

Knight turns virtual

Annual fundraiser, The Knight, forced to go virtual due to COVID-19

TikTok danger to society

Bales takes an in-depth look at the dangers of losing personal data through social media

VA/Vets deserve better

Editorial: Veterans and VA need leadership and government-funded improvements

Staff succumbs to COVID-19; school turns to virtual learning

By Angela Messere

On November 17, 2020, Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) reluctantly changed to virtual learning through the Thanksgiving break as the number of staff affected by COVID-19 posed staffing issues for the school. GICC reopened on Monday, November 30, 2020.

The closure forced teachers to adapt their lessons and teaching styles to accommodate the new virtual environment. Teacher Marilyn Luther shared her experiences with virtual teaching. When asked about adjustments to her lesson plans and curriculum, pre-calculus teacher Luther did not experience much difficulty in regards to changing her lesson plans compared to when the school went virtual last year.

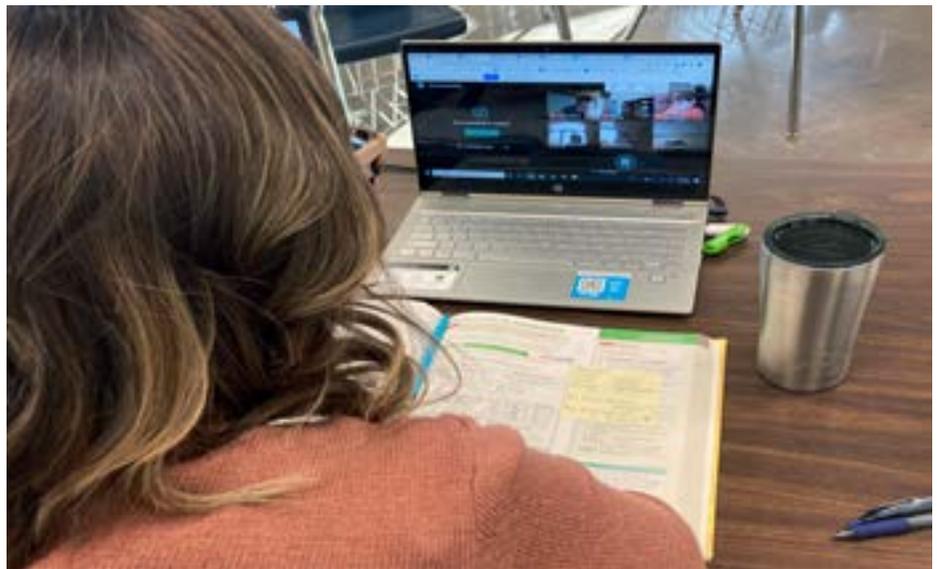
"I actually did not have to adjust my curriculum. I taught at home on a whiteboard and I made videos and uploaded it up to YouTube so the kids could watch what I was teaching everyday. They emailed me all of their work for that day. I gave quizzes and tests [online]... and made the curriculum work which was a lot of work. We ended up in exactly the same spot as they would have if they had been in class," explained Luther.

One area Luther had to make adjustments in her teaching style was ensuring that every student comprehended the materials in a way that they could master the concepts.

"I constantly feel like I have to make sure...that they understand everything that I have to get to them, so we do a little more review" said Luther.

Participation and engagement continue to be a struggle at times in the virtual learning environment, as students relied on technological education which, in some cases, does not provide the same benefits of in-school learning.

"They are listening, it isn't as much of a participation as it could be, but it's hard. The responsibility falls on their shoulders to turn the stuff in that they know about. There is a lot more responsibility



Spanish teacher, Amy May, meets with her class virtually on Thursday, November 20, 2020. The school became short-staffed with nine teachers out which was the driving factor to move to virtual classes.

to the student who isn't coming to class and hearing it directly, but it can work as long as the students do accept that responsibility," stated Luther. In reference to the length of the closure, Luther felt strongly that a shortened school closure was preferable in regards to virtual learning.

"I am glad that when he [Mr. Engle] said it, it would only be for a week. For a week, it would be just fine. We have Chromebooks in every student's hands, and all of us have the ability to teach our students through the Chromebooks, it's awesome," said Luther.

"There will be a little bit that I am not going to cover that I would have in class because I would need them there [in class] where I could help

monitor what was going on. It won't change a lot, but I will make sure that what I am doing is at a level they can accept and are willing to do," added Luther.

Luther also addressed the issue of teacher burnout, a common problem in the virtual teaching environment. Teacher burnout is a type of fatigue teachers face when teaching virtually for a long time. Luckily, Luther has not been affected by this during her experience with virtual learning.

"I am very lucky because I truly love to teach. I truly enjoy it so I have not ever experienced that [but] I think some people legitimately have... I feel like it is a blessing from God that I do not have to deal with that," concluded Luther.

Knight turns into a virtual fundraiser

By Koby Bales

The annual Knight fundraiser took place on Friday, November 20, 2020; however, the event occurred virtually on YouTube and Facebook where watchers were encouraged to bid on items.

The change in the event location came as a big blow to many of the Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) faithful as the event offered a night full of elegant dresses, a catered dinner served by students, and fun shared between adults. Going virtual was also a big set-back for students since the Knight was a great way for students to earn service hours.

"When the situation with COVID started getting worse, we knew it was the right thing to do. As fun as the event is, and as much as we wanted to bring people together, we just knew it was going to be impossible to have an in-person event," Jolene Wojcik, Foundation Director, said.

The silent auction was the only part of the event that remained inside at the school and not virtual. Students and volunteers began bringing in tables and placing auction items out onto those tables earlier in the week. Then on the two nights preceding the auction, the school hosted a walk-through for visitors to look at potential items available for purchase. Senior girls dressed up and hosted the walk-through.

The Knight was filmed by a professional production crew and was live streamed across social media for everyone to view. The event was hosted by Principal Jordan Engle and Kory Koralewski. The two hosts guided viewers through available items up for bid and showcased school items that had been purchased from donations by previous Knight events. Father Jim Golka also helped out on the production by helping with raffles and other tasks. Engle and Koralewski had great chemistry which led to an enjoyable viewing experience.

"The biggest item though was planning a show to broadcast from the school on YouTube and Facebook that people would actually watch. It took a lot of work and Pax Christi Multimedia helped us put together a great show. Mr. Engle, Mr. Koralewski and Father Jim were fantastic," Wojcik gleamed.

"Everyone loved the pre-show with photos of the 22 prior Knights and then also sending in their own photos that evening from their watch parties. The show already has 691 views on YouTube and 1,728 views on Facebook. We don't have the final income numbers yet but things look good, and we are so thankful to all the donors and all the people out there that bid on items. And we are thankful for all the students and teachers that volunteered their time to help us out," Wojcik said.



Hannah Gellatly (10) assists in placing items up for auction for The Knight, which went virtual on Friday, November 20, 2020.

One-Act team continues perfecting for upcoming performance

By Koby Bales

Despite the lack of competitions available, Grand Island Central Catholic's (GICC) One-Act team continues to practice and perfect their interpretation of *Check Please!*

The team has had terrible luck thus far into the season with team members being quarantined, members dropping out, coaches having surgery, and most importantly competitions being cancelled.

"It's been difficult when people were quarantined because we were missing crucial characters during scenes. We had to drop some competitions because of us missing some members and not being as prepared," Molly Mueller (12) said.

The team continues to practice in preparation for the meet they still have on the schedule. In most weeks, the One-Act team has four hour and a

half practices that can be described as wild. The team chemistry is a major factor in what keeps the team motivated and moving forward. Every practice consists of laughs, jokes, and having a great time together. Along with that, they perform their scene all the way through once or sometimes even twice. The team recently moved from the Little Theater to the Schuman Gymnasium stage to get a more realistic feel of competition. A close knit team, they enjoy going to practice in hopes of becoming better as actors and as friends.

"We all work pretty well together because we all did One-Act last year. We keep it fun and joke around a lot, but when it's time to focus up we make sure to keep each other in character," Celia Sutherland (12) stated.

Due to the extra practices, the show has come together well, with quick transitions, lots of costumes, and a dedicated group of performers. The performance is a wild sight to see and could arguably be one of the best in school history.

If all comes to fruition, the team will perform *Check Please!* once in front of their parents. In addition, the competed in David City on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, and will also compete in Wood River on Friday, December 4, 2020.

"I hope we can compete and make ourselves proud," Mueller said.

The One-Act team has endured some rough times but as the great German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, once said, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," the team is definitely a lot stronger because of this season.



Disguised and masked, Celia Sutherland (12) rehearses with her One-Act team in this year's presentation of *Check Please!* by Jonathan Rand.

Master storyteller inspires students in role as senior religion teacher

By Hayden Price

Any student at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) likely knows most of the staff members at the school. One individual who teaches senior religion, who is less well known by underclassmen but has profoundly impacted the senior class is George Ayoub. Ayoub has taught senior religion for four years at GICC.

The senior class is used to Ayoub's tough moral dilemmas and his easy-going personality. They have enjoyed Ayoub's class; Ayoub has cherished his time teaching as much as his students have.

"I like to teach, I like the relationships, I like the big ideas," said Ayoub.

Ayoub was urged for years by teachers John and Cathy Howard to teach at GICC. He was approached about teaching a theology class by former GICC Principal Kristen Klein and Father Scott Harter. Ultimately they convinced him he could have an impact at GICC.

"They encouraged me to have students explore what a spiritual life should look like, and what are some moral and ethical questions seniors might encounter after they leave GICC. I would never consider myself a scholar of Catholic theology, but moral and ethical philosophy are in my wheelhouse," said Ayoub.

Ayoub does not just teach at GICC. He is also a long-time adjunct professor at Doane University. Additionally, he taught in California for a decade and at Grand Island Senior High. During his years of teaching, Ayoub also wrote, and writing would eventually become his primary source of income.

Ayoub is a prolific writer. He has authored four books and was also a writer for *The Grand Island Independent* for 21 years, where he became well known for his column writing. When Ayoub first started full time at the newspaper, he wrote five columns a week and was also the Editorial Page Editor. Most columnists, Ayoub said, only write one to two columns per week. Ayoub also dabbled in online streaming while at the Independent.

"I spent twenty-years writing on deadline. I did about 4,000 columns," shared Ayoub.

Ayoub enjoyed the impact of his columns. He loved having the ability to have a voice with his

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personal columns. The columns also allowed him to form community relationships.

"The thing that I'm most proud of is the people who would stop me and say... you wrote this column, and it really made a difference in my life," stated Ayoub.

Ayoub served in many ways as a prominent journalist, working as one of two moderators at the 2012 Nebraska senatorial debate. Ayoub was even able to meet former United States President George W. Bush. Journalism is something that Ayoub finds essential.

"It's incredibly important that journalists tell the people's story," emphasized Ayoub.

Ayoub retired from the Independent in 2015; however, he is far from bored as he continues to work on another book. His ability to organize is pivotal to writing books. One of Ayoub's books took him three years to perfect.

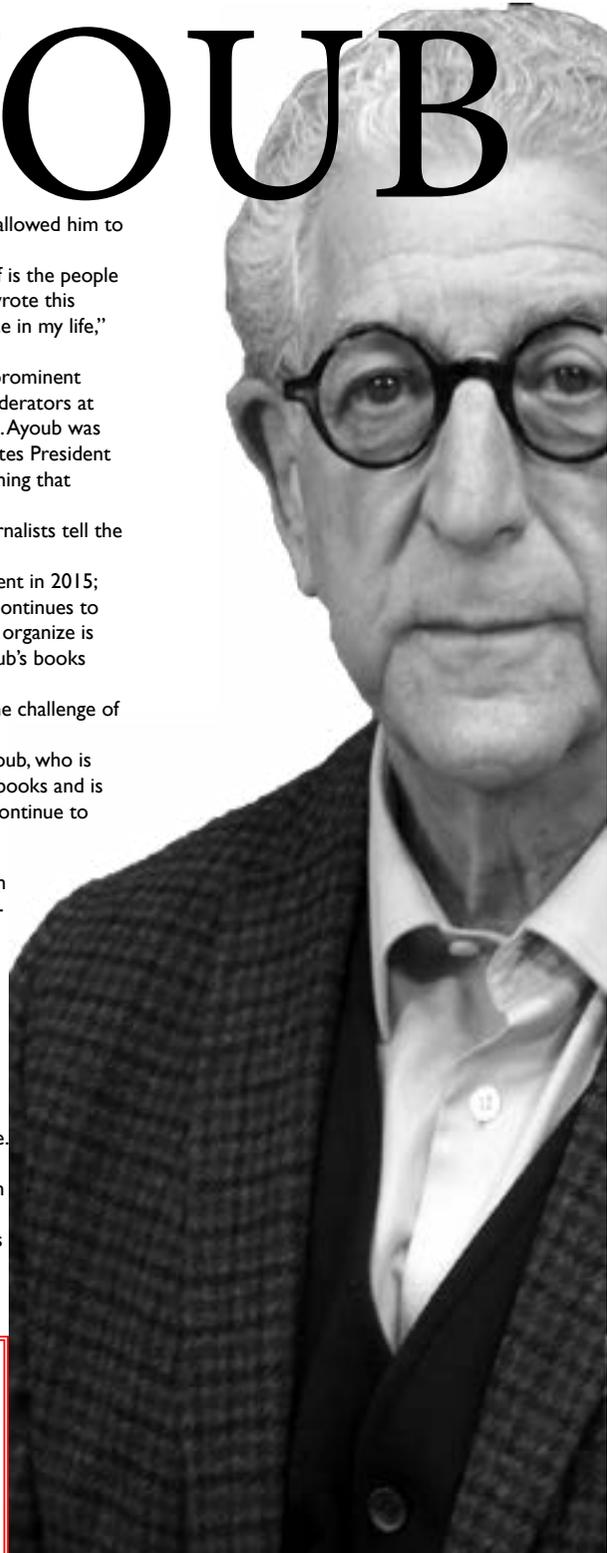
"It's a big undertaking, but I like the challenge of it. I really do," shared Ayoub.

The future looks promising for Ayoub, who is an optimist. He plans to write more books and is excited to see how technology will continue to alter our lives.

"I really like how the new ideas and the new technology blend in with the things that we hold dear, like family and friends, people's faith... that keeps me curious about the world," Ayoub stated.

The teacher that comes during periods three and four in our first semester is a man of many wonders. His writing intelligence and life experiences present great exposure to seniors. This exposure is invaluable. The career Ayoub had serves as a great example of what hard work can accomplish.

"Having him [Ayoub] on staff adds a unique set of life experiences to our senior theology class..." said GICC Principal Jordan Engle.



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TikTok: A danger to society

By Koby Bales

TikTok: a fun social media platform or a national security threat? If we were to believe President Donald Trump it would be the latter but is it?

TikTok, formerly named Musical.ly, is an app that has grown to prominence since launching in America in 2018. The application, which is owned by Chinese company ByteDance, allows users to make short dances, lip-sync, or comedy videos, which can then be shared to other social media sites. TikTok's popularity has grown to unforeseeable measures, especially from younger people with 41% of its users ranging in age between 16 to 24.

TikTok has also had its fair share of controversies in its short life span. The application's owners ban certain topics that it finds unsuitable or controversial, which has led to an uprising in censorship conversation around the world... These topics included videos over human rights in Hong Kong, China; images of foreign leaders like Vladimir Putin, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump; spreading false information regarding the COVID-19; and widespread racism and bullying.

The most major controversy is the way the application collects personal data from its users. TikTok's End-User Licensing Agreement (EULA) lists that it collects usage information, IP addresses, a user's mobile carrier, unique device identifiers, keystroke patterns, and location data.

The EULA states:

"If you choose to register to use the Platform using your social network account details (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google), you provide us or allow your social network to provide us with your username and public profile. We will likewise share certain information with the relevant social network such as your app ID, access token, and the referring URL."

The collection of this data has earned the concern of President Trump. The data collected by the Chinese-owned company will allow the Communist Chinese Party to access Americans' personal information. Trump claims that the application acts as spyware for the Chinese government since TikTok calculates how long a user watches a video and what videos the user likes. By calculating this, TikTok is able to more precisely give a 'For You' page that the user will enjoy.

Dave Catherman, Director of Information Technologies at Mural Consulting in Tucson, Arizona, discussed the dangers of giving out information to anyone, including foreign countries.

"Foreign countries and companies for that matter are gathering personal data in an effort to track, categorize, [and] understand a user's behaviors and what drives people to make decisions. The access is simple. We give it to them willingly. It comes from users offering this data as part of the use of rights for the application. Users click 'YES', I do want you to track my information so I can use the app. It comes as the check box stating I understand and accept the terms and conditions of using this application called a EULA. Deep in the EULA is the tracking efforts. The EULAs are long and complicated in an effort to bore the end-users into submission without reading the detail," Catherman stated.

One reason that the Chinese government tracks data is to monitor user's behavior and crack

down on groups deemed dangerous to their way of life. This could be seen when protesters in Hong Kong were jailed due to the Chinese government finding their plan by using the personal information pulled from various internet sites.

"China is looking to gather information similar to the way the US and other countries do. Their handling of information is done in an effort to understand the population's habits, trends, and movements in an effort to gain financial benefits. Secondly, this information is gathered and passed in an effort to protect the stronghold of the government over people who may be acting in a way that threatens or is in opposition of their rule. Look how they used social media to track and quell the efforts of protesters in Hong Kong," said Catherman.

"...they don't care to recognize privacy infringement as affecting them. They would rather get a few more gems or watch a slightly inappropriate animal or kid video than maintain their privacy. .." Dave Catherman, Director of Information Technologies at Mural Consulting in Tucson, Arizona

This leads to the question, what is the difference between how TikTok handles personal information compared to American companies like Facebook? TikTok takes the data they have collected and are able to target ads specific to the person. This is very similar to the handling of data by Facebook. Facebook is able to take data by using a technique called "Facebook Pixel". The "Facebook Pixel" is a code that drops into other websites which allows Facebook to track user activity.

For example, as a test do the following: have your phone on your home screen with no apps open; sit in your car or in your home and have a conversation about that Christmas gift you want to buy or place you want to visit. Then open Facebook - notice the advertising is now geared towards the items in your conversation.

Another way Facebook collects information is by the Lookalike Audience strategy. In this, Facebook takes data from users similar to you and makes ads targeted to make you click or bring interest. Facebook mostly uses this technique to target decisions that are rash, such as spending money on expensive items. The Lookalike Audience strategy is often used in online casino games. The difference between how American companies use personal information collected from these applications compared to China is that they use it to track data and movement. American companies are more worried about your spending and how they can encourage you to spend more rather than monitoring suspicious activity.

"They don't want to lock you up for protesting,

they would rather provide opportunities to sell you protesting supplies," Catherman joked.

Due to these frightening tactics that social media companies use, President Trump has cited an injunction to prevent the downloading of TikTok in the United States. TikTok has appealed this case and is now actively searching for an American company to buy them out in hope that this will solve the problem. Catherman disagrees with this plan from TikTok.

"Simply put - No!" exclaimed Catherman.

He believes that regardless of who owns the application, American or Chinese, they will continue to track your personal data. Catherman also disagrees with the attempt to ban the application as well.

"The banning of TikTok is insignificant as it is just one in 4.4 million apps that reside in the app stores for major device manufacturers. The precedent is not focused on user data but more of a political tact in the case of TikTok. However, this may bring a new air of caution to political and governmental organizations on what they are willing to share with other countries about their citizens' behavior. More of the monopoly of the data, not a stop to collection of data," Catherman added.

The solution to this problem comes down to the user. It comes down to whether or not you want your information taken, whether or not you keep the application on your phone or delete it. Overall, it all comes down to how much you care about your personal data.

"The short answer is because they don't care to recognize privacy infringement as affecting them. They would rather get a few more gems or watch a slightly inappropriate animal or kid video than maintain their privacy. I don't believe that they are not concerned but rather the allure of the application gives them the dopamine rush their brains want. It is similar to love or a slot machine with the lights, sounds, and rewards. They are very skillfully crafted to take our minds off what these apps are truly designed to do," Catherman declared.

So, you want to be a



41% of users
ages 16-24

Targets rash decisions,
making users spend
money

Collects usage
information, IP
addresses, mobile
carrier info



Hayden Price (12), Editor-in-Chief, The Lance

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Outside submissions, suggestions, or letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. They may be brought to Mrs. Yager-Wach in Room 213 or emailed to journalism@gicc.org. Submissions may also be mailed to:

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Any and all submissions must be signed to be considered for publication, and the editor reserves the right to edit or print any submissions.

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Veterans and VA deserving of better care

By Hayden Price

Every November 11, Americans celebrate Veterans Day. On this day, every year, I think of my grandfather, John Price, who served in Vietnam.

Most Americans, like me, are proud to know someone who served in the military. Do we ever ask ourselves if we take for granted the freedoms we possess protected by the brave, selfless individuals who comprise the United States Military?

The [Congressional Research Service](#) shared that between 2006 and July 1, 2020, 17,645 active-duty personnel have died while serving our country. Members of our military are willing to die for us. As a nation, we must ensure veterans are cared for.

With a new United States President soon to take office, we must ensure that our nation's heroes are treated with the utmost respect. President-elect Biden must ensure that he prioritizes fixing the Veterans Affairs (VA) issues that have manifested themselves all across the country. VA facilities are struggling to keep up with their workloads and these facilities are wildly understaffed; psychiatrists are especially needed in these facilities to address mental health concerns.

[Military Times](#) stated at the end of 2019, the number of staffing vacancies was nearly 50,000. Executives at the Veterans Administration have insisted that these numbers are comparable to other government agencies. In other words, the numbers are normal; however, the standard for normal seems to change continuously, considering [Stars and Stripes](#) reported that in 2017, there were 35,000 vacancies at VA facilities nationwide. Biden must ensure that funding is given to VA facilities to advertise job positions and recruit qualified individuals to fill these vacancies. If Biden will not directly pushing for funding, then he needs to nominate a Secretary of Veterans Affairs who will advocate for proper funding.

The vacancies at VA facilities should concern Americans. We must ask, why are there so many vacancies and what can be done to reduce the number?

The simple answer is that VA employees are paid far less than private-sector employees and facilities are not receiving qualified applicants. In a 2018 [report](#) from the VA, 125 facilities stated that staff shortages are due to lack of qualified applicants. Ninety-eight facilities said non-competitive salaries lead to increasing vacancies. These were the two leading responses for vacancy causes, and they genuinely go hand-in-hand. Lower salaries mean that qualified applicants will look elsewhere. At the time of publishing, the VA report shared Omaha's VA facility ranked third in the nation for social work staff shortages. All across the nation, the lack of employees impacts wait times and quality of care. [The Washington Post](#) (2019) emphasized the pay gap that VA employees bear, sharing that the top pay a VA medical center director can receive is \$201,900. This number is one quarter of what the average private-sector hospital CEO makes. The pay disparities are consistent with a multitude of positions, ranging from psychiatrists to nurses.

I propose the government reallocate funds going to Planned Parenthood to the VA facilities across our nation. [The Washington Times](#) described that in 2019, \$617 million taxpayer dollars went to Planned Parenthood. This money could be much better used serving our veterans rather than carrying out abortions. Additional funds would lead to high doctor pay and better-recruiting campaigns.

The sad thing is, I have only addressed a small piece of the problems that the VA faces around our country. Whomever Biden nominates to become the Secretary of Veterans Affairs must ensure that proper recruiting and staff incentives are established to fill vacancies and improve veterans' productivity and quality of care.

The work VA employees do does not go unnoticed. Our country relies heavily on the military. We should not cease our support of individuals who have served after they are discharged or after they retire. Proper care for our veterans is an issue that largely goes unnoticed. America should wait no longer. Change needs to occur.

Letter(s) to the Editor

Dear editor:

In regards to the article *Ghosts of GICC past continue roaming the halls of school at night* published on 10/30/2020, I agree with Angela Messere that there have been some ghostly experiences at this school because of stories like these and personal experiences. I also think others should learn about these times because I believe in spirits and demons, and I think others might be able to believe too if they knew some of these stories. We are a Catholic school, and they think because of that we can't be haunted or in danger.

In my opinion, if everyone doesn't take demons seriously and play with ouija boards, etc., we could be putting ourselves in danger. I feel the only way to accept it is by hearing these stories and leaving it up to the reader to decide if they will believe or not because if we were always told they don't exist we might not ever be able to even open our minds up to the possibility.

Therefore, we won't feel the need to ask for God's protection from these spirits, if they are evil.

Thank you,

Kinnley Kearns

Basketball teams expect state run this season

By Payton Gangwish

Basketball is back, and the expectations can't be any higher for the girls and boys basketball teams this year. With both varsity squads making it to the State tournament last year, and the boys finishing as Class C-2 runner-up, the goal of both teams is the same: to win a state championship.

Girls Basketball

After an early exit in last years state tournament due to a loss to Ponca, the Lady Crusaders are determined to reach that peak and go even farther.

Graduating three seniors from last year (Allison Kalvoda, Katie Maser and Ellie Steenson), the Lady Crusaders return this year with a veteran team of five seniors, four juniors, and two sophomores who have numerous amounts of on-court experience.

"I think this team can make a deep post-season run because we have a lot of girls who are passionate about this sport and are determined to succeed. We also have a lot of quick girls this year, which will be an asset during the season and possibly help us make a run in the state tournament," said Guard Grace Herbek (12).

"We have set the expectation for ourselves to show up ready to work and give our best effort daily... Everyone on the team is also expected to be committed and to truly put the team first," Herbek said.

"Always try your hardest at everything and be vocal on defense," is how Forward/Center Chloe Cloud described the expectation of team members this year.

"Our expectation we have set for ourselves is to take advantage of every day we have with each other, and to have fun and play at our best all the time, because you never know when it could get taken away," added Guard Alexis Mudloff (12).



Brayton Johnson (11) squares up against Gil Jengmer (11) during practice for the upcoming basketball season.

The girls' first games will be on Friday, December 4, 2020 against Omaha Gross High School in Omaha, Nebraska.

Boys Basketball

Making it to and winning the state championship game isn't just a goal from last year, it's the expectation going into this year for the boys basketball team.

"We want to get a year better, not a year older, and that means we want to clean up a lot of our silly mistakes from last year and hopefully that will give us a better chance at winning the ultimate goal of winning a state championship," stated Guard/

Forward Koby Bales (12).

The boys team have played together for years which has created a bond between the players.

"We just have a chemistry that other teams don't have... Our bond outside the court is very different," Center Dei Jengmer (12) stated.

The returning players now take a larger leadership role.

"I think that all the seniors are going to have to step up in a leadership role this year along with Isaac and Marcus since we all have a lot of varsity experience," said Bales.

The boys start their season away against Omaha Gross High School on Friday, December 4, 2020.

NSAA issues Winter Sports Guidelines

By Payton Gangwish

On November 13, 2020, the Nebraska State Athletic Association (NSAA) published their guidelines for this year's winter sports season. Among the required changes are the use of masks for coaches, athletes, officials and fans, as well other items related to social distancing whenever possible.

Basketball is one sport that the NSAA officials have drastically altered to protect athletes which have impacted scheduling. According to the NSAA Official Winter Sports Guidelines (Winter Guidelines),

Games canceled due to COVID will be considered a "no contest,"; Replacement games (not originally scheduled) may be scheduled at any time with schools who have lost a game due to COVID-19, ...and ...wild card points will not be awarded for replacement games. (Nov. 13, 2020).

While these present a challenge for gamedays, there are many other challenges just for practices.

"Right now, the team is separated into two groups and they are practicing in different courts at different times ... to ... prevent spreading the virus to the whole team," said boys basketball head coach, Tino Martinez.

"I'm going to say the fans will be affected by the virus the most. I think they're affected more because with the guidelines put out by Governor Ricketts, now only parents are allowed to watch the games in person. This is going to be especially hard on the relatives and grandparents of the players who won't be able to watch to come and support their relatives," stated Martinez

There were some changes for wrestling, a high-contact sport. The Winter Guidelines changed the team/individual contest limitations from 10 tournament dates and eight individual duals to - 18 total competition dates. The NSAA also recommends that tournaments be limited to no more than eight teams or, for individual tournaments, 112 participants. The Winter Guidelines require that dual meets be used when available, that any meet containing more than four teams must be considered a tournament, and when possible multiple gyms should be used for tournaments.

"All of the challenges COVID has brought can be taken care of. We just have to make sure we keep our mask on at all times during practice. One of the challenges will be meets because since both wrestlers won't have masks on, we just hope that each individual is healthy and has no symptoms and

make sure after every meet that we do a good job with hygiene to keep all the germs away. Other than that, we just have to make sure the mask stays on at all times... We just have to roll with the punches and find out where the path lies" said wrestling coach Zach Schroder.

There were also several changes for swimming, but the most impactful changes are that there can only be a limited number of swimmers in each lane during practices and warm ups prior to meets and the use of virtual meets.

"Schools can conduct 'virtual meets' and achieve state qualifying times, at sites in which meets are conducted under the jurisdiction of a full complement of officials and fully automatic timing (FAT) is used" (NSAA Official Winter Guidelines).

"The biggest challenge for the team that COVID has brought us is the uncertainty of the season. We aren't sure which meets will happen and which meets will be cancelled," said swimmer Johnathan Novinski (12).

"I believe that the swimmers will be affected by the COVID guidelines more than the coaches. This is because we need to worry about spreading out in the pool," Novinski also stated.

Swim team looks for individual and team improvement

By Angela Messere

With the start of the swimming season, the Grand Island Senior High (GISH) team is aiming for success. The GISH team would not be complete without Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) athletes: Jonathan Novinski (12), Zach Cloud (12), Michael Sambula-Monzalvo (10), Kathryn Novinski (9), and Sheridan Puncochar (9).

This year has proven to be unique in many ways and the challenges of this year have proven to be particularly unique. The swimming team also must face some tough challenges, both in and out of the pool.

"The team's biggest competition this year is our health. Obviously with the pandemic going on it's extremely important to stay healthy not only for the members but also for the members' families. I think there is a high risk for any sports team being shut down, especially with the swim team being multiple schools, not only in Grand Island but also Doniphan. I think we just have to be very safe and cautious," said J. Novinski.

The GICC swimmers are looking for both personal and team improvement this year. The goal of better scores is never far from their minds as they prepare for their season.

"I would love to break a minute in my 100 backstroke, which will be one of my main individual



Jonathan Novinski (12) practices with the co-op Grand Island Senior High (GISH) swim team at the YMCA in preparation for their season to begin.

events this season. For this upcoming season, my main focus is to not put too much pressure or stress on myself and enjoy the sport," said K. Novinski.

Swimming is a sport that is both individualistic and team oriented. The swimmer is striving for the best personal times while taking into consideration the benefits to the team.

"I think outside of the time aspect I would like to further myself as a team member. I can learn a lot of skills just through the team and try my best to be a leader for the rest of the team and making sure everyone is staying safe and taking steps in the right direction," stated J. Novinski in relation to the team.

Many things have changed in order to accommodate the CDC recommendations. Fortunately swimming lends itself well to social distancing.

"...Since it's GISH's rules, spectators are very limited, if any, and outside of that, at the YMCA, we have our protocol: just masks at all times when you are not in the water. The primary focus of the swim team however remains personal and team improvements," J. Novinski stated.

"My main focus is to try to better myself and everyone around me. I think being a competitor in practice and in meets and motivating all my teammates will push us to the next level. That's the most important thing," said J. Novinski.

Grapplers prepare for successful season

By Angela Messere

As the wrestling season begins, the Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) team is looking forward to a great year. However, this season presents challenges as the number of COVID-19 cases surge in Nebraska. Head Coach Zach Schroder is focusing on the basics and looking forward to getting better individually and as a team, while balancing keeping his team as safe and healthy as possible.

"Coronavirus is a major concern as the season starts, and since wrestling is a close-contact sport, we as a team are taking every opportunity to keep safe. I'm doing everything possible to make practices as safe as possible, and wearing masks as much as possible," explained Schroder.

The threat of COVID-19 is taken seriously as coaches collaborate with methods to keep athletes safe during meets. The coaches have taken measures for meets to maintain COVID-19 guidelines and keep the risk of infection as low as possible.

"I have been in contact with a lot of coaches, and at meets they have set up some great guidelines; having each team have their own room, and not being out in the gym, then having the track-wrestling on the tv screens in rooms so we know when each wrestler is up," stated Schroder.

Schroder emphasized the importance of keeping everyone safe and healthy. The personal contact of the sport does provide some inherent risk that can be mitigated with careful precautions.

When asked about making weight during wrestling season, Schroder was looking for specifics, his ideal weights for his current team are not in



Jackson Farias (12) and Sam Mueller (9) practice their moves while fully masked to prepare for the wrestling season.

question.

"I hope to wrestle [kids] at 106, 126, 138, 145, 152, 160 and 170," said Schroder. These weights are ideal and the athletes are working hard to maintain them for the season," Schroder added.

Although COVID-19 looms large in the mind-set of all the wrestlers, the psychological focus of improving and having a great season is and needs to be the focus of the season.

"I want each one of my kids to get better

each day and know they did, because if we leave it all out there, then we have nothing to look back at and know we did our best. I'm enjoying every single moment I have with my team. We are going to have a young team this year but our team will have a lot of grit and willpower. We won't give up," said Schroder.

Schroder is determined to have a great season no matter what the circumstances.