

THUNDERBEAT

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Scoreboard upgrades lead to new opportunities

TIFFANY DOMINGO
REPORTER

Bellevue West's football and South Gym scoreboards were due for an upgrade after years of use.

The football scoreboard was about 25 years old, and started malfunctioning during the 2016 football season.

"Last fall when we had football games, it worked about half of the varsity games," Activities Director Jon Mauro said. "Then in the spring it worked maybe ten percent of the time and the components on it were just going out."

Since it is a district stadium, the school board agreed to pay for it. The new scoreboard currently resides in the Faiman Field.

The upgraded South Gym scoreboard debuted at the Varsity Volleyball Invitational on Sept. 1, 2017. The old scoreboard ran on light bulb technology, and Bellevue West was one of the two schools in the metro who possessed those kind of scoreboards.

The South Gym's scoreboard was not paid for by the district, so they had to reach out to businesses around the metro. A five-

year contract has been issued between six platinum sponsors and Bellevue West to help pay for the South Gym scoreboards.

"We decided to reach out to businesses to essentially help us pay for the scoreboard," Mauro said. "In which we are successful in doing."

The six businesses include: Buffalo Wild Wings, Cornhusker Auto Wash, Erwin's Jewelers, Freddy's Frozen Custard Steakhouse, Bellevue University, and Shadow Lake.

The South Gym scoreboard has a video operating system, with which Mauro plans to incorporate the video yearbook as much as possible. They are expected to play some video features at the end of the quarter or at halftime during games.

Mauro said he looks forward to showcasing the work that video yearbook creates.

"I'm hoping the fans enjoy in what they see up there and it kind of just adds to the atmosphere on what we have going on for games and activities in that gym," Mauro said.

In terms of content of the videos, they are looking



Photos By Gavin Clang and Emma Clark

One of the new scoreboards, which is equipped with a video display, resides in the South Gym. In the lower lefthand corner, there is a sunny photo of the new football scoreboard.

more towards what professional and collegiate teams present up on the TV screen.

"I think if you have a real short introduction interviews of the players, and then add some of the re-

corded action of the teams, it will kind of hype up the audience," head basketball coach Doug Woodard said.

Video Yearbook Director Amiya Johnson is currently working on a hype video for

the Bellevue West Volleyball team. She will be creating more videos throughout the year as basketball season comes to play.

"The purpose of doing this is just to get the team

and crowd pumped up," Johnson said. "I'm excited to try something new. This is something that I envisioned a long time ago and to actually do it for the first time is really exciting."

HAL program provides opportunities and support

TAEGAN JACOBS
REPORTER

HAL, which stands for high-ability learners, is a program that provides services for Bellevue Public Schools students who have been identified as being gifted in certain academic areas. Although the pro-

gram is federally mandated, laws and funding vary from state to state.

"We're fortunate that the powers see the value in what we're trying to do," district K-12 HAL facilitator Molly Wolfe-Koehler said. "The idea is that we want to help students build their strength and create opportunities for

them in their learning experience at the elementary, middle, and high school levels so that they can really hone in on what they love to do and what they feel they're good at."

Koehler, who has been teaching over 20 years, is in the middle of her second year as the district HAL

facilitator. As a mother of students who've been identified as gifted, she feels she adds a different viewpoint to the job.

"The perspective of being a parent of multiple children who are identified because they are very unique learners, just like every student is," Koehler said.

High-ability learners are first identified based off of their MAP test results in the third, fourth, or fifth grade. If their scores indicate they need further screening, the student will take the CogAT, a group-administered K-12 cognitive abilities assessment intended to estimate students' learned reasoning and problem solving abilities. If their CogAT score aligns in the same domain as their MAP score, that indicates they're identified for HAL services.

"And once you've been identified, that identification is never removed," chemistry teacher Nicole Menard said.

New teacher brings fall play to Bellevue West

JAMES WALKER-SCHULTE
REPORTER

The 2017 year has introduced two new aspects to Bellevue West's theatre department: a new teacher, and a full fall play. Play auditions were open to every student regardless of whether or not they were in a theatre class, similar to the school musicals, on Sept. 5, 7, and 8.

"We had over fifty people audition and our cast and crew is going to be pretty big," director Jennifer Ettinger said. "We had like forty people on cast and crew, so it's going to be an exciting opportunity."

"You Can't Take It With You" follows a family in the 1930's just recovering from the Great Depression, who don't want to work for a living and instead strive to live life in a fun way. The youngest daughter falls in love with a boy in a conservative family who she invites over for dinner, and the two

families clash almost immediately.

The play being full rather than a series of one-acts, and open to all students is both exciting and nerve-racking to some.

"I'm excited that it's a full show," senior Jaeden Starling said. "Although I'm also nervous because we haven't had full shows for the fall performance in awhile, so I'm both excited and nervous, but can't wait to see how it turns out."

The play will be directed by Jennifer Ettinger, Bellevue West's theatre teacher and WAST sponsor. Prior to working at Bellevue West, Ettinger taught English for two years in Council Bluffs, IA. After graduating from college, she worked at the Rose Theatre for three years before deciding to get Master's Degrees in both educational theatre and English education at New York University.

Continued on Page 8.

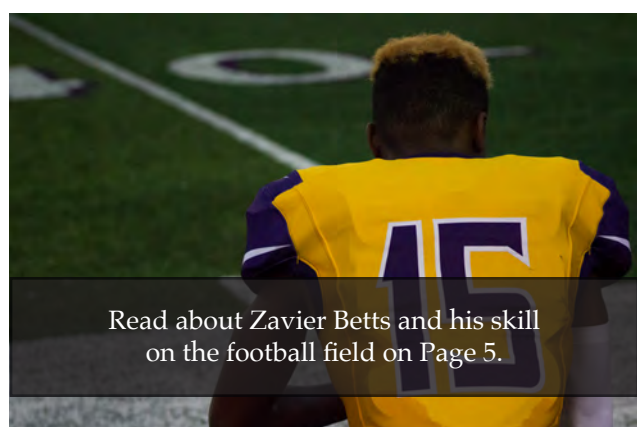


Photo By Gavin Clang

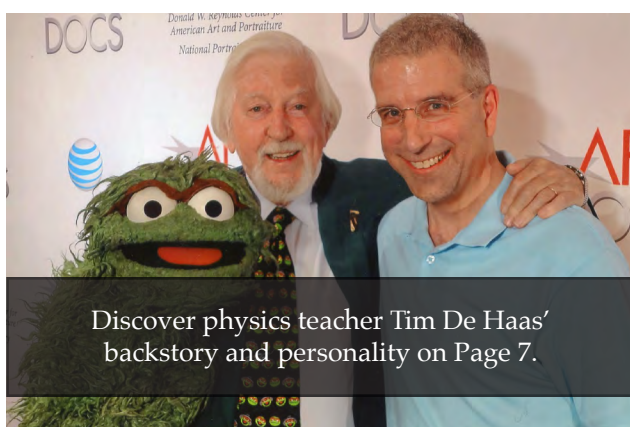
Megan Brewer, one of the HAL facilitators at Bellevue West, oversees a HAL meeting.

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Read about Zavier Betts and his skill on the football field on Page 5.



Discover physics teacher Tim De Haas' backstory and personality on Page 7.

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Ban on doughnut sales affects fundraising

JAMES WALKER-SCHULTE
REPORTER

The 2017 school year began rough for any Bellevue West group considering the use of sweets like chocolate and doughnuts for fundraising.

On July 1, 2014, the United States Department of

Agriculture released a Smart Snacks in School nutritional standard, which adjusted nutritional values within schools across the United States. For three years Bellevue Public Schools were able to slip past the act with “gray-areas” and certain exemptions. Both are no longer applicable.

“The federal government passed what is known as the Michelle Obama ‘Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act,’ which passed the smart snack guidelines,” Activities Director Jon Mauro said. “That was probably three or four years ago, and you could only sell food in school that met those guidelines. Each state had different exemptions, but the state of Nebraska for the first year allowed two exemptions per

group or club per semester. DECA for example could [sell doughnuts] twice per semester, four times a year.”

Although the reasoning for the rules seems to be to promote a healthier lifestyle for American students, some think that it isn’t the government’s decision to make.

“Do I think that you can live a healthy life consuming a doughnut or two?” Mauro said. “Yes. I think that a lot more goes into having a healthy lifestyle than not having that doughnut once a week at school. If you exercise and eat your fruits and vegetables and do the other things that you need to do to be healthy, then I don’t think a doughnut or a candy bar from school is going to hurt anyone. I’ve eaten thousands and thousands of doughnuts,

and I’m okay today. I don’t think it’s the worst thing in the world.”

Another complaint is from club sponsors whose funds have been built primarily upon sweet sales, so those clubs are having trouble finding an alternative.

“It’s just going to be a lot more difficult, because for cheerleading that was our main profit, and now we have to look elsewhere,” cheerleading coach Sarah Geiken said. “What we’ve had to do unfortunately is pass a lot of those costs onto the girls, and although we’ve looked for other ways to make that much money, it was kind of impossible.”

Even clubs who don’t need a lot of funds struggle against the act.

“I think it will be difficult

to come up with the same amount of money,” Latin club leader Leslie Hooper said. “We don’t really use the funds for much besides the art club t-shirts and snacks for meetings. So we’ll be okay without it, but it will be difficult to find an alternative way to pay for those things.”

Some sponsors hope that students will continue to support their clubs, even without sweets.

“We’ll probably use the community food nights [for fundraising], where we’ll encourage people to go out,” Hooper said. “And unfortunately, fast food is not that much healthier. In fact, it might be worse than eating doughnuts.”

Even if the school administration wanted to allow doughnut sales for school

clubs, there isn’t much they could do.

“We have a lot of

groups who rely on money made through these fundraisers to do what they want to do,” Mauro said. “And now that we don’t have those fundraisers it’s just going to come out of our kids and our parents’ pockets, which is too bad.”



Students divided on opinions of advisory

MELISSA IRISH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Some days it is an activity session, sometimes it is a required viewing of a video, and sometimes it is a study hall. Advisory is all of these, but there are other parts of it that are still being figured out.

This homeroom equivalent was implemented into schedules this year, taking the place of Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) that used to be during 5th hour. Advisory is a 20 minute class after second period used for announcements, small lessons, class discussions, and a study hall.

“It’s a good time to do announcements and make sure everyone knows what’s going on,” librarian Karissa Schroder said.

Students will have the same advisory teacher until the end of their high school careers. The purpose of that is to ensure that every student has an adult in the school who they can go to when needed.

“Teenage years are difficult years, and I think for academic help, emotional help, they need an adult that can be a mentor to turn to, because sometimes a situation might be so that they don’t feel comfortable telling their parents, and they need somebody else they could talk to,” career development facilitator Julie Sorenson said.

The students could also potentially profit academically as well.

“If a student feels like a teacher really cares about them, then they’re more apt

to be successful in the classroom,” Sorenson said.

Some are taking advantage of advisory to have a moment to just breathe and take a break from doing schoolwork.

“It seems pretty chill,” senior Diana Bonilla said. “I don’t hate going to it, and it’s also a place I get to relax.”

Not all students agree with that view though.

“I feel like it’s a waste of time,” junior Lexi Storey said. “We just kind of sit there and do nothing.”

Senior Meghan Prusia also felt that advisory is not very productive.

“During my SSR last year we were able to finish tests and she kept talking and teaching, so it’s kind of a waste of time for my classes, but I bet for other people

it’s better,” Prusia said.

Although she did not feel as strongly against advisory, Bonilla still had a suggestion to make.

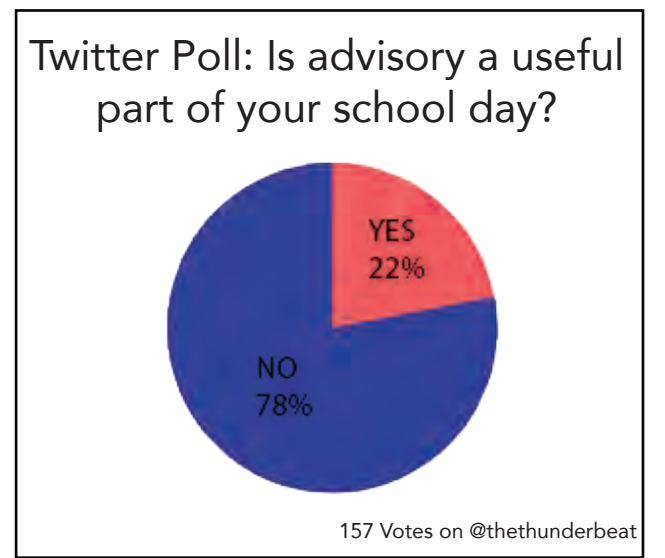
“Try to at least make it fun,” Bonilla said.

Some teachers are already following that advice to liven up their advisories.

“I got some children’s books and I’ll read those to the students,” Schroder said. “I also ordered some games like Bop It and Apples To Apples. It’s just a time to have a little bit of fun in your day, and just kind of relax. Some people have classes beginning to end and they never have a chance to breathe.”

Some are even taking those 20 minutes to try to help the community.

“I said we’re going to do a volunteer project every



Graphic By Gavin Clang

quarter, so right now we’re working on making posters for Make-a-Wish,” Sorenson said.

Along with Schroder, Sorenson appreciates Advisory.

“I’m really enjoying getting to know a group of kids that I see just for a short while but on a regular basis,” Sorenson said.

Additional reporting by Andrea Gonzalez.



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4-year college isn't end-all-be-all

EDITORIAL BOARD

The common stigma surrounding the concept of attending college is that without some sort of higher education, there is no chance of being successful in the real world. The minds of the public see a four-year college education as the end-all-be-all of getting a high-paying job or expanding their connections with influential individuals. The modern day reality, though, is that there are plenty of opportunities to be successful without a four-year college degree.

In the days of yesterday, significantly fewer people enrolled into colleges and universities, whether

public or private. In correlation with that, the number of Americans entering the workforce straight out of high school was higher. According to Statista's website, between 1965 and 2015 the total college enrollment increased by 240%.

To anyone who has a basic understanding of economics, the value of a good or a service drops when there is more of that specific good or service. Why does it become less valuable? Because there is more of it. The same concept can apply to that of a four-year college education.

As more people attend a college or university, the more students graduate with a degree. When

the number of students graduating with a degree was lower in 1965, employers saw a possible employee with an advanced education as more respected and qualified for the job when compared to someone who went straight to work after high school. In 2017, those numbers have switched.

Universities have taken notice to the increase in college enrollment and have taken advantage of it financially. Since 1995, the average private university tuition fee has gone from \$13,891 to \$38,762 according to U.S. News.

According to the Economist's online series of infographics, the total student loan debt around the

country exceeded \$1.1 trillion with over seven million debtors in default in June of 2014. The stigma that made it appear that college was the only path to a high-paying career is actually putting students in debt that they won't be able to pay off maybe until their late 60's. This is where the advantages of the trades come into play.

Rather than going into debt for a degree with a diluted value, going into a trade, such as plumbing or becoming an electrician, provides an immediate source of income. If you aren't serving as an unpaid apprentice, a tradesperson earns instant income while the college student racks up tens of thousands of dollars

in debt.

For instance, the average electrician with about four years of paid, on-the-job training has an average salary of \$58,827 while the average high school teacher with a masters degree makes \$52,869 according to Salary.com.

In terms of job availability, the estimated expansion of the trades--especially in Nebraska--is significantly higher than that of lawyers and doctors. While the need for surgeons will always be there, the need for tradespeople will be at a higher capacity. The estimated number of truck drivers in 2020, for instance, is almost 10,000 employees higher than that of the estimated

number of registered nurses according to the Nebraska Department of Labor.

Supply and demand, ladies and gentlemen.

With that said, if someone has a desire to someday become the world's best doctor, there is no sliding past the need for a degree or two. Some careers require four to eight years of college. However, those who are not on this life-plan don't have to spend time in a classroom for another few years in order to be successful.

Of course the world needs its doctors, its lawyers, its nuclear engineers, but the world can't go round without its plumbers, its electricians, and its carpenters.

Phones need mutual respect



ALEX TOTH
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Smartphones are the natural enemy of the teacher. They distract from learning and they've shortened students' attention spans to what they would've been 20 years ago.

To make this clear right off the bat, I'm not against taking a phone away from a student if he/she is using it constantly at inappropriate times, taking away from their learning and success. My problem lies when teachers feel the need to take a phone away from a student for simply checking a text, or even the time, for the rest of the day, sending it to the dean's office for safekeeping.

Teachers seem to take one of two paths, either banning phones all together, or not really caring what students are doing on them as long as they aren't a major distraction. If a student is falling behind in a class,

it's their fault, not the teacher's (most of the time). And if a student wants to be on their phone instead of doing work during the work time, then that's up to them.

I hate to say it, and I hate being told it as well, but being off of our phones can greatly help our success in school and other endeavours. I tend to get more done, and am more creatively stimulated when I'm not distracted every minute by a notification. As redundant or as demeaning as this may sound, I think we need to lighten up on our phone use.

I'm not only going after students. Teachers also can find ways to make peace with a fundamental part of teenage life, while preserving a classroom's purpose.

I hear plenty of speeches from teachers talking about

how since we're going to have more adult responsibilities our junior year, that we may as well be treated like adults too. That same day I was told by teachers to put my phone in a pocket at the front of the room to keep me off of it for the period so you tell me how adult that is.

Phones in school is a tough issue. On one hand they can seriously hinder students' learning and can be a big distraction in the classroom, but on the other, students just want to be at school without sacrificing what they feel is important just to make their teachers happy. We need to find a happy medium with this; students should respect the teacher when they're teaching, and teachers should respect the students' free will to have a phone in class, especially if they aren't using it.



Graphic by Gavin Clang

make their teachers happy. We need to find a happy medium with this; students should respect the teacher when they're teaching, and teachers should respect the students' free will to have a phone in class, especially if they aren't using it.

Think when you drive



SARA FOGARTY
COPY EDITOR

We all drive stupidly, even if it's not on purpose. Driving after school can be aggravating, especially when people aren't thinking about the people around them while they're driving. Following these tips will benefit you and the rest of the students in the crowded parking lot after school.

Get off of your phone. You should never text and drive, but especially not in the midst of the after-school parking lot chaos. Hundreds of people are walking and driving all at the same time, so it is important to make sure that you are fully aware of what is going on around you.

Stop driving 50 miles an hour in the parking lot. There are tons of people everywhere, so driving slow is the safest way to get out

of the traffic. Plus, because there are bad drivers out there, you need to pay a lot of attention which is really hard (and dangerous) to do if you're speeding.

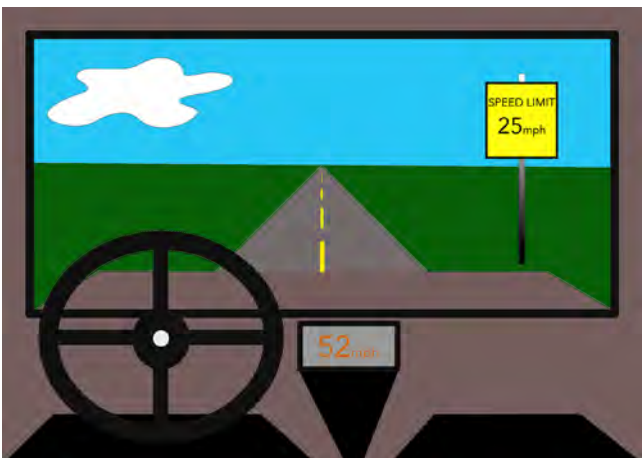
Every student has gotten stuck in the lines of traffic at least once. Because there are so many cars and people walking, it takes some time to get out of the parking lot, and the lines can get backed up pretty easily. If you're trying to get into line, don't cut in front of a car that has done their time waiting. First of all, it's dangerous, and second of all, it's really rude.

Parking lot etiquette goes for pedestrians, too. Don't be that person that walks to their car with their eyes glued to a phone

screen. Watch out for drivers who may not see you, because it's hard enough to maneuver through all of the students as it is.

One of the worst things about the parking lot after school is the huge masses of people rushing to get to their cars. If you're walking past someone trying to back out, let them. It's hard enough to find a break in people to back out, and other cars can also get in the way.

Driving stupidly is dangerous, and it will make everyone around you mad. Next time you leave the parking lot try to be more aware of how you are driving, because it affects everyone around you.



Graphic by Gavin Clang

Qualities that make great teachers



MELISSA IRISH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With school being such a large part of our lives, teachers have the potential to leave large impacts on their students. Ideally, those impacts are positive ones, but it takes a great teacher to achieve that. Luckily, in my experiences as a student, I've picked up on some the traits that truly set the best teachers apart.

The first step is realizing

that not all students are the same, and so sometimes, accommodations should be made. This may mean providing additional information to a student curious about why something is the way it is, or it could be giving a student an opportunity to come in after school to go over test scores. Although they might not seem like much, these accommodations can make all the difference.

Effective communication is another important part of being a great teacher. By regularly announcing upcoming projects and reliably inputting grades into Powerschool, students will find you more reliable. This reliability can become trust with ease, as long as the information provided

is accurate. Since teachers are already required to use Schoology, they can use that platform to their advantage to achieve this aspect.

Hopefully, this next tip is a given, but make sure that you truly enjoy what you are doing. If you are disinterested and loathe your job, everyone else in the building will be able to pick up on that. Instead, try to find ways to instill an element of fun in as many things as possible. For example, social

studies teachers could create some sort of history scavenger hunt in which students must solve problems to find their next clue.

In order to maintain control in the classroom, sternness and rigidity is necessary. Too much though, and you could find yourself facing the hatred of the student body. The trick is to find a balance between being strict and being able to change and roll with the punches. Being able to

deal with the ever-changing nature of high school while maintaining power in the classroom would be greatly beneficial for both you and the students, with the added bonus of keeping you likeable.

Relating to that is the ability to accept other opinions. Especially when analyzing historical events or works of literature, this is an important skill. Students may see an event in a completely different way than you as a result of the uniqueness of the human experience. To put down their opinion without even giving them a chance to explain their position could be viewed as an insult, and could damage their image of you beyond repair. A good method to avoid that

is to create a class discussion about what points they have brought up, so that they can express their opinion in a controlled environment.

One last important aspect is to make a personal connection with the students. One easy way to do this is to provide small details of your personal life, but be careful not to overshare, lest you come off as overbearing. Simple statements every now and then such as the antics of the family pet or your impression of a television show are a better way to open up a doorway to bond with students.

With these tips in mind, a teacher could easily leave a long-lasting impact on their students and rise to the status of a fantastic teacher.



Graphic by Gauret Stearns

The full staff list is available at www.thethunderbeat.org

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Football means family for Chaney Brothers



EMMA GAGE
REPORTER

The two Chaney brothers, like many other siblings, enjoy throwing a football around and working out together, but playing at the same high school together takes it to a whole other level.

Junior Justin Chaney plays on the offensive side of the Bellevue West football team while his brother, sophomore Tyler Chaney, works on the defensive side.

Yet, they have the same soft-spoken personalities and share a love for football that forms a deep bond between them.

The Chaney brothers have been playing football together since they were young.

"We used to play ball when we were little at BJSA," Justin Chaney said. "We for played for three years."

As they moved from the most basic levels of the sport all the way up to the high school level, they became more combative.

"When we were little it wasn't really a competition, but now it's a competition,"

Tyler Chaney said. "It's more fun now than back then."

Both brothers agree that they have formed a sibling rivalry both on and off of the football field.

"We like to out-compete each other and see who does it better," Tyler said.

English teacher Adam Heuertz coaches running backs for the Thunderbird football team and sees this rivalry and how it plays a

Justin said.

Tyler, however, finds that much more can come from being the younger brother.

"It sucks when people compare me to him," Tyler said.

While being compared to his brother seems like a bad thing, Tyler has also used it to improve his abilities and character.

"I try to learn his moves," Tyler said. "He

his relationship with his brother is like with a smile on his face.

"[We have] good chemistry," Justin said. "I think it's pretty cool."

Heuertz enjoys watching this "good chemistry" at work.

"Both of these guys are pretty soft spoken," Heuertz said. "I like that they let their performance do most of their talking for them."

Tyler and Justin have gained their love for football from their dad, who played football himself

"It is very important, our dad played football back in the day and he just loves it," Tyler said.

He played running back."

The

brothers don't plan on ending their time on the field together anytime soon. When asked about their future together both of them answered without hesitation.

"If we got to go to college together that would be cool," Justin said.

"I want to keep playing with him, it's fun," Tyler said. "I like being known as 'The Chaney Brothers' on the field."

"I like being known as 'The Chaney Brothers' on the field."
Tyler Chaney

role in their performance.

"I know that competition between brothers is very serious," Heuertz said. "I mean it's one thing to get shown up a little by a teammate, but when it's your brother, you know you're going to hear about it as soon as you get home."

Justin finds that being the older brother gives him authority at practices.

"I get to boss around my little brother even though he's kind of bigger,"

showed me how to be tough and do what I need to do and keep going no matter what."

Heuertz is able to connect to Justin and Tyler's relationship and knows how it affects them.

"I was fortunate enough to have played on the same team as one of my brothers as well," Heuertz said. "It's a special thing to have had that experience, and I know these guys understand that."

Justin described what

Photos by Emma Gage, Gavin Clang, Chaney family

[Top picture] Junior Justin (left) and Sophomore Tyler (right) Chaney both play varsity football. [Middle picture] Tyler Chaney walks onto field with teammates. [Bottom picture] Justin (28) and Tyler (78) Chaney stand on the sideline during a practice.

Photo Essay: Bellevue West wins 17th straight for Hoco '17



Photos By Gavin Clang

[1] The Bellevue West Thunderbirds rush the field at the beginning of the Homecoming game. [2-3] The Thunderbird defense crush Millard West's running back, showing they are a force to be reckoned with. This game would later become one of their hardest fights so far in their season. [4] The Thunderbirds rally up together in their final moments of preparation before the game. The team came back in the 4th quarter to beat Millard West 34-28 [5] Homecoming court nominees, AJ Forbes and Rachel Nimmer are all smiles after being announced king and queen. They earned their new titles during halftime at the Homecoming game. [6] Shane Smith rushes the ball through the Wildcat defense.





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Bet on Betts: Sophomore receiver shows signs of 'elite talent'

NATHAN HAWKINS
BROADCAST MANAGER

When a sophomore football player gets playing time, it's already clear that they are an exceptional player. But when a sophomore football player becomes a key point of the team, it's clear that that player is a star in the making.

Zavier Betts has quickly established himself as someone with star potential, as the sophomore wide receiver has made his mark felt this year. In his freshman season Betts was a role player, totaling 20 receptions and three touchdowns in the 13-game season. This year Betts got taller and bigger, now nearing 6 foot 3 inches as a wide receiver who has tremendous size to go with his tremendous production. At only 15 years old, Betts in four games has already passed all of those marks from last season, and he currently leads the team in receiving yards and touchdown receptions.

The significant leap in his performance is simply Betts doing what he's supposed to do.

"Catching it and running

like I'm supposed to and running my routes hard has really lead to that improvement," Betts said.

Betts also acknowledged that there was pressure being a freshman getting varsity reps.

"It was pretty tough going against all the seniors and juniors, to try and prove myself to show that I'm good enough to play," Betts said.

A new type of pressure is growing on Betts, however. After an impressive offseason of work, he is quickly being regarded as one of the top players in the region.

One of the main people who have spread the word about Betts is Bellevue West head football coach Michael Huffman. Huffman has praised Betts' skill set and intangibles, focusing on how much potential Betts has as a player.

"You go with the combination of his size, length, and speed at his age," Huff-

man said. "If Zavier could get an inch or maybe two, now we're looking at elite size to go along with what I believe is elite talent, which

"That's part of the reason I did that," Huffman said. "I wanted to see how he would respond to it. If he has any inkling of playing on Satur-

little bit," Betts said. "But it's not as bad as it could be, so I'm not really too worried about it yet."

Along with the pressure, Betts takes his success in stride as well, as he hasn't let the compliments and praise get to him.

"I kind of just take it easy," Betts said. "When other people compliment me I just say thank you and all the respectful stuff. But most of the time I don't really try to think about it, I just play the sport and have fun."

Huffman said that his humble personality is important.

"That's one of the neatest things about him, he is very humble," Huffman said. "You'd have no idea that he is one of the region's best players. He's just a nice kid.

He smiles a lot, he's almost like an 'aw shucks' kind of guy, which you don't see in those kids anymore."

Nobody knows Betts quite like cornerback Michael Smilko, who goes head to head with Betts daily in practice. He has seen the role that he has had for the team up close.

"He's a leader by action," Smilko said. "You can just see it on him that he's completely focused in his stuff. But he also tries to use his words to try to bring the competitive spirit out of his teammates to make them better."

With the leadership role that Betts has as an underclassman, he certainly has a lot on his shoulders. Already ahead of most sophomores in the region in skill, he plans to keep doing his job, and better himself on the way.

And of course, force the sophomores to keep up.

"I just do what I'm supposed to do and make the game easier for everybody else," Betts said, "I just got to keep getting better and keep pushing the other sophomores to get better as well."



Photo by Gavin Clang

Sophomore Zavier Betts talks to a reporter after the Bellevue East football game. Betts finished the game with four receptions for 99 yards and three touchdowns.

will open up many more doors."

With Huffman gushing over Betts' potential, he understands the type of pressure it could put on him. That's exactly what he wants.

days and then possibly Sundays down the road you got to be able to handle that."

Betts understands the pressure that comes with his skill, but he's taking it in stride at this early stage.

"It's starting to grow a

Academic standards necessary to compete

EMMA GAGE
REPORTER

Friday night games on the field or events in the gym are a part of high school that most student-athletes look forward to.

However, many athletes in every sport can be pulled from their spotlight because they're considered ineligible to play due to the "no pass, no play" policy.

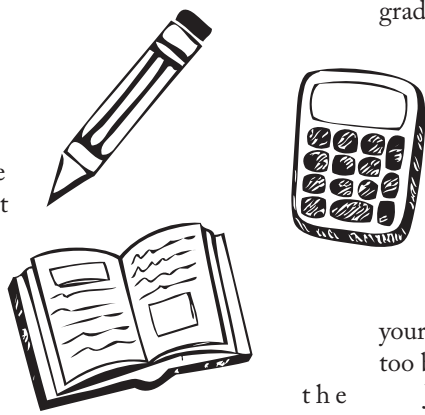
"No pass, no play" is a term used to describe the requirements that student-athletes must meet in terms of their grades before they are allowed to participate in athletics.

Head football coach Michael Huffman knows how important this idea is.

"The number one thing of high school is to get an education," Huffman said. "As much as I love football and athletics, such a small percentage of kids get to go on to play college so it's very important that they are getting the academic skills necessary to give them some choices when they get out of school."

According to the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) website, students are eligible to participate in school-related

competition as long as they are taking twenty credit hours worth of instruction



of two Ds or Fs they cannot play."

Junior basketball player, Akili Felici finds that grade checks are helpful in the long-run.

"I think grade checks are good because at least you know where you are at," Felici said. "If you're not okay with your grade you could talk with your teacher before it gets too bad."

Junior Baseball player, Treyce Machacek also finds benefits to grade checks.

"It tells me if I need to raise my grades or if I'm doing really good and should keep it up," Machacek said.

Because some coaches at Bellevue West have added to the basic state rules, more pressure can be added on to athletes.

"It's just a lot of juggling with basketball and school," Felici said. "But when you're in sports you know what you're getting yourself into so you just have to make time."

Despite the pressure that the team-specific rules can put onto athletes it is believed that implementing them throughout the entire school, and even state is beneficial.

"I think our state does a poor job of you pass four classes the previous semester and you're eligible," Huffman said. "I don't think that's enough. Although it would be harder, and there might be a couple lessons learned early, if everybody did it and it was a whole school policy - y o u would have f e w e r

offenders."

Grades are serious for athletes and while many coaches don't like to, if grades aren't kept up to par they will dole out consequences.

"Last year we had two kids that didn't get it done and they didn't go on to playoffs with us and we ended up winning a state

title," Huffman said.

The overall purpose of the no pass, no play policy is to remind athletes the reason why they go to school.

"You're here to get an education and playing sports is a privilege, it's not a right," Mintken said. "You have to take care of the school work before you can take care of the game stuff."

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH NATE

Nathan Hawkins Asks Freshman Pitcher Lexi Page

What's your favorite pitch to throw?
Dropball.

What would you do if a bird swooped down and stole the ball from you when you were about to pitch?
I would laugh and feel funny.

Smoothies or Slushies and why?
Slushies because I like chewing on ice.



Photo credit Eric Morris.

What type of mentor role have the softball players played for you?
They're really supportive of me being a freshmen playing with them.

Would you rather jump in a pool of snakes or spiders?
Probably spiders because they wouldn't hurt me as much.

Graphic by Gauret Stearns

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- 9/25 - Softball vs Bellevue East Senior High at Lied Activity Fields
- 9/26 - Softball at Marian High School
- 9/28 - Boys Tennis at Elkhorn South High School
- 9/28 - Softball vs Elkhorn South High School at Lied Activity Fields

HAL Program aims to aid gifted students

TAEGAN JACOBS
REPORTER

Continued from
Front Page.

Menard and English teacher Megan Brewer are Bellevue West's HAL facilitators. Before working with the HAL program, they already had experience working with students who enjoy rigor and challenging themselves, both having taught Advanced and AP courses for several years.

At the high school level, they provide support and help for HAL students in a different way than they would in an elementary or middle school.

"We help them deal with those kinds of things like if you're overwhelmed, here are ways you can get organized," Brewer said. The way they communicate to students is different.

"During elementary school we would be pulled out during a class, mine was grammar, and we would go to HAL," senior Samantha Lydiatt wrote in an email.

"Now in high school there isn't necessarily a set meeting time but you can schedule an appointment with Mrs. Menard or Mrs. Brewer and talk to them, and they also send out a HAL newsletter to everyone in the program."

Part of the reason for the sudden drastic change

in contact, according to Koehler, is the scope of the number of identified students compared to the limited supply of HAL facilitators.

"My role is the kindergarten through twelfth grade facilitator," Koehler said. "But I spend most of my energy between here and Bellevue East. Between both buildings we have around 400 identified students."

Another reason is the different opportunities students receive in high school.

"HAL is important in high school, don't get me wrong," Menard said. "But it's even more important in the lower grades where you don't have the advanced classes that you can go in - so you're not trapped. In middle school they have pull out services because all kids are in the same level. You don't want a plateau on growth, so you've got to differentiate or have extensions where kids are able to explore new and different things based on their passion or whatever."

Despite their lack of



Photo by Gavin Clang

HAL facilitators Megan Brewer and Robin Kratina assist HAL students with their assignments.

at the new HAL GPS in room 127, which doubles as the Peer Tutoring Center. Koehler meets with

sition from middle to high school.

"The goal is to get to

know the

kids,"

Koehler

wrote in

an email.

"And work

on building

habits that

allow them

to make

the most of

their high

school

experience."

N o t

only was

the pro-

gram's location

moved

from the health

room to

Brewer's, the

facilitators

have transformed

the space

into a Makerspace, a place for students to go to create and study something they're passionate about.

"That's really where the whole idea of the Makerspace came from," Brewer said. "We wanted a space for them to unwind."

One of Koehler's goals is changing how people perceive the program.

"We're trying to get away from the idea that it's a club that you join," Koehler said. "That it's very exclusionary because, ultimately, good instruction and good experience for students is good for all students."

Koehler hopes to provide more field trips.

"For a while we were kind of discouraged from

doing field trip kinds of opportunities," Koehler said. "So I'm really working to bring that back so that we can take you guys off campus to go experience some different things whether it's looking at post-secondary opportunities, education wise or career wise or just interest wise."

Not only do they want to provide opportunities to HAL kids, but unidentified students as well.

"While we do have opportunities we make available to students that are identified for HAL services," Koehler said. "We also know that there are some kids that would grow exponentially from some of them as well."

"We're working really hard to help kids get a sense of what they want in terms of their goals."

- Molly Wolfe-Koehler

a set meeting time at the high school level, HAL students can meet with each other and the facilitators

between 15-20 identified freshmen on a rotating basis on Thursdays during GPS to help them with the tran-

Foreign exchange student enjoys new American lifestyle

EMMA CLARK
REPORTER

Ida Wennicke is a foreign exchange student from Denmark attending Bellevue West High School for her senior year. She chose to be a foreign exchange student because she wanted to learn about different cultures and travel to a new country. Wennicke's host family makes her feel welcome along with staff and students at school.

"It's so much different here than in Denmark," Wennicke said.

Wennicke said the people are a lot more welcoming and nice in America and that people in Denmark come off as cold, but once you get to know them they aren't like that. The food in Denmark is a lot healthier than American food. According to the website ProCon, America is the number one most obese industrialized country and Denmark isn't even on the chart.

She began learning English when she was in third grade and was speaking it fluently by seventh grade.

Opportunities for the Education First Foreign Exchange Program (EF) were brought to Wennicke's attention through friends and family.

Wennicke put in her application in 2015, but said the deadline for applying before departure is about two months prior. The program representatives choose what state the student goes to, but for \$1,250 the student may choose what state they want to reside in if they're coming to America.

The requirements to be an EF foreign exchange student are having at least a C average and speak English fluently. For the round-trip flight, going to New York the first three days in America, and for insurance is \$12,500. Host families are required to provide a roof over their head and somewhere to sleep. They have the option of making them pay for food, but most families opt to pay for basic needs.

Calls to Bellevue's EF coordinator went unanswered.

The trip to New York is called Welcome Days. It

lasts around three days and everyone that students room with are headed to the same state as one another. The first day of Welcome Days consists of classes on what they will be experiencing while they are in America, expanding into the laws and homesickness. The second day consists of a tour around Manhattan and New York City. The evening of the second day is a barbecue or what they call a 'goodbye' party and the third day wasn't really a day because they have to get up between 1 and 4 a.m. to make their flights.

Education systems between the US and Denmark have other differences as well including sports and school work. Wennicke also noted Denmark sports are not played under the school, rather they play through a club and there's more day-to-day homework in the U.S. than in Denmark.

"School is way easier here but there's a lot more homework," Wennicke said.

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New physics teacher brings example of chasing dreams beyond the classroom

EMILY SCHMIDT
REPORTER

Physics teacher Tim DeHaas may be new to Bellevue West, but he is no stranger to teaching. With 33 years worth of experience, DeHaas has gathered many interesting stories from working both in and out of the classroom.

One of DeHaas' most noteworthy stories is from his time working at T.C. Williams High School, whose football team was the subject of the film "Remember the Titans." When DeHaas first started teaching at the school, it was being represented by 92 different countries. While the transition was smooth, he was nervous starting his career there.

"I was initially terrified because I had never taught in a public school before," DeHaas said. "I had 19 years in all private schools, so I had no idea what I was gonna be in for."

Teaching wasn't always DeHaas' plan for after college, however. DeHaas was originally a chemistry major before he noticed how much fun his physics professor was having and switched to an engineering physics major.

"The appeal is you can be the bridge between the theoretical thinker (the physicist) and the application thinker (the engineer)," DeHaas said. "I realized pretty quickly as graduation approached that those kind of jobs were not what I was interested in."

DeHaas had enjoyed tutoring others and took another year to get his teaching certification. After teaching physics in several different schools, DeHaas applied for a job in Lincoln Public Schools. Lincoln didn't have any openings, but then DeHaas got an



Photo Courtesy of Tim DeHaas

Physics teacher Tim DeHaas works on the set of "The Muppets". He was a puppeteer for "The Muppets Take Manhattan."

email from Bellevue Public Schools asking him to apply. Since DeHaas lives in Lincoln, he has an hour commute each day.

"I usually leave around 6," DeHaas said. "I get up at 5, I shower, I eat breakfast, I try to have 15 minutes of zen time with my cats, and then I pack up and go."

Since starting his year at West, DeHaas has proved his worth with his seemingly endless energy and experience.

"I can tell his enthusiasm and his passion for what he teaches and his wanting to build a relationship with the kids, so I think he has as a whole made our department a more positive place," Science Department Chair Nicole Menard said.

DeHaas' most interesting stories don't come from inside the classroom, but outside. One of the English

teachers DeHaas worked with co-wrote an episode for Barney Miller, an American sitcom about a police station captain and his officers.

"I was very intrigued by that," DeHaas said. "I decided that I wanted to try script writing."

DeHaas considered what he knew best and picked Star Trek because he had read a bunch of the tie-in novels. He wrote a couple of scripts and called to Paramount, the film studio that produced Star Trek: The Next Generation. He spoke to the assistant of Gene Roddenberry--the creator of Star Trek--who told DeHaas he needed an agent.

"The problem with that was you can't sell a script without an agent and you can't get an agent unless they know somebody wants what you have, so it was a

catch-22," DeHaas said.

DeHaas did some digging and found out Roddenberry's assistant would be at a Star Trek convention near him. Since Roddenberry's assistant was an employee of Paramount, he couldn't legally read the scripts, but the assistant's two friends could. His first attempt only got him an agent, but the second time he submitted a script was picked up and scored him an invitation to pitch more ideas.

"At that time, I didn't find this out until later, they actually changed their policy," DeHaas said.

"They were the only series and one of the few ever that allowed anybody to submit a script."

There were over 10,000 scripts submitted that season, and DeHaas' was one of the six bought. DeHaas

also wrote five comics for "Babylon 5". For one of his comics, DeHaas picked an outline alluded to in a TV episode and had a special reference put in because they thought the episode would come out before the comic.

"It was really strange," DeHaas said. "So my comic book came out first, like 3 months earlier and everybody saw the reference, but didn't get to find out what it meant until the episode aired later, and that was really cool."

DeHaas' comic came out earlier than the episode because the show was syndicated and the last four episodes were held back and used in the following season. DeHaas still enjoys writing today.

"I think my preference is short stories," DeHaas said. "I think my preference is in

short stories" DeHaas said. The hard thing about writing for a show like Star Trek is you have to play in somebody else's sand box and you have to play by their rules, and sometimes it's very hard to figure out exactly what those rules are."

DeHaas was also a puppeteer for the film "The Muppets Take Manhattan." His puppetry career started when he auditioned for his high school talent show as a sophomore. He was selected and had his puppet lip sync to a Barry Manilow song, which the crowd went wild for.

"That's when my interest really started skyrocketing, so I did more and ended up co hosting the talent show my senior year with my puppets," DeHaas said.

At the time, DeHaas was interested in working for the Muppet Show. He called and asked how he could work for them, and they told him to send in a video of his work. DeHaas staged and filmed a 15 minute puppet show by himself.

"I've been thinking about this a lot, I can't remember how I did this, but I went to New York and talked my way into the Muppets and got someone to sit down in a room with a big screen and watch it with me and critique it," DeHaas said.

Like his scripts, he was originally rejected. A year later he received an invitation to audition. On the first day of class, DeHaas told all his students they should chase their dreams. He maintains there's something that everyone dreams of doing, and he told them if they didn't believe him to Google him.

"Every person dreams about doing something and if you don't try, you're gonna be thinking 'what if?' for the rest of your life," DeHaas said.

Instagram pages fuel small business venture for senior

EMILY SCHMIDT
REPORTER

Many students have jobs, but very few make money without working for a company or business. Senior Nathan Alvarado uses the social media platform Instagram to make profit.

Alvarado's parents said he always had an entrepreneurial spirit. Through trial and error, they've seen him thrive.

"It has evolved and grown since he was 2 or 3 yrs old," Alvarado's parents said in an email. "But now [we] support him to both explore & focus which will hone his future."

Alvarado first became interested in the industry when he noticed many Instagram pages selling shout-outs and building up their followings.

"I had extra time on my hands and I was looking through all these Instagram accounts and I was wondering, 'Why would they want to do that? Why would they want to build their pages up?' so I did some research on it," Alvarado said.

Alvarado started by creating his own program using the macro recorder program TinyTask.

A macro recorder is a piece of software that records user actions for play-

back that uses proxies to put the accounts in a different location because if you have like 30 accounts in one location, Instagram's going to ban that," Alvarado said.

Alvarado came up with the formula for selling accounts based on his experiences. For example, since five proxies cost Alvarado ten dollars a month, an account with 20,000 followers would cost roughly \$500.

"It's basically how much I've used the account," Alvarado said. "If I've used an account for a whole year, I've bought like \$10 per month worth of proxies and then just double that."

Through the process, Alvarado had the encouragement and support of his parents. They have supported him both administratively and financially. They helped him learn to operate his business and bought him the supplies and equipment necessary for his success.

"Nathan has a desire to succeed and strives to improve by doing his research and reading books about what has worked and not worked," Alvarado's parents said.

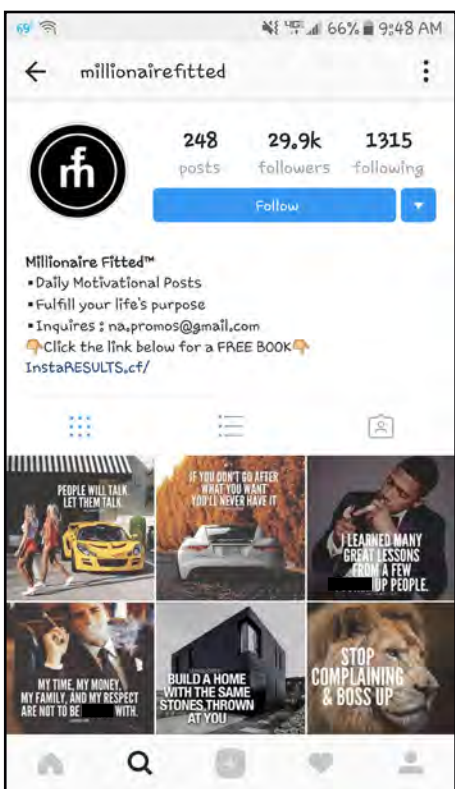


Photo courtesy of Nathan Alvarado

back at a later time. The main advantage of using a macro recorder is that it allows a user to perform complex operations much faster and with less effort without requiring custom computer programming or scripting.

"I have a program I made

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The Right Place to Go . . . to See

Theatre department gets new teacher and full fall play

JAMES WALKER-SCHULTE
REPORTER

Continued from Front Page.

“You Can’t Take It With You” is one of my favorite plays,” Ettinger said. “This is actually the first play that I was cast in when I was in high school as a freshman. I kind of wanted that parallel of, I acted in this as one of my first plays and I wanted it to be one of the first plays I directed here at Bellevue West,” Ettinger said.

The play will be a comedy with a full cast chosen during its auditions.

“I play one of the two

lovers’ fathers, who is a very uptight and conservative old man. He sees things traditionally and when he’s introduced to a weird family that’s not normal in the 1930’s he’s shocked and wants to get out of there,” Senior Gage Rynders said. “He also wants his son to be happy the most he can, though, so he puts up with it.”

The cast and crew will prepare for the play from auditions up until it’s opening.

“There’s lots of preparation, we’re starting rehearsals right now. We just did our first read-through yesterday and today, and then

we’ll start rehearsals. We’ll start blocking out where people are going to stand and move during the play and we’re going to start tech days soon, too, where we’ll start building the set and figuring out our sound cues and our light cues,” Ettinger said. “We’ll start pulling costumes, making alterations, making new costumes we don’t have, and new props we don’t have. There’s lots and lots that goes into the play, pretty much right up until the point that we open on November 1, we’ll be working after school.”

“You Can’t Take It With You” will run from November 1 to November 4.

Staying organized during the year

ANDREA GONZALES
REPORTER

If you’re the type of person that has loose papers flying around inside your backpack, I was just like you. Then you’re trying to find your algebra homework, but it’s buried under all that mess, so you can’t turn it in. Must be stressful, I get it. Because of those situations, it’s critical for you to stay organized with your school supplies.

Tip #1: Have a Pencil Holder

A lot of us will start the school year with packs of pens, pencils, and highlighters but by the third week have no idea where they went. If this sounds like

you, you probably don’t use a pencil holder. This year, I started using one and it saves me so much time from digging my hand inside my bag in search of a pencil. Having one saves you time and money.

Tip #2: Color Code your Notebooks and Folders

When I go shopping for my school supplies, I make sure each class has a specific color assigned to it for my folders and notebooks. This helps me know which folder my specific assignments are in. It also takes me out of situations like the one I mentioned earlier: I’ll know that my algebra homework is in the blue folder. Even if you don’t decide on color

coding your notebooks and folders, at least have a safe place where you can put your papers.

Tip #3: Use a Planner

If you’re anything like me and have a million things going on at once, a planner will be your best friend. Having a planner really keeps you on track of everything you have to get done. It’s critical for you to write down assignments so you won’t forget to do them. If you’re in sports, clubs, or have a job, a planner will help you manage your time.

Using these three easy tips will help you not lose any assignments, save you money, and help manage your time.

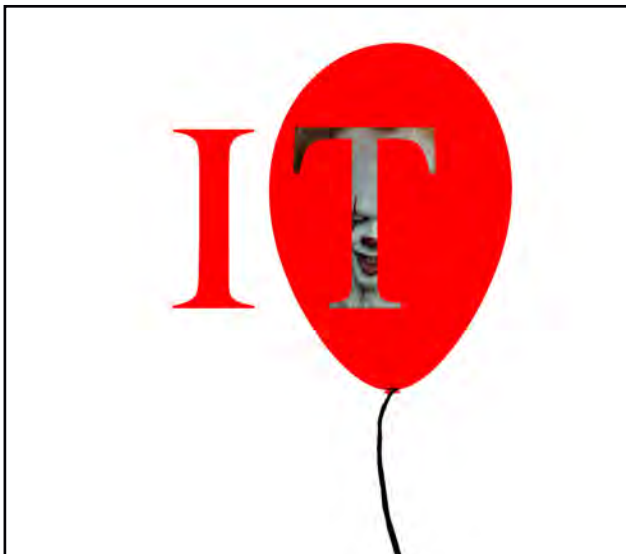
“It” sets new standard for the horror genre

TIFFANY DOMINGO
REPORTER

Recently, horror movies in Hollywood have been more of the same. You have the unnecessary jumpscars and bad plots. Aside from “Get Out” and “Don’t Breathe”, there aren’t any modern horror movies that are worth watching. “It” was definitely an exception.

“It” earned a spot in my top favorite horror movies, and let me tell you, that list is short. Not to mention, it’s another remake of a movie that was oh so long ago. Remakes usually disappoint me, but I was not prepared on how good “It” was.

The plot of the movie revolves around seven outcasts kids who call themselves, “The Loser Club.” Bill Denbrough (Jaeden Lieberher) deals with guilt after the disappearance of



Graphic by Alex Toth

his brother, Georgie (Jackson Robert Scott). He recruits his friends to investigate a wasteland called “The Barrens”, in which Bill theorized that that’s where Georgie has been all along. Throughout their journey, they are haunted by a clown

named Pennywise (Bill Skarsgård), who gets off on fears and preys on children. The Loser Club must overcome their fears together to defeat the killer clown.

There were no big flaws that stood out. The fact that it was overhyped was

the only thing that ruined my experience. But that alone was not the director’s fault. “It” had a serious plot, but I was left with an impression that “It” was going to actually scare me. I left the theater disappointed, not because the movie was bad, but because the media exaggerated the film’s intensity of the psychotic clown too much.

Stephen King’s “It” is a widely acclaimed novel, so having a name like Andy Muschietti (“Mama”) directing a highly anticipated movie definitely turned some heads. Muschietti is not a known name like Quentin Tarantino or Christopher Nolan. But if he keeps directing movies such as “It,” he can make himself known. Muschietti had every opportunity to fail by following the path of every basic horror

movie out there. However, he knew what he was getting himself into and he did not disappoint.

The soundtrack blended in well with the movie. It was eerie and suspenseful by placing the music where it was necessary.

I have to praise Bill Skarsgård for playing the role of Pennywise outstandingly well. He brought out a whole new meaning of creepy. Pennywise’s psychotic personality was unnerving.

Twitching while talking, sewage water dripping out of his mouth, and maintaining an eerie grin was just disturbing to watch. Skarsgård’s acting just felt so real. His last name is well known, and I wouldn’t be surprised if his acting career skyrocketed within the next couple of years. Maybe the next Joker perhaps?

Most of my favorite parts in the movies were the playful banters between Richie (Finn Wolfhard) and Eddie (Jack Dylan Grazer). I looked forward to what they were going to say every time the two were on screen. Not only were they funny, but their conversations filled in the comedy relief that the film needed.

Usually comedies never clash well with horror, but with Richie and Eddie, it just made sense. It was relatable and it’s a typical conversation between two kids.

“It” was definitely worth my money. I didn’t regret spending \$10.50 and another for popcorn and a drink. I’ll definitely be keeping my eyes open for Bill Skarsgård’s next roles.

“It: Chapter Two” will be the grown-up version of “The Loser Club” and it is estimated to release in 2019.



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