



Administrators remind students of open lunch policies

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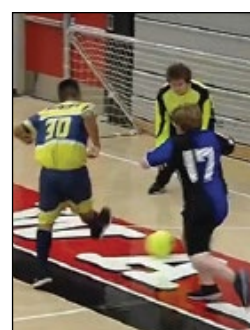
# The Quill

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Robbinsdale Cooper High School

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Adding an additional minute or two to the transition between periods would merely lead to students wasting more time

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Wish comes true for fans of Boots

Puss in Boots: The Last Wish, which came out in December, finds new ways to keep the characters in the ongoing Shrek franchise fresh

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Bowling team rolls to runner-up spot

After winning the conference crown with a 15-1 record, the Hawks bowling squad fell just short of taking the state title in a match against Spring Lake Park

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## DR. HERMAN RETIRING AS COOPER PRINCIPAL

February 28 marks the end of Papa Hawk's long career as a teacher and administrator



Photo by SHENG VANG

According to IB Coordinator Ms. Christensen, Herman is a leader who values "collaboration, problem-solving and shared ownership."

By JESSE GARCIA  
Quill staff writer

Dr. Herman is retiring on February 28 after working as Cooper's head principal for more than nine years.

Herman first came to Cooper with a lengthy background in education. He taught Social Studies classes at the junior high school level and served as an administrator in alternative education and

high school settings before eventually getting his head principal position at Cooper. Herman has a bachelor's degree in Social Studies, a master's degree in education and, most recently, a doctorate in education, which he got from St. Cloud State University.

Although Herman became head principal of Cooper in 2015, he first started at Cooper in 2011 as an assistant principal under Head Principal Mr. Favor.

Herman said he is happy to bring his professional career to a close at the high school he has been connected to for so long.

"Ending my educational career here has really been a joy," he said.

Herman said he holds amazing memories of his time at Cooper. He said he has enjoyed everything he has experienced with the students, the staff and the greater community.

"I've enjoyed seeing

everyone progress and develop," he said.

According to a variety of Cooper staff members, Herman has been a friendly leader and role model who has helped them grow as teachers and educators.

"Dr. Herman is the best principal I have ever worked for," MYPIB Coordinator Ms. Christensen said. "Dr. Herman's approach to leadership is one of collaboration, problem-solving and shared ownership."

Another staff member who praised Herman for his work as head principal is Activities Director Mr. Howard. Howard said he believes Herman made him "a better person" and "a better leader" because he always put "others before himself."

"[I knew] every day when I came to work he had my back," Howard said. "[I knew] every day that he would find ways to ensure our students are getting an opportunity for excellence every single day and try to think outside the box to ensure that this happens."

Having many of the same sentiments was Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson, who said that Herman "brought out the best in everybody." Nelson said that Herman instituted many changes to the school during his time at Cooper to benefit students and staff.

"Dr. Herman is a reflective leader who has fought for equity and inclusion at Cooper High School. From providing an all-gender bathroom for students, to adding extra planning time into the teachers' work day, to implementing meaningful opportunities for students so they can relearn materials they may have misunderstood or missed altogether, Cooper has truly benefited

HERMAN continues on page 8

## Catch Up event aided students at semester's end

During Catch Up and Relish, students who were receiving a C or better in a given class had the chance to take part in leisure activities



Photo by SHENG VANG

One area students could visit to work in a quiet setting was the media center.

By SHENG VANG  
Quill staff writer

Catch Up and Relish was an opportunity for students to get caught up in class work on January 12-13 as the first semester came to an end.

According to Mr. Nelson, tenth grade assistant principal, last year's Catch Up and Relish was a "significant success with students that were on

the verge of earning their credit." Thus, this year, Catch Up and Relish took place again on the Thursday and Friday of the second-to-last week of the semester.

On Thursday, class subjects that took part in Catch Up and Relish were English, Physical Education, Health, Business, Family and Consumer Science, Science, Music, Performance and EL. On Friday, the classes participating were Social Studies, Global Language, Special Education, Math, AVID and ABC Lab.

During the given teacher's subject area, no new curriculum was to be introduced in class. Instead, students who were getting less than a C in class, who were missing work or who needed to retake tests could use that time to work on those missing assignments.

As for students who were earning at least a C in class, they got the opportunity to participate in activities available in four areas of the school: media center, cafeteria, auditorium and gym. Students could also choose to stay in their classroom if they preferred.

For those students who wanted to study or relax, the media center and cafeteria were two places in which they could spend their time. In the media center, students could work in the quiet study area or in the group area. Similarly, in the cafeteria, students could have some relaxing time by themselves or with friends.

One student who enjoyed the media center was Mandy Wu (9). She said every time she gets the chance to participate in an activity, she chooses the media center because it is a "good place to work on missing work or other classwork."

On the other hand, for students who wanted to release some of their en-

CATCH UP EVENT continues on page 5

## Hawk's Nest provides students with homework help

Learn from all four grades are able to visit the after-school program in the Media Center without needing to make an appointment

By LA'SHAYA TAYLOR  
Quill staff writer

Do you need a little extra help in a class? Do you need help studying for a test? If your answer is yes to those or any related questions, Cooper is offering an after-school tutoring program for all ages and grades.

The program, which is called Hawk's Nest, takes place in the media center every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:35-4:30 p.m. with the exception of non-school days, conference days and days impacted by inclement weather.

"Students who attend tutoring must sign in and be with a teacher for the entire hour. No student will be admitted for tutoring without a

pass from their teacher past 3:35," administrative intern Mr. Mahan said.

Overseeing the Hawk's Nest program are Cooper science teachers Mr. Balika and Ms. Diamond. Balika said Hawk's Nest serves an important purpose.

"The purpose of Hawk's Nest is to give students a space after school to get extra help with assignments and time to catch up on missing work," Balika said.

Students who are interested in making use of the Hawk's Nest program merely have to show up at the media center after school.

"Students just come to the media center, sign in and get right to work. They can get help from any of the teachers that are available that day," Balika said.

While Balika and Diamond teach science, students can get help and support with any of their classes.

"Currently, we are trying to cater to all subjects. We offer help with organizing materials and helping students figure out what to prioritize. While Ms. Diamond and I specialize in science, students are welcome to get help with other subjects," Balika said.

Balika added that additional teachers from other departments also come to Hawk's Nest periodically to provide additional support.

"Currently, it is just me and Ms. Diamond that are present at each session. However, we

HAWK'S NEST continues on page 3

## YOUR NAME

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face of only one character at a time before panning out to show both of them at once.

The cinematography in this scene shows the audience the beauty of the scenery. Not only do we see the characters, we get to see the lake in the background of the characters. This makes us feel like we are part of the film and we wish we could help them prevent the comet's arrival.

I think the main message of this movie is the importance of taking chances. In the scene where Mitsuha is desperately trying to save the town, she goes up to face her father in an attempt to receive help from him. At first, he says no and Mitsuha lashes out at him, but at the end of the scene, before the comet eventually hits, her dad says yes and evacuates everybody to safety. At the end of the movie, this moral connects to the main characters because they take chances to meet each other again. The scene starts when they see each other on a train. Eventually, they are able to catch up to one other, at which point they confirm their identities. The importance of taking chances appears throughout the whole film.

Ultimately, the Makoto Shinkai movie *Your Name* uses music and cinematography to teach the audience the importance of love and taking chances. I really enjoyed this movie because the plot is amazing even though it is confusing at first. It portrays the romance genre well and it made me feel attached to the characters. When they find each other at the end, I felt relief as if it was happening to me. *Your Name* is sad but enjoyable and it deserves five out of five stars.

## HERMAN

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from the principalship of Dr. Herman," Nelson said.

According to Herman, his time at Cooper was marked by "great highs and lows." One particular challenge of his job was dealing with situations where students would get into trouble. Herman said the experience of watching a student make a mistake and then getting some form of punishment never was easy for him. As a result, he said he tried his hardest to "push for better systems for students to grow and learn in a much more efficient way and setting."

As he brings his time in the school and the district to a close, Herman said he is hopeful Cooper and Robbinsdale Area Schools will continue to develop after his retirement. One change Herman would like to see is that officials "re-establish the connection between the school, the district and, most importantly, the community." Herman added that the community's voice is the most valuable one. While the district can make analytical choices, "nothing speaks for a person better than the person themselves."

As he heads into his retirement, Herman said he will enjoy having more of a chance to relax. Some activities he hopes to have time for include hiking, going for walks and traveling. He also expressed a love for being outdoors.

Although Cooper's students and staff will go through a period of adjustment without him, Herman said he has one final piece of advice to everyone at the school: "Have a Hawk-tastic time."

## HEALTHIER EATING

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stead, it's recommended that you take note of factors such as fats, trans fats, sugars, carbohydrates or cooking processes like frying foods.

Overall, when you consider the positives of healthy eating along with the negatives of unhealthy eating, the choice to eat well seems obvious. Poor eating results in irreversible health damage fairly early in life that then results in even more prominent problems later in life. While it may not be as important to keep up the "perfect diet," it is important to keep up a balanced diet. I encourage anyone who values their body and themselves to take note of what they eat and evaluate if they're okay with how they're eating and its effects on their body.

## Robins P.I. squad takes second in state

The adapted soccer team's second-place finish follows its first-place victory in state during the 2021-2022 season



Photo by MARCUS ONSUM

Cooper student Jose Leon Estrada (11) was responsible for three of the team's goals during the championship match.

By NOAH PLAHN  
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale Robins P.I. adapted soccer squad made it all the way to the state championship match this year, where they fell 4-3 to Dakota United.

The Robins P.I. and C.I. adapted athletics teams are Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) varsity-level athletics for students with disabilities. The P.I., or physically impaired, program is for students who have physical or functional health impairments.

While the team is based at Armstrong High School, it also has students from Cooper, Hopkins, Mound Westonka and St. Louis Park high schools.

The 2022 state title game was a rematch of the 2021 championship game, during which the Robins faced off against Dakota United and took the victory with a score of 7-5. A bright moment of this year's game was the performance of Jose Leon Estrada (11), who scored two goals in the first half to put the Robins up 2-1 heading into halftime. Then, midway through the second half, the Robins went up 3-1 with a goal by Anthony Dockter, Jr. (11). However, Fiona Sitzmann (12) from Dakota United scored three straight goals, giving the Robins a 4-3 loss in the end.

Although the game ended in a loss, Leon Estrada said he had an amazing season and is proud of scoring three goals in the state championship.

"Playing in the game made me feel brave and strong," Leon Estrada said.

Leon Estrada added that he hopes more people attend the Robins games in the future.

"Personally, I would like more people to go to the games and cheer us on," he said.

Nick Johnson (11) is another Cooper athlete who played with the Robins this year. Johnson said the team did "really good" this season and he is happy with their performance.

With respect to the state championship game, Johnson said he was happy and disappointed at the same time.

"I was happy the team made it that far, but I wish we would've won the game in the end," he said.

Johnson said he takes pride in his playing this year and felt as if he improved a lot. He recommended that other P.I. students join the team in the future "even if they're unsure or nervous."

Coaching the team to its successful season was Mr. Onsum, who has been a part of the P.I. coaching staff since 1995. Onsum said the post-season success started with a strong regular season.

"I would characterize our reg-

ular season as incredibly successful. We graduated five key athletes from last year's soccer team and knew there would be a lot of work to be done in order to maintain that momentum. We ended up with a relatively small team with a handful of new players, many of whom had never played soccer of any kind prior to joining us. The group really worked hard all season and became a very tight-knit group. They had high expectations for themselves and expected to be competitive," Onsum said.

Although the team made it to the state championship for the second year in a row, Onsum said he knew the game would be difficult.

"We ended up being short two players at state, including our starting goalkeeper, so we knew another state championship was going to be very tough. We were able to adjust our strategy and starting lineup enough in the first two games of the tournament and didn't seem to be too rattled by not having our regular goalkeeper in the net. We ran out to an early lead in the championship game and really felt like we were in control. Dakota United slowly chipped away at our lead, scoring goals on plays we almost certainly would have stopped in the regular season and I could see our confidence start to slip away. They played hard until the final whistle, but Dakota's pressure was too much for our

adjusted lineup and inexperienced substitute goalkeeper," he said.

Onsum had a big influence on the development of the players over the course of the season.

"Aside from usual coaching things [like] teaching strategy, working on skills, conditioning, etc., I really try to focus on keeping the kids positive and playing with an open mind. Many of our athletes have little or no experience playing team sports prior to joining us, and often have a reduced level of self-confidence, especially those athletes with more significant disabilities. I want the kids to be willing to try new things, sometimes meaning they attempt a particular skill in a way that seems odd or uncomfortable to them, but they tend to realize pretty quickly that we are working on finding out what works best for them as an individual and helping them overcome the challenges they face," Onsum said.

One aspect Onsum enjoys about coaching the Robins is the opportunity that P.I. students have to join a sports team.

"The Robins are a great experience for everyone. This extends beyond the athletes and includes parents, friends, other relatives and anyone else that gets the opportunity to see how our program works and how awesome our athletes really are. In most cases, the Robins end up being a life-changing, or at least a life-enhancing, experience for our athletes and families and is something they hold on to far beyond their playing days. Students and parents that might think the Robins are a possibility for them should always feel welcome to reach out to our coaches to discuss participation with our program," he said.

As they look toward next season, Onsum is optimistic about the Robins squad.

"Our team is pretty small these days [with] 9-12 athletes. Historically, we average about 15-16 kids per season, so we have a lot of work to do to get more students connected to our program. With that being said, we have a great core group of kids that are always willing to put in the work to become a better athlete and a better teammate. With athletes having an attitude like this and a desire to be a part of a really great team, it's pretty easy as a coach to be optimistic about each upcoming season," he said.

## CONCERNS ABOUT U.S. ELECTIONS DO HAVE MERIT continued from page 4

can wholeheartedly recommend is Ground News, which allows me to ensure I have a balanced and nuanced understanding of issues across the political spectrum. On a wider level, it's important to remember your viewership counts. When divisive or rhetoric-heavy networks like Fox or CNN get low ratings, they tend to change their strategies, often moving to a more balanced approach.

Something that is also biased and likely illegal were the voting laws and practices in many states during the 2020 cycle. Due to the abnormal conditions of the 2020 election, many progressive state governments took unprecedented action to run their elections. This included things like expanding early voting periods, allowing wider mail-in voting or adding more employees to polling places. Some of these moves were taken unconstitutionally in light of existing state laws, as many states require legislative body approval to change voting procedures. Making these voting changes possible in some states were decisions made by judges, which was the case in our own state of Minnesota. Oftentimes, when people question the 2020 election, they are questioning the process of the election, not the results. Personally, I am most upset with that aspect as many states did alter their voting parameters, which could have served to change the outcome.

While I feel that changes to voting procedures may be illegal, I can't fully say they were immoral, as more people were allowed to

participate in the election leading to very high voter turnout, which is great in a democracy. Still, it is an issue that deserves real attention. Under what conditions can voting laws be changed and could these same actions be applied in a harmful manner? Many people have valid concerns about restrictive voting laws in some conservative states. It's important we ensure checks and balances are respected. That's exactly why the state constitutions need to be followed in these instances, and I sympathize with many conservatives who are upset with the actions taken in 2020 by voting officials and judges. Something that must be done is ensuring limits on emergency power and passing state-level legislation that ensures there can be no loopholes in future elections. This will prevent confusion going forward and safeguard our election processes.

Another major issue that should be considered is the efficiency of elections. Due to an increase in mail-in and absentee voting in many states, election results can take days or even close to a week. In the 2022 midterms, we saw a similar trend, with a grueling week of speculation and conspiracies resulting from the poorly run Arizona elections. I don't have any issue with expanding voting access if it is done through the correct channels; however, it does need to be administered in an efficient manner. According to the Public Interest Legal Foundation, for example, more than 10.8 million mail-in ballots were unaccounted

for in 2022, although it is likely they were just unused and discarded.

This is a great representation of all the added effort needed to effectively run a post-COVID election. States like Florida and New York have large populations, and yet they consistently manage to have results within hours or a day at the most. When we see elections in smaller swing states drag on for days, it is easy for frustration on both sides to mount. I think Arizona Governor candidate Kari Lake put it best when she said elections should be a "day" not a "week." A similar story happened in 2020 with many states taking days to declare a winner. Investments need to be made into ensuring fast and effective elections, and adequate time and regulations need to be enacted to ensure mail-in ballots are quickly accounted for.

A related issue is the involvement of private companies in the election process. It is often private companies that create things like voting machines and vote counters. Ideally, the U.S. government should work toward producing its own infrastructure to hold elections without private sector involvement.

What is more, the politicization of state secretaries who oversee the election process by both sides before and after the 2020 election needs to be ended. Something we can all do is support fair and accountable candidates for offices that help administer our elections. Minnesota's current secretary of state, Steve Simon, is a perfect example of that as he continually strives for

more accessible elections (Minnesota is number one in voter turnout in the nation) without interfering with their efficiency. Because of efforts from our state government in Minnesota, we do have fast and efficient elections, but it's important to understand that is not the reality in other states when it comes to federal-level elections.

These are the many factors that have contributed most to the loss in confidence of our elections as of late. I don't really think it's a political issue. Fixing all of these shortcomings would be objectively better for our society. While you don't have to agree with concerns or disagree with outcomes, it is important to understand why people feel the way they do when they contest elections because there are real issues with them that do make sense.

In order to prevent further political unrest and violence in the future, we all need to do a better job of listening to our opponents and working toward a better country. I hope that as a country we can come together and build back trust in democracy itself, and the first step is understanding the other side. January 6th could have been prevented if Trump was less fiery in his speeches and if the capitol police were more competent at their jobs. However, it would have been prevented if we had run iron-clad elections nationwide, which we have shown the ability to do in the past. Hopefully, we will be able to correct this going forward if we address these many concerns.