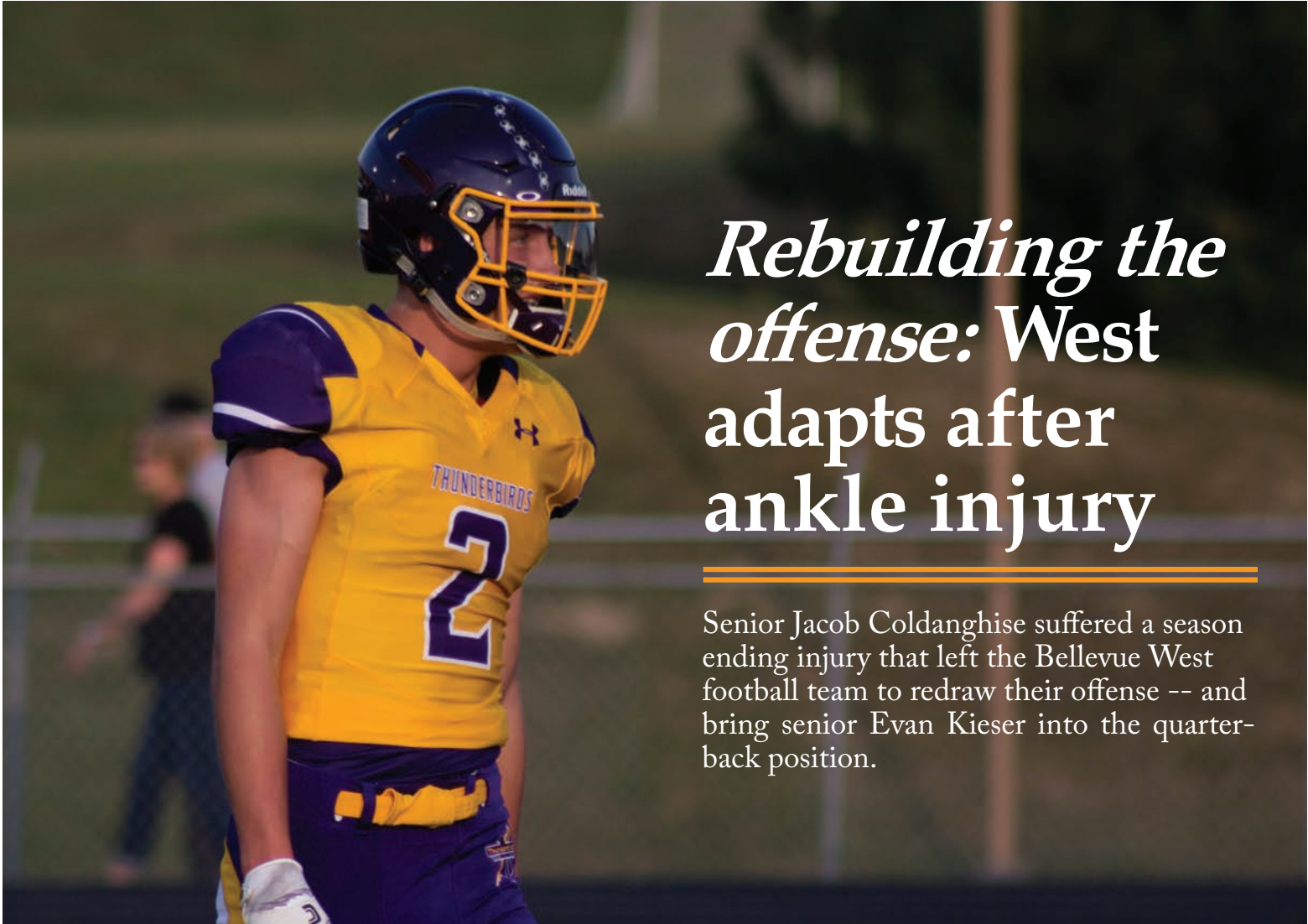


THUNDERBEAT



Rebuilding the offense: West adapts after ankle injury

Senior Jacob Coldanghise suffered a season ending injury that left the Bellevue West football team to redraw their offense -- and bring senior Evan Kieser into the quarterback position.

Photo by Gavin Clang

BILLY DUNKLEMAN
BROADCAST MANAGER

Senior Jacob Coldanghise had high expectations for his final year of high school. After all of his hard work that he had put in for four years, he had done it -- he was Bellevue West's starting quarterback. Unfortunately during the second game of the season, Coldanghise suffered an ankle injury that has him out for the rest of the season leaving many wondering how this team will adjust without their starting quarterback. West's first game of the season

was a victory against Lincoln High. Although Coldanghise didn't put out a mind-boggling stat sheet, he helped the Thunderbird offense seal the win in double overtime. "Jacob was playing fantastic," Head Coach Michael Huffman said. "We don't win that game against Lincoln High without some of the decisions that he made. He only made two poor decisions out of 80 plays. I'll take that any day." At the beginning of West's second game of the season, Coldanghise dislocated his ankle on the first play from scrim-

mage against Bellevue East. There was some uncertainty as to how the injury occurred. "We were passing the ball and I was scrambling," Coldanghise said. "I took a step with my right foot and I'm pretty sure somebody came in from the backside of my leg and my leg got caught in the turf and just dragged across the ground." Coldanghise is expected to miss the rest of the season. He will likely be well enough to return mid-December to play basketball and the injury shouldn't have any long-lasting effects. "As long as his healing is good

and he follows his rehab protocol to get him strong and not try to cut corners to get back sooner, it should be fine," Athletic Trainer Shannon Gier said. "Our biggest thing is just maintaining or getting that muscle strength back for him to be able to run and jump and all those things he's going to have to do for basketball." Senior Evan Kieser was expected to play wide receiver the entire season. However, when Coldanghise went down he was the next man in line to take his place.

Continued on page 6.

PS4 'Spider-Man' game stays true to Peter Parker character

TIFFANY DOMINGO
REPORTER

As a Marvel fanatic, when "Spider-Man" was announced in Sony's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in 2016, I was ecstatic. However, my heart was immediately shattered when I realized that it was only exclusive to Playstation 4 (PS4), since at the time I only owned an Xbox One. From that moment forward, I had been fighting an internal battle on whether I should buy a PS4 just for one \$60 game. My impulsiveness and dedication to Marvel won the battle, convincing me to purchase a \$250 used PS4 from eBay. I can proudly say that I do not regret my decision. When I reached the end of "Spider-Man", I had to sit back and compose myself for a second. Somehow, Insomniac Games managed to pick one of Marvel's most beloved heroes and create the perfect Spider-Man. The game makes you feel like the superhero himself; living every hardship and achievement that the hero is experiencing. The plot, thankfully, is not an origin story.

Continued on page 8.

New health science class offers certifications to students

MEGAN NORMAN
REPORTER

This school year, a new semester long course called Health Science is being offered for students interested in going into the medical field. Science teacher Cynthia Skarda said she is excited to be introducing this new class to students and believes it will be interesting and impactful with everything that it has to offer. "This is my first time teaching it since it's a brand new class," Skarda said. "I'm not quite sure how it's all going to come together this semester. I think it'll be pretty neat because there's lots of hands-on things and it's different, it's not like any other class that's taught here so I think it'll be fun to see how it evolves." This class provides students

with many different opportunities to help them discover what it may be like working in the medical field. In the classroom students are frequently tested on different skills like how to properly wash their hands, put on safety gear, and even how to take vitals. By doing

erinary medicine," Skarda said. Skarda said she believes it will help students decide whether or not they would like to continue into a healthcare career down the road and help students gain some career knowledge and awareness. The students taking this class said they are pretty excited to see what exactly health science is all about. "In my future I want to work in the medical field so this kind of relates what I want to do," junior Aubrie Bishop said, "So I'll have a head start learning how to actually wash your hands and put on the protective gear, taking off gloves, and the medical math were doing. It all leads up for what I'll have to do in the future."

Continued on page 5.

Q&A with mayoral candidate Rusty Hike

NATHAN HAWKINS
SPORTS/MANAGING EDITOR

Why did you decide to run for mayor? My family has lived in this community for generations, I have lived and worked here my entire life, I have invested heavily in our community and I want to see Bellevue flourish. Bellevue's growth has been stagnant for a long time even though our economy is rolling and our neighboring communities are riding the wave. If we are to continue providing our city with quality services, we must expand our tax base. I think I can get us going -- that is why I'm running for mayor. **What do you think are some of the biggest areas Bellevue needs improvement?** We are not developer friendly and that has to change. Our tax base has not grown but our services have. We need to keep a proper revenue stream coming in to cover the services our community deserves. Bellevue has many resources to utilize but also has many challenging obstacles to work around.

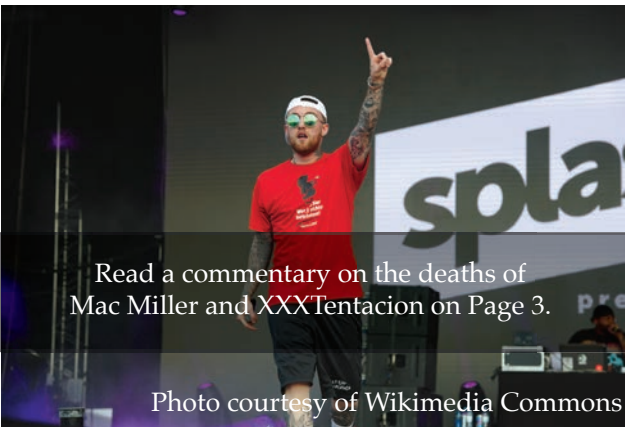
We need to plan better, follow through and do a much better job of attracting new business. We do not sell Bellevue like we should. **How will you make those improvements?** By making sure the right people are in the right places. Provide the tools they need and hold them accountable. We have a lot of good employees and they need to have a clear vision of where we are going, the mentoring to get there, responsibility, and a leadership team to get them there. Strong leadership from the top down will get us where we need to be. **What would be your number one goal if you become mayor?** Building a team that shares my vision and will do what it takes to get there. **Do you feel like Bellevue is currently in a negative direction?** There are some things Bellevue does well but there are a great number of things we can do much better at. *Mayoral candidate Dave Wees was not interviewed because of the lack of contact information.*

"It all leads up to what I'll have to do in the future."
- Aubrie Bishop

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



Read about Green Bellevue's recycling bin donations on Page 2.



Read a commentary on the deaths of Mac Miller and XXXTentacion on Page 3.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

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FDA releases youth anti-vaping campaign

EMMA CLARK
REPORTER

The Food and Drug Administration called the vaping habits of adolescents an “epidemic” in a memo sent to distributors of nicotine devices on Sept. 12. These distributors have been accused of directly marketing to minors and have 60 days to show that their goal isn’t to attract teens. Vapes and Juuls are accused of marketing to minors because of their child-attracting features. They come in different colors, have touch screens, patterns, textures, skins that are available for purchase, and flavored juice. Juuls come with a “party mode” where the device lights up and shines rainbow colors. The most popular e-cigarette is the Juul, making up 72 percent of the market, and producing high contents of nicotine. Each “pod” contains 59 milligrams of nicotine, the same as a pack of cigarettes. The pods come in eight different



flavors including creme brulee, mango, mint, and fruit medley. The FDA also stated that it sent warning letters to 1,100 retailers and have issued 131 fines for selling electronic cigarettes to minors. E-cigarette buyers must be 18 years of age, but according to New York Times’ briefing

with FDA commissioner Doctor Scott Gottlieb, more than 2 million high schoolers were avid e-cigarette users last year. Dean Jessica Prusha said that she is more familiar with teens using e-cigarettes than the average adult because of her role at the school. There is a three-day suspension

for first time offenders using a vape or being in possession of one. The deans have been working with the Director of Student Services, Kevin Mills, on coming up with a more beneficial consequence than the one they have in place. “Instead of doing the three-day suspension, if students agree

to do an online tobacco program we take that suspension and knock it down to one day,” Prusha said. So far the alternative has been more popular and effective than the old one. “Nine times out of 10, students choose to do that in lieu of the three-day suspension,” Prusha said. If a student continues to vape or be in possession of one at school they get an automatic three-day suspension without the choice of the tobacco class. Prusha said every year the number of vaping related incidents in school increases. “We saw quite a few last year but we’ve seen even more this year for sure,” Prusha said. The dean’s office sees these incidents at least a couple times a week and Prusha emphasized that’s at the least. “It’s a personal choice if you’re of age, but be smart and know that you can’t do it at school,” Prusha said. “If an adult wanted to they couldn’t even do it because school is a tobacco-free zone.”

OCTOBER CALENDAR

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 FAFSA available	9 Financial Aid Night	10 PSAT/ Practice ACT	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Conferences	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 No school	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3 ACT

Graphic by LeAnne Bugay

Green Bellevue donates recycling bins to city

AYANNA SOLOMON-SMITH
REPORTER

Students and staff might have noticed bright green containers appearing in Bellevue West’s football stadium, commons, and cafeteria. Those green containers are recycling bins donated by Green Bellevue to promote a better environment. President of Green Bellevue Don Preister helps the community become cleaner by donating bins to public places such as schools and sporting venues. The organization contributed

15 bins to both Bellevue East and West’s football fields. District Supervisor of Custodial Services Andy Severson wanted to start the shipments of the recycling bins at the high schools because they believe students will use them more. Organized in 2009, Green Bellevue’s vision is to make a community “exemplified by healthy environmental practices and lifestyles” and their mission is to come together to ensure a greener, cleaner, more beautiful community. High schools are not the only places where Green Bellevue has

donated recycling bins. They encourage people to recycle more by listing locations of public recycling drop boxes on their website. Aside from recycling and donating, Green Bellevue makes other efforts to help out in the community. They hold various volunteer activities like volunteering at the Bellevue Farmers Market on Saturdays from May 26-Oct. 13 from 8 a.m. to noon. Students interested in Green Bellevue can go to their website for more information.

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Election update: School Board candidates seek to improve BPS

AYANNA SOLOMON-SMITH
REPORTER

Five candidates are running for the three open seats on the Bellevue Public Schools School Board: John Cook, Maureen McNamara, Kelly Bell Wallace, Frank Kumor, and Nina Wolford. School board members collaborate to hire a superintendent, oversee the budget, and oversee the policies and make sure they are enforced. Despite their different approaches, each candidate said they want to make BPS a better district. Maureen McNamara has been an educator and administrator in BPS for the past 35 years. McNamara said she enjoys problem solving, learning from others, and is not afraid of hard work. “The #BeKind initiative is a tremendous movement in our metro schools; we all inherently know this, but a constant reminder,” McNamara said in an email. “I would like to evaluate our school boundaries, as there may need to be some changes based on new housing and shifts in enrollment. Perhaps there are policies that need to be revised to meet the ever-changing needs of our school district.” Kelly Bell Wallace has been the children’s minister at LifeSpring Church for 18 years. Bell Wallace said she looks forward to learning more about the educational systems and rolling up her sleeves to invest in research, ideas, knowledge, involvement, and a voice. “The main steps a school board member needs to take in order to

bring about positive change is to pay attention to details, challenges, and needs in schools,” Bell Wallace said in an email. “By talking with the teachers, parents, kids, and community members along with keeping up with education practices and trends, this can be done..” John Cook is a plumbing mechanical inspector in the City of Bellevue Permits and Inspection Department. Cook was not available for comment. Two candidates currently serve on the board: Nina Wolford and Frank Kumor. They have been on the BPS school board for over 10 years. Frank Kumor has been a member of the school board since 2003. He owns Erwin’s Jewelers and was a Sergeant in the United States Air Force. “I want to keep our buildings in good shape and we need to continue to improve test scores of all students,” Kumor said. Nina Wolford has been a member of the school board for 12 years. She is a retired English teacher and has been a resident of Bellevue for 69 years. Wolford was not available for comment. Nov. 6 is Election Day. Nov. 5 is the deadline for the in-person early voting at the election commission office. In order to vote, students must register by going to nebraska.gov, print out the application and take it to the Election Commission at 501 Olson Dr # 4, Papillion, NE 68046.

Staff Ed: Certifica- tions give students opportuni- ties to get ahead

EDITORIAL BOARD

In the past few years, Bellevue Public Schools has rolled out certification programs for high school students. According to principal Kevin Rohlf, BPS provides ServSafe certification for culinary arts, Occupational Safety and Health Administration for skilled and technical services, Microsoft for business, Certified Emergency Response for health sciences, A+ for information technology, and Adobe Certified Designers for journalism.

The curriculum in these classes allows students time to learn the skills necessary to earn these certifications, making the school day increasingly relevant to these students. Working towards the certifications also gives students an opportunity to learn skills outside of the curriculum.

Certifications allow students to leave high school with more than just a diploma—it allows them to leave with skills that will provide more opportunities to excel. Certifications give students an edge in the job market and college entry competition. Try comparing that to the thousands of other job and college applicants that have to persuade their higher-ups that they're advanced in their field of study. Students with certifications can show their certificate and maybe have some doors open automatically for them whereas competitors may have to work harder to reach the same level.

For this reason, The Thunderbeat Editorial Board is proud of BPS for realizing how certifications will advance graduates in life after high school. It's given us a sense of security in our possible college admissions and motivates us to invest in our futures because we know we'll have our training to support us.

A true legacy requires remembering both good and bad



ALEX TOTH
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the wake of prominent celebrity deaths like that of Mac Miller, John McCain, and XXXTentacion, the public is seemingly going through its collective mourning phase every couple of months.

Each death seemed to elicit a different reaction. From resentful to reminiscent, it seems that especially recently, questioning whether celebrities should be mourned or not has been especially prevalent on social media.

The death of 26-year-old rapper and musician Mac Miller is still fresh on everyone's mind. Not since the death of Robin Williams have I seen such love for not only his art but him as a person. "We all felt supported and loved by Mac and that's incredible, thank you for supporting me, thank you for the music," Zack Fox, friend of Miller and comedian said on Twitter.

Some are quick to blame his overdose on his ex-girlfriend Ariana Grande who not long after breaking up with Miller, got engaged to comedian Pete Davidson. Blaming Grande for Miller's actions is not only uninformed but unnecessary. It's up to him how he handles a breakup, and due to his past history of addiction, making it her fault is just lazy.

It's clear to me now (unfortunately because of his death) how important he was to so many people, making not only a great impact on the music industry, but on the lives on those around him.

The most controversial and discussed example of this is the death of 20-year-old rapper XXXTentacion. Due to sexual and domestic



Nicolas Völcker, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA

Mac Miller performing in Ferropolis, Germany in 2017. Miller died Sept. 7 2018 in Studio City, California

misconduct allegations of aggravated battery of a pregnant woman, domestic battery by strangulation and false imprisonment, XXX throughout most of his career had a questionable public image.

What XXX did was deplorable, which was why I was surprised that his fans were both quick to deny these allegations, and if not that, forgive him when he's shown that his behavior was not an isolated incident.

His death isn't anything to be celebrated but when thinking of his legacy, it's important to remember both the good and bad he did within his life.

Seeing the contrasting reactions between both deaths raises questions on how we treat ce-

lebrity deaths. Reactions to XXX were split for the most part. I had friends both ecstatic and devastated at the news, which I'd never seen before in reaction to any death of a celebrity.

I lie somewhere in the middle of the two extremes. Death is inherently sad, but in cases of malicious and harmful individuals it's hard to empathize too much with them which is why I wasn't too surprised at my neutral reaction to the death of XXX.

While I can give him credit for his influence and being at the forefront of SoundCloud rap during 2016-2017, my appreciation for him stops there. And since none of his music impacted me on a personal level,

there's no attachment there either.

With Mac Miller's death, on the other hand, all I could do is sit in my car in shock when I heard the news. My Twitter timeline had turned into an infinite stream of eulogies documenting the positive impact he's had on other's lives. And as unfortunate as the circumstances were, I was brought closer to Miller through tweets and articles by those who knew him personally and by his music I hadn't heard before.

I can't blame people who did have personal attachment to celebrities or their art, but forgetting their crimes molds their legacy into something untrue and can give the impression that behaviour like that is forgivable.

Tattoos and piercings shouldn't affect hiring process



AYANNA SOLOMON-SMITH
REPORTER

In 2018, people have become more open to piercings and tattoos. Employers already limit what can be worn with dress codes. By forcing concealment or controlling tattoos and piercings they're also limiting their workers' personalities. I can't believe that people still argue over whether tattoos and piercings are acceptable to have in a professional workplace.

In my parents' generation, tattoos and piercings used to be seen as gang affiliations and taboo to

have. As years have passed, more and more people have some sort of body art because society's outlook on it has changed. A survey conducted by Statista said that 42 percent of Americans have tattoos and another 19 percent considered getting one. Some have special meanings and others are just because they look cool. If society's outlook on them has changed, businesses should be more open to the idea of their employees having them.

A friend of mine was working at her job for months and was one of the best employees I've ever worked with. She was hardworking and independent. Customers loved her and she was on her way to becoming a manager. But that was all taken away from her all because the company didn't like the way she looked. She decided to get a piercing with a bar going through her upper ear. She managed to hide it for awhile but, one day while not working a shift, a manager saw her piercing and fired her on the spot. My friend said she was fired for her looks and not for something that actually mattered.

Yes, I know a few businesses allow their workers to have tattoos



Photo by Ayanna Solomon-Smith

Megan Starks showing off her ear and nose piercing and moon tattoo

and piercings but why not all of them? They don't have an effect on a person's work ethic whatsoever. And as cheesy as this sounds, don't judge a book by its cover. The whole point of a job interview is about capabilities, not appearance.

Tattoos and piercings are meant to be shown, not hidden. It's art anyway; some may like it and others may not.

Tattoos and piercings may not be something that everyone will want but that doesn't mean you should shame others for having those type of things. Keep an open mind to new concepts and ideas. Hopefully one day all businesses will allow their workers to freely express themselves by having tattoos and piercings leading to a more progressive work culture.

Editorial Policy

The Thunderbeat is an official publication of Bellevue Public Schools and is a part of the learning curriculum of the Communicative Arts Department.

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The role of The Thunderbeat is to inform students and others in the community of events that pertain to student life at Bellevue West.

To read The Thunderbeat's full editorial policy, scan the QR code below:





Photo by Ayanna Solomon-Smith

Counselors Sue Polk, Melissa Minahan, and Lynne Henkel meet in the counseling office to talk about their days after school hours.

Counselors work with Metro, UNO; ‘fantastic job’ is more than schedules

EMILY SCHMIDT
COPY EDITOR

It doesn't take someone unusually observant to notice that the counselors are constantly busy. Contrary to popular belief, their attention isn't wholly focused on schedules and response counseling, however. "We can help with so many things, anything related to academics," Counselor Susan Polk said, "In my opinion the role of a counselor is to help students with whatever is getting in the way of their education." Nebraska high school counselors have both educational and experience requirements to meet. Among those are a Master's degree in school counseling and at least two years of teaching experience. There are mulitple paths counselors take to stay informed and up to date on trends and issues affecting teenagers. "It's constant trying to keep up with the changes because when I started as a counselor 18 years ago, I definitely wasn't dealing with as much of the mental health stuff that I am now," Counselor Molly

Moore said, "So I've had to learn how to work with students who are feeling depressed or maybe even suicidal, how to talk to those students and what's the steps to take," The classroom experience hours are put to use by West counselors in the form of occasional lessons. Counselor Lynne Henkel helps freshmen transition into high school by covering topics such as the workings of GPA and class rank as well as bullying and harassment. Moore addresses suicide awareness and Counselor Melissa Minahan talks to Career Development classes about options after high school such as apprenticeships and college admission tests. With Polk covering coping skills and decision making in Sophomore classes, all grade levels are reached. "We try to focus on a topic that's relevant to the students," Polk said, "We've talked about appropriate social media use, we've talked about drinking, just some of those teen issues that we want students to have the skills to make good decisions in those situations." In between teaching and helping students, there's always pa-

perwork that needs attending. There's standardized tests to be ordered and numerous plans to be written. The counselors are in charge of writing and ensuring 504s and Independent Education Plans are followed. "If they're diabetic for example, they may need to have some accommodations: be able to have a snack or may need extended time if their blood sugars could be up and down or be able to go to the nurse's office," Moore said, "Sometimes they need a written plan for that." The counselors are also a vital part of groups that provide students with information they might not get in a classroom setting. For example, Moore works with Metropolitan Community College to ensure students get the essentials for their classes and works with the University of Nebraska Omaha on Dual Enrollment. Minahan works with staff to produce Advisory lessons. "A lot of that is seeing what are the needs of our building and working with staff to come up with lessons and getting those out that relate to some personal social things, career things, as well

as some college things that need to be addressed," Minahan said. Creating schedules may not sound like a year-round job, but when students inevitably come in to make changes each semester, the counselors hardly get a break. The process begins in the spring when they take class requests from students. From there, it's a summer long puzzle of creating enough sections and spacing them to get as many students into their ideal classes as possible. "There's certain classes like band or choir that set the schedule, and so you start with those ones," Henkel said, "If you have any traveling teachers, that kind of sets the schedule because they can only be here certain periods. We look at those first and then we lay out the others in terms of how many sections we need of each class." All four counselors agreed that juggling their work load requires great time management and flexibility. There's no "typical" day because they can never predict when a student will need their help. "I just love the opportunity every day to advocate for students, so I think it's a fantastic job," Polk said

Q&A with lead of the fall play

LEANNE BUGAY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Q: What roles did you audition for?
[Mrs. Ettinger] has a list of characters and you don't audition for a specific role. I put my name down for all the male roles except the ones that didn't have many lines. Charlie was one of them.

Q: Were you surprised that you got the role of Charlie?
I was nervous, but a lot of people were telling me I'd make a good Charlie. I saw the results and I was really shocked.

Q: What was the competition for Charlie like?
A lot of the guys wanted that role. I was nervous because there were a lot of other people that were really good. Everyone was really good and [Mrs. Ettinger] had a hard time cutting people she said. But people have been kind and told me congratulations.

Q: Will this role be a challenge? Why or why not?
Probably because I've never had a big role before. I just have to put my mind to it and I can do it.

Q: What are you most excited for with this role?
Working with other people and being more of a part of something. I want to make my family proud, too.

Q: How will you prepare for this role?
Charlie has a British accent so I'm trying to become British for that. I'm not doing very good at that yet.

Q: How have you been practicing your British accent?
I've been trying to watch videos on how to do things with your mouth to sound British. That's not really helping but Mrs. Ettinger said we're going to work on it.

Q: What past acting experience do you have?
I've taken acting classes at the Rose Theater and I was in the fall play last year. All of my classes have been at the Rose.

Q: Do you have any pre-show rituals and why?
We do a bunch of warm-ups to get into it. We do a bunch of mini games and building games.

Q: How do you stay motivated throughout rehearsals?
The fact that I get to be on stage in front of people -- that's what I want to do. I put in hard work to get what I want. It's what I want to do with my life -- to be an actor. I'm just trying to get more experience with it. It gets tiring but it's still fun and enjoyable. It's worth it in the end.

Q: Where do you want to go in your life with acting?
I want to go to a college to do acting. I know that's a big dream but I'm going to at least try and audition for stuff.

Q: Why did you start theater when you did?
I auditioned for stuff freshman year and I didn't get it. I just always wanted to act since I was little. It stuck with me and my family has always encouraged me to do it.

Mascot Club carries on traditions

BROOKE JONES
REPORTER

The Mascot Club is responsible for creating a lively atmosphere and getting spectators excited during sporting events. The number of members in the club varies, but they are never short staffed. Sometimes, people will mascot one time just for the experience. Math teacher David Butler has been the sponsor of the Mascot Club for the past seven years. Several students in his class became interested in mascotting after he started sponsoring the club, and each year he encourages students to join. "When you ask people or when we try to get people to be mascots they're usually like 'yeah, no I don't really want to do that'," Butler said. "But once they do, mostly everyone stays." Butler also said that the club has a good mix

of guys and girls who join. "Some years we have more guys, this year we have more girls," Butler said. Senior Hailey Golden has been a mascot since her sophomore year and took the position of vice president this year. She recalled the nervousness she felt upon mascotting her first game. "It's a little intimidating at first because you're in this huge suit and people just swarm you and it's crazy," Golden said. Golden participated in several sporting events over the course of her sophomore and junior year. This year, her duties have consisted of teaching others what to do while in costume and taking them where they need to go. "We don't really get in the birds anymore because we're president and vice president so we're just there to make sure everything runs smoothly and escort the new people and you know, make sure

they don't get beat up or anything," Golden said. "You'd be surprised how often that happens." Senior Nathan Bochtler, president of the mascot club, addressed a main concern of spectators: the costumes' smell. "After someone sweats a lot, that's the gross part," Bochtler said. "It doesn't really smell because we have one of those car freshener things at the top of the suit." Bochtler also said that football games were better for the mascots because they had more freedom to walk around, where at basketball games they are unable to go near the court. The mascots do not do much to prepare for sporting events. They simply put on the costume and go into the crowds. "There's not really a lot of preparation that goes into it," Butler said. "It's a pretty low-key activity, but it's one that's very noticeable to the community."



Photo by Brooke Jones

Mascot poses for a picture at Bellevue West's homecoming game.



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Circle of Friends creates amity among students

LEAH LARSON
LAYOUT EDITOR

For eight years, school psychologist Joni Christensen has managed a group known as Circle of Friends at Bellevue West. Along with the help of speech pathologists Cindy Larson and Tricia Soares, she provides opportunities for students to develop social skills and create long-lasting friendships. Circle of Friends is well-known throughout the metro area. Teachers can apply for grants to start a group at their school, as Christensen did, through the Autism Action Partnership. The non-profit charity works to enhance alliances that will better the lives of children and young adults with autism. “The grant has run out now, so we kind of have to be creative in our funding and look for other grant opportunities,” Christensen said. While she searches for other grant opportunities, Christensen turned to group meetings. Every week, students spend time with one another and start the process of building upon those relationships. This method of teaching in the moment allows for genuine friendships for form, not just acquaintances. “I think that they learn a lot from each other,” Christensen said. Sophomore Sydney Doyle joined her Circle of Friends group at Lewis and Clark Middle School in seventh grade, making this year her fourth as a member. Along with the group meetings, she attends monthly community outings. Whether it’s meeting at a restaurant or going bowling, outings allow interactions between members to extend outside of the school setting. “I just get to hang out with all my friends,” Doyle said. “I get to learn and meet other people that I didn’t know of.”

Bringing the group together regularly hammers home their message of inclusion. Within Circle of Friends, peers become aware of the differences other students have without disbarring them from any activities. They learn to recognize Autism as a disability; it’s not always visible from the outside. “We’re about truly getting to know people and appreciating the things that they have to offer as a person,” Christensen said. Senior Mia Pancoe has been a member of Circle of Friends since her sophomore year. Being in the group offered her a deeper perspective about the truth behind Autism. “I feel like people know the general effects of Autism,” Pancoe said. “But not how hard it is for them to branch out and make new friendships.” Pancoe and other positive peers are invited through teacher recommendations or because of their excitement about the joining. Christensen knows in advance which students she thinks would benefit from it and they go about forming the group from there. “I wish I would have joined earlier,” Pancoe said. “So just reach out if you want to be involved.” While Circle of Friends aspires to introduce students to new people, it also gives rise to change on individual levels. It provides a platform to those who might not have had one in the past. “When I got to Circle of Friends, I finally got to be able to talk,” Doyle said. “Because when I was little, I was silent.” In terms of after high school, Circle of Friends helps students to overcome the social changes they may face so that they can move forward with confidence. They leave prepared for future interactions and might even ready to help others work through them as well. “I’m going to go ahead and try to socialize with others,” Doyle said. “When I go to college, I’ll be ready.”



Photo by Megan Norman

Senior David Young cleans up after lab.

New health science class offers certifications to students

MEGAN NORMAN
REPORTER

Continued from Front Page.


This class will allow students to get hands on experience of different medical and safety procedures as well as different certifications and the knowledge needed to

work in a health science career. Skarda said students will learn how to properly perform and be certified in CPR, while the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) certification will allow students to be ready in any crisis to help out around the community. “So Mrs. Skarda has told us that we are going to try to get CPR certified and I didn’t know we were gonna do that in this

class,” Bishop said. “So I’m excited to see if we can actually be certified for that through the school.” Students said they also appreciate how the class is run and enjoy all of the different activities that are done. “I like the freedom that we get and the way our teacher presents everything,” sophomore Isaac O’Neal said, “I like how our tests are hands-on activities instead of pencil and paper.”



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Undefeated: Thunderbirds find ways to win after season-ending injury

BILLY DUNKLEMAN
BROADCAST MANAGER

Continued from Front Page.

Kieser has experience playing the quarterback position, as he started for the Thunderbirds in 2016 before going down with a torn ACL. Kieser said though his focus the past two seasons was on the wide receiver position, he couldn't completely forget his quarterback skills. "I have to do both at the same time just in case something did happen like this and I had to go in," Kieser said. Kieser's athleticism has always been clear at whatever position he played. To Huffman, that was his greatest asset as a quarterback. "Jacob is a pure passer, he has a very strong arm and he can make every throw that we have," Huffman said. "That's not to say he's never under thrown a ball. He's able to run but he's not a runner. Evan knows exactly what he's looking at. He's very accurate but his arm is not as strong, but when he gets his whole body into it he can really let

it rip. He's a tremendous runner." A big factor on the offensive side is how the wide receivers will need to adjust to a new starting quarterback. Top receivers Xavier Betts and Shane Dailey are big contributors on how this Thunderbird team performs, and if the quarterback can not deliver good throws then West will certainly have difficulties on offense. "It's going to depend with the wind," Huffman said. "Evan can throw a deep ball but if we get a stiff wind it's gonna be hard for him to throw it deep. The first two deep balls he threw against Papio-South he overthrew them. I didn't even know that was possible with Betts and [Dailey] because they are both so fast. We have a lot of talent there." Even though losing a starting quarterback can take a huge toll on any football team, the Thunderbirds have not lowered their expectations for this year. They believe they can adjust and that Kieser can lead them to the state championship game. "Evan probably knows this offense just as well as anybody else," Coldanghise said. "He's a very



Photo by Bryce Wetzler

Senior quarterback Jacob Coldanghise is rolled off the field after the second play of the East-West game on Aug. 31. Senior Evan Kieser replaced Coldanghise, and led the Thunderbirds to an 81-6 victory.

bright kid and he can definitely lead this team to a state title." If the Thunderbirds do make the state championship game then the crowd might catch a glimpse of Jacob Coldanghise in uniform and on the field. "I told myself if we make the state championship game that I'm gonna suit up that game and Coach Huffman said I can go in for one play," Coldanghise said.

Private donors to support baseball field updates

EMMA GAGE
REPORTER

Erosion in the infield, dangerous dugouts, no lighting, and fences that don't function don't exactly describe a perfect day at the ballpark. For the Bellevue West baseball program, these conditions are all too familiar. Construction on the lower baseball field at West started on Aug. 3 to redo the infield, dugouts, fencing, back-stop, and add lights. However, the whole process started with the district approval for a turf infield. On June 4, the Bellevue Board of Education voted 5-0 to replace the dirt infield on the Bellevue West baseball field with turf. Head baseball coach Jason Shockey said that the infield was a necessity and will improve overall field conditions. Bellevue West Activities Director Jon Mauro said he believes that the district will save money by installing a turf infield. "It was so uneven between the grass and the dirt that we were going to have to do a complete face lift where we rip the grass off, level out all the dirt, and then relay the grass," Mauro said. "The price on that we had estimated to be about \$25,000. It costs us about \$10,000-\$12,000 a year just to maintain the infield. In the long term that'll probably end up actually saving the district money." The field was missing a lot of features that other metro-area schools have and what it did have was not in good condition. "[The backstop] was in really

rough shape, poles were bent, the netting was ripped," Mauro said. "We are the last school in the metro area to not have lights; so we are getting lights up there. The fencing there was in really rough shape in terms of its condition." There were also safety concerns with the dugouts of the field. "Both teams in the respective dugouts are extremely close to home-plate," Shockey said. "Sinking the dugouts and putting a fence up will reduce the risk of anyone getting hit by a foul ball. The inside (and in some parts the outside) of our dugouts port that the field has seen. "I don't know if the district has ever sunk money into that field," Mauro said. "I think the running story of that field is it was paid for by selling candy bars when Don Storey was a coach here in the 80's and 90's, early 2000's." According to Mauro and Shockey, the estimated overall cost for the updates could be anywhere from \$800,000 to \$1.1 million. In order to support this cost, money had to come from a few different places. The turf will be paid for by the Bellevue Public Schools

Bellevue West's baseball field gets a new fence at the beginning of September. Dugouts and lights will be added prior to the team's spring season.



Photo by Gavin Clang

Thunderbird Senior Nights

Football - October 5 @ 7:00 P.M.

Volleyball - October 16 @ 7:00 P.M.

Tournaments

Tennis Metros - October 3-4

Softball Districts - October 4-5

New season brings new atmosphere to the softball team

MOOSHOO TRAN
NEWS EDITOR

The softball team lost nine seniors to graduation and returning players were doubtful at the beginning of the season, but the team has a different culture brought on by the number of younger players joining in for this year, resulting in a Class A No. 9 ranking as of press time. "I think this year above all else, this team has a new identity," softball coach Laura Scott said, "And we as a coaching staff have kind of seen that trying to adapt to it a little bit more. They're young, they're having fun. They don't really see who we're playing or what we're playing, they kinda just wanna play and there's a lot of more fun involved." The players said they feel a strong sense of the team as whole this year as well. "We all get along better I guess, and I think it's because we have more team bonding," senior Madison Machacek said, "We have more time together, and we get to see each other in school, and plus, we get to practice every single day." The team has had a lot of success playing against other teams this year: from defeating teams that have dominated the leaderboard in past years to winning their first tournament. "It was pretty cool, we've never won [our first season tournament]," Machacek said, "We beat Elkhorn South. We never beat Elkhorn South in a tournament, we always lost to them." Winning their first tournament was the first of many victories the team has notched this season. "We've worked so hard this past summer, and we've done Volt, and also, just working hard," junior Paige Stuck said, "We're just good athletes, so that really helps out." Volt is an app that allows for athletes to track their progress in training and build personalized workouts based on their data. The team practiced throughout the summer and now every day during the school year. "They work hard," Scott said, "They work hard day in and day out, they've done some really really good things, which makes me just raise some expectations even higher." For the last five years under Scott's coaching, the softball team has yet to make it to state. This year, the players and coaches believe they have a chance in advancing to state. "Knowing the talent level we have, knowing how hard they work at practice and at games, we definitely have the possibility to make it," Scott said.

Freshman Kiviniemi takes control on volleyball court

MEGAN NORMAN
REPORTER

Freshman Kealy Kiviniemi was thrilled when she found out that she made the varsity volleyball team this season. Kealy is know as well-rounded player by her coach and is always radiating positivity on and off the volleyball court. She always shows up with a smile on her face and knows the game like no other.

Kealy started playing volleyball when she was seven years old and played for a team at Nebraska Premier Volleyball and has been in love with the sport ever since. She said she is excited for her first year of experiencing high school volleyball as a part of the varsity team.

“It feels really cool just being in on the first game and being able to get the first kill or the first block,” Kealy said. “It just brings a lot of excitement.”

Her brother, sophomore Ty

Kiviniemi, said he enjoys watching her play and is proud of everything that she has accomplished.

“It’s definitely an experience because now I have a deeper connection to that sport and going to those varsity games means a whole lot more,” Ty said. “It’s really cool to watch her play at the varsity level as a freshman.”

Kealy leads her team in statistical categories with 104 kills, 311 attacks and the highest kill percentage with a .334% as a middle hitter. Her brother believes she has worked extremely hard to get to the competitive level that she plays at and he sees how driven she is to succeed.

“She has worked very hard to get to the level of playing that she has, for her club team at Premier she was on the top team for two years,” Ty said.

Kealy plans to continue participating in volleyball past high school and into college be-

cause of her love for the sport.

“It means a lot, I want to play in college and I just want to do it for like the rest of my life because it’s really fun,” Kealy said.

Kealy’s teammates and coaches can clearly see her passion for the sport and appreciate her enthusiasm that she carries through every game.

“Kealy is a player who is always looking to get better,” varsity volleyball coach Christina Reicks said. “She takes your feedback and criticism in a positive way and uses it to become more knowledgeable and understanding of the game.

Kealy’s teammates always appreciate her presence and her positivity on and off the court.

“She’s always fun to be around and always super talkative and it makes the team a lot more fun because she’s always laughing and bettering the ball every play,” junior Mady Akerson said.

Kealy and the rest of the vol-

leyball team have a very strong bond this year. Everyone gets along very well and enjoys their time together.

“I like how close we are there’s not like an odd person out or like divide like groups and stuff we’re all just one team together,” Kealy said.

The team has high hopes for this school year’s season and are anticipating on making it to state.

“Kealy always has a smile on



Photo by Jay Walker-Schulte

Freshman middle hitter Kealy Kiviniemi waits for the serve in a home game against Burke.

her face and comes to practices and games with such positive energy,” Reicks said. “She’s a great teammate and a very smart, well rounded player with high volleyball IQ.”

5 QUESTIONS WITH NATE

1. You’re on an abandoned island. What is the one movie, song, and board game would you bring?

Does Jenga count? Jenga, 2001 A Space Odyssey, and “Nights” by Frank Ocean.

2. Could you beat a cheetah in a 5km race? Why or why not?

Yes, definitely. I run cross country, a cheetah can only run for so long.

3. What’s your favorite type of car and why?

BMW M3E30, because the box style is original and classic.

4. What do you think about when you’re running?

Not running. I think about not running.

5. What’s your pre-meet meal like?

It’s always salmon with rice, chicken with rice, always asparagus, granola, yogurt, lots of iron.

Nathan Hawkins asks Caleb Williams

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Photo from Insomniac Games



Insomniac Games' “Spider-Man” exceeds expectations

TIFFANY DOMINGO
REPORTER

Continued from Front Page.

You're playing an experienced Spider-Man, and not trying to juggle the whole “With great power comes with great responsibility!” mantra over and over again. When making a Spider-Man game, you have to have the perfect blend between the awkwardness and relatability of Peter Parker and the confidence and wits of his alter ego. Spider-Man's obligation as a superhero clashes with his personal life. Peter Parker is often late to his job, forced to bail plans with family and friends, and ruin his relationship with his longtime love interest, Mary-Jane Watson, just so Spider-Man can fight New York City's biggest and baddest villains. As you go through the story, you can see how Peter's life clashes with Spider-Man's. In midst of a battle as Spidey, Peter is always talking to himself. Usu-

ally reminding himself to pay rent and to wash his suit, or thinking about the people in his life. But ultimately, you can see the nobleness that the two characters share. They have to deal with the betrayal of someone close to them and constantly worry about the most important people in their life. Swinging through the city is an essential part of the game, so it's only obvious that the game has perfected the web slinging algorithm. In past Spider-Man games, especially in Activision's “Spider-Man” (2000), Spider-Man's web-swinging never relied on the buildings themselves. Instead, the web shooters would aim straight up at the sky and have our Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man latching onto the clouds and swing from there. But with today's technology, the creators of “Spider-Man” were able to master the physics of web slinging. It's undeniably simple to swing around. Just hold down the R2 button, and after the first couple minutes of trying it out,

you'll find yourself effortlessly swinging around Manhattan. And man, it feels so good to web zip, wall-run, and crawl on the sides of buildings. It takes quite a strategic thinking to plan out where you want to go though. For example, to swing faster, you might have to dive down from a tall skyscraper and web-shoot to the nearest building to gain a greater momentum. But what really makes it unbelievable is the animations of Spidey when he is swinging. The way he soars into a flip to prepare to web sling to another building or when he gracefully twists and turns at the end of the rope as he lands makes everything so realistic. You really feel like Spider-Man swinging across Manhattan. Because it's Marvel, Easter eggs are scattered throughout the whole game. The subtle Marvel Cinematic Universe references that they snuck in incites a warm feeling inside that had me fangirling more and more. While swinging through Manhattan, it's

hard to miss the Avengers Tower, formerly known as Stark Tower. Unfortunately, we don't see any of the Avengers, but Spider-Man does comment to himself that they might be in the West Coast. This is a nod to the West Coast Avengers from the comics, and may even be an Easter egg for the future Avengers game coming up. Furthermore, if you visit Midtown, you can see the never-before-seen Wakanda Embassy. And of course, a Stan Lee cameo is bound to happen somewhere in the gameplay. Since it is an open-world game, there is more to play than just the main story arc. Being Spider-Man means having a full schedule. To level up and upgrade your gadgets, you have to complete side missions and side quests. Crime is all over the factions of Manhattan and whenever it is nearby, will show up on the map. Preventing crimes will give you more experience points. You can check up on Harry Osborn's passionate Oscorp research labs and swing through

clouds to gather data for air pollution, or find anti-serum for the contaminated marine life in the lake. Spider-Man's backpacks are scattered throughout the city and you learn a lot of his back-story once you find them--like broken gadgets from when he fought Vulture and Rhino, or a dinner date receipt with MJ from a long time ago. Taking pictures of Manhattan's famous landmarks, such as the Empire State Building and Radio City Hall, are examples of more side quests. Insomniac Game's “Spider-Man” exceeded my expectations of the game. The game captured the superhero so well, and its final act left me wanting more and excited for the obvious upcoming sequel. I wish that they would have cameoed other Avengers and Marvel characters in, but that is probably just a monetary issue. “Spider-Man” has set up a perfect path for the future Marvel Gaming Universe, like the upcoming Avengers game--"Avengers: Assemble."

Escape music rut with fall playlist

KINLEY HAMILTON
REPORTER

Music surrounds us in our daily lives in a lot of ways, whether it be in commercials, YouTube videos, social media, or directly from our smartphones. For the most part, people stick to listening to their favorite genres. But when the seasons change, so does our choice in music. So if you're stuck in a rut with what you're listening to, here are some different songs that can “pumpkin” spice up this upcoming fall season.

Some Velvet Morning by Nancy Sinatra & Lee Hazlewood: If a song that has “velvet morning” in the title doesn't make you automatically think of fall, I don't know what else will. The contrasting vocals of Lee Hazlewood's deep and cowboy-esque voice and the angelic, floaty sing-

ing of Nancy Sinatra will make you feel like you're the main character in a Wes Anderson movie.

Roslyn by Bon Iver & St. Vincent: “Roslyn” is a classic throwback for all fans of the 2000's vampire teen romance days of “Twilight”. Not only is it a blast from the past, but also a beautiful acoustic piece that is sure to swoon your heart into bundling up in front of the fire on that extra chilly fall day.

White Ferrari by Frank Ocean: If you haven't listened to Frank Ocean's “Blonde”, you're definitely missing out on some great alternative R&B, specifically “White Ferrari”. It's lonely vocals and calm synth instrumentals suit those extra emotional days, and once paired with an autumn temperature, fits the mood perfectly.

Hunny Bee by Unknown Mortal Orchestra: Simply put:

“Hunny Bee” will make you want to dance through a field of sunflowers wrapped up in your favorite big sweater. It has a unique rhythm with a touch of 70's disco, but remains modern with its light vocals.

Water by Juan Wauters: “Water”, a quirky song with a slight hint of country, is a must have on any fall playlist. Despite its simple sound and different style of vocals, it's a perfect combination and quite catchy as well.

Zebra by Beach House: A long drive at night with a dreary autumn rain is just the right time to listen to anything by Beach House, but in particular “Zebra”. The steady beat maintained throughout the song and its dreamy vocals will send you into auto-pilot mode until you reach the next song.

Unique places to visit this fall

EMMA GAGE
REPORTER

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center: Two of fall's most iconic features its weather and bright colors. What better way to experience both than to take a walk through Bellevue's largest nature center? Fontenelle Forest has various events throughout September and October such as “Yoga on the Plaza” and “Trick or Treat in the Forest”.

Skinny Bones Pumpkin Patch: If you're looking for a cost effective pumpkin patch, or even a freshing change from Vala's, Skinny Bones is a great source of traditional fall fun. Open in Blair from Sept. 7 to Oct. 31, Skinny Bones accentuates the classic side of fall with a large pumpkin patch, various barns, and a haunted path. Skinny Bones is

perfect for people who want to spend time in the crisp fall air with friends and family.

Wenninghoff's Farm: Wenninghoff's Farm turns into an exciting mix of outdoor games, animal encounters and hayrides from Sept. 28 to Oct. 31. Each activity is sure to have you up and moving and completely absorbed in old-fashioned seasonal fun. The farm provides endless memories at a low-cost and is great for families and younger children.

Arbor Day Farm and Lied Lodge: The Arbor Day Farm is definitely worth a drive out to Nebraska City. The 260 acres of land create a spectacle of color during the fall months. In addition to its beauty, the farm hosts a multitude of no-scare activities for all ages. The Arbor Day Farm also has the adjoining Lied Lodge, a 14,000 square foot hotel and spa.

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