BASKETBALL

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ELECTION

Demographics and growing trends from the midterms
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NORTHWESTERN NEWS

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Students face high book prices

By **COOPER JOHNSON**
Student Reporter



Photo by Oaklee Fielder
ZayDen Volden working the register at the Northwestern book store in the Student Center, where Northwestern students can buy textbooks.

College students needing to pay for college already have a big task to tackle, but textbook prices have recently made it an even bigger struggle. Textbook prices have been on the rise over the past several years, and it is causing many college students extra stress.

Textbooks have always been expensive, and many bookstores have tried to find ways to help the students who need to pay for books. Options such as renting a book have been a good option for college students for quite some time. Unfortunately, the prices of renting a book have also gone up over the years.

Tracy Clark, a teacher at Sharon-Mutual Public Schools, shared her experiences with textbooks. Clark, who graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with her bachelor's degree in 2002 and later graduated with her master's in 2004, said, "We bought used, and they were still ridiculously high, I thought. Textbooks were expensive, but they were required for all classes. It was a hard purchase to make as a college student."

She later shared her biggest problem with buying the expensive textbooks. She stated, "The biggest issue is that you could only hope that you could buy them used. There was only one place to purchase the required textbooks, and it was the university bookstore. You could only hope to be the first to purchase the book so you could get a used book instead of having to purchase a brand new one."

While nowadays there are online options along with other places that hold textbooks, it can still be hard to get your books. Shipping costs, along with the original textbook cost and shipping delays, are all problems that can occur when students order their textbooks online.

According to educationdata.org, average college students spend $340 dollars on course materials over an academic year. A total of 25% of students have to work extra hours to pay for their textbooks, and 11% have said they have skipped meals in order to pay for their textbooks.

While all of those students are struggling to pay for their books, 63% of students have admitted to just not buying the textbooks because they were too expensive.

Between 2001 and 2026, the total price of textbooks has risen by 158.3%. An even bigger statistic says that the total price of textbooks rose by 1,041% from 1977 to 2015. That growth is astronomical, and it's no wonder why college students are struggling to pay for their books.

The price of textbooks is rising three times the rate of inflation. Many people complain about how much inflation has raised the price of everything around the world. Imagine what a college student is going through as they have to pay for books that are rising in price three times the inflation rate.

The rise in tuition has also gone up, as tuition has risen almost 50% over the past 20 years.

The price of tuition is already a burden on the students, but the textbook prices just add to the list. A total of 19.2% of students who fail a college course blame the price of the textbook and other class materials.

Drew Taylor, a senior at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, shared his experience of buying textbooks over the past four years. Taylor stated, "I think textbooks have gotten way too expensive, especially for students who have other school expenses." He went on to say,

"They can be difficult to afford because textbooks cost a lot, and not everyone has the extra money to spend on them. My biggest issue is how expensive they are, especially when I only need them for one class or semester."

Mrs. Clark argued that textbooks were expensive when she was in college. She graduated 22 years ago, and the argument has not changed. It has, in fact, gotten worse. With the costs of textbooks continuously rising, textbooks in the future will be almost impossible to afford for future generations.

Online textbooks have been getting more popular each year as many classes are heading towards them. Most of the time, they are a good option as they are normally cheaper and can be easier to access.

Textbooks that are online are normally 50% to 60% cheaper than the hard copy of the book. College students have started to use these more because of the prices, and they also don't have to carry around those large and heavy textbooks.

Some problems when it comes to online books are that students normally have to remember some sort of login information, so if they forget that, then students won't be able to access the book. Another problem with online textbooks is that some printed textbooks don't have an online version.

The online textbooks have their perks, and they have their downsides, but overall, they can be a good option for people who want to save money when it comes to buying textbooks.

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NEWS

Holiday store and pictures with Santa

From University Relations

The Nescatunga Arts and Humanities Council and the NWOSU Campus Cabinet Food Pantry will offer two days of holiday shopping and family activities in conjunction with the Alva Chamber of Commerce's Bring Christmas Home for the Holidays celebration.

Festivities begin Friday, Dec. 4, during the annual First Friday Artwalk from 5-8 p.m. at the Runnymede. Nescatunga members and local crafters will offer handmade items for last-minute holiday gifts, and the Woods County Coalition will serve complimentary hot chocolate. On Saturday, Dec. 5, the Holiday Store for Kids and Photos with Santa will take place from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Castle on the Hill Games, 417 College, in downtown Alva. From 9-10 a.m. there will be a sensory-friendly hour exclusively for children with special needs to shop and visit Santa, and after that, Santa and the Holiday Store will be open to the rest of the public with the last hour being for adults to purchase any remaining items. The Holiday Store for kids will be sponsored by the Nescatunga Arts and Humanities Council, the Holiday Store offers children an affordable way to shop for family members, friends, teachers and pets. Adult volunteers will help each child select gifts within their budget and wrap them before heading home. Parents and family members may accompany their children or watch from nearby to keep gifts a surprise. To ensure a smooth experience, only a few shoppers will enter the store at a time, and holiday coloring stations will be available for those waiting. Cash and checks only will be accepted for all purchases.



Photo Provided

Members of the Woods County Coalition will serve hot chocolate to those stopping by the Runnymede to shop for last-minute gift items during the annual First Friday Artwalk from 5–8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4, as part of the Bring Christmas Home for the Holidays celebration in Alva.

Photos with Santa will be sponsored by the Northwestern Campus Cabinet Food Pantry and Holder Drug, Photos with Santa welcomes children and families to have photos taken. Families can review their images at on-site viewing stations, and selected photos will be saved onto jump drives donated by Wisdom Heritage Bank. Thanks to Holder Drug, each family receives one free digital photo along with a coupon for one free 4x6 print at Holder Drug. Additional digital photos selected are $5 each, payable by cash or check at the central pay station. All guests for both the store and photos are first come, first served. A sign-up list will be available upon arrival.



Photo Provided

Photos with Santa will take place from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, at Castle on the Hill Games, 417 College, in downtown Alva, sponsored by the Northwestern Oklahoma State University Campus Cabinet Food Pantry and Holder Drug. Special needs children may take photos from 9–10 a.m., with all others welcome starting at 10 a.m.

Those with questions or wishing to volunteer at the Holiday Store or Santa photo station may email NescatungaArts@yahoo.com. To volunteer for other Bring Christmas Home for the Holidays events, contact the Alva Chamber of Commerce at communications@alvaok.net. A full schedule of holiday events is available under the events tab at https://www.alvaok.net.

The Nescatunga Arts and Humanities Council has booked Tuesday, Dec. 1, from 4-9 p.m. at Gambino's as a fundraiser for the 56th annual Nescatunga Arts Festival that is scheduled for June 4-5, 2027, at the Alva Recreational Center. Registration forms for fine artists and crafters for the festival will open Jan. 1. The early bird rate for booth space will end March 26, and fees will increase. Memberships to the organization are open to anyone for $25 a year. Sponsorships are also welcome to help fund the various activities and awards at the festival each year. More information about Nescatunga and the Festival is at www.nescatunga.org or contact Nescatunga president Heather Penner at 580-748-1905 or hlpenner91@gmail.com.

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NEWS

Red Dirt Review High School Art Contest

From University Relations

More than 200 entries from five area high schools have been submitted for the second Red Dirt Review High School Art Contest and Exhibition, organized by the NWOSU Wisdom Family Foundation Visual Arts program.

Of the entries received, more than 100 works of art in the categories of ceramics, digital art, drawing, mixed media/other, painting, photography and sculpture were accepted to be displayed in the Gallery Sophia in Jesse Dunn 218 Nov. 17 through Dec. 4. Open days and times are Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Fridays by appointment.

A public awards reception is planned for Dec. 4 at 5 p.m.

Artwork being displayed is from Balko, Chisholm, Guymon, Oklahoma Bible Academy in Enid and Woodward.

Thomas Cornell, assistant professor of visual arts and chair of the Reichenberger Department of Fine Arts, said that there is some "phenomenal artwork from around the region" on display.

Public, private and home schooled students in grades 9-12 were able to submit up to three entries at no charge.

Questions about the art show or the visual arts program should be directed to Cornell at 580-327-8111 or tacornell@nwosu.edu. Additional program information is available at www.nwosu.edu/visualarts.

Please note that Gallery Sophia is accessible only by stairs.



Photo by Oaklee Fielder

Art made by students at more than five high schools around the area in the Gallery Sophia.

Theater program puts on Aesop's Fables

From University Relations

28 NWOSU students will present four of James Brock's "Aesop's Fables" in Fellers Family Auditorium in Herod Hall. A public showing will be Saturday, Nov. 21, at 2 p.m. Admission is $2 for all patrons.

Classes from local and area elementary schools will attend performances during the day on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 19-20.

This annual Theatre for Young Audiences production weaves together the classic fables "The Fox and the Crow," "The Hare and the Tortoise," "The Donkey in the Lion Skin," and "The Fox and the Sour Grapes."

The production will feature a deceptively clever fox, a vain crow, a fiercely competitive tortoise and hare, and a donkey in disguise, delivering a hilarious, heartfelt exploration of authenticity, humility, and what it truly takes to win at life's finish line.

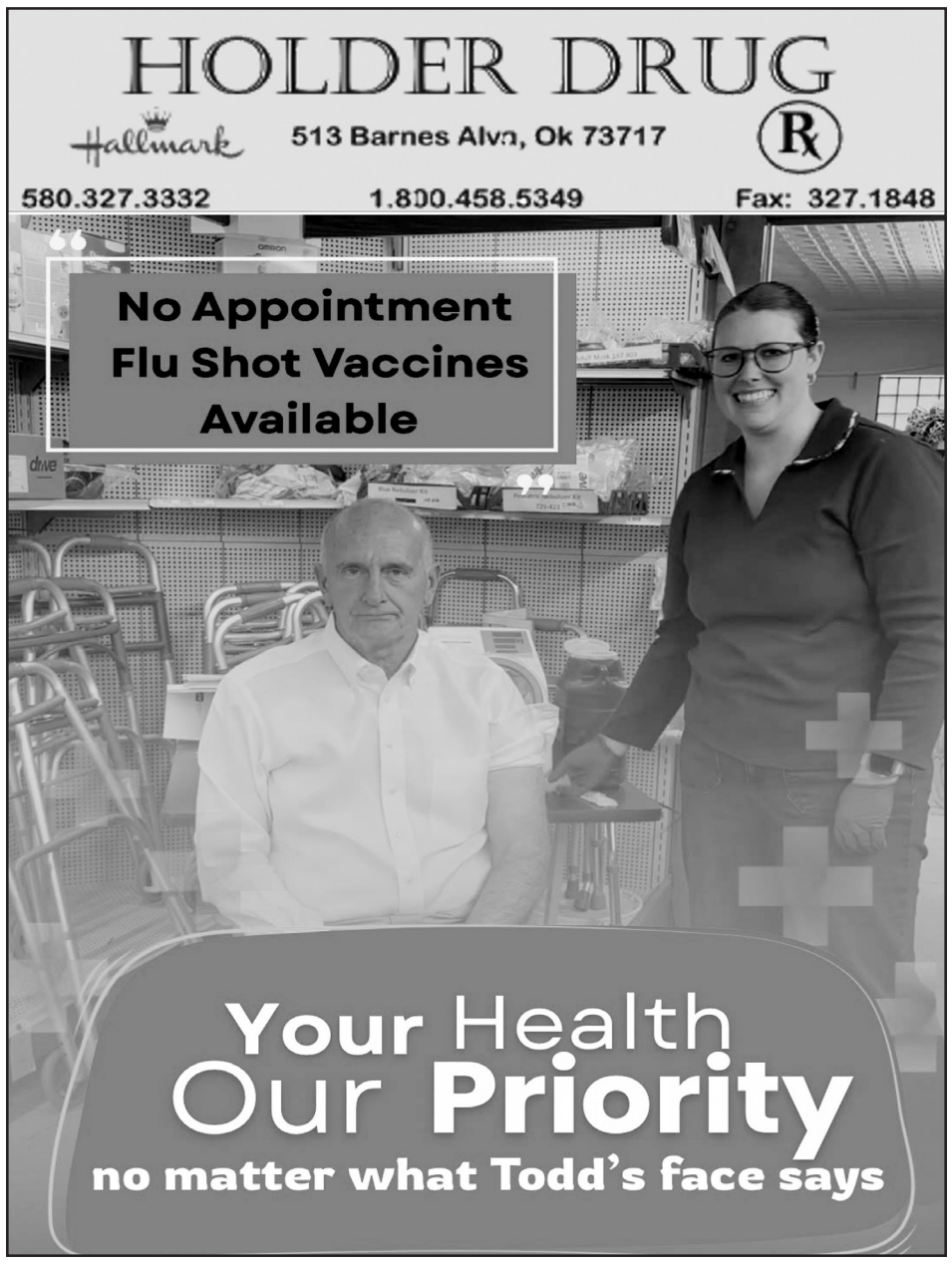
Through these fast-paced animal antics, viewers will ultimately learn that true success and respect cannot be faked or stolen; instead, it is honestly earned through self-acceptance and steady, consistent effort.

Questions about this play or the theatre program should be directed to West at jdwest@nwosu.edu or 580-327-8462, or Jordan at mojordan@nwosu.edu or 580-327-8458. Additional information is available on the Reichenberger Department of Fine Arts webpage.



Photo Provided





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Letters to the editor shall bear the author's handwritten signature, hometown, classification, title, etc., address and phone number for verification and shall be kept on file. Unsigned letters to the editor will not be published.

Letters must be turned in by noon on Monday to the News office in JDA232. Letters via e-mail are acceptable as long as they follow the rules stated above and can be sent to nwnews@nwosu.edu. Please limit submissions to no more than 250 words. The editors reserve the right to condense or edit any letter for grammar, libel and space limitations. All letters submitted may not be used.

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NORTHWESTERN NEWS

OPINION

Never save your "best"

By **JESSICA SCHIEBER**
News Editor

I have a problem with the saying "best for last." It doesn't make much sense to me. If you think about it, the last is never supposed to be the best.

If you are doing things properly, the last is the messiest. It's a fight because you have already done it several times before. Think about the saying "last set, best set." If your last set is in fact your best set then you are doing something wrong. If you are able to perform with proper form, little effort and no sweat, then you aren't working out to your full potential.

If it's not sloppy and it's not a struggle, then what is the point of doing it? I went into this semester with a false sense of security; it's my last one, so I thought that it would be easier compared to everything else.

In reality, I do only have one super difficult class, but that doesn't change the amount of work and effort I put into my other courses. If I do not push myself, then how will I learn? What does it mean if I choose to take it easy and not put my all into everything that I do?

There is too much that I have on the line to even think about not giving it my all. The last may be someone's best, but it will not be mine. The best moments for me start with the beginning. With how all things came to be.

It's when you see an empty page and you think of all the things you can fill it with. It's the excitement of what is to come, not what I have done.

My best has never been an ending. It has never been the last. My best has been the work that got me to the point of the last step.

When I walk across the stage, it may be my last moments in Alva, but the best moments of Alva, the ones that I will tell stories about aren't a stage or a piece of paper that says I got my degree. Those moments are for memories. The people that I met through this journey, the amazing teachers that I have and the place that has been a part of my life for three years are what I'll remember, that's where the best lies to me.

My best came from teachers pushing me further, from friends that were with me through tough times and good times. It isn't the stage. The stage isn't the end goal; it's a new beginning and as a college student I believe that we get caught up in the last moments we forget to appreciate the first. The ones that led us to what we are.

If this was all there was for me, if this semester was supposed to be my best moment in life, I would live a pretty stressed life. The last thing is the start of something new.

Your last isn't your best, because you still have so much effort to give. So, give it, don't keep living in the "best for last" mindset. Start living in "every day is my best" mindset. Give your all, all the time. Let people see your work, your effort and want to give more themselves.

Students' favorite Thanksgiving dishes

By **ALLISON RUWALDT**
Senior Reporter

There are only two weeks until Thanksgiving break, and students around campus are thinking about their favorite meals.

Many students on campus are more excited about the sides that they will be eating for their Thanksgiving meals. While the turkey is usually the most represented food, students around campus tend to favor the side dishes.

"Stuffing is my favorite," said Savannah Mingus, a NWOSU student. "And hot take, my least favorite is pumpkin pie."

Mingus was not the only person who mentioned the stuffing as their favorite food. Jacklyn Hawkins, a campus custodian, said that her favorite Thanksgiving food is the stuffing her mom makes every year.

Many others on campus mentioned that their favorite Thanksgiving food is not something that they make, but something that a loved one makes. As Thanksgiving is usually when families get together, some people's love of the food comes from a deeper love for the person making it.

"Baked mac and cheese for sure," said Taylor Bass, a NWOSU student from Choctaw, Oklahoma. "My grandma used to make it; I don't know how she made it, but it was delicious."

Other students' favorite meals are associated with their favorite family traditions. Emily Wright, a senior at NWOSU, spoke about how her favorite Thanksgiving food is deviled eggs because every year her family brings a big platter

Though turkey was not the most popular answer, it was still some students' favorite meal. While some families stray away from turkey entirely, others still keep the tradition alive. Gale Schroder, a NWOSU student from Okeen, Oklahoma, said her favorite Thanksgiving food is the turkey that her uncle makes.

"I don't have a traditional Thanksgiving meal, but my favorite is tamales," said Andrea Rosas, a NWOSU student from Alva, Oklahoma. "And my least favorite would have to be anything turkey-related."

Rosas went on to talk about how since her family does not regularly eat turkey, she has always had an aversion to it. Many other students also have untraditional Thanksgiving meals, like chicken noodle soup and barbecue.

No matter what the person is eating on Thanksgiving, they all mentioned enjoying it with people they love.

Reviewing the movie Ebenezer

By **JANESSA RAINVILLE**
Guest Reporter

You may have heard about the movie that released on November 13th, Ebenezer. It follows the story of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. Johnny Depp plays Ebenezer Scrooge in this one and I will say does a fantastic job convey the dark humor of the film.

While I am sure you have likely seen several film versions of this same story, Ebenezer seems to focus more on the harsher details rather than skim over them.

Ebenezer follows the original story with a less children centric feeling. The movie is rated PG-13 after all. The reason for this rating is the focus on Gothic horror and fantasy. One example of this is the designs of the spirits of Christmas past, present and future.

Rather than the spirit of Christmas past being a candle-like figure as it is in Disney's telling of the story from 2009, the spirit appears to be a gaunt woman in white cloaks and her skin is a deathly pale. You also see the spirit of Christmas present actively decay rather than it be a more PG feel to it.

While the story does seem to focus more on a horror tone, it does also seem to focus on the more somber as well, seeming to actually explore what happens to Bob Cratchit and his family rather than just showing that Tim is no longer alive. It appears to stick more closely to the book than the movies that were made toward a child audience.

The sound design of the movie was fantastic and it was one of the first things you get pulled in by in my opinion. The grandfather clock ringing was very effective to set the horror aspect of the movie's tone.

FEATURE

The art of taking it slow

By **SHEALYN PRATT**
Features Editor

Fall is fully here, and with it comes all the cozy outfits, sweet smells, movie re-watches and slowing down a bit. It's a season that refreshes people like me.

There's something about hearing the sound of rain against the windows, the smell of seasonal candles and finally being able to sit outside without the Oklahoma heat making it unbearable.

My ideal afternoon consists of throwing on a big sweater, lighting a candle and re-watching "The Hunger Games" series.

For some reason, fall feels like the perfect time for everyone to be doing exactly that. Taking it slow and taking time to refresh.

There's something about everything just cooling down for a minute, and I'm not just talking about the weather.

Fall is inherently a "feel-good" season. Maybe it's the holidays coming up and the extra time spent with family, or maybe it's the fact that you can go outside without breaking a sweat within the first five minutes.

Regardless, psychology suggests that the fall season fits into our lives in a similar way that birthdays or New Year's do. The start of a new season of life can be referred to as a temporal landmark.

The founder of Madison Park Psychology Services, Yasmine Saad, explained that temporal landmarks create structure for how we see and use time. They divide life into distinct mental phases that allow us to propel a new outlook on things. Dr. Saad also explained that with cooler temperatures comes clarity of thinking.

With fall, we are given time to reflect on all the emotions we were feeling when things were hot, when the air was muggy and the days were longer.

Neuropsychologist Sanam Hafeez explained that during the summer, with vacations and more free time, people tend to have unpredictable schedules. But once fall comes back around, familiar, comfortable routines are reintroduced.

And it's not just the return of consistency that makes fall feel comforting. It's also the memories that come with the season.

For me, I'm reminded of being back at home with my brothers and mom, the smell of her incense moving through our home.

Dr. Hafeez explained that the nostalgia that comes with holidays can play a role in how people feel about fall because we tend to create unconscious associations with specific times in our lives that have made us feel the happiest.

So, watch your favorite feel-good movie or series for the eighth time. Romanticize the leaves changing colors and the foggy early mornings as you walk to class.

Take it slow. Take the time to thank yourself for making it through another season of life that has now passed. Because sometimes, a fresh start doesn't require a new year, a birthday or something life changing. Sometimes, it just takes a change in the air.

Demographics from midterms

By **ALLISON RUWALDT**
Student Reporter

The midterms are over, and the exit poll demographics are showing an interesting shift from the 2024 presidential election.

NBC partnered with other news organizations to gather exit poll demographics across the country. They did the same for the election in 2024, but only gathered information from ten states.

Although the survey was much broader this year, the demographics still show a change in the country's opinions. The surveys showed that in 2024, voters between 18 and 29 made up 14% of the votes; however, for the midterms, the age group only made up about 11% of voters.

Though this does not prove that fewer people in that age group voted, it does indicate that this election may have felt more important to older groups. People between 30 and 44 shifted down as well, from 23% to 20% of voters, and those between 45 and 64 slightly changed, having 35% in 2024 and 34% this year.

Those 65 and up, however, showed a significant increase. The group accounted for 28% of voters in 2024, up to 36% this year. Most may understand the importance of a midterm election and use this time to make their voices heard. Interestingly, the age group switched from 50% of the group voting republican in 2024 to 50% voting democrat this year.

That age group was not the only demographic to switch to blue this year, though. In 2024, 55% of men and 45% of women voted red. This year, 51% of men and 60% of women voted blue.

The overall blue shift across demographics could be a reflection of the current government. Whether the general public is fed up with things like Congress and the Senate or is concerned with more local issues, it is clear that they want a change.

Although Oklahoma stayed a red state, the New York Times surveyed a significant shift to blue in almost all demographics as well. It was not enough to swing the state, but this midterm showed more votes for democrats than in many years prior.

The Times reports that there was a 35% increase in democratic voters in the 18 to 29 age range in Oklahoma. Although the group made up only 11% of voters in the state, it is also the only age group to have a majority of blue votes.

Records also show that around 2 million Oklahoma residents are registered, but only around half of those eligible voters participated in this election.



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Basketball home opener











Photos by Tierra Green

Top: The men's team warming up before their game on Tuesday night.

Left: Marcus Zeigler Jr. high-fives a little fan before the home opener in Percefull Fieldhouse.

Left Middle: Brianna Wilson jogs off the court for a substitution against Central Christian College.

Middle: Kylie Adair defends Central Christian's Kylee Jones on Tuesday.

Right: Kya Blakley cleaning her glasses while she waits and watches on the bench against the CCC Tigers.

FEATURE

The missed message in "The Hunger Games"

By **SHEALYN PRATT**
Features Editor

When talking about young adult literature and science fiction, it is hard to imagine the conversation without mentioning "The Hunger Games." Suzanne Collins' young adult dystopian series has continued to influence readers years after its initial release. Following the release of the original trilogy, its film adaptation turned the fictional world of Panem into a cultural phenomenon.

"The Hunger Games" is easily my favorite book series. When I tell people this, some laugh because the story has often been reduced to a movie franchise for preteen girls, centered around a love triangle between three main characters. In reality, the novels offer a powerful example of what society can become when tyrannical leaders are left unchecked.

In an interview with the School Library Journal, Collins said she was inspired to write "The Hunger Games" after channel-surfing between reality television shows and news coverage from the Iraq war. The unsettling similarities between young people competing for money or fame and people fighting for their lives sparked the idea behind the series. Collins also explained that Greek mythology and the Roman gladiator games became major influences for characters and the storyline as she developed it. The series draws heavily on the Roman practice of using state-sponsored violence, spectacle and entertainment to distract citizens from political oppression and poverty.

"The Hunger Games" is a story set roughly in the 23rd century. After numerous natural disasters including rising sea levels, severe droughts and devastating fires, wars broke out over dwindling resources. The conflicts destroyed existing governments and collapsed infrastructure throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

This led to the rise of a new totalitarian nation called Panem. Survivors eventually established a new form of government, dividing the remaining livable land into 13 districts, each responsible for producing resources to sustain the Capitol. These districts were completely impoverished and barely functioning, while the Capitol continued to grow. As the Capitol and its citizens gained power and niceties, neglect of the districts became more apparent.

After decades of forced labor and oppressive rule, the 13 districts rebelled against the Capitol, putting them into a three-year civil war known as the "Dark Days." Given the Capitol's heavy military occupation and control, the districts fell short in the war. District 13, which had been responsible for mining graphite and developing nuclear weapons for the Capitol, was believed to have been completely destroyed. The remaining 12 districts were forced to sign the Treaty of Treason, which officially started the games as the district's punishment for going against the Capitol.

The Capitol is a place of extreme luxury and glamour, where citizens want for nothing, while the 12 districts struggle to survive. Nonetheless, every year the government forces a reaping ceremony. During the reaping, each of the 12 districts must select one boy and girl between the ages of 12 and 18 to fight in the games. These 24 children, known as "tributes," are chosen completely at random.

Once tributes are selected, they are transported to the Capitol to be briefly trained for the games by mentors and shown off to the Capitol citizens. They are essentially being marketed to wealthy Capitol citizens in hopes of receiving "sponsorships", or donations, such as food and medical supplies, during their time in the arena. The mentors that train the tributes before entering the arena are survivors of previous games.

Once it is time for the games, tributes are placed in an arena. This arena is specified for the tributes and uses futuristic technology to adapt the arena to break them. The entirety of the Hunger Games are televised and presented as a government-sponsored reality TV spectacle. Rich Capitol citizens place bets on the child they believe to be the sole survivor of that year's games.

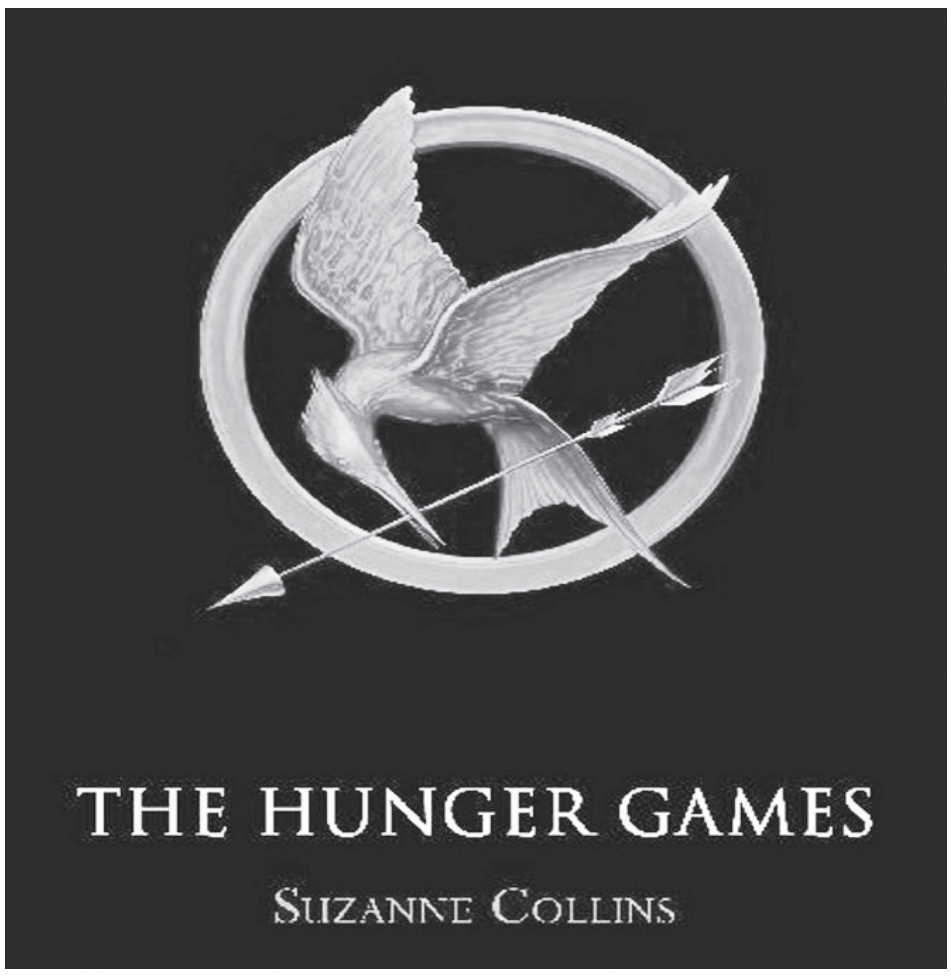
The original trilogy, consisting of "The Hunger Games," "Catching Fire" and "Mockingjay," follows a 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, from District 12. Her defiance quickly becomes an unprecedented symbol of hope. Her bravery inspires the oppressed citizens of Panem to challenge the government in a way that started an entire revolution.

In 2020, Suzanne Collins expanded the franchise with its first prequel novel. "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" takes place 64 years before the original trilogy and follows the story of the Capitol's President, Coriolanus Snow. Readers finally got the chance to see what turned President Snow into the series' main antagonist, as Collins depicts an 18-year-old Snow as a mentor in the 10th Hunger Games.

During the early years of the Games, the event was way less theatrical and focused more on reminding the districts of the Capitol's power.

As someone who appreciates the message behind the series, getting more information added to the storyline throughout the years has been extremely exciting to follow. Collins continues to give readers and viewers exactly what we want. She continues to expand the narrative and add to the history of this fictional future.

The latest book, "Sunrise on the Reaping," is the second prequel that



was released on March 18, 2025. The novel follows Haymitch Abernathy and his experience in the 50th Hunger Games, also known as the second Quarter Quell.

When the Hunger Games were first established, the Capitol created secret special editions, known as Quarter Quells, to take place every 25 years. The founders sealed the guidelines in envelopes, each containing a different twist designed to inflict deeper psychological suffering on the citizens of Panem. Every 25th anniversary of "The Hunger Games," the President of Panem opens the corresponding envelope on live television. The sinister twist is revealed to the entire country just moments before the reaping begins.

Throughout the series, three Quarter Quells take place. During The 25th Hunger Games, districts had to vote for their own tributes rather than them being drawn at random. This forced neighbors to turn against one another, further dividing the districts. During the 50th Games, twice as many tributes were reaped. This resulted in a total of 48 children fighting in an arena, with still only one survivor. The twist of the 75th Game, featured in "Catching Fire," had tributes selected from the pool of living victors. Tributes were sent to fight for their lives and for the Capitol's entertainment once again.

The upcoming film adaptation of "Sunrise on the Reaping" is set to release tomorrow, Nov. 20, 2026. Although I am excited to watch it, I can't help but ask myself one question. It is a question I have considered since first reading the series. So, I leave readers with it: Why is a story filled with so much violence, political commentary and emotional depth so often reduced to a cheesy preteen love triangle?

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ENTERTAINMENT

'Traces Of Angels and Innocence': A short story

By **KEVIN KAUMANS**
Entertainment Editor

I sat at my desk, the only sound in the room being that of my pen tapping against the pages of my journal. My fingers were stained black with ink from the past four hours of drafting.

I had a story due tomorrow; I already asked my publisher for a third extension two weeks ago, so I knew there was no way I would be able to talk my way out of this.

My agent even pulled me aside after the meeting and told me that he couldn't cover me anymore. Either I got this finished by midnight, or they would drop me.

There was once a time I never had this problem; back when I first began writing, I was able to create an original story every week. My mind constantly raced with ideas and concepts that impressed everyone around me.

Those I sought respect from would praise me for my style and tell me how far I would make it in this world. I thought of myself as something of a connoisseur, a pioneer of the literary world.

Over time, my house became my cell. As I read more and discovered different ideas, different schools of thought, I discovered how selfish the world truly was.

I realized that the average man was only out for himself, and most that associated themselves with me only loved me for what I could offer them. I closed off from the world, protecting myself from the filth outside.

Yes, I said it: This world is filth. We wake up, go outside, greet one another with plastered-on smiles because we're too mortified by the thought of showing our true faces to our neighbors, and then we repeat the same monotonous process the very next day.

I hated it. I hated the world and all its fake politeness, so I turned away from it. I hid from the world, and in turn I distanced myself from any other human that could hurt me. Eventually, my self-made prison transformed into my sanctuary.

It may sound selfish, I know. But just so we're clear: I wasn't shutting myself out from the world to shield my ego. No, I was trying to protect something fragile. Something so frail that even the tiniest of trauma could shatter it completely. My angel.

Everyone has one. From the time one is born until the time they leave the nest, every person is granted an angel.

However, they aren't angels in any religious sense.

Think of them as more like air, or something else insubstantial that can't be felt by human hands. Instead, think of these angels as the light that surrounds our childhood.

These intangible beings thus become the thing that separates children from adults: Innocence. If you ask any parent what their favorite part about raising a child is, many of them will likely say it's that phase in their life when they are so oblivious to how the world works.

It is this innocence that makes children so pure, and we as adults naturally want them to hold on to it for as long as they can.

But that in there lies the problem, isn't it? Children cannot stay innocent forever. Even if someone were to have a child and keep them locked up at home their entire youth, biology is unstoppable in its course.

No matter how we might try to prevent it, everyone loses their innocence. Some of us have the illusion shattered before us earlier than others, but the end result is the same.

I knew my angel would leave me one day, and then all my zest for life would turn into a black hole of misery. And as pathetic as it sounds, I wanted to hold onto for as long as possible.

But how could I not? It was a comfort, something I could run to whenever I felt unseen by other humans. A coffin that only I could enter.

No matter how cruel the people around were or how unbearable the noise outside felt, I could always retreat back into my mind and reflect on the nostalgia that brought me comfort when I was a boy.

So as I sit there, my last remaining sanity escaping me, I have just one think to ask of you: Don't become filth like me.

Thanksgiving movies to watch before the holiday

Planes, Trains and Automobiles (1987)	Two travelers try to get home for Thanksgiving while overcoming chaotic mishaps on the road.
Pieces of April (2003)	A young woman tries to cook Thanksgiving dinner for her estranged family in a small apartment.
A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving (1973)	An animated classic featuring Charlie Brown and Snoopy trying to put together a Thanksgiving meal for their friends.
Free Birds (2013)	Two turkeys travel back in time to the first Thanksgiving to get turkeys off the menu.
Home for the Holidays (1995)	A woman loses her job and has to travel to Baltimore to spend Thanksgiving with her dysfunctional family.

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SPORTS

Football loses final game

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**
Editor-in-Chief



Photo by Tierra Green

The Ranger defense stops a Ouachita Baptist University player on Oct. 31. The game ended in a close Northwestern loss to the Tigers, 31-24.

The Northwestern football season came to an end in Weatherford after a 46-6 loss to the Bulldogs with only one touchdown on the board for Northwestern.

The Bulldogs won the coin toss and decided to defend for the first half kickoff. The Rangers started the game with possession.

After Henry Wilson ran 22 yards on the kickoff return, the Ranger offense went onto the field to start the game's first drive.

The first play was a one-yard rush from Ezequiel Luna. Then, Jax Bernard threw a short pass to Wilson who ran for 21 yards before he was taken down by the Southwestern defense to give Northwestern a first down.

Short gains and an offsides penalty against SWOSU put Northwestern on the 40-yard line in Southwestern territory. Bernard made a pass to Caleb Cornell who ran for 22 yards ending up at the 10-yard line, putting Northwestern in the redzone. Bernard threw it back to Cornell who made up four yards, inching closer to the endzone. A one-yard rush from Luna put the Rangers on a 3rd and five.

Bernard stepped back on the next play, and threw a pass to Luna who ran it into the endzone giving Northwestern the first points of the game. The extra point kick was no good, and the Rangers were up 6-0 to start the game.

To keep up the momentum, the Ranger defense stopped the Southwestern offense in just three plays, quickly giving Northwestern the ball again.

To start the drive, the Rangers were on the 12-yard line on their side of the field. On the first play, Bernard was sacked for a loss of 11 yards, putting Northwestern on their one-yard line. Bernard was sacked again on the following play, giving SWOSU a safety. Southwestern was given two points and received possession after the kickoff.

The Bulldogs spent no time getting across the field as they had back-to-back big plays putting them on the Ranger side of the field. Once the Bulldogs were on the Rangers' side of the field, they struggled to find a way past the Northwestern defense. The Bulldogs were forced to try for a field goal to end their drive.

Southwestern scored the field goal and made it a 6-5 game to end the first quarter.

The Rangers had possession at the end of the first quarter so they continued on in the second quarter. Northwestern made two great plays to make up 49 yards. Following a play that allowed the Rangers to enter the Bulldogs' side of the field, Luna made a rushing attempt but lost one yard on a third down. The Rangers were forced to punt and the Bulldogs were on the offense.

After a short gain, the Bulldogs had a 95-yard play that went all the way and the Bulldogs were up 12-16. Not shortly after kicking off, the Bulldogs intercepted a pass from Bernard and ran that ball into the endzone to score another touchdown to make it 19-6.

The Rangers punted on their next drive and the Bulldogs then had their longest drive of the game. The Bulldogs went 93 yards in 12 plays, taking up five minutes of the game and added to their lead making it 26-6.

The Rangers had three plays and then punted on their next drive. Southwestern had a big 54-yard play to increase their lead to 33-6. The second quarter ended with that score and the Rangers had a lot on their plate if they planned on coming back from a 27-point deficit.

The Rangers were unable to score any more points in the game as the Southwestern Bulldogs continued to increase their lead as the game went on. The Rangers had flashes of momentum, but they could never finish. By the end of the game, the Bulldogs were up 47-6 and the Rangers had a 100% winless season.

Bernard threw 20 for 34 and had 164 yards. Bernard threw one touchdown, the only one of the game for Northwestern, and had three interceptions. The Ranger o-line struggled as Bernard was sacked five times.

Luna had many rushing attempts with 25. Luna had 87 yards against the Bulldogs. Wilson had eight receptions and 43 yards. Weston Tucker had 40 yards with three receptions.

Aiden Lewis was at the top of the tackle statistics for Northwestern once again with his 11 total tackles. Six of them were solo and five were assisted. Cade Reynolds had 10 tackles, two solo and eight assisted.

Sean Wright had eight tackles, five solo and three assisted.

2026 season results

Sep 3 @ Harding	**L 76-0**
Sep 10 vs Arkansas Tech	**L 34-29**
Sep 19 vs Oklahoma Baptist	**L 55-37**
Sep 26 @ East Central	**L 42-24**
Oct 3 @ Southern Arkansas	**L 30-37**
Oct 10 vs Henderson State	**L 34-7**
Oct 17 vs Southeastern Ok.	**L 25-10**
Oct 24 @ Southern Nazarene	**L 60-37**
Oct 31 vs Ouachita Baptist	**L 31-24**
Nov 7 @ Monticello	**L 51-26**
Nov 14 @ Southwestern Ok.	**L 47-6**

SPORTS

Rangers win two, lose one

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**
Editor-in-Chief



Photo by Tierra Green

The Rangers gather around the coaches during a timeout to plan for the upcoming minutes in the game against Manhattan CC on Tuesday.

The Rangers opened the 26-27 season at the Central Region Challenge in Edmond where they faced Oklahoma Christian university and the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Northwestern lost their season opener on Friday against Oklahoma Christian with a final score of 101-83. The next day on Saturday, the Rangers took down Minnesota Crookston in a nail-biting overtime finish with a final score of 84-80.

The Rangers lost to the Eagles after being outscored in both halves, but they were both close. The Eagles weren't able to score more than 10 points than the Rangers in either of the halves, so the Rangers could have taken them on another day of the week.

Chang Hoth, Jeremy Innocent and Julian Williams were the leaders in the points against the Eagles. Hoth had 15 points. Both Innocent and Williams had 13.

Hoth also had two blocks, one steal, went 7-7 on free throws, had two threes but went 3-13 in all of his shots.

Innocent went 3 for 5 on his shots, but had six rebounds. Marcus Zeigler Jr. had the most rebounds with eight.

Overall, team struggled when making field goals. The team went 22 for 59, 37.3% of their shots going in. The team got most of their shots from free throws.

The Rangers had 39 free throw attempts and made 34 of them, 82%. In order to win, they had to do better.

Better is what they did against the Golden Eagles from Crookston. The tight game came down to the wire in overtime after ending regulation 72-72.

To start overtime, the Rangers took the lead with a jumper from Zeigler. Crookston made two free throws to tie it at 74. Crookston had two more free throws to take the lead by two. Then, the Golden Eagles fouled to continue the game of free throws and Northwestern's Jaydon White made the first free throw but missed the second.

With the Rangers down by one, the Golden Eagles made a layup to make it a 3-point game with 2:32 to go in OT.

Zeigler hit a three pointer to tie it at 78. Then, Innocent made tow free throws to take the lead by two, followed up by a tip-in by Williams to make it 82-78. Crookston wasn't going down without a fight, and made a dunk with just six seconds to go.

The Golden Eagles fouled the Rangers hoping they would miss and give Crookston the ball again, but Innocent drained both free throws and the Rangers won their first game of the year, 84-80.

Innocent had the most points against Crookston with 28. White was second with 14. Hoth and Cris McElveen had 10 points each.

Innocent had the most rebounds with eight. He was also the best shooter with seven of his 13 shots going in.

This game was much better for the Rangers and their shooting as they made 31 out of 75, 41% of their shots. The Rangers then came home for their game against Manhattan Christian College for the first home game of the season.

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By **AMAYA EVANS**
Student Reporter

The Northwestern Oklahoma State Men's basketball team defeated the Manhattan Christian College Thunder, 104-62, for their second straight win.

Northwestern had five players record double figure points on the night, led by Jaydon White who put 17 on the board. Daleron Thomas added 16 of his own followed by Chang Hoth, who had 13, Jeremy Innocent with 11 and Cris McElveen who had 10.

The Rangers found themselves early to start the first half, getting behind 9-3. Northwestern outscored the Thunder 15-11 over the next 5:14 to take the lead 18-17. The two sides traded baskets for the next period of the half, until the Rangers went on an 11-2 run to take an 11-point lead 34-23. The Rangers maintained firm control of the game through the remainder of the half, taking a 42-34 lead into the halftime locker room.

Northwestern picked up where they left off in the second half, as Hoth hit back-to-back three pointers to put the Rangers up by 14. Northwestern went on a 16-5 run over the next three minutes to push their lead to 58-39. The Rangers continued to pour it on, this time scoring 16 unanswered points pushing their lead to 72-39 at the under 12-minute media timeout. The Rangers held strong from that point on to come out victorious over the Thunder, 104-62.

Jaydon White had the most points with 17. A close second was Daleron Thomas with 16.

White and Thomas were also the rebound leaders, along side McElveen who each had five.

SPORTS

Lady Rangers win at home

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**
Editor-in-Chief



Photo by Tierra Green

Ali Schwerdtfeger shoots the ball against the Central Christian College Tigers in the first home game of the season on Tuesday night.

The Lady Rangers opened the season in Bethany for the SNU Classic where they faced Texas A&M University from Kingsville and Texas A&M International University.

Northwestern lost their first game of the season to A&M University on Friday in a 65-43 loss. The next day, the Lady Rangers took down the Dust Devils from A&M International 78-67.

Northwestern started the game against the Javalinas from Kingsville after scoring 19 in the first quarter. The quarter opened with seven unanswered points from Northwestern.

The Lady Rangers tried to increase their lead, but couldn't by much as they only got up to nine over the Javalinas. As the first quarter came to a close, the Javalinas had caught up to the Lady Rangers. After a foul on Northwestern, the Javalinas were down by only one. A three pointer from Ali Schwerdtfeger made it a two-possession game at the end of the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, Northwestern held their lead until three minutes into the quarter. The Javalinas took the lead with two free throws and a layup to make it a three-point game with plenty of time on the clock.

The teams battled back and forth, trading points until with three minutes left in the quarter, A&M Kingsville hit a three pointer and followed up with two free throws to extend their lead to seven. Although the teams battled, the second quarter ended with not much changing after the short Javalina run, the score being 35-28.

To open the second half, A&M Kingsville had a 9-0 run to put the pressure on the Lady Rangers. The pressure continued to push until the Lady Rangers were down by 19 to end the third quarter.

The final quarter was mostly a stalemate, neither team was able overpower the other. Northwestern wasn't able to catch up and A&M Kingsville couldn't pull away. The game ended with a similar score to what the third quarter ended as, just a few more points between the two teams. The Javalinas defeated Northwestern 65-43 in the Lady Ranger season opener.

Schwerdtfeger had the most points on the Lady Ranger roster with 16. Schwerdtfeger went six for 14 in all of her shots and made three of her four free throws. Ava Watkins had the most rebounds with eight, Conley Cayot had seven. Overall, the team only made 25.9% of their shots, excluding free throws.

Game two in Bethany went much better for the Lady Rangers, as they took down the Dust Devils 78-67 with a high scoring second quarter from Northwestern.

The first quarter was a slow start for Northwestern, going down 4-0 to start the game. The Dust Devils took advantage of the slow start from Northwestern and increased their lead to 13 with three minutes to go in the quarter, 18-5. The Lady Rangers were able to reel in A&M International before the quarter ended, and Northwestern was down by only eight to start the second quarter.

In the second quarter, the Lady Rangers showed just how well they could do on the offensive side of the game. Northwestern had 33 points on the board in quarter two, giving them a lead of nine to end the quarter. Northwestern was doing so well, they overcame the deficit at the start and at one point had a double-digit lead over the Dust Devils midway through the quarter.

The third quarter was a tight one, with the Dust Devils outscoring the Lady Rangers by just one.

Up by seven and looking for their first win of the season, the Lady Rangers locked in during the fourth quarter and sealed the deal by scoring 20 points against A&M International's 17.

The Lady Rangers had points all over the board with four players having double digit points. Kennedy Hight and Schwerdtfeger both had 17 points. Hight had the most threes with three.

Watkins did well on the defensive side of the game with eight defensive rebounds, three blocks and one steal. Briana Wilson had 14 points and six rebounds.

By **AMAYA EVANS**
Student Reporter

The Northwestern Oklahoma State women's basketball team earned another win, as they defeated Central Christian College, 83-39.

The Lady Rangers took an early lead to start the first quarter as they took a 10-0 lead over the Tigers. The Tigers then cut their deficit down to eight with the Lady Rangers still on top 17-9. The Tigers couldn't keep up with Northwestern, with the Lady Rangers leading after the first quarter, 18-9.

The Lady Rangers continued to control the game, starting the second quarter with a 29-13 lead over the Tigers midway through the quarter. The Rangers fight kept going as well as their lead staying on top 46-18 through halftime.

The second half was no close competition, with the Lady Rangers dominating the Tigers by opening the third quarter on an 11-0 run. The lead continued to grow in the fourth quarter, with Northwestern going on an 11-2 run to close out the game and get the victory, 83-39. The Lady Rangers had four players earn double figures and were led by Ali Schwerdtfeger with 16 points. Ava Watkins and Kennedy Hight added 13 points each, with Kya Blakely adding 12 respectively. Watkins and Blakely each had double-doubles, as they both led the Lady Rangers in rebounds with 11.

The Lady Rangers dominated inside the paint, with 40 points inside compared to four the Central Christian, as well as capitalizing off 26 Tiger turnovers with 29 points.