not want to close any schools in the process.

“I wouldn’t close down the schools, but I would look for different ways to cut budgets [to save money]. I know how that is hard now to try to get all the different things, but I feel the schools are already pretty crowded so I would find other places than actual schools to cut,” Crawford said.

This opinion that closing schools are a bad idea is not just that of students. Teachers, parents, and East alumni such as 2015 graduate Erin Mather agree that closing schools is not the way to go.

“I think that the district has many ways to get money instead of closing the proposed schools. The schools would not only change the lives of the students and teachers, but also the parents that have to commute to drop these students off. I also think that bus routes would have to be altered, add-

ing more buses. They would have to build onto the schools that the students would be going to because some of the surrounding schools are almost at max capacity,” Mather said.

These plans, according to the survey, are supposed to be instituted over the next five years. The results of the online survey will be revealed to the public on Jan. 4, and many are anxious to see if their school is to be cut. Even though these changes are designed to save money across the district, many are nervous and uneasy about how they will impact Bellevue Public Schools in the long run.

“The district is worried about the schools that are not being used to their capacity and instead of just proposing to shut them out right away, I think that the board should reconsider their process by changing the boundaries of the schools. My nephew’s school [Fort Crook Elementary] that was proposed to be cut is not even under capacity and [according to the charts provided by the district [at the community dialog] is not showing to be within the next 5 years,” Mather said.

Quiz Bowl wins three medals



Junior Baxter Knee, senior Tommy Casart, junior Bobby Storck, junior Greyson Kreis won first place at the Grace University Quiz Bowl Friday, December 11. *Photo courtesy of David Bossman*

Bobby Storck
Web Editor

The East Quiz Bowl team won three separate competitions in the metro area. By preparing and being faster than their opponents, they brought home one silver and two gold medals. Despite their success, many students at East do not know what Quiz Bowl does.

“Quiz Bowl is a fun, interactive quiz game where students in teams of four are asked questions. It’s kind of similar to jeopardy [with] different categories mostly academic that they have to answer. There’s usually a bonus question if you get a question right where you work as a team to answer the question,” Quiz Bowl head coach David Bossman said.

Placing second at History and Geography Quiz Bowl and

first at Women’s Quiz Bowl and Literature Quiz Bowl, the Quiz Bowl team competes throughout the school year at 10 competitions. Most of those competing have been in Quiz Bowl since their freshmen year, giving them an edge in competition.

“The great thing about Quiz Bowl is it’s pretty much open to everyone. Mr. Bossman just holds Quiz Bowl practices in his room three times a week. I just started going to these, and if you do well, then he’ll invite you to Quiz Bowls and you get to be part of the team,” junior Kelly Speltz said.

Practices are scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from the end of school to 4 p.m. By performing well, Speltz has gone to two Quiz Bowls this year and many others in her sophomore and fresh-

man years.

“This year so far I’ve gone to Women’s Quiz Bowl and Literature Quiz Bowl and we won both of them, so it was a lot of fun,” Speltz said.

Members heard about Quiz Bowl through their friends and classmates. Freshman Casey Nolte was asked by his band section leader to join.

“My friend Tommy Casart told me to join [Quiz Bowl] so I went to Bossman’s room and joined. It felt great getting questions faster than people who had been going there for a while, so I continued to go to practices,” Nolte said.

Students don’t have to know everything. Many have their own areas of expertise which others rely on to get the answers right at competitions.

“I like answering science questions. Science is one of my favorite subjects in school, and I learn new things about it everyday I go to Quiz Bowl. Being faster at answering than other people is also one of my favorite parts of Quiz Bowl. It makes your heart race when multiple people hit their buzzer and you get it just before they did,” Nolte said.

Students prepare for State Quiz Bowl in April. Last year, the team came in second behind Elkhorn.

“I think we have a bunch of students who have done it for a long time who are interested and come to practice that really work on the ability to not only know these types of questions, but also to be able to answer them quickly,” Bossman said.

Inclusive support

Destinty Soto
Feature Editor

Thanks to a generous grant from the Rotary Club and the support of past president and club member Rich James, students from East were able to attend the IncluCity diversity camp this year. The Tom Tom interviewed him on why the Rotary gave their support.

What made you decide to donate this grant?

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is a leadership development program run by Rotary. ...Most events focus on secondary school students, university students, or young professionals. RYLA events... include presentations, activities, and workshops that cover a variety of topics: leadership fundamentals and ethics, communication skills, problem solving and conflict management, community and global citizenship

How did you decide how much you would give?

Originally we asked for the maximum amount we were told would be available for our share of the match which was \$1500 for a total of \$3000... However, the Rotary District eventually came back to us and asked if we would be willing to raise our share to \$2000 and they would then match it with another \$2000.

Is the IncluCity Camp a program that you would continue to support?

Bellevue Rotary plans to attend the local seminar which will be held at your school in the spring. We have to submit an

after action report to the Rotary District explaining what the was the result of participation by the students and staff of Bellevue East and in the IncluCity Program. In other words the Bellevue East students and staff that participated in IncluCity and the Bellevue Rotary Club have to demonstrate to the Rotary District and Rotary International that the money was well spent. From what I have learned about IncluCity I think the outcomes will be very positive.

How do you think your donation has affected our school?

I have been told the program went very well in September and that the students came away with a much greater understanding of themselves and interaction with other people. That will be part of my justification to Rotary that it was money well spent. In addition we hope to be able to participate in the workshop to be held in the spring.

Is there anything else you would like say?

Rotary has been around for over 100 years. Rotary has a standard by which we measure our behavior called the Four-Way Test. 1. Is it the truth? 2. Is it fair to all concerned? 3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships? 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned? I called it “The Four-Way Test” of the things we think, say or do. I would encourage students to think about these words as they conduct their daily lives. I find it to be a very challenging standard to live up to.

‘Be an Angel:’ Leadership Academy helps the needy

Nia Both
News Editor

Dragging two green christmas tree pieces, senior Ashley Hensen walked with her Leadership Academy partner to set up the angel tree. The students spent their gps period placing the green segments together and stringing bright green and red lights around the tree. In addition to the traditional tree, little pieces of paper with ages and genders adorned the branches adding a little more spirit to the winter season for Bellevue East.

This December, Bellevue East’s Leadership Academy decided to continue the Ange Tree with the Salvation Army for a second year. Until recently National Honors Society ran the project. Members of the groups, along with those within the school who decided to participate, came together to help take a little bit of the burden off those in low income families this Christmas.

“We started doing it [the angel tree] last year when [instructor David] Bossman brought it up an idea for a project for our english class. And we decided it was a good thing to do this year, too, so we did

it,” Hansen said.

Leadership Academy’s Angel Tree was open for anyone to donate to. The instructions were very simple.

“The person donating will grab a tag from the trees around the building and then buy the gift that is being recommended for that child. They can then bring the gift back to the area of the tree where they found it. There will be collection boxes housed in the counseling office,” academy advisor Sara Fjell said.

In addition to the daily announcements giving information about the tree, there were written instructions on the back of the angel tree tags.

According to the Angel Tree tag “You can buy one or more gifts for as many children as you desire. The gifts should be valued around \$15 - \$30. Keep this tag with your toy receipt for tax dedications purposes. Return your gift to either the location you got it from or one of the locations listed on the tag.”

Once a student, faculty member, or parent decided to donate presents to the cause they are given many options regarding what to give and how to

go about getting the gift. Leadership academy offered two ways to choose what gifts to give.

“I have a sign by the Angel Tree and it basically has all of the requirements for all the ages and it’s organized by gender and age and it just has a list of the types of toys you would buy for those age groups. So you can either get a tag for a specific age or gender, or you could just take a picture of that whole sign and you can go and buy a gift that is not exceeding the limit that they have put on it and you bring it back still wrapped or inside of it’s box,” Hansen said.

The Angel Tree offered many students the opportunity to give back to the community. Students like junior Kiara Stanback took the angel tree as personal project.

“The Angel Tree project to me is giving things to children who need them and giving back to the children whose families can’t afford to buy them presents. For me it’s really important to give back to the community and this is the perfect way to do it ,” Stanback said.

Due to past complications, the way that the project set-up was arranged has

changed. Hansen was one of the people who understood the need for the change and stood by it.

“There used to be a specific kid on each tag that would get a gift but now it’s set up in a way where it’s divided by gender and age. Before, when it was set up by kid, some people would get a tag with the intention of getting the present, but would either forget to get the present or lose the tag and there were even times where there would be favoritism. Each tag had a description of the kid so it would be like ‘Let’s get something for the cute little girl,” but now a lot more kids get more gifts. It’s not possible for a kid to be left out anymore, which is great,” Hansen said.

Hansen has high hopes for this year’s tree. She feels strongly about giving young children the access to a good Christmas.

“I really hope everyone comes together to help the angel tree. It’s a good cause and all children should have a christmas. They shouldn’t have to go without one just because their family can’t afford as much as others,” Hansen said.

High school is cooler with a parent by your side

Samantha Collison
Editor in Chief

The lunch room was abuzz during first passing and junior Logan Wood was eating with a group of friends like he usually does. He glanced over his shoulder and whispered conspiratorially to them, “Do you guys dare me to run over there and hug my dad?” His friends nodded and he immediately jumped up and nearly tackled his dad in an affectionate hug.

“[My favorite thing is] unexpectedly turning a corner and your kids are there, and luckily for me, my kids have been pretty open, so by the time they’re sophomores or juniors they’ll come up and talk to me,” Instructor Gary Wood said.

At East, there are eight students whose parents are teachers: senior Trevor Cornell, senior Katie Haynes, sophomore Abby Higgs, senior Grant Higgs, junior Connor Sailors, junior Elaine Stueve, and junior Logan Wood. Of the students and their parents that the Tom Tom spoke to, they all agree that there are upsides and downsides to their situation.

“I think it’s pretty great because my dad’s always in the building, so I can always talk to him whenever I want t. I can get permission slips signed when I want to, and turn them in by the end of the day, so it’s pretty great,” Logan Wood said.

The everyday conveniences, from always having a fridge to put food in, to taking naps during the day, all add up. The teachers describe it as beneficial as well, but for different reasons.

High school is one of the busiest times in anyone’s life and many parents see their kids very little, but teachers who teach in the same school their kids attend or, like in the case of Principal Brad Stueve, are the principal of the school their children attend, have the advantage of being in the same building all day, every day.

“It’s probably one of the best experiences I’ve ever had as a dad. Watching the progression from the 13 or

14 year old girl that she was when she started here to where she’s at now, it’s just unbelievable to actually see that happen right before my eyes,” Brad Stueve said.

It’s not always sunshine and rainbows, however. Logan Wood complained about his dad always “breathing over his shoulder” and reminding him to do his homework and keep his grades up. Even though parents watching over their children’s shoulders can be irritating to the student, Instructor Tobin Higgs said it can be comforting.

“I like the fact that I know who [my children’s] friends are and what class they’re supposed to be in and it’s just reassuring as a parent that I know that they’re where they’re supposed to be and I’ve got 20 eyes watching them most of the time. I look at it as a family because I’ve got people looking out for my kids and I look out for theirs,” Higgs said.

Instructor Valorie Sailors had different experiences with her three sons. Not only did she teach them at different ages, since she used to teach at the middle school level, they differed in their level of embarrassment.

“My oldest son, when I taught at Logan, he would sometimes duck into other rooms during passing period when I was coming down the hall just to avoid seeing me. It was embarrassing to him to have his mom in the building, but then my second oldest son would yell from one end of the hallway to the other end of the hallway, ‘Hi Mom!’ during class time. Now I only see my youngest son if he wants food,” Sailors said.

It can be awkward or challenging for the parent as well. Gary Wood worries about challenges like showing favoritism when teaching or coaching his own children and what students who have issues with him will do to his children.

“There have been times in this building where I’ve had to deal with difficult situations and I have to deal with some difficult kids. There were some times when I’ve had to make hard decisions and the kid is mad at you but can’t do anything to you, but they see your son in the hallway and they elbow him a little

bit harder. That’s the one thing that I’ve always worried, that if someone is angry with me that they’d take it out on my own kids,” Gary Wood said.

In spite of the things that have made his job hard, Gary Wood really does like his job. His wife teaches at Mission Middle School and once his youngest son graduates, he will have had three kids go to Mission and East. Spending that much time in the district has its advantages.

“I get to know [my sons’] friends and it’s a little bit different for me because I’ve grown up about a mile away and I’ve seen some of these kids since elementary school and seen who they’ve grown up with and I see them in the hallway. Seeing kids that aren’t just my kids that I’ve known since they were little kids grow up is super cool,” Gary Wood

said.

Teachers and students agree that going to a school where their parent teaches or teaching at a school where their child attends has its advantages and disadvantages, but none of them would ever change schools if they had the option. Their situation may be a little different, but they feel it creates more good opportunities than bad ones.

“Coming to school as a Freshman, I didn’t feel nervous because I thought that if I had a problem, I would have my dad here. Since then I’ve become less reliant on my dad because you grow up in high school. You can’t have your dad watching you every two seconds, but it’s a good support system to have,” junior Elaine Stueve said.



The Sailors



The Higgs



The Woods



The Cornells

Society impacts teen body image

Adrienne Bruner
Entertainment Editor

Before the first bell rings, girls crowd in front of the bathroom mirrors. Some of them put makeup on while others struggle to get their hair to cooperate, ponytails on their hands and bobby pins held between their teeth. Finally, some of them just look, trying to hide their shape, fix their flaws, and come as close to perfect as they can.

“I don’t necessarily see a problem with ‘hating.’ I see a problem with everyone getting hurt too easily. The only thing that needs to change is you. Stop listening to people that put you down. Stop pouting about what you want to go do and do it. We as people can’t put blame for things like body image issues entirely on companies. We have to take a look at ourselves and say, ‘I am beautiful. And no one can change that.’ Confidence. That’s what needs change,” junior Kyle Kuehn said.

Body image is defined as the way someone sees themselves. It is related to self esteem, and has many internal and external influences. According to DoSomething.org, approximately 91 percent of women are unhappy with their bodies. Only 5 percent of women naturally have that is commonly seen in American

media. Having poor body image can have many negative effects however there is a way to treat body image issues.

“I think there is a large emphasis on the way we look because people have a lot of superficial interactions in today’s society, social media especially. People only share good things about themselves. And so people have begun to only look for the best picture, the best, video, the best angle, all the time,” instructor Piper Porras said.

According to Brown University Health Education, this generation is pushed to focus on appearance. The website goes on to quote “The Adonis Complex,” a book about body obsession directed toward the male audience, “There’s often a vicious circle here: the more a person focuses on his body, the worse he tends to feel about how he looks – obsession breeds discontent.” Since people worry about their appearance more, there is more of a problem with poor body image.

“If society did have different standards, I feel like I would accept myself way more and I would love what I look like, but since society is so, well, in my eyes, so different and they don’t accept [different body types], the way girls look or even the way guys look, it’s hard for everyone to accept it because society is just an imperfect place,” senior Angelic Diaz said.

Poor body image is a precursor to many other problems, including early sexual activity, drug use, self harm and a number of different eating disorders, including anorexia, binge eating, and bulimia. People are sometimes diagnosed with body dysmorphic disorder, or BDD, a mental illness that makes it extremely difficult for someone to see what they look like. There is no cure, only treatment. There was also a study discussed on About-Face.org that showed how insecurity affected cognitive skills. College students went into a private dressing room and had to wear either a sweater or swimsuit and take a math test. The women in sweaters performed much better than those in swimsuits, while there were no differences for men.

“I think we need to have an emphasis on taking care of the root of all these unrealistic expectations. Most of which, I blame the media, but then I have to blame myself and the rest of society that purchases the magazines, watches the movies, clicks the like on the pictures of the actors and the actresses online, because they’re representing, unfortunately, a false image for everybody else on the outside, who is apart of the regular community,” Porras said.

There are many contributing factors to body image issues. They come from

a number of places, including the media and the people one sees everyday. Girls who watch reality television shows tend to care more about appearance, according to DoSomething.org. There are documentaries about how the images in magazines are not the original picture. Photoshop is used to alter the image, sometimes beyond recognition of the original picture. The people in magazines don’t even look like the people in the magazines. Vickie DeBuhr, a Bellevue East counselor, has dealt with students and body image issues before.

“I believe that the media has contributed greatly to this problem. Young people are constantly bombarded with images on TV and social media that emphasize looks and what is acceptable,” DeBuhr said.

There is a lot of help offered to those who suffer from body image issues. There are helplines for people with eating disorders and depression, support groups and therapy. School counselors can offer support to their students.

“If a person continues to obsess over image, it will begin to affect all aspects of their lives. It is important to get help to change the negative thought process. There are some really good programs and therapists who can help with this and other related issues,” DeBuhr said.

Knowing warning signs can help prevent teen suicide

Thomas Casart
Opinion Editor

A student picks himself up from his desk, hitting resume on the music on his phone. He takes his things and floats down the hallway to his next class. Day after day he drifts through the school year as weightless as a browned leaf caught in the wind. Except this wind does not carry the leaf anywhere, it blows in circles, repeating endlessly the same paths around the tree, just as the student goes through the same emotions over and over again. The student feels many things in this vortex, from feelings of loneliness to punishing self-hatred. Eventually he accepts the faults inflicted upon him as his own. He begins to consider suicide.

Sadly, the rate for suicide attempts is up, which can be said to be a general trend for the last few decades. The CDC reports for suicide trends among different age groups all point toward the same thing.

“Increases in suffocation suicide rates... continued through 2012 among females and males aged 10–24 years across all races/ethnicities and U.S. Census regions. Since the early 1980s, firearm had been the most common mechanism of suicide... however, suffocation surpassed firearm as the most common mechanism of suicide... Increases in suffocation suicide rates also have been reported in older age groups, especially middle-aged adults,” said the March 6 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from this year.

Individuals may often be trying to get away from situations that they are in along with their underlying suffering. These stressfull situations are possibly most relevant in the lives of students, as explained by health instructor Jennifer Carda.

“A lot of it has to do with the increased amount of pressure, specifically in high school and junior high,” Carda said.

The ages that students experience this kind of pressure are also when mental illnesses can begin to emerge. Mental illnesses can contribute heavily to depression and suicidal thoughts. Psychologist Kimberly Rausch explained how mental illnesses affects youth that consider suicide.

“At the time of death many people who die from suicide have a mental illness that may be potentially treatable, but the illness has often gone either untreated or unrecognized. Mental illnesses such as anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, substance and/or alcohol dependence or abuse, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia often emerge for the first time in adolescence. Terrible pain and suffering from mental illnesses can interfere with an adolescent’s clarity of thought and make it difficult to make sound decisions,” Rausch said.

The fact that a student has a mental illness doesn’t necessarily mean that they are considering suicide, however.

“The vast majority of people who are affected by mental illness do not attempt suicide. There are usually a combination of factors including life events that are challenging, persistent psychological pain, and dire hopelessness that are co-occurring,” Rausch said.

Rausch also explained how signs that someone may be considering suicide appear.

“Warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide usually show up in three ways: talk, behavior, [and] mood,” Rausch said.

Signs in behavior and mood are important to note, and while these kinds of signs are not always noticeable in people, if suicidal tendencies are suspected it is helpful to say something to the per-

son, even when it might feel out of place.

“Many people worry about saying something because they fear they will give the person the idea to commit suicide. It is never wrong to tell someone you are worried about them and are afraid for them,” Rausch said.

In many cases, telling someone that you care about them can be extremely productive. Rausch added to the idea of telling people you care.

“Often times when people feel hopeless they do not realize there are people around them who care about them and are willing to help them. Helping a friend reach out to an adult who can help them get the assistance they need can be life changing,” Rausch said..

To counter the current suicide trends among youth it should be known what can be done for those that consider suicide.

“We need to educate students about suicide, the risk factors, the signs of suicide, so that they can recognize it either in themselves or a friend, and make sure that if they do recognize signs then they know what actions to take that will help them,” Carda said.

Aside from education about what students can do, there are more immediate solutions for concerned students that are easily available to them.

“Within the school setting the fastest and best way to get someone help is to contact one of the school counselors. There are a number of resources available within the school and the community. Our school counselors are very knowledgeable about the resources available and can help both students and their families find the help they need to address the complex life issues that are causing someone to contemplate suicide,” Rausch said.

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Look Closely. Demonstrating how he would search a student's backpack is School Resource Officer Sean Vest. "If I was able to establish probable cause, it gives me permission to search their belongings or them," Vest said. *Photo by Destiny Soto*

ACLU informs students on their rights in school

Cailin Tomsu
Editor in Chief

Destiny Soto
Features Editor

All students, staff, administrators and everyday people are protected by the Fourth Amendment. The Fourth Amendment states "the right of people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Students, even though they are not legal adults, have the right to be protected from an "unreasonable search or seizure." Students are also protected from being questioned when they are in school, at a school event or on school property. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), "a school official, ex: a teacher or administrator is allowed to search a locker if they have 'reasonable suspicion.'" The person who might search students' lockers are required to tell them that their lockers were searched and why.

Reasonable suspicion is a suspicion based on information of wrong or illegal doings. If a teacher were to hear a rumor, that is not reasonable suspicion. However, if an authority figure, like a principal or dean, were to approach an officer and present to the officer a reasonable and legitimate concern regarding a student and some sort of illegal action or substance, that would provide the officer with enough probable cause to further investigate. School officials are allowed to give a police officer permission to search a student's desk or locker.

A teacher or administrator is not allowed to search or look through a student's phone or any other personal electronic devices that a student might possess - unless they have reasonable suspicion that texts or anything else on the device will show wrong or illegal doings. School officials are not permitted to search the entire student body due to suspicion of one single student. For example, if one student in an English class is suspected of being in possession of an illegal substance, a school official is not allowed to search every student in every class.

If a student is searched and evidence is found that can be used against the student, the school officials are allowed to use the

evidence as long as it was found legally. Even in school, all students have the right to remain silent while being questioned and a student cannot be punished for staying silent.

At Bellevue East High School, the Student-Parent Handbook gives staff members the right to "use reasonable physical force, as distinguished from punitive action, against a student or physically restrain a student when it is necessary for self-defense, the protection of the student or other persons, the safeguarding of the public school property or the preservation of order."

School officials, if needed, are allowed to use force against a student in serious cases and are protected by the Parent-Student Handbook. They are also allowed to defend themselves, for example, if a student uses force against a teacher, the teacher is allowed to use force against the student.

Superintendent, Frank Harwood, "delegates the responsibility for maintaining discipline in the schools and the administration of the appropriate corrective measures to the building administration within the guidelines of Board Policy, Administrative Regulation, and the Laws and Constitution of the State of Nebraska and the United States."

STUDENT RIGHTS REGARDING SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Recent videos of police brutality and violence have gone viral, and there have been some concerns in high schools involving students and School Resource Officers. Many high school students are unaware of their rights in a school setting, and or what an SRO is allowed to do. An SRO is a qualified police officer and is allowed to wear and carry the same weapons on their vest.

School Resource Officer's fully equiped vest



Police officers explain their official responsibilities

Cailin Tomsu
Editor in Chief

Destiny Soto
Features Editor

Nationwide, there has been an increase in the amount of controversy surrounding the police department and school resource officers (SRO). Videos have gone viral, showing police violence, including those in a school setting. Students are not taught their rights against SRO's in school. School Resource Officers are considered a specialized position in the police force and require extra training. SRO's are supposed to be well qualified and trained when going into a new job in a high school and have to follow certain rules.

"They [SRO] have to adhere to our department manual. There isn't anything that is specific because he [SRO] has the same authorities and he's [SRO] required to conform to the same rules or regulations that anyone that wears this [police] uniform does," Bellevue Chief of Police Mark Elbert said.

To become a school resource officer, in most cases, one must have been a police officer for at least three years. Police officers go through the academy which is 14 to 16 weeks. If one would like to become a school resource officer, that person would have to go through specialized training to be SRO certified. Many school resource officers must also go to summer extensive training. There is an application and a screening process for possible school resource officers to complete. The majority of the time, SRO carry all of the same weapons as any other police officer.

"In general, searches of any individuals are covered in the Fourth Amendment. There has to be, for me to search someone, probable cause. I have to have something to support why I am doing this," Elbert said.

An individual can consent to a

search by giving permission to an officer. However, search and seizure policies will vary from school to school; each school will different expectations of their SRO.

"If there is probable cause to search an individual and said individual doesn't want to comply to said search and the officer has probable cause, he [the officer] is going to search," Elbert said.

Police and school resource officers have to have probable cause to search but do not have to tell the individual who is being searched, what that probable cause is. If an officer has probable cause, searches you and finds nothing that does not mean the officer did not have probable cause in the first place.

Probable cause is a necessity when conducting a search. However, the officer who may be conducting the search is not required to tell the individual that is being searched what their probable cause is. Probable cause will vary from officer to officer.

"The same threshold to search someone is the same threshold to arrest someone" Elbert said.

Many things are taken into account when detaining or searching someone. For example, someone's age, capability, motive, weapons, if any, or what the officer thinks the individual might do. Any and all officers have to be reasonable in the amount of force they use while detaining an individual. Officers may also be appointed to a case or can be interjected into a situation by the school if the situation requires police force.

"For us to do anything with it [information], I have to have to legal means to get there. If I don't have the legal means it will always be deemed an illegal search" Elbert said.

If an officer is interjected into a situation by the school, they must be reasonable in their response. If it is an exigent circumstance, meaning that the individual has proven itself harmful to itself or other people in any way, the officer must act quickly. With that, an officer has no obligation to react to a request by the school. If the circumstance is not legal or does not require the force of an officer, the officer does not have to respond. If an officer finds information illegally, meaning they did not have a warrant or probable cause to look for the found evidence, then the evidence is found from that point on cannot be used in court.

"Usually it becomes an issue with me when somebody's safety is in question or somebody has broken a law. Those are typically the times when I'll get involved," School Resource Officer Sean Vest said.

Vest has been an SRO at Bellevue East for three years and has encountered many situations where he has had to search or detain students for various reason. If Vest finds information or evidence, but the information is not enough for probable cause, then he will give the information to the school and let the school handle it. Also, if the evidence was found in someone's locker, then he must hand over the evidence to the school along with any other information concerning the case.

Most incidents involving lockers are given to school officials because lockers are school property and without an officer's personal probable cause, the officer is limited to their involvement in the situation until it becomes a legal case or the officer is provided probable cause. The school resource officer is also more than likely to be responsible of pursuing the charges against a student. For example, if illegal contraband is found on a student, Vest would be the officer to fill out all of the paperwork regarding the case and he would need to testify in court.

"If anything really happens in the school and it's a situation where somebody needs to be ticketed, I'm more than likely the one that will do it, notify the parents and go all the way through with it," Vest said.

1943	1962	1969	1974	1986	1988	2002	2002	2015
Board v. Barnette Supreme Court ruled that students could not be forced to salute the flag against their will.	Engel v. Vitale Supreme Court ruled that students have the right to be free from religious oppression.	Tinker v. Des Moines Supreme Court ruled that students could not be suspended for expressing forms of independent speech.	U.S. Supreme Court ruled that students are guaranteed "due process" rights when facing suspension from school.	Bethel School v. Fraser Court ruled that school was not violating students rights when it suspended a student for using bad language in a speech to the school.	Hazelwood School v. Kuhlmeier, Supreme Court ruled that the school paper was subject to censorship if it counteracted the educational mission.	Supreme Court ruled that schools can require students in sports to submit drug tests.	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was set as a law.	President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act, replacing the No Child Left Behind Act.

Athlete Spotlight: Varsity basketball

Cailin Tomsu
Editor in Chief



Interview with freshman Fred Knotts

Q: When and why did you decide to play basketball?

A: “When I decided to play basketball I was in 4th or 3rd grade and my grandpa decided to sign me up.”

Q: How does playing make you feel?

A: “Playing makes me feel happy because I’m happy to have this opportunity.”

Q: What is your favorite thing about basketball?

A: “Playing against people who are better than you.”

Q: Where do you see yourself and basketball in your future?

A: “Playing with the Chieftains for 4 years and getting a scholarship to a good school.”

Q: Why do you like playing basketball?

A: “I like playing basketball because you have the opportunity to verse people who are better, stronger, faster.”



Interview with junior Tori Mullen

Q: What is your favorite thing about playing basketball?

A: “My favorite thing is being around the girls, they make it fun.”

Q: Where do you see yourself and basketball in the future?

A: “I don’t really see myself playing basketball but it would be sweet to play college for fun!”

Q: How do you feel representing the Chieftains?

A: “It feels good to be a part of Chieftain Nation because of all the work we put in and how strong of a bond we have as a team.”

Q: What position do you play?

A: “I play wherever they need me.”

Q: How does it feel when you win?

A: “It feels great because we put in a lot of work in practices.”

Sports injuries continue to be an issue in high school

Will Timmins
Business Manager

For as long as there have been sports, there have been sports injuries. High school athletes in particular seem to be more susceptible to injury for various reasons, whether it be that they didn’t stretch before the game, they used improper technique, or they just seem to be unlucky.

High school athletes have accounted for an estimated 500,000 doctors visits and 300,000 hospitalizations each year; according to stopsportsinjuries.org.

Some of the most common sports injuries include: ankle sprains, ACL tears, shin splints, hamstring pull, groin pull, knee injury and tennis elbow. Sports injuries can be career ending , very dangerous and or have life long lasting effects on a person.

“The most important thing is to make sure students are stretching and using common sense in the activities they are

doing, [such as] making sure that they are using equipment properly, wearing helmets in sports like skateboarding and parkour, and being aware of the risks that are involved and making sure that they’re participating safely,” physical education instructor and athletic trainer Jennifer Carda said.

To help prevent sports injuries, an individual should warm up before engaging in physically demanding sports. An individual should also know when to stop and take a break. Many sport injuries can occur and reoccur because of overuse of the muscles.

Muscles are not inviolable and can become tired and worn out, it is best to take a break when feeling fatigued. Taking a break is better than ending your sports season because of an injury.

Another thing many athletes should continue doing while engaging in sports is to stay hydrated. Athletes should continuously take water breaks, to rest their muscles and hydrate their body.

It is crucial to get the right amount of water in your system before, after and during any workout or sport. If an athlete is not properly hydrated, they will not preform to their best ability, and they can experience muscle cramps and more serious side effects. It is important to stay hydrated while working out to help avoid any possible injuries.



Treating an injury

Sophomore Alex Welch pulled her hamstring during swim. She works on her upper body to keep in shape and tries to heal her hamstring. “I am doing stem to stimulate the muscle activity in my pulled hamstring,” Welch said. *Photos by Trevor Cornell*

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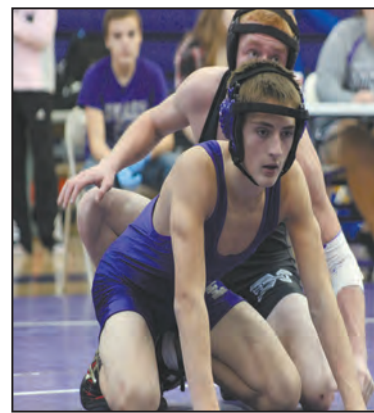
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Winter sports begin with intensity

As Junior Majok Bethow gets ready to make a free throw, he mentally prepares himself, to make a basket in front of the student body. “It is very great to play at home,” Bethow said.
Photo by Faith Wer

To the far right is sophomore Kyle Waring during the varsity wrestling meet on Dec. 12 at Bellevue East against six different schools.
Photo by Faith Wer

At the bottom left is junior Justinna Epting, during the varsity basketball game on friday night against Benson high school looking for an open teammate to pass the ball to.
Photo by Faith Wer



Above, Junior Evan Simonsen practices and warms up before the boys swim meet. The pressure was on, as there were many schools getting ready to compete against each other. “There were a lot of schools that we went up against and we did our best,” Simonsen said. *Photo by Cailin Tomsu*



Senior Noah Hoefer spins a ball on his fingers at a game. East had lost to Benson, but they kept good attitudes. “We tried our hardest, but we just didn’t do enough to get the win,” Hoefer said.
Photo by Faith Wer

Sophomore Anna Schreck practices swimming before her big meet. “I got a lot of personal records, and our relays went really well. Every person that was in the relays put in their all,” Schreck said. *Photo by Cailin Tomsu*

East alumni successful as professional athletes

Megan Miller
Sports Editor

There have been many professional athletes that have graduated from Bellevue East throughout the years. “Historically we’ve had a number of folks come through here and go on to either professional careers in football or baseball or the olympics,” Athletic Director James Hirz said. Buddy Carlyle played baseball and basketball at Bellevue East. He graduated from Bellevue East in 1996 and went on to play Major League Baseball. Carlyle was drafted in the second round of the 1996 Major League Baseball draft by the Cincinnati Reds. He was with the Reds for two years before being traded to the San Diego Padres in 1998. He went on to play for many other teams including the ROyals, Yankees, Dodgers, and even in Japan. Carlyle signed a contract with the New York Mets in 2014 and still plays with them. “In recentmemory we’ve had some proffesional athletes and the most notable of those is Buddy Carlyle, who has played for a number of teams in

major league baseball,” Hirz said. Jarrell Crayton graduated from Bellevue East in 2009. He currently plays for Rostock in Germany. “For basketball, there is Jarrell Crayton. He plays over in Europe,” instructor Jerry Lovell said. Matt O’Hanlon graduated from Bellevue East in 2004. He is most known for playing for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, but he did go on and play after college. O’Hanlon signed a free-agent contract with the Carolina Panthers after he played for the Huskers. He then went on to play with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and the New York Giants in the preseason. “Matt O’Hanlon tried out for the the Buccaneers, Panthers and Giants. He did not make them. He also played for the Omaha Nlghthawks,” Lovell said. Brian Deegan is a professional freestyle motocross rider. He went to Bellevue East and left when he was 17 to go to California. Deegan became a professional in 1997 when he was 17. He has competed in the X Games multiple times. He was the first person to do a 360 in competition, and he named it the Mulisha Twist.

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BELLEVUE EAST TOM TOM

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In defense of deans

Staff Editorial

What do deans do? We all see them “hanging” out in the hallways and commons, talking to other administrators. Our deans are notorious for carrying around invisible brooms and sweeping the hallways. Even though it’s super easy to joke about and criticize the deans, no one really realizes their contributions and importance to the school. We as the newspaper staff feel that our deans should have more recognition for the work that they do.

It can be quite arduous being dean, you can ask any dean that. Our deans started out as teachers, so they understand how it feels to stand in front of a class and talk. They have dealt with students. The deans didn’t just wake up and become deans. It took, and still does take, work. The deans are in charge of more than just “picking” on students or loudly encouraging them to go to class. Deans are in charge of the attendance, discipline and safety of the school. They have to figure out what disciplinary measures will help a student do their homework, come to school, stop skipping school, or stop bullying.

The deans are there, watching the student that never comes to school, and trying to figure out how to motivate them to achieve the greatness they have the potential for. The deans watch over the small kid that gets picked on everyday, and helps them learn how to stand up for him or herself. The deans look at the student that acts like he doesn’t care about anything and they encourage him to reach out and show that he cares about school, about his future. The deans see the kid that gets into fights everyday and reach out to him/her, and calm the rage inside. The deans are there, trying to get each student to have self confidence and realize their ability. The deans have to form relationships with the students; they make them feel welcome.

Not only do deans discipline students, but they have to reward those that are doing well, too. The deans spend so much time trying to help everyone, and fix any little mistake a student has made, but they also find time to thank those that have being doing well, and are model students for the school. The deans are not monsters, chasing after kids for fun. They are doing their job, trying to be deans, role models and teachers.

If a school had no deans, think about the consequences. Many students may like that idea; however, it wouldn’t be a dream come true. The school would be out of control How many fights a day do you think there would be? How many students would skip and not return? How many students would not show up, because they didn’t want to or because of bullying? How many students would be even more out of control, doing whatever they wanted? How much vandalism would go on? How many more drugs would be brought into the school? How much more alcohol? How low would our graduation rate go? If students do not have anyone trying to motivate them, or just a simple source of authority, the school and the students would run wild.

Next time you or a friend gets sent down to the dean, realize that they are not here to get everyone in trouble. Deans are not working in a high school because they think it’s fun to get kids in trouble. Understand that the deans are trying to help, that they are trying to put you on the right track, because in real life, there won’t always be someone downstairs willing to listen and help get you out of your mess every time you make a mistake or get into trouble. When you see a dean walking in the hallway or standing in the cafeteria, do not be rude and make jokes, look at their importance to the school and say thank you or smile. Deans need appreciation, too.

Educate on mental illness



Nia Booth
News Editor

Students are giving reports in their English class about the topic that they’ve studied for about a month. Several students have gone up and now it’s time for another to go. Sweat is visibly rolling down his cheeks and soaking the shirt around the armpit as he stands around the room. He goes to open his mouth, but words don’t flow from his lips. Instead, it repeatedly opens and closes. His fingers dance around as his eyes dart around the room anticipating the laughs that are sure to follow. Whispers begin to drift around, causing him to visibly sway and his eyes to water. He is filled with anxiety.

The average percentage of teens with a mental illness is about 20, and yet there is limited knowledge about mental illness being taught. In East, the required health class discusses mental illness for about 3 or 4 weeks, and they only go over what mental illnesses and suicide are. Personally, that does not seem like enough time to give detailed information on such a complex subject. According to Janice DeSocio and colleagues in the Journal of School Nursing, “without comfortable adults as reliable sources of information, children form faulty conceptions and negative attitudes about mental illness from bits of overheard conversations, television commercials advertising medications, high profile news stories about homicides and suicides attributed to mental disorders, and dramatic representations

of mental illness on television and in the movies.” If the information that most adolescents get is inaccurate or faulty because of the source, why aren’t there specific classes for just mental health in junior and senior high? I believe that there should be required mental health classes beginning in elementary and continuing into high school.

By not informing students about mental illness in a positive way, affected students are being put at risk. These risks are as stated in National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), “Mental health problems may lead to poor school performance, school dropout, strained family relationships, involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, substance abuse, and engaging in risky sexual behaviors.”

Mental illness also has a very deadly effect on teens. Suicide is currently the third leading cause of death for youth ages 15 to 24. Of those who died by suicide, 90 percent had an underlying mental illness. With mental illness having such a huge impact on the lives of teens, students should be informed on mental health before they reach the point in their lives that it becomes an issue. In DeSocio’s writings about the study, she reported on elementary students that were given information about mental illness. The given information included how to recognize signs for mental illnesses, what it means to have them, and the causes and effects of poor mental health. After the classes there were reports by the teachers and students of an improved understanding of mental health, and one student was able to recognize signs of mental illness in him/herself and seek help. The fact that the student was able to receive help is great, seeing as 70 percent of adolescents with a mental illness did not receive help for the mental illnesses that they have.

I feel everyone needs to be informed on mental illness, because everyone can be at risk from the effects of mental illnesses. By providing reliable information, schools can help decrease suicide rates, increase school performance, and take steps to resolve many other problems prominent in youth today. If Bellevue East provided more in depth mental illness education it could make a big difference to a lot of lives.

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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 editors, 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.

‘Krampus’ disappoints this Christmas season

Bobby Storck
Web Editor

Christmas is a time of year that is meant to be spent with family, no matter how terrible they may be. This fact of life is learned the hard way for 10-year-old Max in the new Universal Studio’s horror film, “Krampus.”

Krampus is a German legend about an anthropomorphic goat and his followers that go from house to house during the Christmas season, punishing bad children. He is known as the shadow of St. Nicholas (who would reward good children), and his followers include anything to living gingerbread men to man-eating jack-in-the-boxes.

In the film, we are introduced to an American suburban family in late December that has lost the christmas spirit. Max (Emjay Anthony) wants Christmas to return to what it was like when it was a kid. Unfortunately, he must spend this year with a sister who would rather spend the holidays with her boyfriend (Stefania LaVie Owen), parents who are completely stressed out about company for the holidays (Adam Scott and Toni Collette), his gun-loving Uncle (David Koechner) and his meek wife (Allison Tolman), his cousins who are not the nicest of folk, a drunk aunt (Conchata Ferrell), and his German grand-

mother, Omi (Krista Stadler).

After being subject to embarrassment for writing a letter to Santa, Max tears up his letter and throws the pieces out his window. This sets off a chain of events including a power outage and a blizzard that traps the family inside their home. Soon, children start disappearing, starting with Max’s sister and a few of his cousins. Omi then tells the family that they are being visited by Krampus and his followers for Christmas this year, not St. Nicholas and his elves.

With his family disappearing one by one around him at the hands of Krampus’ followers, Max realizes that he is responsible for bringing this plague on his family, and decides to confront Krampus himself with the intent on getting his family back.

To be honest, this movie did better than I expected. Its plot made sense and the special effects made the jump scares all the scarier. However, it was no perfect film. Some of the acting was a bit lacking, especially the parents as they watched their sons and daughters getting dragged up the chimney by a chain or getting eaten by a fairly sizable jack-in-the-box. The drunk aunt was a riot though, and many of her lines made the whole theatre laugh out loud.

Unfortunately, this humor was not shared throughout the

rest of the movie. Many jokes fell flat, and some were placed in the wrong scenes. Adam Scott making a pun after hearing his daughter make a bloodcurdling scream just seemed wrong and out of place. Too much humor was in horrific scenes and too much horror was in comedic scenes. As my friend put it, they tried making a horror movie comic, and a comedy horrific.

The overall flow of the movie went well at first, but stalled as it neared the middle of the film. They seemed to stretch scenes whose purposes seemed clear enough and the plot seemed to go nowhere. As the movie got closer to the end, the plot began to speed up again and ended in a climactic finish. However, at the very end, the film threw one too many curve balls at the audience and it left the audience confused and trying to put the pieces together.

Overall, I would give the movie a 6 out of 10. Although the plot died in the middle, and the movie could not decide if it was a comedy or a horror, and the acting could have done better, I still enjoyed the movie and would recommend it to anyone who loves horror films. This movie puts a twist on our ideology of the holiday season, and reminds us of what German children thought was coming if they were not good for Christmas.



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Candidates continue to be supported by super PACs

Tommy Casart
Opinion Editor

The presidential election season is long, grueling, and ripe with drama. The candidates we see from day to day can be easily dismissed as market shills and puppets for corporations’ agendas. These people show up in every election, and are often the winners. The simple truth is that when a candidate needs money for their campaign, they will often accept money from people and organizations that try to push their agendas. The candidates will take donations in exchange for supporting the donors’ ideals.

Over the course of a campaign, the candidates will accept more and more of these donations, all usually flowing into one or more super PACs. PAC is an acronym for “political action committee.” These committees usually organize advertising campaigns that are notorious for overly glorying or overly demonizing certain candidates.

These large donation organizations arose from the 2010 ruling Citizens United. Before this ruling, donation organizations had their spending limited, and in effect had limited influence on election. Citizens

United now allows corporations, labor unions, associations, and individuals to raise money in a super PAC and utilize unlimited amounts of money for ads that influence elections. This means that the more money a candidate raises from donations, the more ads they can have that progress their campaign, and the cap is virtually unlimited.

Due to this legal truth, the candidate that raises the most money will usually stand the best chance at winning an election. Many argue that this destroys democracy, and I am one to agree. The effects that super PACs have on voters and candidates are detrimental to the individual’s ability to influence government. Candidates are bought out by corporations that can promise them money and status, and voters are bought by the ads that those corporations fund. The election becomes a disguise for a money trading service that benefits the powerful and silences the poor majority.

One thing about this election season is different than many others. Two candidates who reject the use of super PACs have become legitimate competition in the election, versus other candidates who do utilize super PACs. What’s interest-

ing is that each of these candidates are from the two largest parties in the United States, which reflects clearly on what the public thinks.

These two candidates are Democrat Bernie Sanders and Republican Donald Trump. They have both spoken out so adamantly about super PACs and the Citizens United ruling that they have both gone as far as shutting down unofficial super PACs started under their names.

So far, their campaigns have been running on personal finances and small donations, which is a throwback to the way many campaigns used to be funded. They stand so firmly against super PACs because they don’t want to compromise the integrity of their campaigns just to cater to corporations. It’s gotten to the point where resisting the effects of corporate America is a cornerstone of their campaigns. They have both made statements about how super PACs buy candidates and compromise democracy. One such statement by Trump from October particularly condemns the other candidates that accept super PAC contributions.

“I am self-funding my campaign and therefore I will not be controlled by the donors,

special interests and lobbyists who have corrupted our politics and politicians for far too long,” Trump said.

Sanders made a similar statement that highlighted the importance of getting rid of these super PACs.

“A few wealthy individuals and corporations have bought up our private sector and now they’re buying up the government. Campaign finance reform is the most important issue facing us today, because it impacts all the others,” Sanders said.

Americans on both sides of the political spectrum are becoming more and more concerned about campaign finance reform, and are voting accordingly to voice their concerns, which is an excellent way to make a statement against policies that corrupt voting. Vote to overcome that which inhibits effective voting. The practices that made America the force of good that it is have been under siege, and more and more people are fighting to restore them.



Illustration by Tommy Casart

Black Ops 3: Backing up the hype

Will Timmins
Business Manager

For the past few years, the first person shooter (FPS) industry has been dominated by the Call of Duty franchise, and they’re trying to keep it that way with their newest release: Black Ops 3. The third edition of the Black Ops sub-series, it portrays a future where humans have merged with machines as well as fight alongside them in battle. The game features three base modes: Campaign, Multiplayer, and Zombies.


The campaign mode is basically a play-through movie in which the main character (the player) fights their way through multiple factions of extremist groups in the southern Asian subcontinent to try and find out the implications of a mysterious digital anomaly called Corvus. In general the campaign seems well thought-out, but it gets a little strange at the end and sort of loses its sense of reality.

Multiplayer is by far the most popular mode in the game, as some people buy the game just for this mode. Contrary to popular belief, the multiplayer mode isn’t just the same game as last year’s with new graphics, because it’s been completely revamped from the ground up. It features all-new weapons and maps designed to elevate gameplay to the level that gamers desire. There’s also a brand new feature in multiplayer mode where you can choose your character type from four dif-

ferent classes, all of them with different power-ups and abilities. The last new major upgrade to Black Ops 3 Multiplayer is the gunsmith feature. It allows you to customize your weapons with a plethora of designs and colors to make each one of your creations truly your own.

Zombies is the last mode and it was highly anticipated prior to the release because the game studio, Treyarch, is well-known for creating immersive storylines and maps that previous games can’t compare with. The Zombies storyline is entirely different than that of Campaign and Multiplayer. In fact, it’s set in a completely different timeline. Here’s how the story goes: in World War II, Nazi scientists accidentally discovered a material in the earth, dubbed Element 115, that when it came into contact with humans, living or dead, it turned them into zombies. Flash forward to the 1940’s in the fictional Chicago-inspired Morg City where a motley crew of adulterers, gamblers, murderers, and corrupt cops are the only people left alive to fend off endless hordes of Zombies and try to find out the source of the evil plaguing their city.

Overall, the game runs smoothly and is fun to play. The multiple modes ensure that it won’t get old for a while, and if you have some time on your hands, it’s a worthwhile investment. Multiplayer is fantastic, Zombies is always fun, but it can get a little repetitive, and Campaign is Campaign. I’d give it a rating of 7.5 out of 10 due to the overall quality of what you’re paying for.



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