

THUNDERBEAT

Thunder Brew to hold soft open Dec. 17

LEANNE BUGAY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Future Business Leaders of America and the entrepreneurship class will hold their soft opening of Thunder Brew coffee shop the week of Dec. 17. Thunder Brew will be in the former FBLA closet in the first hallway of the business department. CEOs senior Clara Larson and sophomores Leah Larson and Baden Brumbaugh sparked the idea of an in-school coffee shop as a way to carry out their American Enterprise Project for FBLA. Clara said she thinks a coffee shop would be successful in a high school because of the number of students that already drink coffee throughout the day. “For our project we have to start our own business and incorporate the community or other parts, for example like our business department,” Brumbaugh said. “Mrs. Hinkle has this closet with a window that has just been sitting there.” Thunder Brew will sell iced or hot coffee, tea, and apple cider as well as hot chocolate, lattes, and cappuccinos. 12 different flavors are available for coffee and tea, including regular cane sugar and fruity flavors. “We’ll probably add some snacks next semester and maybe some pre-made drinks or energy drinks,” Clara said. “Right now we’ll just have one size for hot drinks and one size for cold drinks. I’m thinking right now 12 oz for hot and 16 oz for cold.” The CEOs hope to keep prices around \$3 so that students might buy from the Thunder Brew instead of popular coffee



Photo by LeAnne Bugay

Freshman Sophie Goessling paints a mural of her Thunder Brew logo on the outside of the shop at the opening of the business hallway. Goessling was one of two student winners in the coffee shop’s logo contest.

chains like Scooter’s or Starbucks. “I want it to make us money,” Brumbaugh said. “But I also know what it’s like to be a high school student and not have a lot of money for that stuff.” Throughout the process of planning their business, the CEOs met with several local coffee shops and businesses, most notably Spielbound Board Game Cafe, Mara-

thon Ventures, and Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart’s student-run coffee shop, to gain advice on both the logistical and sales sides of the coffee business. “I can read in a book how to talk to a business professional or something,” Brumbaugh said. “But what I like about these locally owned businesses is that they’re happy to help people like me learn.”

In their time meeting with local businesses, both Larson sisters and Brumbaugh received the donation of coffee pots and a bean grinder as well as a discount on coffee beans from Marathon Ventures, who they hope will continue to supply their coffee products and some machinery. Since the shop will be open before school, during first through

fourth periods, passing periods, advisory, GPS, and after school, one aspect that both FBLA and the entrepreneurship class have discussed concern over is tardies due to students waiting in line for coffee. Hinkle said that students will be turned away if they might be late to class.

Continued on page 2.

West reflects on #BeKind

KINLEY HAMILTON
REPORTER

Bellevue West’s motto for this school year is #BeKind. Its main point is to spread kindness around the school by little acts like holding the door open for someone or saying “hello” to a stranger. However, are the little acts of kindness making a big enough impact on the students and staff at West? #BeKind is a metro-wide movement that started with the Ralston Public Schools Superintendent Mark Adler. Ralston held a conference in the spring of 2017 inviting all metro public schools to join the movement. Around the school, there have been different attempts at spreading the kindness initiative. Senior Emily Schiefelbein is focusing her DECA project around #BeKind. “I wanted something that would impact the school and since the #BeKind is a metro-wide thing I thought using that as my project would help spread the message more around,” Schiefelbein said. She’s also pursuing different methods to further her project goal and share the school’s motto. “One of the things we did was we had a Be Kind week and each day we did something different to be kind to others,” Schiefelbein said.

Continued on page 10.

Index

News	2
Opinion	3
Features	4-5
Sports	6-7
Entertainment	8-9
In-Depth	10

New girls basketball coach brings change in culture

BROOKE JONES
REPORTER

This year, former assistant girls basketball coach Dane Bacon was hired as head girls basketball coach with hopes of improving individual skills among players and building strong relationships within the team. The change comes after Coach Rick Mintken stepped down as head coach, a position he had served in since 2014. This is Bacon’s first position as a head coach. It’s not his first coaching experience at Bellevue West, however, as the 27 year-old had been an assistant coach at West for four seasons. Bacon played at Kearny High School and Hastings College. This season, Bacon’s main goal is to focus on the specifics and making sure each player takes time to fix their mistakes.



Photo by LeAnne Bugay

Head girls basketball coach Dane Bacon huddles up with his team at a home game against Omaha Benson on Dec. 7.

Continued on page 6.

Winter guard has new approach, new director

TIFFANY DOMINGO
REPORTER

This year Bellevue West hired a new color guard director and a few winter guard assistant directors. New Bellevue West color guard director, David Baker, took over during the marching band season this past fall. He marched in the Blue Stars drum corps for five years and was the assistant director to the former guard director, Julie Hadley. Baker has been mentoring color guard for five years since he graduated from Millard South High School in 2014. There will be four teams in this year’s season of winter guard: Varsity, Junior Varsity, Gold, and Novice. Baker

will be designing the show for all four teams, but will only be coaching Varsity and Novice. “This year I want to push the limit as far as what we can do with our equipment and what we can do with our body form,” Baker said. “Everyone [in varsity] will be on equipment in the show, [which] is something we have never done before.” West 2016 graduate Alycia Cain will be running the junior varsity team. She has been mentoring guard at West ever since she graduated. As someone who won the Scholastic A Winter Guard International (WGI) World Championship, one of her goals is to lead her team to WGI finals at Worlds.

“Last season the JV team didn’t make semis,” Cain said. “It was a really tough season [but] I want to teach them that hard work pays off. No matter how you place in the end, as long as you did your best, that’s what matters.” Senior Roxy Muela made the varsity winter guard group for the third year in a row. From experiencing both Hadley and Baker as coaches, her goal remains the same — to make WGI Worlds finals. “This year we have a different coach so it’s going to be a different style and different way of doing it,” Muela said. “We’re going to have to work on team bonding, fighting, and having motivation through the entire season.” According to Baker, West guard

is known for their performance aspect and being able to put on a show. Baker plans to push the limits as far as possible to be able to reach their goal in making finals. “We’re going to do a lot of fundamentals [and] establish a foundation of training,” Baker said. “This year we are going to focus a lot on our equipment skills and movement details.” Baker has a three-year plan. He is hoping that the varsity team moves from Open Class to World Class in WGI. “I’m really excited to premiere a new era of Bellevue West guard,” Baker said. “We already did that with the fall [season], and people could not believe how different the program looked.”

Bellevue West JROTC earns near perfect score following inspection

ALEX TOTH
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Every three years a representative from the United States Air Force visits Bellevue West’s Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. This year the corps received not only their highest score yet, but also the highest rating possible. “They probably give us a budget of about \$30 to \$40 thousand a year to spend on the kids including uniforms, trips, different things,” Chief Vicki Swingle said. “They write all the curriculum, give us all the books, give us all the uniforms, so when they come in they have a whole checklist of items that they’re going to check.” The checklist analyzes every aspect of the program to make sure the corps is using funding to meet the Air Force’s standards responsibly, as well as making

sure the corps is doing everything it can to prepare the cadets for a future in military service. Scores range from below standards to exceeds standards. If a corps doesn’t meet at least standards, funding can be taken away and they could potentially lose their program. “In the 11 years I’ve been here we’ve never gotten that high of a ranking, so we’re now in the running now for an award we’ve never gotten for ‘Distinguished Unit Award with Merit,’” Swingle said. “If we get a few suspenses in January and the kids average twelve service hours per cadet, we’ll get that award for the first time ever.” Every year the corps runs a self inspection that goes through the checklist the official inspector uses, but to a more relaxed degree just to get a feel for what a real inspection will be like. “There’s a lot of criteria on

the self inspection list,” Corps Commander Hannah Steadman said. “There’s criteria where it says meets standards but we kind of go beyond that to prepare for it, with the logistics, uniforms and inventory we could’ve just not worried about it and we would’ve been fine, but with inventory it definitely helped us to know where we were and to get the exceeds standards.” The corps is inspected and also performs a 30-step standard drill sequence for an inspector. They also present a PowerPoint laying out their goals and standards. “We also have goals that we set at the beginning of the year, so we had to do that the first week of school and basically work on those goals developing why we do them, how we’re going to implement them and how we’re going to measure them, so we brief him on that too,” Steadman said.

Bellevue West implements new bleachers due to safety concerns

TIFFANY DOMINGO
REPORTER

New bleachers were installed in the South Gym this October because the old bleachers were non-compliant with the district code, with no handrails or walkways, and it showed some issues concerning safety. During the three-week construction, school sports practices scheduled for the South Gym were moved to the North Gym. Because they were installed in the 1970s, the bleachers were worn out. The motors in the bleachers below the mezzanine stopped working and no longer pushed them out. Activities director Jon Mauro

said that a team of custodians had to hand pull them out a section of the time to prepare for events. “We had to take five or six people to pull them in and out,” head custodian Laura Olsen said. “It would probably take at least 10 to 15 minutes with that many people.” The district tried to repair the motors throughout the years, but due to several safety issues, they decided to replace all the bleachers in the South Gym. “We can’t just replace one set of bleachers and not match the [other] color set of bleachers,” Mauro said. “They’re both original installs so that’s why we’re getting all new sets.” Now it takes only one person

half a minute to pull them out. “They are a ton easier to pull out,” Olsen said. “We use a controller to pull them out and all the motors work brand new.” The current bleachers have a different purple and gold color scheme. Handrails are now placed in the walkways to ensure the safety amongst students, faculty, and visitors. With the handrails now in place, Mauro said the South Gym lost about 370 seats. Because the new bleachers were a district project, West was able to get funding from Bellevue Public Schools. As of right now, there are no future plans in replacing any other bleachers at West.

FBLA, entrepreneurship class to open coffee shop to get hands-on business experience

Continued from Front Page.

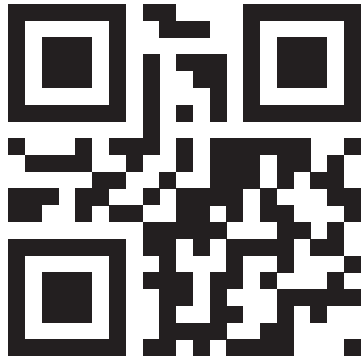
“I’ve also talked to the janitors about concerns on spilled coffee on the carpet,” Hinkle said. “But who doesn’t carry around stuff with flavorings or coffee. [Students are] already doing it, so I don’t really see it as being any different than what’s already going on in our school.” Brumbaugh said that one thing he’s most excited for with Thunder Brew is the real life experiences it will provide. Since several groups and classes within the business department are pitching in to build and sustain Thunder Brew, students can apply what they learned in class to get hands-on experience. “It became [the entrepreneurship class’s] semester project,” Clara said. “Before we were going to each create our individual fake businesses, but then we included FBLA and now it’s the whole class’s focus.” As for the future, Thunder Brew CEOs hope to make Thunder Brew run smoother and more efficiently, but not necessarily larger. “We are just trying to get it open right now,” Brumbaugh said. “The main thing we have to worry about before we go into specialty drinks is we have to make the foundation first.” Eventually, deals and coupons may be posted on their social media @ThunderBrew2 on Instagram and Twitter. Senior Allen Surratt and other FBLA members are also in the works of developing a mobile app that would possibly include deals, the menu, and the option of pre-ordering. “Our main reason for using [the app] would be for the

preorders,” Clara said. “That would help us to be open during passing periods because you can just preorder and pick it up.” As of right now the payment method for pre-ordering is still in the works, but Clara hopes that it will be refined by sometime next semester. Over winter break, the CEOs and other leaders of Thunder Brew will meet to discuss what worked during the soft opening, and how to make their business better. “The biggest thing is to teach the kids about business by running a business,” Hinkle said.



Graphic by Mooshoo Tran

Open Snapchat and tap and hold your screen over the QR code to watch a video about the construction of Thunder Brew.





DOANE UNIVERSITY

WHERE IT REALLY DOES PAY TO VISIT.

Visit Doane during your senior year of high school, enroll, and receive our \$4,000 visit grant.

That's **\$1,000 PER YEAR FOR FOUR YEARS**—just for making a personal campus visit!

Schedule a personal visit at **DOANE.EDU/VISIT** or call 402.826.6767.
Can't make it to campus? Check us out online at doane.edu/virtual-tour.

New leadership council to provide visibility, support

EMMA CLARK
REPORTER



“This club is for all of you to feel like you have a place in this school and in this world. You are all loved and beautiful. Every single one of you has royalty in your DNA and I will not stop until each and every single one of you has reached the peak of self worth.” I spoke these words at the first African-American Student Leadership Council meeting, which is designed as a safe place for African-Americans to meet others like them and build a sense of community. My second biggest motive was for African-Americans and people of all races to become educated on black culture in an effective way. In school we have years of learning about white and European culture that only touch on African-Americans as slaves

and civil rights but there’s so much more to us that I want people to see. On Nov. 30 I hosted the first AASLC meeting at Bellevue West. I was bashful talking about it at first because I felt like I was ‘doing the most’ but then I realized that ‘the most’ was necessary. I got my fair share of criticism, but I took that with a grain of salt. Multiple people accused me of forming a hate group and if anything, it would tear people apart more. The support and love I got outweighed the slander and created the perfect storm; the epitome of motivation and determination to take a step towards change at Bellevue West. AASLC is important for the overall dynamic of cultural and racial diversity at West and in our community. The club is open to all students and staff without regard to race. The meetings consist of lessons on different topics in the African-American community, each week something different. Some of these topics lead to hard conversations but the point is for that hourlong meeting to be a safe place for open discussion and expression of difficult things. Standing on stage and seeing

all the people that came filled my heart to the brink; hearing their stories made it spill over. They talked about their experiences with racism and thanked me for giving them an opportunity to seek refuge with people who are like them in a school and world where they are the minority. Hearing their stories changed the initial goals and focus I had envisioned, as well as my obligations as the leader of it. By the end of the meeting I was overwhelmed with emotion; specifically determination and empowerment. Something I emphasized during the meeting is how beautiful and loved every single person in that room was. I expressed to them that they shouldn’t have to dilute themselves because the stereotype of African-American is “hyper aggressive” and “predatory.” I sensed insecurity in the room, and it hurt me but at the same time made me want to push even harder for them. At the end of the meeting I made a promise to them that I have full intention of keeping. “I will not stop until each and every single one of you has reached the peak of self worth.”

Got something to say?

Write a letter to the editor!
Drop it off in room 426 or
send an email to
thethunderbeat@gmail.com

Thanks for reading!

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. The Thunderbeat is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association. The Thunderbeat, a nonprofit newspaper, accepts advertising, letters, and other contributions. Inquiries should be addressed to Bellevue West High School, Journalism Department, 1501 Thur-

ston Ave., Bellevue, NE 68123. To read The Thunderbeat’s full editorial policy, scan the QR code below:



LeAnne’s five tips for surviving finals

LEANNE BUGAY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Every year I get a recurring whirlwind of emotions when it comes to the end of the semester: avoidance, anxiety, and fear. There’s weeks of almost impending doom trying to memorize months worth of information with my eyes fixated on the end, followed by two days of stomach lurching and internal screaming. But who says it has to be this way? Sure, finals should be taken seriously, but there are ways to cope with the stress and prepare accordingly without plummeting to the ground. Here are five ways I’ve been able to better handle finals week:

2. Set a time limit for studying
In past years I’ve been a firm believer in marathon studying, but often times I end up feeling burnt out or confused because I overstudied. Setting a timer between 15 and 30 minutes allows me to put my all into reviewing while having an end in sight to motivate me. Try planning out time blocks in your study plan to allow for consistent breaks and to preserve energy.

3. Put the phone away
I know, I know. Nothing makes me groan more than hearing an adult complain about our generation’s cell phone addiction. But when it comes to trying to cram information, leaving your phone in another room can increase focus and sharpen your attention span. Avoiding the flood of texts and appeal of mobile games allows your mind to hone in on your work.

4. Also utilize your phone
From experience alone, I know

that most teenagers spend their time before bed scrolling through the sea of posts on social media, eyes inches away from the bright lights of their screen. If you’re already piddling around on the internet before bed, why not use that time to watch a review video or two? After a few minutes of catching up on your social life, head over to YouTube or Khan Academy to recap your night’s studying.

5. Find a quiet place to work
Trying to do homework or study at home often ends in me playing with my dog, accidentally napping, or doing chores. To combat this, I go to either the Bellevue Public Library or a local coffee shop to work. I can have a table to myself and feel comfortable knowing that there’s nothing pulling me away from reaching my study goals. Get out of the house to study for finals, and you might be surprised how much you complete. Finals week can be a hodgepodge of stress-induced cram studying and absolute fear and panic, but trying out these small tricks to calm you down or refine your studying strategies can help you tackle your exams in a more efficient way.

Self-checkout technology makes part time job search difficult

BROOKE JONES
REPORTER



When you get to high school, the anxiety inducing task of finding a job can be met with conflicts involving age, experience, and time constraints. Of the few jobs available to teenagers, cashiering is one that is sought after by many first-time employees. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, cashiering is one of the largest occupations, trailing right behind fast food service. For teens, simply bagging groceries and running a cash register is a good transition into the workplace. It teaches workers how to make quick decisions as well as basic math skills that usually aren’t taught in school like counting change and learning how to manage quick transactions. However, the influx of technology and new ways for machines to do people’s work has created a new environment for cashiers all over the world. Stores began spending less money to pay their employees and more money to put into buying the fancy

new self-checkout machines. While the convenience of self-checkouts appeals to modern-age shoppers, they put the jobs of thousands of teens worldwide at risk. There aren’t many jobs available to those 18 and under, and new technologies haven’t made the job searching process any easier. Recently, Nike opened a store that is fully dependent on QR code scanners in place of self-checkouts and regular cashiers. This eliminated the need for cashiers completely. The way in which many stores like Walmart and Target are trying to modernize their checkout methods create even more challenges for teenagers in an already competitive job market. Although as a society we’ve grown accustomed to having self checkouts at every store, they put one of the most common jobs among teenagers at risk. In most states, cashiering is one of very few jobs available to 15 and 16 year-olds and the addition of new ways for machines to do peoples jobs makes it that much harder to get employed. The extra two minutes you spend at a regular cashier instead of a self-checkout might not stop stores from changing their ways, but it might ensure that people keep their jobs for a little longer.

Editorial: Congress must act on immigrant reform

EDITORIAL BOARD

In a political climate dictated by fear and the looming threat of “the other,” anyone trying to start a new life in our untouchable nation is an easy target for us to project our problems onto. Fear mongering around a certain race coming into the U.S. and “tearing the nation apart” has been somewhat of a flavor of the week situation for as long as we’ve been a major part of western civilization. The Irish, Italians, Jews, Chinese, and Japanese have all had

their time in our collective spotlight, but at the moment it’s immigration at the southern U.S. border getting all the negative attention. Latin American immigrants from a myriad of different countries traveling through Mexico to the U.S. are all unfortunately lumped together into a collective “Mexican threat.” Because of November’s midterm election, both sides of the political spectrum were using the migrant caravan as a jumping point to support their views on immigration. According to the BBC, the

November caravan consisted of over 7,000 Latin American migrants seeking asylum in the United States only to be turned away at the Mexican-American border in Tijuana, and violently so. 5,800 troops were deployed to aid border patrol in protecting the border against those in the caravan attempting to enter illegally. The border wall was covered in barbed wire and tear gas was used to defer the caravan. President Trump took to twitter to say “many gang members and some very bad people are

mixed into the caravan heading to our southern border” continuing the narrative of the evil outsider mentioned before. Using a process called metering, less than 100 migrants are being allowed to legally seek asylum per day. Of course this caravan isn’t the only caravan of its kind in recent years. The only reason we’re hearing so much about this one is due to politicians seeing it as a way to support their beliefs in immigration, whatever those may be. If politicians on both sides

really wanted significant immigration reform as a result of this most recent caravan, they’d legislate it, not dehumanize thousands of people trying to live a better life in our country for a campaign ad or two. So when you see stories like these floating around the internet, remember that real people are involved. Congress needs to step up to the plate and take some real action instead of tiptoeing around a topic as serious as this. Human lives and the wellbeing of our country are at stake.

Thunder Threads supports fashion conscious students

AYANNA SMITH-SOLOMON
REPORTER

Thunder Threads is all about helping and providing second hand clothes to students who are in need of new clothing for free. The idea of donating clothes was started by English teacher Anne Munter and social studies teacher Brenna Dacey in the spring of last year.

When it came to their old clothes, Dacey and Munter knew that they didn't want to just throw them away, so they decided to help out others in need.

"We both had excess clothing that we needed to get rid of and we knew that kids needed clothes and supplies, but there wasn't really a good place for kids to get clothes," Munter said. "So we thought why not donate some of our clothes?"

As they started the donations, teachers and other students started chipping in their second hand clothes.

According to their Instagram account, @bwthunder_thread, the original plan was to have pop-up shops every Friday after school from 3:30-4:30 in room 139. On their Instagram they also post photos of the types of clothing they've received from students and teachers. Munter and Dacey encourage customers that have any of their clothing to take a picture of it to spread the word about Thunder Threads.

Thunder Threads doesn't just help students by donating clothes, they also give them volunteer hours for National Honor Society. Dacey is a NHS Leader who gave her students an opportunity to help out with the organization.

"We thought it would be a good way for students to help us out with something that's in the building," Dacey said.

NHS students set up, organize, and help with clean up. Dacey said that last year 20 to 30 students contributed their time to helping at pop-up shops. This year at least five students have helped out.

"I thought it was something good," senior Rebecca Martin said. "I hope other people step up to do it because I think the more help she can get, the smoother it's going to go."

On Friday they had their first pop-up shop. Their Instagram will announce every time they have a pop-up shop.

"We post new items that come in, cool brand name items, or items with tags still on them," Munter said.

Thunder Threads wants students and staff to help out by donating your unwanted clothing to a fellow student in need.

Mock Trial named regional champs, makes it to state second year in a row



Photo courtesy of Megan Brewer

Mock Trial team sits to eat lunch after their first trial at state as attorney Coach Todd West goes over notes on Monday, Dec. 3, 2018.

TAEGAN JACOBS
FEATURES EDITOR

Continued from Front Page.

This year Bellevue West's Mock Trial team placed 8th at state after being named region 8 champions for the second year in a row. Having gone with the team to state, I got to see some of the top mock trial teams perform with a front row seat.

"We have witnesses and lawyers," co-captain senior Kahea Chai said. "So three witnesses and three lawyers for each side of the case. And we compete in a real courtroom against another team, who brings their three lawyers and their three witnesses, and we act out the case like we would a normal case and someone wins just like in a real, live courtroom. And that's mock trial."

In September, before the season starts, each competing mock trial team receives the same written up case. After this, teams have three or four weeks to prepare and create a roster of lawyers and witnesses.

"You can only have eight people on a team," Psychology teacher and mock trial coach Robin Kratina said. "And so, what we do is just like any other performance. We just have people start asking questions and performing in front of us. And then we start to pick out who's voice is done, and who comes to practice, and who practiced."

Those chosen to be witnesses are tasked with memorizing their assigned witness statements. According to senior Sydney Sherrard, it's like being a character in a play.

"You have to try to figure out their personality," Sherrard said, "their characteristics, and what their job is and then you base your responses to the lawyer's questions off of your script."

Witnesses have to know the script well enough to be able to

answer any questions the opposing side asks them. In their first trial at state against Fillmore Central High School, I'd watched stunned and barely able to keep up as Bellevue West's performing defense witnesses seniors Cassy Kribell, Dan Burgamy, and sophomore Brianna Miller answered cross-examination with little to no hesitation.

Although witnesses are stuck strictly to their character's written statements, lawyers are given a bit more leeway. Lawyers write their own list of questions and are able to use anything from the case materials to help prove their side of the case.

Which is what makes an entire season of trials that deal with the same story for every competition less predictable than one might think.

"To some degree, it is improv acting," co-captain senior Cassy Kribell said. "The improv comes across when the other teams start. You have a general idea of what they're going to do because you've read the case but you can't really plan for everything. Like

sent the state of Nebraska." Kratina said. "Or, if you get there, you may have to be the defense attorney. We may have to defend the client. So the people who join mock trial have to know the case very very well because they have to be able to switch."

Mock Trial is sponsored by the Nebraska State Bar Foundation, an organization that has been supporting law-related education since 1963. Every year teams compete in order to make it to state. In order to make it, teams have to beat others from their region.

"Last year," Kratina said, "In Nebraska, there were 122 high schools that competed in the mock trial competition. Bellevue West ended up number 12 out of 122."

The club, which has only been available at Bellevue West for four years, would only make it through a couple rounds their first two years, according to Kratina.

"As sponsors and coaches we just really, kind of, were new and we didn't know what we were doing," Kratina said. "But these last two years, back to back, we have won regionals."

mock trial take from the program.

"They go from 'oh my god I can't do this' to 'I can do this.'" Kratina said, "Then their parents come and watch them and, like, we see parents going 'holy cow, that's my daughter.'"

The team's dynamic was also something to take note of. Having ridden with some of the team on the way to the courthouse, it was easy to see how comfortable they were around one another as the van stayed loud with conversation and laughter. It made the students' switch from loud and playful teenagers to confident and serious young adults in a matter of moments all the more impressive.

"It is a small group so we are able to work more closely with one another and we are able to get to know each other a bit more than you would in a bigger extracurricular activity," Sherrard said. "So I would say that we had a really great dynamic even though a lot of us are high tense, high stress, high strung kind of group, but that's how we work."

Kratina said she hopes to make Mock Trial more known around the school with the hope more people will join. "Even when I was in high school we had mock trial," Kratina said. "But we just don't have a place for it anymore in our curriculum. We're trying to

figure out its place and we're trying to keep it alive because we know it does good things."

And despite placing 8th at state, Chai believes the team had a really successful season.

"We've had a lot of shift in the team," Chai said, "we've had a lot of people drop, and new people step up, had some sickness and people sub in, but, overall, have a really strong team this year."

"We're trying to keep it alive because we know it does good things."

- Robin Kratina

objections - you generally plan some objections, but you don't know what the other team has. You need to study the rules a lot and just kind of plan for whatever objections they throw at you."

Competitors are also unaware of which side they will be trying to prove until they get to the courthouse to compete.

"You never know if you have to be the prosecutor or repre-

One person she says has really helped the team is their attorney coach Todd West, a public defender with the Sarpy County Public Defender's Office and Bellevue West alum.

"He's awesome," Kratina said, "And he really, really helps those kids, and he really helps them with gaining confidence."

Which is something she hopes the students who join

Papio prodigy finds 'perfect fit' in Bellevue West choir

IZZY PINEDA
GUEST REPORTER

Harmonious voices fill the choir room as students form a small arc in front of the mirror. A new face stands front and center effortlessly singing the solo. Senior Jace Noble is singing his part with notes of confidence. And although remarkable at vocal music, his talent alone isn't what makes him stand out.

As a Papillion native, Noble attended Papillion La-Vista schools for 12 years. For many, starting as a senior in a new school district can be nerve wracking. In a district where three-quarters of kids have been enrolled since they were in kindergarten, a majority of students already made deep friendships years before.

But for Noble, Bellevue West was an exception.

"I never felt as though Papio was a perfect fit for me, sometimes

I felt out of place," Noble said. "Everyone's been so welcoming. I miss some of my friends from Papio, but really I've made enough friends here that I feel welcome; I'm happy to come to school everyday."

Senior Kinley Hamilton, fellow choir member and classmate, felt that Noble's personality was just as welcoming as West is.

"I met him through English, and he's a very easy person to talk to so I found that we became quick friends," Hamilton said. "I didn't really know anyone in choir because it's my first year, so it was nice to see a familiar face."

Within Noble's first semester at West, his singing career has made its mark. For most choir students, being a member of West High Singers is an upperclassmen accomplishment, after a year or two of preparation. Not only was Noble accepted into the varsity choir, but also to a cappella ensemble Project 424.

"Auditioning for 424 was a really cool experience and making it was even better," Noble said. "Going on with choir, I've been learning a lot more than I did when I was at Papio. Mr. Reimer is really focused on teaching the theory and not just singing the music."

Choir director AJ Reimer has had his fair share of extraordinary singers, and Noble is no exception. Being the Project 424 director, Reimer decides all parts. More specifically: solos.

"I remember him auditioning at the end of his junior year and he sang great right off the bat," Reimer said. "He's auditioned for and gotten the solo, and it really showcases him; the second [concert] song is full choral and he's done a really good job of reigning in his 'solo' voice. Because, you can have the best instrument in the world, but how well can you work with others? I've been super pleased with not only his

voice, but his attitude as well."

Between new friends, choirs, and academics, Noble is extremely involved. And, although juggling multiple activities as a high school

student is more than stressful, Noble has zero regrets on hanging up the crown before his senior year. "This was 100% the right decision for me," Noble said.



Stock photo

Senior Jace Noble rehearses with 424 prior to the Christmas concert.

Wrestlers take precautions against infections

NATHAN HAWKINS
SPORTS/MANAGING EDITOR

To wrestlers, it's a pain that is quite common to have to go through-- some sort of bacterial infection that keeps them sidelined for a few days. To the coaches, it's a problem that they can do little about except for the sanitary standards.

Wrestling coach Curtis Gocke, in his first year at Bellevue West, said that everything they can do to prevent these infections is done. They have chemicals that they clean the mats with, and they take the liberty to vacuum the room on a daily basis as well. That's just the beginning of the duties he takes in an attempt to limit these infections.

"We have provided them with a little bit of education," Gocke said. "We have provided them with some body bacteria disinfectant soap that they use in the showers, we shower before we ride home after competitions, they're encouraged to shower after practices. We also make sure that they don't wear the same clothing for multiple practices in one week."

Sometimes these infections are simply unavoidable. Senior wrestler Connor Brown, who suffered from ringworm earlier this season, described the infection as "hard not to come by."

"It's very common with wrestling and it's in the wrestling mats," Brown said. "Even though right after practice we shower in the locker room with antifungal soap we can still get it very easily."

Being "in the wrestling mats" may just be the problem. The wrestling room isn't a wrestlers-only privilege. It is used by various other organizations, such as the Thun-

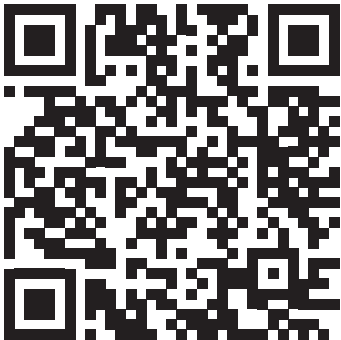
derettes or dance and aerobics.

"It'd be awesome if Mr. Mauro [activities director] bought us a wrestling room only for wrestling," Gocke said. "It's just one of those things. I understand funds and money, but when you have multiple people in your wrestling room on a daily basis it is tough to clean it. A lot of people say that it's wrestlers, but everybody that walks around in their shoes and then comes into those rooms, it just needs to be cleaned on a daily basis."

Until the day they get their own room, Gocke and the wrestling staff will continue to do the most they can to prevent these types of infections. Still, that doesn't reduce the commonality of them. The wrestling team has had multiple wrestlers who have had these types of infections this season so far, and Brown says he commonly suffers one at least one or two times a year throughout his 11 year wrestling career.

"It's not really easy to prevent, but there are preventive measures after you get it," Brown said. "You can put like antifungal cream or they have specific cream for ringworm. It's also doctor stuff, just going to the doctor and doing what they tell you. That's all you can do."

To see more about the wrestling team, scan the QR code below.



New basketball coach focuses on opportunity, relationships



Photo by LeAnne Bugay

Bacon calls out commands for players against Benson on Dec. 7, 2018.

BROOKE JONES
REPORTER

Continued from Front Page.

"I wouldn't necessarily say we're focused on winning and losing right now but we have to get to a spot where we're doing all the little things right and hopefully good things will come from that," Bacon said.

A common quality that stuck out among players was Bacon's motivating 'quotes of the day'. Every day before practice he gives the team a quote that he expects them to follow and implement into every part of practice.

Taryn Wharton is one of four freshmen on the varsity team roster. She noted several quotes that she found really helpful throughout the season.

"One of the main things that just really stuck out to me was when he told us that making a better team is about making oth-

er people better," Wharton said.

She'll get a chance to learn from other players to be better as well, as Bacon has given her a spot in the starting lineup throughout the beginning of the season.

"I think it's going to be nice playing with older girls," Wharton said. They'll be able to teach me things that players my age couldn't."

Another one of Bacon's main concerns was the energy level in the gym. According to senior

loud and we think about everything he says before practice so we have a set goal," Felici said.

Instead of focusing on the challenges that come with being head coach, he explained the several opportunities he has been presented with this year.

"I would look at it more as an opportunity," Bacon said. "I think it's a good opportunity to be a head coach at such a young age and I think it's an opportunity to show these kids how to do things the right way and how to come and prepare every single day at practice."

Bacon noticed a few changes upon becoming head coach.

"Now my role has changed a little bit to where I do want to have the same strong, good relationships with the kids but now I'm holding them accountable, which at times is a struggle but I think at the end of the day they know that we do it because we care about them and we want the best for them," Bacon said.

Despite his change in position, one thing has re-

"We think about everything he says before practice so we have a set goal."

-Akili Felici

Akili Felici, some of his quotes of the day are mainly focused on the energy of each player.

"He always tells us that a quiet gym is a lazy gym, so then we'll start off practice super

mained constant for Bacon.

"I think the most important thing to me is to make sure these players understand that we care about them not only as basketball players but as people," Bacon said.

4 QUESTIONS WITH AYANNA

1) What does TSOTWITP stand for?

It means "The Strength Of The Wolf Is The Pack".

2) What does it mean?

The focus is on the pack of wolves and each individual wolf is important through the success of the pack, but the pack is important to the success of each individual wolf.

3) How do you come up with these sayings?

This year I was watching Jungle Book with my grandson and it struck me. One year I was in Las Vegas and saw a saying on one of the casinos out there. It had Latin on it and I liked what that Latin was and that became a saying one year. It's whatever strikes me in that given year.

4) Is it meant to be a secret?

It's not meant to be a secret from anyone else but it's something more for them to focus on and think about and have in their minds as they're playing.

Ayanna Smith-Solomon asks
Doug Woodard





Bessmer
Chiropractic P.C.

11525 S 36th St, Bellevue, NE 68123
(402) 292-1337
www.bessmerchiropractic.com
info@bessmerchiropractic.com



Thunderbird
Sports Calendar

12/14 - Varsity Swimming & Diving at Elkhorn @ 4:00 p.m
12/15 - Varsity Wrestling at Auburn High School @ 9:00 a.m.
12/15 - Girls basketball vs. Omaha Central @ 5:30 p.m.
Boys basketball vs. Omaha Central @ 7:00 p.m.
12/20 - Girls basketball vs. Papillion-La Vista @ 5:30 p.m.
Boys basketball vs. Papillion-La Vista @ 7:00 p.m.

Anders makes connections, prepares for future through athletic training

EMILY SCHMIDT
COPY EDITOR

Senior Aubrey Anders could be found supporting the football team at almost every game this fall not in the stands, but on the sidelines. As a student in Sports Medicine, Anders was required to work 25 hours each semester in the training room or at athletic events. She completed her hours for the year as well as completed all her extra credit hours before the first quarter finished. She spends about three and a half hours every day with athletic trainers Shannon Gier and Sydney Todd and even longer on game days. Anders said she finds the work she's doing provides deeper context to what she's learned in classes and gives her examples to refer back to. "I like hands-on experience when I learn, so when we get to do hands-on type stuff like taping or crutch fitting or sling fitting and stuff like that, it is ingrained in my memory more," Anders said. The experiences created such a growth of knowledge in Anders that recently when a student asked Todd to stretch them out, her immediate response was "Aubrey can."

One injury Anders help treat that stands out to her was a hematoma that formed in sophomore Madi Moraski's shin after a girl fell on her during a basketball game and the injury wasn't dealt with right away. Anders was involved in the ultrasounding, icing, and

massaging part of the treatment. This trust paired with the sheer amount of time Anders spends with the trainers has created a close bond between the three. "It was pretty cool because yesterday was [my brother's] birthday and Syd and Ms. Gier were both like 'Oh yeah, tell your brother happy birthday' so it's like a personal connection too because they're both pretty important mentors to me and they've helped me look at colleges and programs and helped me figure out exactly what I want to do," Anders said. After graduation, Anders is looking to attend the University of Kansas, University of Nebraska Lincoln, or Brigham Young University. While she has been accepted into the former two, Anders is working on the essays for BYU's application. She says BYU would be ideal because it'll be the lowest cost option. "It would be super cheap for me because I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ and that's a church school for us, so it would be less than even in-state tuition and they have a pretty good athletic training program," Anders said. Anders has also accumulated a variety of certifications and experience outside of classes. As part of her class at Metropolitan Community College and her Health Science class, Anders became certified in Automated External Defibrillator use and CPR. She became trained in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety,



Photo by Emily Schmidt

Senior Aubrey Anders uses an ultrasound reader on Taylee Wharton's knee as part of her rehabilitation.

light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations and has been prepared for hazards that may impact our area as a member of the Community Emergency Response Team. "As far as her getting all those individual skills, that's just going to make her more employable whether she's doing something during school, something during college, or even when she comes out for job opportunities afterwards," Gier said. "She can show all the past experience she has not only in athletic training, but in other areas of medicine."

Gier said what sets Anders apart from other students is her motivation and commitment to learning. "She's a wonderful young lady, she's committed to what she's doing, and I know she's going to go really far in this career," Gier said.

Opinion: Scott Frost disappoints in first season, shows promise for future

NATHAN HAWKINS
SPORTS/MANAGING EDITOR

Nebraska football had a hype going into this season that was like nothing I've seen in my lifetime. It was as if the Huskers were coming off a season in which they were a contender, or they won their bowl game, or even had a strong group of players to build off of. That's not even close to the case. The Huskers finished at an incredibly disappointing 4-8 in the prior season, didn't come even close to a bowl game, and had a group that lacked top prospect potential. The only difference is the Huskers fired head coach Mike Riley and hired hometown hero Scott Frost, who led a Central Florida team from an 0-12 record to an undefeated 13-0 in just two seasons. With the buzz that Frost brought came expectations; expectations that a coach who is taking over for a 4-8 program would seem unreasonable. Nebraska was supposed to go from a team lack-

ing pieces to a bowl game winner, and from a team near the bottom of their conference to a contender, all because of a coach. Although this notion doesn't make much sense, even I bought into it a little bit. The players were confident, and the atmosphere around Frost and the Nebraska program seemed different. Then the season started. Then it continued. And continued. And game after game, the Huskers suffered loss after loss. Faith started to waver but not crash, as people questioned Frost's ability. Major media outlets even began to speculate about the possibility of firing him at the end of the season. Frost wasn't leading the team to a championship or even a bowl game this season, just the worst season start in the program's 129-year history. Eventually he turned it around, going from 0-6 to 4-8, including competitive losses to Big Ten Champion Ohio State and a good Iowa team. The last four game stretch showed a glimpse of the po-

tential that Nebraska could have with Frost at the helm. In months after being appointed coach, he signed multiple four star recruits, including quarterback Adrian Martinez and running back Maurice Washington. This season, Martinez ended up being the first true freshman in Nebraska history to start a season opener. He went on to break Nebraska's freshman passing record, while throwing for a total of 2,617 yards and rushing for 629 as well. Martinez truly looked like a piece for the present and future, and don't be surprised if you see him in New York for the Heisman ceremony in the next couple of years. Maurice Washington also looked like a running back with lots of potential, rushing for 477 yards with an average of 5.9 yards per rush. Frost recruited those studs in a few months, and this year's next recruiting class looks promising as well. It includes six four star recruits, including the state's best player in Burke's Nick Henrich, and the second

best all-purpose back in the country in Wandle Robinson. The most positive thing Scott Frost has done so far is change the culture and attitude of the program. In the beginning weeks of the season, after the Huskers struggled mightily, Frost told his team "you're either all in or don't be here." Following that, running back Greg Bell and wide receiver Tyjon Lindsey, both players with high expectations, transferred out of the program. The other players, however, showed a sense of pride that you wouldn't usually expect from a program struggling the way Nebraska was. Players buckled in, and seemed more committed to the football team than ever before. That made their first win against Minnesota that much sweeter, along with the other three wins that the Huskers had that season, including a 4th quarter comeback in the snow to beat Michigan State. The successful second half of the season run closed a largely

disappointing opening chapter of the Frost era with some optimism. It wasn't the bowl season fans expected, or the return to the "glory days" they wanted. Regardless, promising wins against fellow Big Ten teams Minnesota and Illinois showed the potential of the Frost era. It also put some of the doubtful back on the very packed Frost bandwagon. It's clear the players are on board with Scott Frost, and it's clear that Frost has their back. It's also clear that from a fan base's point of view, it was ridiculous to expect much more from the Huskers this season. But most importantly, it's clear that with Frost at the helm, great things are to come, albeit with some time. That might be a hard pill to swallow for the Nebraska faithful who expect results, but for a coach of the caliber of Frost, that's the most we can give him. And maybe with enough time, Frost will lead Nebraska back to their championship caliber that he once led them to a long time ago.

OnToCollege

with John Baylor

OnToCollege ACT Prep is the best paying job a high school student can have. Jump your score 2-3 points.

Sign up for In-Person Classes or Online OTC Classes at OnToCollege.com

Now Offering College Counseling for Families!

Preparing Thunderbirds for the ACT and SAT

We help families and schools create two- and four-year college graduates with minimal debt.

OnToCollege.com

Quintessential jazz hits for this winter

JAY WALKER-SCHULTE
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Wintertime conjures images of torrential flurries of powdery white snow, pullovers swallowed by lint, and holiday-themed reruns. It's also about the time that people either complain about Christmas music being played too early or act as the repeated offender of the heinous act. I've never been much of a fan of Christmas music as my preferences have chiselled. The chilled season's essence, to me, isn't quite captured by pop jingles. However, jazz has always remained the backbone of my holiday spirit. So, I've decided to share with you a few of my favorite jazz-centered winter tunes.

“Take Five” by The Dave Brubeck Quartet: “Take Five” is smoother than eggnog on a nippy morning. The quintuple-timed piece--for which it was named--features a rolling drum motif with a warm blues sax refrain. It also has a particularly memorable two-chord piano ostinato that acts as a strong foundation for the song. Dave Brubeck's hit jazz staple never fails to thaw me no matter how many times I hear it. Carmen McRae's vocal cover of the song that she performed with the quartet (simply taking place of the saxophone line) is also catchy, yet the homey atmosphere that comes with the original song is stolen away by the cover's quicker-paced and samba-esque inflection.

“Sad Tune” by European Jazz Trio: European Jazz Trio certainly took no risky liberties whilst naming this piece--but at least they were accurate.



Graphic by Jay Walker-Schulte

“Sad Tune” is a hard transition from “Take Five”: the song is slow, borderline melancholic, and more typical of your usual wintery jazz piece. The song is simple, only using a mournful, dragging piano melody lying atop a bassline that relies on the drums to carry it. “Sad Tune” feels heavy and wistful, which is great for staring out of a frost-glazed window like a snowed-in and sullen romantic interest. Unfortunately, there isn't much technical sustenance to the song, so I'd recommend using it as ambience rather than a focused listen.

“Bebop Lounge” by saib.: “Bebop Lounge” is pulled from artist saib.'s 2017 album “Bebop”, which is a homage to the iconic

1998 anime “Cowboy Bebop.” Admittedly, one could confuse “Bebop Lounge” as something apart of The Seatbelts' original soundtrack written for the show, which is interesting since it's rather atypical of saib.'s usual low-fi hip-hop aesthetic. “Bebop Lounge” is absolutely magnetic, in an almost indescribable way. Each listen is like a small adventure: the song's thumping baseline and vibrant drum-solo tug me along with it. From the captivating vocals to the personified trumpet riff, “Bebop Lounge” makes me feel alive during the sometimes-dreary sweater weather.

Paradise Within (Paradise Found)” by The Manhattan

Transfer: “Paradise Within (Paradise Found)” can quite honestly be summed up as “50's elevator music.” Its enigmatic marimba and wishy-washy drums make the song quaint and likeable. The first time I heard it, I was especially drawn in by the vocals. The Manhattan Transfer uses a sort of barbershop quartet acapella style, which is unique since they utilised two female voices. This close-harmony is reminiscent of “Mr. Sandman” by The Chordettes. The tone is charmingly nostalgic and reminds me of the old holiday reruns I used to watch with my grandparents.

L'étang by Stacey Kent: How would I describe “L'étang?” Think back to the Blockbuster days of old—A qui-

et, snowed-in night. Popcorn. Hot chocolate. You picked up a romance flick: it's box's edges are frayed and the title isn't in english, but the vibrant cursive hanging over a young couple is what screams out do you as you pick it up. You call a friend over and bundle up in your grandmother's old quilt. Your dog is at your feet, the fireplace is on, and everything is simply perfect. “L'étang” is a dynamic piece sung by Stacey Kent, who is surprisingly an American-born artist, even though a majority of her songs are performed in French. Whoever said French was the language of love were right. Every time I listen to the song, I instantaneously fall in love with everything around me. If you're not a huge fan of chilly weather, I definitely recommend adding this to your playlist. I promise you that your ill will of flurries will dissipate.

A Charlie Brown Christmas by Vince Guaraldi Trio: If you're like me, at least once in your childhood a teacher reserved a class period just so you could watch the iconic Christmas special, “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” I didn't know it when I was a kid, but the subtle jazz influence delicately emphasized throughout the film stuck with me like a tack. I'd be remiss if I didn't include the film's soundtrack: Vince Guaraldi Trio's “A Charlie Brown Christmas.”

Holiday music doesn't necessarily have to be a faux pop high. If you're not a fan of that typical waxy and manufactured music evocative of digging through clearance Christmas items, then I'd recommend using these classic jazz hits to broaden your winter playlist's horizons.

ACCESS TO EXCEPTIONAL

EXPERIENCES

The right place to build your college memories.

Your time at UNO will be full of unforgettable experiences: sporting events, campus activities, and nationally-renowned guest lecturers. Plus, you'll be surrounded by Mavericks just like you!

See what memories you'll make.
Visit campus today.

[BEaMAV.COM/VISIT]

Nebraska
UNIVERSITY OF
Omaha



Mooshoo’s Gift DIY

- Materials needed:**
- Gift wrapped in brown kraft paper
 - Pinecone
 - Green spray paint
 - Baker’s twine
 - Black marker

Instructions:

Car
Take the gift wrapped in brown kraft paper and draw a detailed cartoon car on the middle of the package with the black marker. Fill up as much space as you can.

Tree
Spray paint a pinecone green, so it resembles a tree.

Once the spray paint is dry, place the pinecone on top of the package, so it looks like a tree is tied down sideways on the roof of the car. Use baker’s twine to tie the pinecone to the box.

Predictable, clichéd, and enjoyable: Netflix’s “The Princess Switch” a holiday confection

BILLY DUNKLEMAN
BROADCAST MANAGER

Watching Christmas movies might not be considered a “must” for the season, like spending time with your family is. That doesn’t mean it can’t become a Christmas-time tradition, however. Netflix’s “The Princess Switch” is a new Christmas-themed romantic comedy which arrived just in time for the 2018 holiday season.

The movie is directed by Mike Rohl and stars Vanessa Hudgens, Sam Palladio and Nick Sagar. One week before Christmas, Stacy De Novo (Vanessa Hudgens), a baker from Chicago, bumps into Margaret Delacourt (also Vanessa Hudgens), a soon-to-be princess. They’re shocked to learn that they look identical and decide to switch places for two days to see what life is like in each others’ shoes.

One of Hudgens’ major strengths was her acting: she managed to clearly distinguish the two different characters she was playing. She accomplished this by using a British accent and changing the way she walked, making it impossible for viewers to confuse which look-alike was on screen. There were a number of times during the movie that I found myself cringing because of the dialogue. The storyline was well

written and easy to understand, however, the use of classic romance cliches such as falling in love too quickly and happily ever afters made me question how improbable the events in the movie really were. My brain was telling me that I should be hating this movie because of how cheesy it was, but I admit that I really liked it. While I was watching “The Princess Switch” I realized that it was a lot like “The Parent

Trap”—a movie also about two girls who discover that they look the same and decide to switch lives for a few days. The two movies were strikingly similar, with a few scenes that seemed to collide. I did not have high hopes for this Netflix Christmas movie, but I do have to admit I was pleasantly surprised and kind of annoyed by how much I enjoyed watching it. It was a great way to spend a cold evening, bundled up in blankets.

Inexpensive places to visit this holiday season



MEGAN NORMAN
REPORTER

With tons of money being spent on gifts during the holiday season it’s nice to be able to spend your leisure time doing enjoyable activities without breaking your bank. Here are six free or inexpensive places to go this December that will get you out of the house and into the holiday spirit without killing your wallet.

Ice Skating :
One of my favorite winter-time traditions is ice skating. Something about the idea of bundling up and getting together with friends or family to go enjoy some time on the rink brings me pure joy. In the Omaha area there are countless ice skating rinks you can visit. Some options for indoor rinks include Grover Ice and Motto McLean Ice Arena, and an outdoor location is The Rink on Farnam at Midtown Crossing. My personal favorite is NRG Energy Outdoor Ice Skating Rink. Admissions average \$5-\$7.

Gene Leahy Mall: Omaha’s Gene Leahy Mall features a spectacular holiday lights festival. There you can witness thousands of sparkling lights throughout the downtown area. The best part? It’s free!

Gingerbread Festival:
Every winter the Mormon Trail Center hosts an annual gingerbread festival at 3215 State St, Omaha, NE 68112. You can see a grand display of gingerbread houses with the accompaniment of live music, all for free!

Coffee Shops:
Nothing says cozy like taking refuge in one of Omaha’s many coffee shops on a cold, snowy day. Some of my favorite spots include Archetype Coffee and Sozo Coffeehouse. With an ample range of drinks to choose from, the cost of coffee at these locations range from about \$2-\$6.

Durham Museum:
The Durham Museum is a magical place to visit during the

holidays. “Christmas at Union Station” is one of their biggest attractions. You can visit the region’s largest Christmas tree, standing at 40 feet tall, and other trees that represent different cultures and how they celebrate the holidays. The exhibit is open through Jan. 6. Admission is \$11 for adults and \$7 for children.

Lauritzen Gardens: Even during the winter months, the Lauritzen Gardens is still a phenomenal place to visit. In addition to their usual plant displays, they also feature special holiday events. One of the events is “Holiday Harmony,” where visitors can enjoy live music amid the festive displays or cozy up near the fireplace while eating lunch. This event lasts through December 24. Another featured event is the “Holiday Poinsettia Show,” which features thousands of vibrant poinsettias and a 20-foot-tall poinsettia tree in the center. This show will last until January 6. The price of admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

- **Grover Ice** 6171 Grover St, Omaha, NE 68106
- **Motto McLean Ice Arena** 5015 S 45th St, Omaha, NE 68117
- **Rink on Farnam at Midtown Crossing** 3409 Farnam St, Omaha, NE 68131
- **NRG Energy Outdoor Ice Skating Rink** 10th and 1022, Capitol Ave, Omaha, NE 68102
- **Gene Leahy Mall** 1302 Farnam St, Omaha, NE 68102
- **Mormon Trail Center** 3215 State St, Omaha, NE 68112
- **Archetype Coffee** 3926 Farnam St, Omaha, NE 68131
- **Sozo Coffeehouse** 1314 Jones St, Omaha, NE 68102
- **Durham Museum** 801 S 10th St, Omaha, NE 68108

Spread joy through volunteering this holiday season

EMMA GAGE
REPORTER

Many of the holidays during the winter season revolve around appreciating what you have and giving to those who don’t have enough. There are tons of ways to give to people in your community, and whether it be through helping a charity, donating toys, or random acts of kindness, helping others is beneficial to your character and essential to forming a positive community environment.

Visit nursing home residents:
Take time to do activities with, learn from, or even just talk to a resident at a nursing home. Often times, residents are not able to travel to see family due to medical concerns. Instead of residents sitting alone in their room, make

them feel cared for and give them something to occupy their time. Nursing homes are always looking for volunteers, so check with the one closest to you for more information on how to start.

Make a meal for first responders:
First responders often have to spend holidays away from their families in order to help those who are in need. During the winter, they respond to calls no matter the weather, location, or for how long. Somehow, in between all of this, they still have to buy and cook their own meals. You can help them out by making a meal for them and showing support for their work.

Sponsor a family:
The holidays can be an especially upsetting time for families who

struggle to make enough money for the bare everyday necessities. Many organizations like The Salvation Army have programs in place where you or a group of people can “adopt a family” for a certain time and provide them with gifts or food. Many people choose to sponsor a family during Christmas time in order to provide toys for the families. This is great for young children who might have otherwise not have received a gift.

Volunteering gives you amazing experiences and connects you with so many people that you otherwise wouldn’t have gotten to know. With all of the extra time that is given during winter break, help others who are in need because it can provide you with unforgettable lessons and memories.



Graphic by Jay Walker-Schulte

In-Depth: A look into long-term programs at Bellevue West

Students and staff reflect on the #BeKind movement and its effects

KINLEY HAMILTON
REPORTER

Continued from Front Page.

“And what we’re doing right now is we’re trying to get donations to buy t-shirts for elementary students.”

While some students are pursuing kindness through clubs or projects, administrators and staff are taking other initiatives, like principal Kevin Rohlfs’ weekly newsletter with a kindness challenge.

“I give all the staff a kindness challenge and I ask them to share it with students or to just demonstrate it within the classes,” Rohlfs said. “I’m hoping that they’re reading that and having some conversations about it but primarily I keep putting in the conversations because I want them to keep putting in the conversation where we just need to talk more about how to be nice to each other.”

To Rohlfs, a lot of #BeKind is keeping the message relevant.

“We’re trying to put it into advisory lessons once a month,” Rohlfs said. “We’re doing the Be Kind recognition at home football and home basketball games. That’s kind of the thing we’re doing publicly, but most of it’s just trying to keep that message out there.”

Despite the once a month advisory lessons teacher Jamie Procopio commented her opinion regarding these advisory lessons encompassing #BeKind.

“I don’t necessarily know if a five-minute discussion is going to change their mind,” Procopio said. “I think in order for it to be effective it can’t be something that you push or force. It’s more so just changing the mentality of how people treat each other.”

Other teachers like social studies teacher Sarah Geiken commented on her opinion on how accepting students are with #BeKind.

“I think there are some students who embrace this,” Geiken said. “I think there’s still some who maybe have some maturing to do and can embrace this concept a little better once this happens.”

Students like senior Emerald Bagby doubt the campaign regardless of the student club initiatives and administrative attempts.

“I think the Be Kind campaign inside the school has a lot of potential but it’s not being backed in the right ways,” Bagby said. “They’re focusing too much on the small acts of kindness which are kind of meaningless because they’re short term, it’s not trying to change people or trying to influence people into treating other people better.”

Junior Andres Alanis agreed.

“I don’t think its impacted my life,” Alanis said. “But I feel like it has for others because the point of #BeKind is for those kinds of students who are bullied and feel as if they’re not being treated kindly.”

Alanis wasn’t the only student who disagreed. Bagby also shared her doubts on the campaign and



Photo by Jaclyn Taggart

Student council members from Bellevue West and Lincoln High pose with the #BeKind banner before the West vs. Lincoln football game on Aug. 24 at Faiman Field.

why it might not be making the impact they had hoped for.

“I’d really like to say yes,” Bagby said. “I feel like #BeKind could be successful but it would take a lot of work and it would take a lot of forcing on people and the way they’re trying to force it on people now through the small meaningless things, it’s not gonna impact somebody, but if you can form a bond with somebody, I feel like that means more.”

Though there could be many reasons on why there seems to be such little impact of #BeKind, dean Doug Woodard said he

thinks it has to do with social media.

“I’m sure with many students it has at least given some pause before saying or doing something that wouldn’t fall in the being kind category,” Woodard said. “But in terms of overall impact what I think is, it may not be fair to say it hasn’t made any impact but it’s been overwhelmed by the increasingly negative impact especially on social media.”

Although Rohlfs does what he can to implement #BeKind, he’s noticed the lack of effectiveness it’s had on students at West.

“I can’t say that I’ve seen anything measurable,” Rohlfs said. “But I’m hoping that we’re just slowly shifting attitudes and thoughts and that over time that we’ll see a kinder happier student body.”

Rohlfs offered a simple--and hopeful--approach to encouraging students to embrace the Be Kind.

“As a student body and as a building, look for opportunities to be kind to somebody that maybe you haven’t been kind to in the past or maybe that you don’t know at all,” Rohlfs said. “It’s all those little things.”

NMSI update: AP students offer mixed reviews for Saturday study sessions

NATIONAL MATH + SCIENCE INITIATIVE

EMMA GAGE
REPORTER

Students in Advanced Placement classes affected by the National Math + Science Initiative grant signed contracts at the beginning of the school year which stated that the student will make every effort to participate in out of class events, including the AP test and Saturday study sessions.

During these study sessions, AP instructors from around the country come to one of the Bellevue high schools to review and teach material covered in AP courses for hour long classes from 8 a.m. to noon.

In the first half of the school year, Bellevue Public Schools hosted three National Math and Science Initiative Saturday study sessions. On Nov. 3, Bellevue West hosted its first for AP Physics I and II, AP Biology, and AP Chemistry.

Junior Anna Gullett attended the Physics I session and said she found it to be more confusing than what she had anticipated.

“NMSI Physics was an interesting experience, I will say that,” Gullett said. “It was kind of structured weirdly; it wasn’t what I expected and overall I think it just went really, really fast and I feel like sometimes you just didn’t understand it.”

Although Gullett found that the classes went at too quick of a

pace for easy understanding, she did like that the material was not limited to the study session.

“I liked the fact that they gave you a packet to work on outside of time,” Gullett said. “They gave you a packet to work on throughout the session but you could also bring that home and work on the questions on your own.”

Where one session felt fast, junior Alex Marley found the opposite for his Biology AP and Chemistry AP sessions.

“It was really long,” Marley said. “It wasn’t broken up very well so it felt like we were sitting in a classroom for four hours.”

However, Marley did find that the sessions proved beneficial.

“The Bio AP was really nice because I was able to clear up some topics like evolution, which confused me,” Marley said. “While Chem, it was helpful to a point, but not as much as Bio AP.”

Both Marley and Gullett agreed that the outcome of each class depended on the instructor.

“One of them like went super fast and said ‘no questions, no questions,’” Gullett said. “One of them went kind of slower it was nicer because you had more time for questions.”

Marley found that his Saturday classes allowed him to think differently because of his instructors.

“My first one had us come to conclusions ourselves instead of telling us,” Marley said. “The other one would tell us the answer and

then have us figure out how we’re supposed to use it.”

The second NMSI session was for Bellevue students in AP English and took place on Nov. 17.

“I thought the English session went better compared to the physics one,” Gullett said. “The teachers were better and seemed to include more time for questions. However, I think NMSI needs to cut down what’s in the packet because there’s never enough time to review.”

The third NMSI session this semester was for AP math and computer science on Dec. 8. Junior Carley Conover attended all three and found that they were helpful but had room for improvement.

Because NMSI instructors are from various places, they can affect how easy the session is to understand.

“The more fun and upbeat teachers help me get more out of the session because they seem more enthusiastic about what they’re teaching,” Conover said. “We are already going to school on a Saturday so it helps me to stay focused when it’s more interactive.”

All three students said that they would recommend another student go to a study session.

“It was much more engaging than what we normally do,” Marley said. “It was really helpful.”

The next NMSI session is scheduled for Jan. 26 and will be for AP science classes.

CBL created to develop student research skills

AYANNA SMITH-SOLOMON
REPORTER

Editor’s Note: The idea behind this story was to provide an in-depth coverage on why Bellevue West juniors do CBL. This story was written because the origin of CBL is not covered in junior English classes. Our staff is aware that Julie Rowse, adviser to The Thunderbeat, helped implement CBL at West. As such, this conflict is unavoidable. Since Rowse was interviewed for this story, she was not involved in the writing or editing.

West English teacher Nikki Salinas to teach juniors research skills meant to help them in the future.

“It gives students freedom to look at things that they’re interested in,” English teacher Jamie Procopio said. “I guess the biggest thing that we stress is to pick something that you actually care about otherwise it’s going to be a really big project. It’s really, really awesome to see them get interested in something and do some really awesome things with it.”

As of now, BPS is the only district doing Challenge Based Learning in Nebraska.

“Here at Papio,” Salinas, who is now an English teacher at Papillion La-Vista South High School, said. “We have electives senior year if they choose to take this class they will have a Capstone project which is a combination of 21st century project and a CBL,” Some juniors question the purpose behind CBL. As much as it may seem like CBL is time consuming and a lot of work, it is ultimately placed in the curriculum as more than busy work.

“The sequence of how we teach research in Bellevue Public Schools is supposed to build year from year,” Rowse said. “Freshman learn certain research skills, sophomore year the teachers add to what they expect them to know and juniors same thing and it all culminates in the senior paper.”

Rowse said she has enjoyed seeing how the projects have evolved over the years and the impact some have made on the community.

“I love how they do the presentations now,” Rowse said. “I think there’s something about having every junior in the north gym presenting their projects at the same time. There’s an energy there when you have it from 2 to 3:30 where you have the student body that’s able to come down during GPS and interact with their peers. I love that part of it and how it’s evolved from having presentations throughout the day.”