

# The Round Table

Everyone in the office has caught the plague since 1853

VOL. CCXXIX NO. 5 Tuesday, October 6, 2026 roundtable.beloit.edu

## A Call for Creatives: Chelonia 2027

(And an Interview with Professor Gina T'ai)

NEWS  
By VIVIAN KOPKA

As a senior who's been dancing since her first year at Beloit, I've seen a lot of change within the program. I'm happy to write this article to announce that Chelonia is still on, and request that any artist get involved with the production. Chelonia is a dance concert, where students, faculty, and visiting artists choreograph and create a showcase, and recently have taken place in the Spring semester. But this year will be different. The show will open itself up to any type of performance art – from drag and burlesque to short films and screendances – and open up to any creative wanting to participate. I talked to the director of Chelonia, Gina T'ai, director of the School of Media and the Arts and associate

professor of Performing and Applied Arts, and asked her who should participate in Chelonia. Aside from dancing, drag, burlesque, and projected videos, she encourages performances like "singing live or live music that might also include something else. So, a band that also has a singer and a mover." She paused to think, but concluded by saying "I don't want to say what it is. I think that Beloit students are creative." Chelonia, in the past few years, is determined by who participates in it. The students set the tone with what they create, and are helped by the director through every step. "Creativity thrives in a container. And so having a supportive container means that you can take

BTYB: PART, SoMA

### CALL FOR ARTISTS

DO YOU ENJOY MAKING...

DANCES

DRAG OR BURLESQUE

PERFORMANCE ART

SCREENDANCE/SHORT FILMS

PUPPET SHOWS

WANT TO BE PART OF CHELONIA?

FILL OUT A COMPOSITION PROPOSAL!

Info Session:  
Friday, Oct 30th  
Moore Lounge  
12:30 pm.

→

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PART, SoMA

more artistic risks," T'ai said. It's an opportunity to create something and finish with an end product everyone is happy with. Chelonia isn't just the people you'll see on stage. Students who work on the technical side of things—stage managers, lighting crew, and sound crew—also make the show so special. Everything comes together to create a showcase of community and creativity. So, I asked T'ai a question to direct you, the artist, mover, or creative: - If I'm interested in performing or helping with Chelonia, how can I reach out? There will be an info session in Moore Lounge (Second Floor Pearsons) on Friday, Oct 30, during common hour. "There will be pizza and we will

talk about auditions, piece proposals, and more. I think it's good to know that Chelonia is in April this year and rehearsals start right away in January." T'ai encourages anyone interested in being involved at all in Chelonia to come to the information session. "I would love for musicians to come to the info session and work with people who want to make something in collaboration with musicians." "The student experience is the foundation. And that support, no matter what each person is doing, whether you like their work or not, that support and that camaraderie is imperative. Having fun and feeling good, even though it might be stressful, that's the most important thing to me."

## HEY YOU! YES YOU!!

### The Rocky Horror Picture Show Needs Extras!

Do YOU want to participate in some spooky season traditions but don't know how? Are you fond of Rocky Horror? Are you looking for some time on the stage without too much pressure? Beloit College's annual production of The Rocky Horror Picture Show is looking for extras!

The performance involves lip-syncing to the iconic movie and filling in for various bit roles, moving props, and being involved with the production. Rehearsal is from 7-10 p.m. on weekdays at Wilson Theater, and extras are not required to come every day. Sonya Edwards'28 describes it as a commitment where "you wouldn't have to come to all rehearsals", making it perfect for if you need a more variable extracurricular.

If you are interested in being an extra in Rocky Horror, please contact [baileyra@beloit.edu](mailto:baileyra@beloit.edu).

## Au Revoir, French Major

NEWS  
By CIAN MCKEOWN

It was formally announced Sept. 16 at Beloit College's Academic Senate meeting that the College will no longer be offering a French major or minor for students to complete. The current cohort of seniors majoring or minoring in French will graduate with their degrees, but students will not be able to earn a degree in French

from Beloit after this academic year. French is not the first modern language program to cease operating a major or minor in recent years at the college, as the last decade has seen the departures of the German, Russian, and Chinese departments. Introductory and advanced Chinese courses are still being offered, but there are no degrees available. Two seniors will finish their French major this semester, but according to Associate Professor of French Joseph Derosier, there are no other students who have declared a French major. Professor Derosier emphasized the far-reaching opportunities that a French language education at Beloit can present, highlighting former students who have completed graduate programs in a variety of fields, including anthropology and political science. Derosier also mentioned that, under Professor Emeritus of French Jack Street, who taught at Beloit College from 1961 to 2015 and passed away in 2021, the college offered a study abroad seminar in



Betty Cavicchia '28

## Anthropology Club Jeopardy

FEATURES  
By OLIVIA THOMPSON

20 people, four prizes, winner takes all. Jeopardy is a game that's been bringing in a crowd for generations. Anthropology is not a subject I am very familiar with, but I hoped I would have walked out of Anthropology Club's Jeopardy event a winner (spoiler, I did not). But there were some fun facts in the answers to the questions. Starting with a faculty question: what's Professor Shannon Fie's favorite show? The answer was, obviously, Star Trek. Next fun fact: Beloit's very own Roy Chapman Andrews, class of 1906, allegedly inspired the hit character Indiana Jones. Keegan, the anthropology club's publicist, is afraid of monkeys (sorry to call you out, Keegan) so try to avoid any monkey business around him. Did you know there is a turtle-shaped mound on campus? I knew there was something fishy going on when I first got here. As someone who's considering working in the forensic sciences, I found it fascinating how closely anthropology and forensics work hand in hand. Colby, the vice president of Anthropology Club and president of CMSAI, was kind enough to give me an exclusive interview. CMSAI is part of the reason Beloit respects the mounds,



Betty Cavicchia '28

which is a huge win, especially in these political climates. Colby, when describing anthropology in three words, used diverse, well-rounded, and welcoming. Anthropology can go in many directions such as creative writing! It changes your perspective on the world and applies to many different fields. When going to the Logan Museum of Anthropology, Colby recommends the pots shaped like animals, Pueblo pottery, which is polished to be very shiny, looking almost metallic, and small woven baskets. All of these are on the first floor. There are opportunities to work on the second floor for any anthropology students that are interested! The anthropology department is open and welcoming to all majors. Make sure to look out for Leslie Williams' dog! Overall I had a great time, and can't wait for their next event!

Rennes, France. According to the Beloit College website, this seminar was available from 1975 to 1997. Study abroad programs took a "big hit" from the COVID-19 pandemic, Derosier said. According to Derosier, the number of French students interested in study abroad opportunities has declined in recent years. "If students come to [Beloit] and want to study abroad in a francophone country, [they] are going to need French to be able to do that," Derosier said. According to Derosier, the Global Experience Seminar conducted in Senegal over the summer is a way of returning to seminars

like the one in Rennes, but on a different scale. Vivian Kopka '27, one of the students who studied in Senegal and one of the two seniors completing their degrees this year, spoke about her time in Senegal and what French education at Beloit has meant to her. Kopka shared that she was inspired to learn a world language because of her mother's experience as a fluent French speaker, a French major in college, and as an au pair in Paris in her youth.

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MONDAYS 8 p.m.

Round Table

The Round Table provides a balanced and creative newspaper for the Beloit College community. Our student-run organization is an outlet for its members to juggle truth and integrity with vividity and humor.

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Print is Dying

The Round Table editorial board pride ourselves on providing an entirely student-run news and editorial source for the Beloit College community. The content of each issue is neither reviewed nor approved by college faculty or administration before it goes to print.

The Round Table prides itself on producing content of the highest quality and integrity. All stories will be covered with the greatest degree of impartiality possible, resulting in a fair and balanced presentation of the news.

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The Round Table meets every Tuesday at 9 p.m. in Pearsons.

# Everything to Know About the Cornell Seven

By KATELYN SCHROEDER

*Editor’s Note: The following article contains detailed descriptions of rape, gang rape, and extreme drug usage. Reader discretion is advised.*

On Sept. 16, a civil lawsuit was filed against Cornell University and seven men who belonged to their Chi Phi fraternity. The Plaintiff is legally against Cornell University INC, Chi Phi Fraternity Association, Chi Phi Fraternity INC, Chi Phi Educational Trust, Alpha Beta House Corporation of Delta Delta Delta, Moonie’s Bar and Nightclub, Matthew Ingalls, Jonathan Newell, Winston Lee, Gillio Lopes, Diego Sarabia, Scott Norris, Scott Kretzschmar, an anonymous faculty member, an anonymous alum, the anonymous executive board, and Orazio Petito. All the claims made in this case are currently alleged.

One of the biggest claims against Cornell is claim 330. The claim alleges that Cornell failed to protect the Plaintiff, the anonymous Jane Doe, from known dangers by not having proper procedures in place to prevent sexual abuse and assault committed by students. In other words, the institution did not place or enforce rules and regulations to prevent the assault from occurring.

If this claim is found to be true in a court of law, this means Cornell broke their contractual obligation to protect the victim and can be held liable.

At Cornell, just a week before the assault took place, the police responded to a drug-related incident at the XI fraternity chapter house. This is the location where the victim was allegedly assaulted. In fall 2022, the year Jane Doe was a freshman at Cornell, there were five drug-related reports and two sexual assault reports. All of these occurred on campus, and all of these occurred at fraternity addresses. These are all claims made in the official lawsuit, claims that highlight a bigger issue with the institution itself. Their negligence is expected to be further dissected in court.

The night of the incident in question occurred Oct. 19, 2024, into the early morning of Oct. 20. The 20-year-old victim, Jane Doe, started the night at her sorority, drinking with other sorority members. They decided to go to an event happening at Moonies, a local bar and club. Upon entering, she had an X written on both hands to indicate that she was under the legal drinking age. The lawsuit states in claim 138, the “Plaintiff was served and consumed at least one alcoholic beverage at Moonies.”

Within the establishment that night there were “sober monitors,” which were girls from the sorority, tasked with assuring the safety and security of their fellow members. The idea is that these sober monitors would look after the girls, and handle the situation accordingly if anyone got too drunk. After Moonies, they all went to another bar for about an hour, before Jane Doe departed from this group.

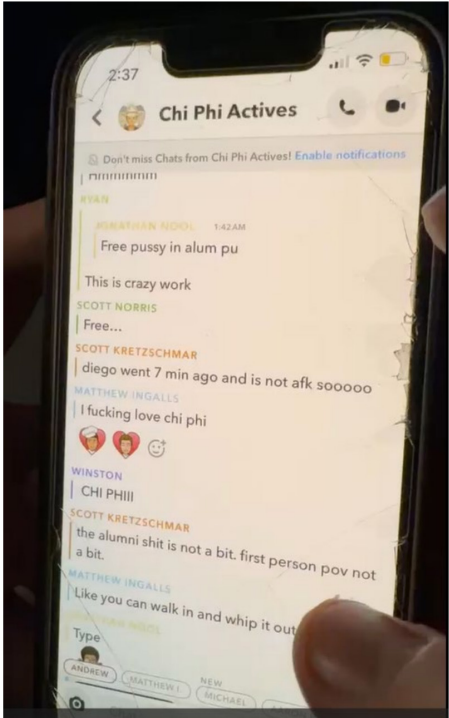
She walked a mile, alone, to the fraternity house where she was going to meet up with her friend, Matthew Ingalls. At this point,

Jane Doe had already had around 10 drinks in the last three hours.

When she arrived, Ingalls answered the door of the fraternity house, and welcomed her with a beer. Ingalls danced with her, then led her upstairs.

Matthew Ingalls proposed to Jane Doe that they have a threesome. In her drunken state, she was incapable of giving consent (per claim 149). Another frat member, Alex, who is not a defendant in this lawsuit, was in the room talking to Jane Doe until Ingalls led her to another room. Alex did not follow. In the second room was Jonathan Newell, also one of the defendants.

Ingalls and Newell pulled out what they claimed to be ketamine. The lawsuit claims that the two members pressured Jane Doe to do ketamine with them, then plied her with marijuana and what they called “Jamaican liquor” (possibly rum). Soon after all of these substances entered her system, the two men raped her. Newell allegedly slapped the victim repeatedly so hard that it left visible bruising. Later in the night, at 1:42 a.m., Jonathan Newell texted a group chat labeled “Chi Phi Actives.” The text states “free pussy,” referring to Jane Doe in one of the upstairs rooms. Some of the responses to this horrifying message were: “Free...,” “I fucking love Chi Phi,” and “Like you can walk in and whip it out” (shown in photograph from page 27 of lawsuit).



Yahoo News UK

After this message, more men came into the room where Jane Doe was hiding. Seven men, all around the bed, looked down at her while she was trying to cover herself. One of the men, Diego Sarabia, kissed her, but she tried to push him away.

They did drugs off her body, and made her take ketamine again. Then Ingalls, Newell, Lee, Lopes, Sarabia, Norris, and Kretzschmar, took turns raping her. The seven male Cornell students gang-raped her until around 5:45 a.m. When the hours of assault were done, she passed out.



Facebook

On Nov. 8, 2024, Jane Doe filed a report to the Cornell police force. The seven students were issued temporary suspensions, and the lawsuit claims that Cornell offered the students the chance to lessen their punishment if they submitted essays to the school. There are no details of what these essays would contain. Then, after Jane Doe had waited three months, on Jan. 14, 2025, a Title IX investigation started. From May 2 to May 29, 2025, Cornell “conducted numerous (at least twelve) hearings regarding Plaintiff’s allegations,” as alleged by claim 184 of lawsuit. Some time after that, the Title IX investigation ended. This is the timeline displayed in the lawsuit. Two members were expelled, and the others were suspended.

After the lawsuit for this case was officially filed on Sept. 16, 2026, the District Attorney of Ithaca, New York, Matthew Van Houten, came out with a statement. He and his office stated that in 2024, they only assisted the school in their investigation. They “do not conduct parallel independent investigations of cases alongside police investigations.”

Days after this statement was released, investigative journalists from CBS got the full transcript from 2024 containing the interview between Jane Doe and investigators. Only snippets have been released to the public. Included in one of these clips is Jane Doe stating to campus police, “I can say with 100% confidence I was raped.”

Houten tells CBS that he never received that transcript from Cornell. All the information they had, he claimed in his official statement, “did not allege that she was drugged against her will or gang raped.” In an interview, he admitted to CBS that if he had this transcript in 2024, they “would want to have explored that more”.

Jane Doe was interviewed by Cornell’s student newspaper, the Cornell Daily Sun. “Almost two years later, I still carry the weight of its impact every day and night,” she said, referring to the alleged assault. Now, according to the lawsuit, she and her attorney demand a trial by jury, deemable punishments to the defendants, and rightful compensation.

## BSG Statement of Culture Revision Town Hall

By OLLIE IDZIKOWSKI

The student statement of culture has been in the revision process since last semester, with much thought and discussion over the contents and purpose of the document. The Beloit Student Government, or BSG, has been the group spearheading the effort to revise the document and encouraging students to vote on the adoption of the revision. A Google Form is expected to be sent out to all students voting on if this new edition of the student statement of culture should be made official.

Beginning at 7 p.m. Sept. 30, the members of BSG were prepared in Moore Lounge with a healthy stack of Domino’s pizza on the back table and chairs set up on the main stage. Around six non-BSG members attended the town hall. The members of BSG immediately came to the conclusion that the turnout for the townhall was far from enough to even begin considering ratification of the document.

After initial readings of the current draft, attendants were welcomed to propose changes.

A major goal for the session was to reduce the length of the document in an effort to make it more accessible and concise. BSG’s changes for the statement have been criticized as being too long and having too much “academic” language. More specific contested inclusions were points that concerned ICE, COVID-19, and land and labor acknowledgements. The actualization of the Black Demands put forward by Black Students United is a point listed under Community and Identity, and there was discussion about linking the Black Demands directly in the statement of culture. The purpose of the document itself has been a source of discussion, considering it is debatable if the statement should represent current student culture or an ideal to be achieved. Even the less-criticized points were subject to scrutiny, as choices in diction in every category were investigated.

This desire for a shorter document was voiced because previous iterations of the statement of culture have been handed out as pamphlets

during a particular convocation, limiting its length. This is also the reason for the prioritization of accessibility, as freshmen should be able to read and gain an understanding of the statement of culture before taking any classes.

The student statement of culture is a relatively new document in the college’s history. It was implemented by Eric Boynton as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The intention was to create a list of values that all students were expected to uphold.

The town hall in Moore Lounge was another step for BSG towards creating structures that accommodate student’s needs. A common sentiment from everyone involved was that more input and participants were needed for change that properly represented the student body. The idea of postponing the meeting seemed to be the most agreed upon way to get more students engaged with the statement of culture. After two hours, BSG’s reservation for the Moore Lounge expired and the town hall attendees dispersed.



Ollie Idizowski'28

# Au Revoir, French Major

By CIAN MCKEOWN

*CONT'D FROM FRONT*

Kopka adds that “Taking French at Beloit has been such a wonderful experience because it puts me with people that also struggle to learn a new language and those who are also inspired and invigorated, because [learning a new language] is so difficult.”

Kopka’s knowledge of Francophone countries across the world has also deepened as a result of her education at Beloit. “It’s so important to have that well-rounded collegiate experience of being able to read in French or English about French-speaking countries,” Kopka said. On attending the Global Experience Seminar in Senegal, Kopka mentioned that “[being in Senegal] really taught me that there’s such a vast amount of French speakers,” adding that the reason for this is centuries of French colonialism and how it has “seeped into many aspects of global life and trade.” She also spoke about how special speaking French and being able to communicate in Senegal was: “Even though there are many other native languages spoken in Senegal, it was still meaningful that I was able to communicate and connect with people, even if it was in their colonizer’s language.” Another Global Experience Seminar in Senegal is still tentatively scheduled for summer 2028.

With dwindling interest in French language courses at the college post-COVID, those French courses are, as Derosier put it, “on the books” — but, he said, that fact does not guarantee their ability to offer a major or minor. Elaborating on this point, he expressed that with a single faculty member — himself — teaching French courses, it isn’t feasible to maintain the major and minor. “It’s not fair to students to promise something that I can’t deliver on,” he said. The workload is also not necessarily sustainable for Derosier; he described taking on individual projects as “exhausting.” Eliminating the major and minor is not sudden. Derosier said that he has followed research like the aforementioned MLA study, and “seen

the writing on the wall.”

However, the dissolution of the major and minor remains difficult news to bear for Derosier and deliver to students. “There’s a mourning period of losing the French language, and that is unfortunate,” he said. He admitted, however, that keeping or losing the major and minor was ultimately beyond his control. On the decision to let the major and minor go, Derosier said he values “doing the work I want to be doing” and “teaching literature and film with students” over “trying to save something that I know I can’t save.” Due to a lack of interest in French language study, Derosier has diversified the courses he teaches, pivoting to classes taught in English and medieval studies, in which he has a research background.

Derosier said that when he was first hired to teach at the college, there were two full-time faculty members devoted to French at Beloit. A short time later, this number went down to one full-time and one part-time faculty member. Now, Derosier is the only full-time faculty member teaching in the department. Derosier said that, currently, there are not enough students to teach more advanced second- and third-semester French courses. To help stem this problem, Derosier said that he has attempted to offer free and open educational resources due to the high costs of French language textbooks. “It’s a broader cultural turn away from language learning, and taking the risk of studying abroad [and] learning a language,” he said. He went on to cite research by the Modern Language Association which shows that the amount of students interested in pursuing language study is diminishing. A 2021 study by the organization found a 16.6% drop in college and university enrollments in world language courses since the MLA’s last published report in 2016.

Abigale Krepelka’29, who came to Beloit as a first-year student having already scored a five on the AP French Exam while also accruing college credits in French through AP courses,

would be one student eligible for such advanced classes. She spoke about her high school French teacher, a native speaker, who inspired her to continue her French education, as well as the value of the tight-knit community in her small AP French class of six students. She took Beloit College’s placement exam and was placed in a 215-level French course. Krepelka was only able to enroll in the class in spring 2026, and the 215 course is the only French language class she has taken at the college. Krepelka, already a double major in Creative Writing and Education and Youth Studies, was looking into declaring a French minor. “I see a French minor as something that can be really resume-building, and I have always known that I wanted to study abroad,” she said.

For Krepelka, part of the difficulty of losing the degree has been the fact that, as she put it, “I was kind of banking on my study abroad experience to both flesh out my French credits and give me a lot more experience with [speaking the language].” Krepelka said that she still intends to study abroad, but having the opportunity to take more French courses at the college would have strengthened her readiness to do so in a Francophone country. She shared that she has been looking into opportunities to go abroad to Western France or Eastern Switzerland in meetings with the Global Experience Office. Krepelka also expressed a need for extracurricular support for French at Beloit College. For the French language to be fostered more extensively among students, she said, “French Club would need to make a pretty extreme comeback.” According to her, part of the reason French Club is no longer active owes to the graduation of a majority of last year’s executive board members.

Derosier, meanwhile, spoke about how his entrance into the field of French and Francophone studies was first precipitated by his interest in literature. “When I started, I was teaching advanced courses entirely in French. Some of them felt like grad-

level in terms of the students that we had and the great work that was going on,” Derosier says. He added that, as the French program has contracted and seen less interest, it has become more difficult to create a pipeline that ensures each course has enough students. Talking about the breakdown of this advanced students pipeline, Derosier said that, while he currently teaches some advanced students, his class size is not as large as it used to be. Because Derosier can no longer offer many of these advanced courses, he now focuses on teaching more courses in translation related to literature and media studies.

Working in between departments and concentrations has the potential to redevelop the humanities in a way that better serves students. “There are legitimate critiques of the disciplinary nature of academia and how we structured things based on different silos,” Derosier said. He also discussed how a “full buy-in” from the college’s administration on the Center for Integrative Learning’s block program, which allows students to design their own interdisciplinary majors and minors, could provide a better path forward for the humanities at Beloit. This could also be a method that sustains the liberal arts ethos on which Beloit was founded, opening up opportunities to mix in disciplines like music and STEM into interdisciplinary blocks. “These are all related in terms of how cognition works,” Derosier said, adding that this connection can be codified if “we can be thinking differently and encouraging students to see the value of the humanities through different pathways.”

Moving forward from the loss of a storied major and department that has been a pillar of Beloit College’s liberal arts tradition will not happen immediately, but as Derosier elucidates, “for the humanities to thrive, we have to be participating in [them]; we have to be part of that.”

# Gas Prices Are Surging. Why?

By THEO BJORNSTAD

In the past few weeks, you, as well as most of the U.S., may have noticed your car’s tank taking a fair bit more money to fill back up. In most places throughout the country, gas prices have risen 40 or 50 cents a gallon, with a few hotspots like California seeing increases approaching a dollar per gallon. You may have also, like many other Americans, noticed that the forces behind this increase are a lot more nebulous than in the case of previous increases. We have heard little in the way of major news from the Iran war, which continues to drag into its eighth month, and the Strait of Hormuz, the closure of which resulted in the year’s first substantial jump in prices, has been blockaded for almost as long. Just over a week ago from today, the national average for gas and diesel prices broke a new record high for September. The monthly average price for gas of \$4.33 per gallon blew out the previous record for September, set in 2023 at \$3.83 per gallon. The current market for diesel is even more bleak, with the national average hitting a new all-time high of \$6.52 per gallon in late August of this year — which it remained relatively close to throughout September — before creeping down to an average of \$6.38 per gallon in the past few days, per the American Automobile Association.

southern Arabian peninsula, has been embroiled in a civil war for over 12 years. It has recently found itself in a deadlock between the Yemeni government and a paramilitary Islamist organization known as the Houthis. The Yemeni government, backed by Saudi Arabia, held a firm grip on the nation’s southern coast, and allowed Saudi oil tankers to move freely through the Bab-el-Mandab strait. This was especially critical to enabling Saudi Arabia’s oil exports in the months following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, where the Bab-el-Mandab strait saw a significant increase in tanker traffic. That was, however, until mid-September, when the Houthis took vast swaths of coastline in a number of decisive victories against Yemeni and Saudi forces, including strategic islands in the middle of the strait itself.

The Houthis, backed by Iran, closed this strait to Saudi Arabia as well, forcing all Saudi oil tankers through the only remaining route out of the Red Sea: the Suez Canal. Although it is safe, exiting out of the Suez Canal requires the ships to traverse the Mediterranean Sea and go around almost all of Africa, refueling multiple times, before finally ending up near the original exit of the Bab-el-Mandab Strait. A Saudi ship’s journey to east Asia, which once took 10-12 days, has now stretched to over 29, according to Al Jazeera. During all of that time, the ships burn fuel, pay workers, and need to sell their oil at a far higher price to profit. That cost, which has gone up massively, is passed on to the consumer through gas and diesel prices.

But Saudi Arabia’s woes don’t end there. The East-West pipeline, which allowed seven million barrels of oil a day to move across the nation, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz, was damaged by a drone strike and forced to dramatically cut capacity on Sept. 10. While it was able to be brought back online within two weeks, the pipeline now appears very vulnerable, and considering the dramatic success of the first attack, future efforts to damage or disrupt it are almost certain to succeed. Both this initial shutdown period and uncertainty around this critical pipeline’s future have led to higher costs as oil supply decreases and other countries demand more oil to replenish their reserves in case of future shutdowns.

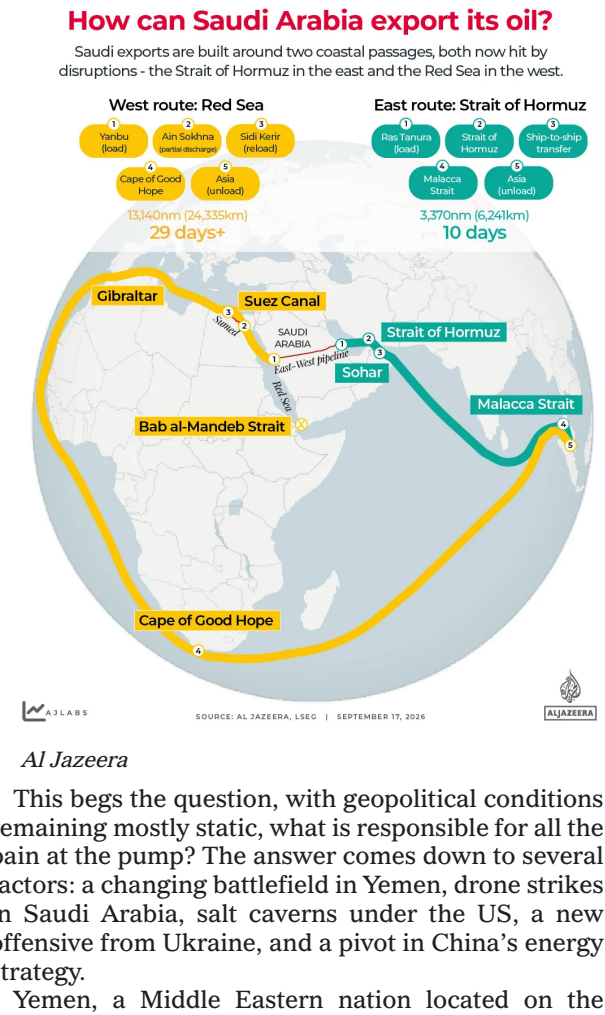
Few countries have relied on these strategic reserves more than the U.S. Donald Trump, who during his inaugural address pledged to fill the nation’s strategic petroleum reserves “right to the top,” has since released over 110 million barrels of oil from those reserves since the war in Iran began in an effort to keep fuel prices down. As these reserves continue to drain, they close in on a legal minimum level of 252.54 million barrels, after which the president must formally declare a kind of “energy emergency” in order to enable further withdrawals. Some experts have warned that the system of salt caverns where the nation’s oil reserves are stored is already under threat of partial collapse, and that consistently operating below this level could place the reserve’s functionality and cavern’s integrity at substantial risk.



Betty Cavicchia’28

The chances of the U.S.’s strategic reserve, and many other strategic reserves around the world, to be replenished to safer levels remains low. This is because warfare hasn’t just impacted production in the Middle East, but also in Russia. While Russian oil continues to be sanctioned heavily by the U.S. and most of Europe due to Russia’s war in Ukraine, many nations — including Turkey, China, and India — import large amounts of Russian oil. This flow has also recently come under attack, with Ukrainian drones striking a number of targets deep into Russian territory — notably, a number of oil refineries, as part of a push to apply stress on the Russian military’s infrastructure. On Sept. 30, the Russian government issued a ban on diesel and gas exports lasting at least until the end of October, citing pressure from sanctions, and likely motivated in part by new threats to domestic production. These attacks incentivise Russia, which is dependent on diesel for the operation of its military, to sell less of it to other nations. Nations like China, which previously relied on exported Russian oil for some of their needs, are now in the process of shifting that demand to the same supply which was already suffering under the burden of war in the Middle East.

These factors, along with smaller elements like the recent Federal Reserve rate hike and restrictions on Chinese energy exports, have all compounded to create the highest diesel and some of the highest gas prices on record in the U.S. However, it isn’t just the U.S. People all over the world are filling up to find that their prices have also spiked, but until these pressures dissipate, gas and diesel prices returning to pre-Iran war levels, many say, is unlikely to happen anytime soon.



# Beyond the Books: Reading Buddies Club Feature

By BETHANY YU

When I went to Todd Elementary School to learn more about the Reading Buddies program, I was greeted with a whirlwind of energy from students and staff.

Reading Buddies is a Beloit College club and part of Todd’s after-school program where, two days a week, college students volunteer to read and do activities with the elementary kids. “It’s always different, always fun, always entertaining,” said Mary Ellen Fuentes, the Todd Elementary connection for Reading Buddies.

Through the partnership, college and elementary students build a connection and learn from each other. The elementary schoolers see older students that look like them. “It’s hugely important for our

kids to see what their future could be,” Fuentes said. Club coordinator Maddie Schnurr’29 also emphasized the importance of children having supportive adults in their lives beyond their parents. She said some students have even recognized her in public, saying hello or introducing her to their parents.

The after-school program also allows kids who may be quieter in a group of more than 20 students to break out of their shell and find ways to express themselves. All the kids are “so interestingly fun, and all have unique personalities,” said Fuentes. At Reading Buddies, a different side of the students comes out.

Volunteering with Reading Buddies is an exciting and rewarding experience. “You can learn a lot from kids,” said

Schnurr. “They’re young, but not stupid. The program teaches patience and how to hold a real dialogue with them.”

Schnurr is an education and youth studies major, who plans on working with ages K-9. She took over leadership of the club after the previous coordinator graduated. The program is now over 20 years old, which is remarkable for a club that depends on students showing up semester after semester.

Schnurr and Fuentes both expressed that they are grateful the partnership has continued all these years. There have been Reading Buddies volunteers who go on to do their student teaching at Todd and become full-time teachers at the school.

The program has something to offer for all students. “Being involved in the school system

is a really good gateway to that community connection,” said Fuentes. It can be a great experience for education majors to explore if they want to work with kids, and for all students to discover something new. “Beloit is such a diverse and interesting community ... our kids are varied, and our kids are very diverse,” said Fuentes.

Reading Buddies meets twice a week, but it’s one part of the larger after-school program which includes collaboration with groups like Turtle Tunes and Girls on the Run. “These opportunities can be life-changing,” said Fuentes.

During my visit to the school, to be safe from the rain, Girls on the Run moved their after-school running into the halls of Todd. Fuentes answered my questions while greeting runners, giving

high fives, and passing on words of encouragement. This was a snapshot of the energy and care that radiates from Todd’s afterschool program.

This year, Reading Buddies will meet from 4:15 to 4:50 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. There will be two training sessions on Wednesday and Thursday this week, 4:15-4:50. In the session, volunteers will learn about Todd Elementary, the ground rules, and some things they may encounter working with children. Fuentes also shared that they like to hear the interests of students so they can incorporate them into the program.

If you want to be a part of life-changing work, need volunteer hours, or want to dive into community, it seems Reading Buddies is the place to be.

# An Interview with Ousley Scholar Jasmine Nears

By ALEX CAMBOURIS



Beloit College

On Wednesday, Sept. 23, Ousley Scholar-in-Residence and Beloit graduate Jasmine Nears’09 hosted a panel with political science professors Gregory Koutnik and Klara Fredriksson, state senator Mark Spreitzer, and Wisconsin director of All Voting is Local Sam Liebert. The following day, Nears hosted a keynote address titled Democracy is a Team Sport. Both events were held to discuss methods of participation in our democratic system, as well as the future of the nation. The Ousley Scholar-in-Residence program celebrates the legacy of Black

student graduates at Beloit who have committed themselves to social justice and reform. Nears, in addition to being this years’ resident, works as Chief of Staff at America Votes, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing voter participation.

I had the pleasure of an interview with Nears, where we discussed her journey and how it has shaped her values and practices in and out of work. Nears has long been an advocate for diplomacy and team-building, and wishes to use these methods to ensure that, every day, democracy has active participants looking to maintain and build up the nation, and ensure that the state serves the needs of the people.

To provide some background, Nears has been politically inclined all throughout her life, including childhood. In our interview, she described how early experiences set the stage for her path in life. “In middle school, I had just transferred to a school that only had pepperoni pizza for lunch. My mother had recently married a man who did not eat pork, and my whole family stopped eating it. I became aware of how some people didn’t have access to pizza, as they only had meat options. So, I went to the administration to get cheese pizza, and they told me if I could prove there was enough demand, maybe they’d consider it. So, I decided to start a petition. I went class to class to talk to students and get them to sign for more vegetarian options for those with restrictions. I collected around 300 signatures, and wrote a letter to

the administration. They actually wrote me back, and added cheese pizza to the menu.” Early on, she steered her efforts to the needs of marginalized groups, and focused on voicing the needs and wants of the people. “It was an early time in my life when I saw the power of people, just doing something that they thought was right, and that’d just go and try and make change,” she said. “I think people were excited to make a change.”

Nears’ time at Beloit was also very meaningful to her. “When I was looking for college, I really had no idea where to start, but I knew I really wanted to go study abroad,” she said. “I also just had a really great talk with my admissions counselor. I liked that Beloit was small, too. Here, there were a lot of ways to get involved, know a lot of people, and do a lot of fun things in a small, more supportive environment.” During her time at Beloit, Nears was president of Black Students United and a McNair scholar. She was also able to study abroad in Turkey, where she pursued her interest in international relations. “I was mostly interested in human rights in international systems. I believed a lot in the United Nations and the International Court: the systems the world put together post-World War II to prevent a tragedy on that scale again. I was also interested in social movements, like how people in power change the outcome. I studied social movements in Turkey, here, and in South Africa, and the roles that everyone involved took.”

Across the world, oppressed people

fought against their oppressors, and were often met with brutality. “Those really violent moments, a lot of times, are when the biggest changes happen, so I wanted to understand if we needed hard truths like that for things to move forward. My answer is: not always, but those are the moments in history where people pay attention.”

She continued with public administration as her area of expertise, and eventually, after graduate school, shifted toward domestic and local policy. Nears got a master’s degree in public administration at Wagner College, and went on to work with nonprofit Everytown for Gun Safety. She worked there for a short time before eventually landing a position with America Votes, another progressive nonprofit organization. Working within the coalition became a passion within itself, and helped to further her career. “Interacting with people was a lot about understanding their needs, as well as making sure they understood me, and making sure they got what they needed for the work they were going to do,” she said. “I stayed in my lane, and my lane is to help organize people in elections, supporting them so they can execute plans. I never had to step on anyone’s toes: we had a pretty clear mandate, and we were all able to maintain that trust by just doing it. For the most part, people were pretty receptive to sitting down and having a conversation.”

Read the rest online at [roundtable.beloit.edu](http://roundtable.beloit.edu).

# Farmer John

By PETRA FONDRK

Farmer John, or John Peterson’72, lives a life dedicated to bringing joy and fresh produce to all people. In 2005, filmmaker Taggart Siegel ‘81, also a Beloit alumnus, decided to make a documentary about Farmer John’s life. It tells the “50 year journey from innocence through turmoil to redemption.” The courage of Farmer John inspired millions of people around the world. The documentary is titled The Real Dirt (2005) and received very positive reviews from critics. According to Angelic Organics, positive reviews even came from the 45th Vice President of the United States, Al Gore.

Farmer John is from Caledonia, Illinois and an alumnus of Beloit College. The documentary explores Farmer John’s life, standing against feeling like an outcast in a rural community. According to the documentary, he stems from a long line of farmers, with

the neighborhood community all caring for and helping each other, even having meals together. But unfortunately, John’s dad got diabetes and eventually passed away. After his death, John became responsible for much more of the farming tools and labor. This is when he attended Beloit College in order to stay close to home. At Beloit, he learned to care for art, and students of all kinds came to his farm and found sanctuary. They had wild parties at the farm, which they called the “Midwest Coast.” They built a log cabin as a sanctuary for meditation and arts. Despite the farm being a source of fun and expression, people held this wild behavior against him. This was despite John having a strong work ethic and working three jobs.

During the ‘70s it was very easy to get loans and eventually John owed friends, bankers and loan sharks hundreds of thousands of dollars. He had to sell almost

all of his grandfather’s land in order to pay for his loans. He had to part with the fields he grew up on and the fields his family plowed each spring for generations was ending with him. He only had 22 remaining acres of the original 350. Family and friends felt that John was completely responsible for the selling of the land. He fell into a depression following the sale. In this depression he spent some time in Mexico where he read Henry Miller’s “Tropic of Cancer,” inspiring John to turn his miseries and losses into stories. Upon returning though he felt that “farmers were speaking a dying language” as fields were being bought and used for housing. In this hardship John began to produce plays capturing the experience in a “catharsis of up and down pent up grief.” But his hardships did not end there. Farmer John would have over friends of different kinds which led

to harassment and the sheriff talking about “drug-busting” his farm. These harassments led him to go to South only to return again as his farm was calling him back home. When he returned he was in need of money and the community didn’t want him. So he drove to

his moms and asked for money for seed to restart the farm and she agreed. The farm soon was called Angelic Organics.

Read the rest online at [roundtable.beloit.edu](http://roundtable.beloit.edu)



Don Glasenapp, GoFundMe

# Jeff Hamilton Jazz Trio And Beloit Memorial Jazz Orchestra Play Eaton Chapel

By OLLIE IDZIKOWSKI

At Eaton Chapel, during the afternoon of Sept. 27, the Beloit Memorial Jazz Orchestra took the stage as the headlining act of the Sunday afternoon jazz concert. A total of 20 musicians made up the orchestra, with many of the performers getting their own solos over the course of the hour-long set. Chris Behrens, who currently teaches at Beloit Memorial High School, was the director, multitasking both introducing the musical pieces as well as handling the microphones as the instrumentalists traded-off solos one after another. An elongated intermission

took place after the end of the orchestra's set as the Jeff Hamilton Trio prepared to take stage. The Trio features Tadataka Unno on piano, Jon Hamar on bass, and Jeff Hamilton on drums. The orchestra and trio did a few songs together, and this is where Hamilton first revealed his drumming expertise. With the usage of drum brushes, Hamilton was able to switch from rapid calculated drumming to more textural playing and in the process play into the wider dynamic of the ensemble.



Beloit College

The Trio in isolation was no less impressive, and their performance was filled with memorable moments. Jon Hamar had an extended bass solo that was captivatingly sunny and joyous. Jeff Hamilton at one point ditched his drum brushes and resolved to attack the drums directly with his hands. The final number was led by pianist Tadataka Unno, launching a blues number with an energetic piano solo. To speak about the personal experience

of attending this concert, I believe that I am more familiar with jazz than the average person — as in, I have gone out of my way to listen to jazz albums. That being said, I think that technical musicianship can be appreciated no matter one's particular taste in genre, at least to some degree. I was recommended this concert by a friend who attended alongside me, and the experience reminded me to take advantage of events offered to students. This concert was free for Beloit students and I wouldn't hesitate to attend another like it.

## Album Review: ‘Diamond Jubilee’

By EMMA LAUS



Hazy purple light illuminates the stage as Patrick Flegel, also known as Cindy Lee, slowly rocks back and forth, their voice softly echoing through the microphone. The scene looks straight out of a David Lynch film: hypnagogic and hazy. Flegel is in full drag, wearing a short black

Wikimedia Commons

wig, white fur coat, and sparkling golden mini dress. The stage lights produce blurry orbs behind them.

Flegel is performing “Dracula,” the 19th track off of their expansive 2024 album, “Diamond Jubilee.” Although it

received high praise from critics, the album was released under the radar. It is only available on YouTube or for purchase on Bandcamp, and Flegel doesn't use social media; therefore, it was not widely promoted. However, the album's uniquely nostalgic and hypnotizing sound makes it worth the slight inconvenience. Genres like alternative rock, 60s pop, and folk are all encapsulated cohesively within “Diamond Jubilee,” making it a sonic journey through music history.

“Diamond Jubilee,” the first track, opens with ambling guitar. After 30 seconds, Flegel begins to vocalize; the reverb applied to their voice creates an airy and mesmerizing effect. A muted drum joins in, picking up speed and intensity, and then Flegel begins to sing. The drums halt as if startled, but pick up the rhythm again, and the song settles into its groove. Flegel's voice is slightly warped, with layers of lower and higher registers. The

song feels meditative, yet melancholic.

The following track, “Glitz,” is more intense. A grand, orchestral-like opening introduces the piece, before electric guitars and drums crash in. Although every song on this record sounds slightly grainy, like they're emanating from an old radio, it is particularly noticeable on this track due to its abrasiveness. Flegel's voice is barely audible over the instrumentation, yet the cacophony of sound isn't complete chaos — it holds a distinct and catchy melody.

“Baby Blue,” a haunting track reminiscent of a long lost '60s pop band follows, sounding straight off a crackly 78. Strings swell softly in the background as Flegel croons, “Baby baby baby blue / Everybody wants a piece of you.”

These three songs demonstrate the versatility of “Diamond Jubilee.” Despite the variation in genre and sound, each song fits into the next with the same dreamlike quality. I find

that each track sparks my imagination — for example, when listening to “Dallas,” the image of a lonely but earnest performer swaying in a neglected dive bar comes to mind. This song has significantly less instrumentation than many of the others; Flegel's voice echoes, each word drawn out slowly. A distorted, gallop-like sound on “Flesh and Blood,” as well as lyrics like “Another sleepless night / Cloaked in moonlight / And I'm cruising” and “I'm lost at the stars above / I'm only flesh and blood,” remind me of a ghostly cowboy roaming the vast Wild West. The final track, “24/7 Heaven,” only features instrumentals — the sound of strings soar and blossom throughout its 5:26 length.

Many of the songs share a similar theme: mourning a lost love. Everything about the album feels ghostly, as if to represent the loss of this person. Flegel sings, “Don't tell me it's the end / I only want to see your face again,” on

“Kingdom Come,” and “In the diamond's eye / Shining down on me / A single memory / And it's of you,” on “Diamond Jubilee.” While the lyrics generally lean on the sparser side, that doesn't diminish their weight.

For the most part, the uniqueness of each track keeps “Diamond Jubilee” interesting. It's an album I feel the need to dedicate myself to. As much as I wish it were more accessible, I can't help but think it is meant to be discovered among a pile of CDs in the back of a thrift store years from now. Once found, it should be listened to on the drive home, immediately mesmerizing its listener. From there, maybe the lucky person who discovered it would make it their life's mission to learn everything about the enigmatic artist behind this work. However, no matter how this album is discovered, it has an undeniable sense of intrigue and distinctiveness that will make it stand out for years to come.

## Stuck In Stillville: MICO Running from a Feeling Tour

By VANESSA SKILDUM

Tuesday, Sept. 29, music artist MICO performed a sold-out show at the House of Blues in Chicago. It was his sixth performance of his Running from a Feeling Tour, which covers North America, Asia, and Australia.

The setlist was packed full with all ten songs from his first studio album “When the Lights Turn On,” five from his EP “Internet Hometown Hero,” and of course his breakout single “Cut my Hair.” A couple of other songs from his discography were sprinkled throughout, including his most recent single “Everything's the Same,” which came out Sept. 18 of this year, and Sombr's “Back to Friends” as a surprise song. Will Linley was the opener.

MICO, whose real name is Miguel Veloso, is a Filipino-Canadian artist based out of Toronto. His music combines various elements of indie pop punk and alternative rock. He was an independent artist until he signed with the American label Columbia Records in 2025.

I've been a fan of MICO's since 2024, and

was first introduced to him through “EPIC: The Musical,” in his role of Telemachus. This show is the third time I've seen him live, and I can say this was my favorite show.

Instead of just playing music, the show had an ongoing storyline unfolding on stage. Stillville, specifically Main Street, was where the story took place. It started off with a robotic woman's voice on the radio discussing how Stillville expects nothing less than perfection. It then glitched, and a man's voice interrupted, trying to get a warning through to those listening. The radio kept glitching, and that's when MICO came on.

While MICO sung and played guitar, he also performed with a band — Jason Khater on guitar, Raffaele on bass, and Matt Olliver on drums.

The show utilized a screen off to the side, which showed propaganda-type radio messages, as well as the Stillville city signs. Towards the end of the show, the woman's voice returned, warning the citizens of Stillville about the disruptive group on Main Street and how the

issue was being taken care of.

There were some unique bits within the show. The surprise song got revealed via a telephone call. A mailman came on stage with a letter, to slow, seductive music, very reminiscent of a scene in “Legally Blonde.” There was even a blind date part of the show where they brought up two people to have a short two-minute date while MICO performed a song.

It just so happened to be Paul Hammer's birthday, the guitarist for Will Linley. Cupcakes and party hats were brought out, and the entire crowd sang happy birthday.

The crowd was a very interactive one; during “Your favorite flowers,” fans held up flower cutouts fans had made and dispersed prior to the show. During the intermission, security was passing out plastic cups of water. Somehow, all the empty ones got passed to a man named Jojo who was wearing a banana costume. He stacked a bunch of them on his head, and it quickly became an entire group chant of “one more cup!”

“This was his best show by far,” said Tony Infante, a fan of MICO's who also saw him live for his previous tour.

My one disappointment was that nothing really came of the guy warning everyone to escape Stillville while they

could. I was eager to see how they would wrap up that ending, but it kinda just faded away.

The Running from a Feeling Tour ends Sunday, Nov. 29, with its last performance being in Melbourne, Australia.



Vanessa Skildum '27

# Football Offense Comes Up Short In Exciting Matchup With University of Chicago

By NORAH OWENS

All things considered, Saturday, Oct. 3 wasn't the worst day to be a Buccaneers football fan. It was a stunning, sunny autumn day at Strong Stadium when Beloit took on the University of Chicago Maroons in a conference matchup that was expected to be particularly difficult for the Bucs. While the home team still came away with a stinging loss, it was a fairly respectable game for Beloit.

Chicago won the coin toss and deferred to start the game on defense, putting the Buccaneers' starting offense on the field for the opening drive of the game. That drive led to the first of what would be five third-down conversions from first year quarterback Noah Carrasco'30 throughout the first half of the game. The first quarter displayed some of the best football Beloit has played in years as they maintained control of the game for ten of the first fifteen minutes. While the second drive was successful in moving the good guys 53 yards down the field, they just couldn't capitalize on the last 20 yards for a scoring play. When the Bucs did find themselves on defense, Chicago's first possession was shut down quickly thanks to tackles by Michael Snow'27 and Zeke Hennessy'30, two of Beloit's biggest contributors that afternoon. Snow led

Beloit's defense in individual tackles, with five attributed primarily to him.

The second quarter began still tied up at zeroes with another eight-minute possession for the Buccaneers. During that time, Beloit managed to wear away at the Maroons' defense slowly but surely, with running backs Arturo Aguilera'30 and Deandre Fields'30 putting in work on the rush. The defense remained poised for most of Chicago's two drives in the quarter. Unfortunately, a costly defensive pass interference penalty at Chicago's 19 yard line gave the Maroons 15 yards in a crucial moment. This was definitely one of the most painful defensive errors in the whole game. With seven seconds left in the half, Beloit narrowly avoided a Chicago touchdown, but the offense did capitalize on a short field goal attempt to put the game's first points on the board.

Despite the lackluster ending, the first half was so successful overall that many fans fell into a tantalizing line of thinking: "There's a shot we could actually win this one!" Unfortunately, as much as they've improved, the team isn't quite at that level yet. Chicago's offensive prowess started to get the better of the Bucs in the second half as the run game

that has earned the Maroons so much attention around the Midwest Conference began to rear its head. Chicago's offense opened the second half with a drive for 24 yards, limited mostly by Jimmy Guillaume'28's defensive coverage. On the Maroons' second drive, however, the Bucs particularly struggled to limit the rush, leading to the only touchdown of the game for Chicago with 3:51 left in the quarter. Accordingly, Chicago came out of the end of the game with 238 rushing yards out of their 267 total yards gained. Still, it's impressive that the Bucs defense held them to only one touchdown the entire afternoon.

Neither team managed to produce a scoring drive during a back-and-forth fourth quarter. At that point, it slowly became clear that Beloit probably wasn't going to land any points on the board that day as they took a couple tough breaks in the form of a fumbled catch and some close, yet incomplete, passes. The faithful defense still refused to give up, as Guillaume, Hennessy, and Nate Caplan'27 brought in more tackles on Chicago's most powerful running backs. The Maroons ultimately ran out the clock after the two minute warning, leaving the score at a hard-fought 10-0.

Ultimately, that scoreboard doesn't quite accurately represent what the Bucs were able to accomplish against Chicago. Beloit is the first team this season to hold the Maroons to under 30 points in a game through their first four games. This is also a considerable improvement over last season's contest between Beloit and Chicago, a 0-40 loss also on home turf. The Buccaneers' Class of 2030 shows a lot of promise for future development this year, particularly as quarterback Carrasco hopes to improve from game to game and become more comfortable with his decision-making on the field. This group of fresh Bucs are clearly making waves in the team's offense and defense, so continued offensive overhaul can only help the entire squad grow.

The Bucs football rebuild still has a long way to go, but this game certainly marked a step in the right direction. Beloit actually managed to get under the skin of Maroons players and fans alike by simply refusing to lay down and die. "Don't Give Up the Ship" has been the motto of Beloit football in recent years, meaning that the Buccaneers should never surrender in their pursuit of improvement. That ship may have gone down on Oct. 3, but it went down in heroic fashion; it's fair to say the Bucs really didn't give up on their ship this time.

Beloit football will hope to gain some offensive momentum next Saturday, Oct. 10 in Appleton, Wisconsin, when they challenge the Lawrence University Vikings.



Kayla Wolf

# Where are the Blackhawks? NHL Opening Day Review

By SAM NEUBAUER

With the start of the NHL season underway, let's review all five games that took place Tuesday night. Up first are the Florida Panthers against the Carolina Hurricanes. The former



A Winning Habit

— back-to-back cup champions — took this game 1-0 in overtime after a slap shot from Gustav Forsling with five seconds remaining in overtime. Goaltender Jacob Markstrom of

the Florida Panthers recorded a shutout in his return to the team, stopping 15/15 shots from the Carolina offense. The reigning cup champs in the Hurricanes remained rather quiet this game, with goaltender Brandon Bussi stopping 19/20 shots in the season opener.

Let's take a look outside of the country: in Toronto, where the Montreal Canadiens played against the Toronto Maple Leafs. Lots of hype surrounded this game, with the debut of first overall pick Gavin McKenna playing for the Toronto Maple Leafs, on top of the century-long

rivalry between the two teams. Montreal would take the game 3-2, with Josh Anderson (1g 1a) and Alexandre Carrier (1g 1a) leading the way for Montreal. A positive for the Maple Leafs was William Nylander picking up both goals this game, including the opening goal 48 seconds into the first period.

Nearby, back in the states, the Boston Bruins would host the New York Rangers in another original six match up. Boston would dominate the Rangers, beating them 3-0 with a beauty of a goal from J.J. Peterka as well as goals contributed from Fraser Minten and

Mark Kastelic. Jeremy Swayman would be named the first star of the game, boasting a 24 save shutout for the Boston Bruins.

Out west, the Chicago Blackhawks would take a trip to Vegas, playing the Golden Knights, who dominated the young Blackhawks in a 5-2 beating. Rookie Trevor Connelly would score in his NHL debut for the Vegas Golden Knights, and Patrick Kane would score in his debut with the Blackhawks after signing with his former team this off season. For the Vegas Golden Knights, Goaltender Carter Hart would stop

24/26 shots and Center Jack Eichel would put up 3 points (1g 2a).

Lastly, let's fly all the way back to Canada for a matchup between the Vancouver Canucks and the Edmonton Oilers. Vancouver would take the game 6-5 in overtime after a backhander from Paul Cotter for his second goal of the night. Oilers defenseman Evan Bouchard would be involved in every single Oilers goal, scoring a hat-trick as well as recording 2 assists for 5 points, to become the first defender in 30 years to score a hat-trick in the NHL season opener.

# My Thoughts on All 8 WNBA Playoff Teams

By NORAH OWENS

The WNBA playoffs are officially in action, and this year's championship prospects are as exciting as ever! It's anyone's guess as to which team will come away with the trophy at the end of the best-of-seven finals matchup beginning Oct. 17. Ultimately, by the time this article is published, we'll be well in the midst of semifinals, but for now let's pretend that the first round hasn't happened yet. I'm definitely no psychic, just a writer with strong opinions about each of the eight first-round teams.

**8. INDIANA FEVER**  
Let me be perfectly frank. I just don't enjoy the Indiana Fever this season. I have only dislike in my heart for the conduct of many of their players on and off the court, and the way those players treat others bleeds over into their play and their fanbase. Accordingly, the vitriolic remarks that Fever fans often aim towards opposing players and fans are deeply upsetting, particularly on social

media. In general, I try not to think about Sophie Cunningham, lest I see red and throw my phone across the room. The biggest bright spot in their 2026 season is Kelsey Mitchell's consistency. Mitchell has averaged nearly 25 points per game, a team high, and also leads the team in other statistical categories like minutes played. I honestly hope that the Fever burn out in the first round, and I equally hope that their games aren't so exhausting to watch next year.

**7. NEW YORK LIBERTY**  
Normally I'm a Liberty fan by proxy of my upstate New Yorker best friend, but something about their vibe feels off this season in a way I can't quite pinpoint. Perhaps the way Betnijah Laney-Hamilton was treated this season as a fan-favorite veteran player left a bad taste in my mouth; scratching a player for nine games straight before trading her at the deadline certainly seems a little unsavory. I also wish Satou Sabally were

healthy this postseason as she continues to battle heartbreaking chronic head injuries. Regardless, the Liberty are perennial contenders as of late because it's hard to beat the calculated prowess of Breanna Stewart with the supporting brilliance of Sabrina Ionescu and Jonquel Jones. I wouldn't necessarily be upset to see their second title in three years at the end of the 2026 playoffs.

**6. LAS VEGAS ACES**  
The Aces are absolutely one of my favorite teams in the league (and currently the closest thing I have to a hometown team), but for dramatic purposes, I'm not the biggest fan of a few of their personnel. That knocked them down a few spots this year. Ignoring my thoughts on certain bench players, the Jackie Young-A'ja Wilson duo will NEVER get old to me, and Chelsea Gray's hoops are just downright impressive no matter how you spin it. Seriously, have you seen her signature behind-the-back pass?

If you haven't, please go look it up right now. As we learned last season, you should never ever count the Aces out, especially in the playoffs, and I'm looking forward to what their starting lineup can produce against a fairly lackluster Indiana defense in the first round.

**5. MINNESOTA LYNX**  
The Lynx have been so dominant in the regular season in the past few years, it's honestly astonishing they haven't been able to finish through to a championship yet. Arguably, it should've happened in 2024, but that's neither here nor there. What is here this

year is Olivia Miles' absurdly good rookie season; she started all but four of the Lynx's regular season games and broke Caitlin Clark's rookie points record. That's no small feat, regardless of the strength of her costars. It's also easy to forget that Napheesa Collier missed over half of Minnesota's contests this season with an ankle injury that could've been a death sentence for them.

*Read the rest at roundtable.beloit.edu*



John Mac, Wikimedia Commons

## Athletes of the Week

Ben  
Borger-Germann'30  
Men's Soccer



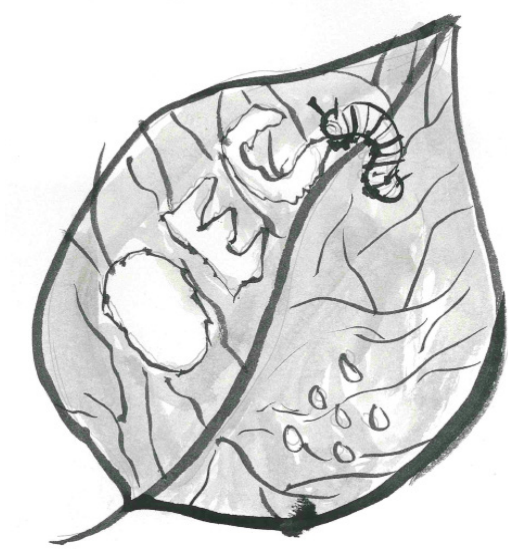
Maggie Wood'30  
Women's Soccer



# CLUB COLUMNS

## Pawpaw Peers: OEC Among a Curious Fruit

By OLIVER IDZIKOWSKI and INDRAYUDH SINHA



Betty Cavicchia '28

The pawpaw, scientifically known as *Asimina triloba*, is a fruit that is much less recognizable than its closest relative: the banana. Recently, one of the members of OEC came into possession of some pawpaw seeds and accompanying paper flyers, brochures, and other information concerning the fruit. The mere fact that this fruit required something like an instruction manual was striking. For many, it was our first time handling and confronting this niche fruit — like a dug-up local deity. It is an extremely local fruit with incredible — as the material we read alongside it announced — significance.

This is not something one will stumble upon frozen and deprived of lustre in a Walmart, Woodmans, or Aldi, despite the fact that it is native to North America. But the pawpaw is not endangered as a whole; like a self-engrossed recluse, it has spun its own, expansive history of consumption, local prominence, and attempts to commodify it, all within the eastern portion of the United States.

Historically, OEC has organised events to work with seeds; pawpaw seeds wouldn't be a total divergence from what we have done in the past. When it comes to edible fruit, we tend to focus on a couple staples, which

is a bit problematic if an issue arises in the agricultural process. Diversity in produce is not only valuable in a culinary sense but is also related to food security.

These particular moments, when something comes up out of the blue, rolling over like an enigmatic charm towards us as a club, makes it suddenly more important. An opportunity shows up among us in the form of a fruit that has acquired somewhat of a cult following. The next steps are still in development, as we need to address how these seeds are going to be stored and cared for, and how this fruit will be given its deserved place.

## The Downfall of Taylor Swift's Music

By ROMINA PALOMEQUE

TikTok was a great place to be on the day “The Life of a Showgirl: The Encore” dropped. Well, TikTok is a great place to be in general; it's a daily reunion of the world's biggest haters gathered in a comment section. It's a blast, truly.

And look, I'm not going to state that I don't like Taylor's music: I do. “Folklore” changed my life, “Evermore” ascended me, “Midnights” carried me through the roughest parts of high school, and “The Tortured Poets Department” crushed my 16-year-old heart.

Taylor, however, lost me somewhere along the release of her Taylor's Versions albums. Whether it was a money grab or not, that's what it started to feel like to me. I was constantly bombarded with announcements, posters, and ads. I listened to them, I enjoyed them, but I lost enthusiasm for new releases.

But when “The Life of a Showgirl” was announced, I was very excited. It promptly turned into disappointment when the album was released. To be honest, I managed to listen to the first three songs of the album before I had to take a mental break. Safe to say I wasn't a fan.

The situation begs the question: How did we get from comparing Taylor Swift to Shakespeare to me needing to take three songs into an album?

The problem isn't that Taylor Swift changed. Artists change. The problem is that the standards surrounding Taylor's music haven't changed. Taylor doesn't have to recreate “Folklore” for her music to be good; she just has to make me believe in what she's singing about again. Her best writing wasn't good because it was complicated; it was good because it was specific.

A lot of the songs in “The Life of a Showgirl” are about her being in love, but they are the blandest love songs I've ever heard. It seems harsh, but it's not dishonest. Taylor can write love songs; for whatever reason, now she isn't writing them well.

The problem is that the love songs on “The Life of a Showgirl” rarely feel like they belong

to anyone in particular. They could be about anyone, written by anyone, and sung to anyone. There are declarations of love, references to romance, and plenty of lines that are supposed to make you believe Taylor is deeply in love, but very little that makes me understand why she loves this person.

Take “Babylon” from “The Encore,” for example. “You never knew that it was Babylon / 'Til it was gone.” Compare that with “Cowboy Like Me” from “Evermore.” “Now you hang from my lips / Like the Gardens of Babylon.” The latter isn't memorable because Taylor mentions Babylon. It's memorable because the comparison actually tells us something. The relationship feels precarious, complicated, almost doomed. The image has a purpose. “Babylon” just feels like a reference for reference's sake.

Another memorable song from “The Life of a Showgirl” is “Wood.” Now, listen. Taylor is a grown woman. If she wants to write about her sex life, I'm all for it. But do it well. We went from “Dress” in 2018 to “Wood” in 2025, and it left me spiraling. I understand that being in love is a wonderful experience. I am happy for Taylor. Truly. Congratulations. Unfortunately, I do not need to hear about it like this.

Taylor Swift has spent years establishing herself as one of the best songwriters of her generation. People compare her to Shakespeare. They dissect her lyrics, search for hidden meanings, analyze every metaphor and reference. They treat every album like it is going to change the course of history. I understand why. She has written songs that deserve that level of attention.

But that reputation cannot exist independently from the music she is making now. If we are going to hold Taylor to the standard of a songwriter who can turn something as a rebound relationship into a story worth dissecting, then I don't think it's unreasonable to expect her music to give us something to dissect.

At some point, being a Taylor Swift fan stops



Betty Cavicchia '28

meaning that you have to defend everything she does. I can love “Folklore,” “Evermore,” and “The Tortured Poets Department,” and still admit when something doesn't work. In fact, I think liking her music is exactly why I can be disappointed by it.

And this is really the problem I keep running into with “The Life of a Showgirl.” Taylor seems to have forgotten that subtlety is allowed. In the words of Adele, “Divorce, babe, divorce.”

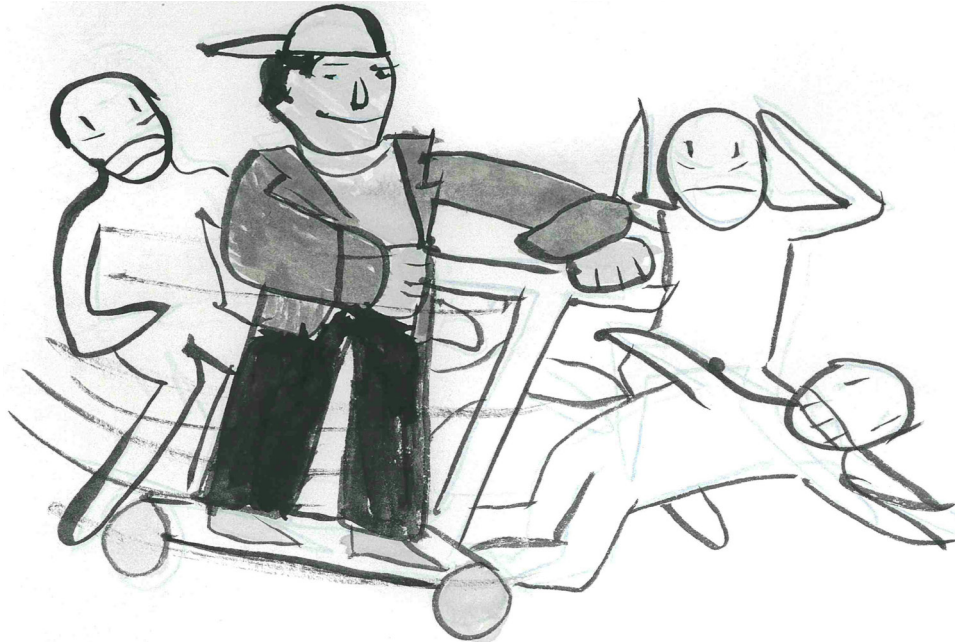
## You Don't Need an E-scooter

By ELISA TURNER

Picture the following. It's 8:42 a.m. on a Monday. You're walking to the Science Center for your first class, groggy, maybe wishing you'd left sooner to be a bit earlier. These thoughts barely register to you before you hear the whoosh of someone absolutely flying past. You didn't hear the hum of the tread and spokes behind you, so it wasn't a bicycle. It was too narrow to be a golf cart. You look ahead, and you see exactly what you dreaded — some asshole turning to park their e-scooter right in the pre-atrium receptacle of the Science Center.

Beloit College's campus is 47 acres. The standard for small campus walkability among colleges is under 100 acres. Beloit College is one of, if not the, most walkable campuses in the state of Wisconsin. There is no reason, absolutely none, for you to have an e-scooter on campus.

The primary concern here is that it's just plain inconsiderate. The habits built up among e-scooter users are, frankly, those of entitlement. They come around corners too fast, brush up way too close to pedestrians, and go at unreasonable speeds. High-end models of e-scooters can go over 40 mph — in some parts of Beloit, that can break local speed limits. Though more common ones can only go 15-20 mph, the average walking pace is 3-4 mph. E-scooters triple and quadruple average human walking speeds, which is entirely unnecessary when the longest stretch of campus is the rough equivalent of a couple laps around Walmart.



Betty Cavicchia '28

You may be wondering, then, why this isn't an issue for bikers. Non-motorized bikes can reach comparable speeds, so why shouldn't we be up in arms about that? The answer, simply, is that bikes have been around long enough for a culture of courtesy to develop. When bikes don't have bells or horns to alert pedestrians, the biker in question will usually call out to a pedestrian “[coming up] on your left/right,” or something to that effect. Moreover, they make enough sound to be reasonably noticeable, even without verbal warning. The friction of the wheel spin makes a noise that is recognizable, since most of us have existed around bikes since the gastrula

stage of our embryonic development. Even further, in some states bikers are required to use hand signals on roads to mark when they're turning.

E-scooters lack this culture of courtesy, don't make a distinct noise, and aren't regulated. The wheels are designed to be quiet. The e-scooter users often don't call out anything, except maybe a retroactive “sorry” if you're lucky. You don't hear a thing until it's too late, and you've already had what feels like a brush with death.

I understand it's hard to walk to class in the mornings. I understand that, mostly for you freshmen, maybe a family member gave it to you as a gift when they heard you were going

to college in the not-so-big city, and they wanted you to have something to make transport easier, so you feel a little obligated to use it. Tough shit, bucko. It's not anyone's fault that Nana didn't factor in the size of your school when trying to decide on a high school graduation gift for you, but it is your fault that you keep endangering pedestrians on a tiny college campus. You do not need the Cybertruck of two-wheel transport to carry your precious cheeks across campus. You do not need to go Mach Jesus just to get to class on time. I don't care if you have to go from Chapin to Godfrey, or from the Powerhouse to Hendricks, or wherever. You don't even get an exception if you're a commuter. People in worse shape have gone further without endangering the people around them. If we lack the time and competence to develop the culture of courtesy associated with bicycles, then we lack the competence to use motorized two-wheelers that have potential to harm other humans, animals, and property.

The one and only exception to this tirade is disabled people. I stipulate this because disabled people use motorized scooters in the same capacity that they would utilize any motorized mobility aid. In the limited capacity I've seen disabled people using e-scooters, they have always gone at or very slightly above walking pace, they have always ensured their visibility, and they haven't whipped around people or cars.

This is the only exception. The rest of you assholes don't need an e-scooter.

# BACK WHEN THINGS WERE ROUND

## HOROSCOPES!!!!!!

### ARIES

You will hit your head on the top of a doorframe and it will make a bonk sound lmao

### TAURUS

You thought you could get away with it. Well you WONT

### GEMINI

Don't even bother trying to get that victory royale this week

### CANCER

Thank God, its benign

### LEO

Watch out for prowling lions

### VIRGO

Unless you're a virgin already, you've been given back your card. loser

### LIBRA

Hopefully we can all be 'libra-ated' from your presence

### SCORPIO

Bugs and creatures will make a home inside your colon

### SAGITTARIUS

Weathers' changing. That means a flat tire is coming your way

### CAPRICORN

You're corny asf bro don't deny it. Like a progressive ad.

### AQUARIUS

That one song you really hate will be stuck in your head all week and you deserve it too

### PISCES

That mercury poisoning will finally catch up to you



## CAMPUS MANTIS by betty cavicchia

