

THE MYSTICIAN

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ASPIRING TO GIVE EVERY STUDENT A VOICE

bscmysticmedia.com



LEFT: Mystic Basketball player, Jerrick Baines (3), plays defense against Miles City Community College. RIGHT: Jamison Kramer makes a three-point shot. Men's Basketball came out with a victory in the home opener of the season. (Credit: Dustin Eichten)

NEWS

PAGE 3

SPORTS

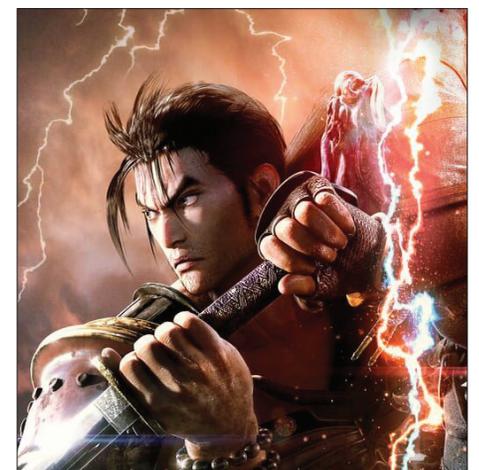
PAGE 5

OPINION

PAGE 6

A & E

PAGE 7



THE MYSTICIAN

Published by the Students – For the Students

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 Jon Fettig.....Columnist
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 Dustin Eichten.....Photographer
 karen BauerMystician Adviser



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back to a new semester at Bismarck State College. The snow is falling, the morning traffic is slowed to a halt by at least one accident, and we are still masked up. Let this be a friendly reminder to mask up, distance and get tested for COVID-19 while you wait your turn to get a vaccine. It could still be some time before any of us return to normalcy, so it is important to do all you can to keep those around you safe.

This semester feels like a huge change from the previous in a number of ways. On the national level, a new President has been sworn into office with the former, Donald Trump, having been impeached for the second time.

Here in Bismarck, we are finally seeing the return of BSC Mystics sports. Travis Askerooth, Caden Shean and I are staffed by the Mass Communication department to help with streaming the games. You can catch the games online by going to the bscmystics.com and pressing the “Watch Live” button. On the website you can find times or watch the Mystic Media Minute every Monday for the schedule that week.

There’s a lot to be excited for this semester besides the return to Mystic Sports.

There’s a new copy of “Figments of Imagination” just around the corner. For those unfamiliar, “Figments of Imagination” is an art and literature magazine published by students and featuring student works. If you or someone you know is a talented writer, artist or musician, then be on the lookout for submission boxes when they appear around campus.

If you would like to join us on The Mystician staff, then there is always still time. It may be too late to come on board for a lab credit, but we are still a student organization. We’re always on the lookout for a number of talented students to add more to our paper. We aspire to give every student a voice and that includes you. We meet every Tuesday and Thursday in The Armory. Don’t forget also to tune into The MYX radio station and watch our productions of MystiCast.

I wish you all the best of luck this semester. Stay safe and get the most out of your experience.



Crossword Information

BSC’s own Language, Literature and Communication Department Chair (and crossword geek) Michael Tomanek has created and submitted this month’s puzzle. Experiment, explore and try to find the answers yourself for the most satisfaction. Below is the answer key to this month’s puzzle.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

S	I	R	U	O	S		I	R	U	O	S	S	I	M
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"They Run through It" Michael Tomanek														

By Robert Mechaley III

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, THE MYSTICIAN



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MYSTICAST



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The Mystician Mission Statement and Disclaimer

The purpose of college media is to serve and give voice to the students.

We, as the student-based forum of journalism on the Bismarck State College campus, provide content that is informative, fair, concise and of importance to BSC. With this goal in mind, The Mystician staff is dedicated to accuracy and maintaining ethical journalistic practices.

We strive to give a voice to student issues

and policies within the local community.

Our goal is to incorporate as many students as possible and be an outlet for student expression.

The BSC Mystician strives to be objective and is not affiliated with any outside organization.

The Mystician upholds the principles guaranteed by the First Amendment and utilizes these rights to bring diverse, entertaining and thought-provoking material to the college community.

Contact:

Robert Mechaley III, EIC,
with letters to the editor

or any concerns/comments regarding this publication.

E-mail: bscmysticianeditor@bismarckstate.edu

SENATE BILL 2031 COULD FIX FUNDING DIFFERENTIALS

By Robert Mechaley III
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With the current North Dakota legislative meetings in progress, various bills will be presented in the coming months. Some that have already passed involve seatbelt law enforcement and others still in committee hearings are focused on higher education institutions.

A bill that has made it to the State Senate floor is Senate Bill 2031, which would amend the North Dakota Century Code's minimum funding formula for North Dakota University System institutions. At present, the legislative funding toward state higher education institutions is done based on successful credit completion with a look back period of two to four years. While tuition has an immediate effect on Bismarck State College's funding, there is a reliance on legislation.

The current way higher education funding for the 2021- 2023 academic years is determined as follows. The

total raw credits taught during the 2017-2019 academic years are added together. Take two separate North Dakota community colleges: Bismarck State College and Wahpeton State College. For example, the total raw credits taught for BSC in that time period is 143,405 and for WSC is 38,700. The raw credits are then weighted based upon the course level and type of course.

An English 110 class is designated under Core Disciplines with a freshman level multiplier of one. The multiplier is increased by two for a 200 level English class after. English 110 remains as three credits taught while English 220 has a weighted value of six. With weighted credits taken into account, BSC's credit total becomes 261,426 and WSC's becomes 59,289.

The second multiplier to take into account is called a Credit Completion Factor. A school is not run by teachers on their own.

Rebecca Collins, vice president of

operations and chief financial officer for BSC said, "In order to produce the basic services for a student, you still need the basic components in an institution. That gives more money to smaller institutions."

Because BSC has the third highest number of credits taught in the NDUS system, this multiplier is only 1.1. Because WSC did not teach as many credits, the value of its multiplier is higher at 1.7 to account for these necessary parts in its structure. Every credit for a two-year is worth \$97.08, putting the funding for BSC at \$31,068,227 and WSC at \$10,067,743.

Adding Minot State University into the equation adds a new layer of complexity. During the academic years being taken into account, BSC was a two-year school with only one four-year program in Energy Management. MiSU is a four year school, so while it taught 4,000 less credits than BSC, the weight factor from having more higher division classes puts it above BSC in weighted credits. MiSU goes

from having taught less raw credits to beating BSC by over 130,000 in weighted credits.

"We have the third highest in credits, but we end up being fifth in the number of credits we are being paid on," Collins said.

Using this funding formula, under current legislation, BSC would be operating on a 10 percent decrease for the next two years. SB 2031 would fix this discrepancy by weighing various credits on new standards. Computer Science is treated in the Core Disciplines at the moment and would be given a new weight factor under the bill similar to Energy. It would no longer have a credit weighed at a 100 level by 1, but instead with a new factor of 2.5 per credit taught.

With the passage of SB 2031, the amendment would be beneficial for BSC, allowing it to operate on an increase at 1.84 percent rather than the present decrease.

A NEW SALAD VENDING MACHINE

By Kyleigh Hilbert
MYSTIC MEDIA COORDINATOR

Bismarck State College is constantly working to become more innovative, especially with new technologies to make life easier. This semester,

BSC's Food Services introduced a new type of vending machine, one that customers can make and customize their own salads.

"It was at the time when the COVID-19 shut down began, and our salad bars went away," said Deb

Sandness, "I thought this was a great opportunity to have that fresh salad back on campus."

The vending machine is called 'Sally the Salad Robot' and has a plethora of options for customers. Salads can be customized completely from spinach or lettuce to a variety of proteins and dressings.

"I think it's cool to be able to customize everything on there and put exactly what you want on your salad," BSC student Madalynn Redig said. "You can pick how much or how little you want of each and I find that a great feature on there."

The vending machine also has more than just the basic toppings, including grape tomatoes, eggs, almonds, and chicken. These ingredients are monitored daily, 24 hours a day to ensure its freshness. Food Service employees are able to receive messages from the robot to track and let them know if something is needed.

"It comes through to our computers to let us know what products are being used and how much," Sandness said, "and it'll let us know when an ingredient is empty so we can come and fill it right away."

Sally the Salad Robot is programmed to take both dining dollars and Mystic dollars, along with credit cards as payments.

"There's a lot of things that we can do with it," Sandness said. "We can do a yogurt bar, and that'll be one of the other options coming up, along with the powerbowls that everyone loves."

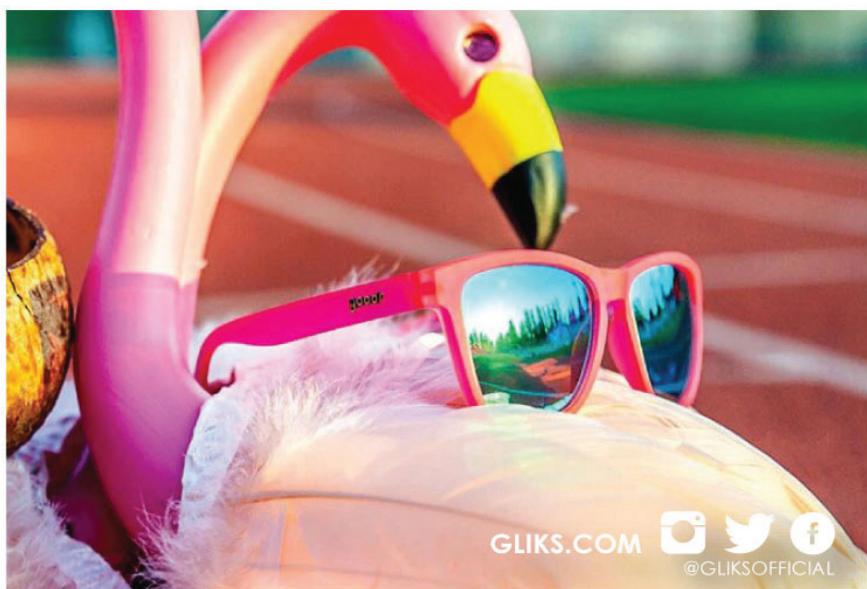
So far the salad machine seems to be a hit for BSC students and employees. Since it's first salad on Jan. 6, there have been over 400 salads made so far.

"I love it," BSC student Hailey Chase said, "I use it twice a day, everyday, all week."

With every purchase, customers are asked to leave a thumbs up or thumbs down review of their experience using it. According to Sandness, there have been 94 percent of thumbs up reviews.

"We're really happy with it," Sandness said. "You'd be surprised with how many different food robots are coming out."

Sandness said that her next project is working on getting a pizza vending machine to BSC as well.



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NEW RAPID TESTING AVAILABLE AT BSC

By **Kyleigh Hilbert**
MYSTIC MEDIA COORDINATOR

It's been a year since COVID-19 has made its mark in the United States. Since then the country has gone through lockdowns, quarantines and various mandates to keep people safe from the virus. Society has long awaited a way for us to get life back to normal, now there might be hope as there are new vaccines and more rapid testing available.

Since the beginning of the Fall 2020 Semester, Bismarck State College

has provided free COVID-19 testing to anyone in the community every Monday at the Armory. Results for people who were tested were available within a day or two. But BSC is now offering a new COVID-19 test weekly that can give students and faculty testing results in as little as 15 minutes.

“BinaxNOW is a rapid test for COVID-19 administered by swabbing the nasal cavity of the testing individual,” said Kaylyn Bondy, BSC VP of Student Affairs. “Results typically take 15 minutes to receive.”

With the new testing, students or employees will be asked to fill out the

NDDOH pre-registration at <https://testreg.nd.gov/>, where they can then mark how they would like to receive their results.

“BSC has not yet been informed of the testing timeline,” said Bondy, “but work closely with the NDDOH to inform the campus community of any changes/updates.”

The rapid test will be offered to students and employees of BSC, but the college plans to still provide PCR testing every Monday to the community.

As of Jan. 17, schedules for the testing will be as follows: Mondays,

Binax testing at the Medical Lab Sciences building from 8:30 AM to 10 AM for BSC athletes. Also on Monday, PCR testing will take place at the BSC Armory from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM, open to BSC students, employees and community members. On Thursdays, Binax testing will be available to BSC athletes from 8:30 AM to 10 AM at the Medical Lab Sciences building and for BSC students and employees in the Student Union Alumni Room from 11AM- 1PM.

NEWS BRIEFS

NEWS BRIEFS

NEWS BRIEFS

BSC LAUNCHES NEW CDL PROGRAM

By **Azariah Irungu Njuguna**
REPORTER

Bismarck State College's Continuing education Department has launched a new Commercial Driver's License training program that will train individuals for positions as heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers.

A \$200,000 investment from NextEra Energy Resources and N.D. Department of Commerce allows BSC to provide equipment, materials and curriculum needed to launch the training program. The CDL job training program will support heavy haul and tractor-trailer jobs in renewable energy and also create jobs for the community.

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers are in high demand throughout

North Dakota, and drivers typically earn annual wages of more than \$50,000. Training takes place over the course of four weeks with students using an advanced driving simulator as well as having behind-the-wheel drive time. Those who complete the course are eligible to take the N.D. Department of Transportation CDL road test to achieve licensure.

The first CDL training program is underway with additional training schedules available later this spring. Multiple courses will be offered in upcoming months at various times and dates to provide options for potential students.

Registration information and requirements are available at www.bismarckstate.edu/drive.

BSC LOWERS RISK LEVEL ON CAMPUS

By **Elliot Hellman**
REPORTER

Bismarck State College lowered its COVID-19 risk level from Level 4 High Risk to Level 3 Moderate Risk on Jan. 11, 2021. The level change is because the zero percent positivity rate on campus among other key factors.

The risk level change affected the following:

Student Life and Activities: Visitation between rooms for individuals living in the same Residence Hall will now be allowed. Outside guests still are not allowed in the residence halls.

Dining: Seating capacity in the Mystic Marketplace will increase from 50 to 65 percent.

Facility Rental: Facility capacity in other areas increases from 25 to 50 percent.

BSC continues to require masks and social distancing and will encourage hand washing and regular testing in light of the level change. BSC continues to hold BSC Monday Testing Events and introduced BinaxNOW testing, with rapid 15-minute results, for its students.

BSC will continue to monitor campus, county and state COVID-19 information and will adjust its risk levels as needed to ensure a safe and healthy campus.

To learn more, see the Risk Level Chart found at bismarckstate.edu/covid.

SHORT HIKES FOR COOL DAYS

By **Amy Doll**
REPORTER/COLUMNIST

Bismarck Parks and Recreation District has several options when it comes to feeling cooped up in the winter time. These smaller trails are perfect for those who need a getaway without getting too far away. Ready to take a hike? Here are some fun options for short hikes on cooler days.

One-quarter mile loop:

Sunrise Park, 3201 Northrop Dr.

One-third mile loop:

Igoe Park, 2413 Tyler Parkway
Kiwanis Park, 318 S. Washington St.
Elk Ridge Park, 3620 Cogburn Rd.
One-half mile trail:

General Sibley Park and
Campground Interpretive Trail, 5001 S. Washington St.

Gateway/Menards Pond Loop, 3200 N 10th St.

There are 75-plus miles of trail options in the area.

For a complete listing, go to <http://www.bisparks.org/parks-trails/park-trail-maps/>



A trail left by a rabbit outside of The Armory. There is plenty of nature to explore during COVID and this winter for any who are looking to stay healthy. (Credit: Robert Mechaley III)

VALORANT SEASON STARTS SOON

By **Dante Ames**
REPORTER/COLUMNIST

Valorant is a free-to-play multiplayer tactical first-person hero shooter developed and published by Riot Games for PC. Bismarck State College added Valorant to its roster of games for Esports in the Fall.

In the previous semester, the BSC Valorant team placed fourth in the competitive season. The new season for collegiate Valorant starts the third week of February.

The Valorant team currently has seven players. The newest player to join the team is John Lapp. The other players that will be returning this semester are, Adam Hoffman also known as ToastyPotato, Robert Modin also known as Medic, Evan

Chaffee also known as Seavens, Paul Gellerman also known as PositivityPaul, Kaleb Klein also known as 3uter and Keenan Welder also known as Skitterbug. With Keenan playing on multiple teams, his attention will be less focused on Valorant and more so on other games.

The team plays scrimmages every Wednesday. Other than the singular scrimmage day, players practice on their own whenever they have time available. Once the Spring season for collegiate Valorant starts in mid-February, the team will start playing games again on Fridays at 6 p.m.

For more information and to keep up to date on the BSC Valorant esports team head to bismarckstatesports.gg/valorant.



MEN'S TEAM IS MASKING UP FOR SPORTS

By Caden Sean
SPORTS REPORTER/COLUMNIST

After a long delay to the start of the sports season, Bismarck State College athletics is finally ready to get the season underway. In order for this to continue, they need to stay COVID free and ultimately mask up. We all know this past year has been nothing short of unusual, but the men's basketball team is doing their part in getting things back to normal.

"The mask precautions are very important because we need to play 14 games to play in the postseason," BSC Sophomore forward Cobe Begger said. "Making sure everyone stays safe and away from the virus is a must."

The men finally were able to play their first game against United Tribes Technical College to get the season underway on Jan. 20.

"It was a great feeling to finally get the first game of the season," BSC sophomore forward Jamison Kramer said. "Being out on the court for the first time sparked all of us, so it was great to get that first win."

The season usually starts in late

October, so having the season pushed back a few months is something the men are not used to.

"It was very frustrating with all the hours we put in and not getting able to play, Begger said. "We started to get chippy in practice after three months, so getting back on the court in a game was super exciting."

Even with the extra long offseason, as well as practices, the men were able to put in a lot of extra work. It may have not been the most ideal thing, but it allowed for more chemistry as a team especially with adding six freshmen to the roster.

"With the extra time, we were able to get closer as a team with the season being pushed back," Kramer said. "Having no games is never good, but we better ourselves in practice and it will help us this season."

So far, staying masked up in practices and outside the gym has worked for the team as the season is underway. To watch the men as well as other Mystic athletics, go to bscmystics.com and click: watch us live!



Mystic Basketball player, Jerrick Baines (3) and teammates wear masks during regular practice times. All Mystic athletic teams must also be regularly tested for COVID-19. (Credit: Dustin Eichten)

IF I WERE RUNNING THE DENVER BRONCOS



Caden
Sean

THE MYSTICIAN
SPORT
REPORTER/
COLUMNIST

At this point in time, all but two NFL teams are officially in the offseason. The time has come to start some rebuilding, make some front office changes, and plan for the future. For my Denver Broncos, a little of all three of these things are in store for this offseason.

With every NFL inside reporter having their own opinion on the way this franchise should go, I thought I would share my nonprofessional opinion on what I think my favorite team should do during the offseason.

The Broncos made the first move with the signing of George Paton to be our new General Manager. I think this was a huge first step into what could be an exciting offseason for the team. He was the main target for whom I wanted to take over in place of John Elway. He actually promoted himself to President, which I found funny.

The next move in my opinion is bringing some key players back. Justin Simmons, Shelby Harris, and Von Miller. Simmons is coming off of a career season in interceptions with five and he is the brightest piece to this Broncos defense. Harris is an absolute force of the defensive line and deserves his big payday. Miller has Broncos Country written across his chest and is so valuable not only to the team, but to us fans. Those three players should be the next step this offseason.

Besides the draft, another roster move that could happen is at the quarterback (QB) position. Drew Lock has had his fair share of injuries in his first two seasons and only tallying 16 games with an 8-8 record. Many people think it is time to move on from him whether via trade or the draft. George Paton is even known to go after the QB he wants to man the franchise. However, I'm not ready to give up on Lock quite yet. I am not saying this because I paid \$100 for his jersey. I want him to stay because 8-8 is only one full season in the NFL. He is still young and has a ton of potential to grow that or, which leads me to believe Lock is the guy to carry us at least for one more season.

Finally, we have the number nine pick in the draft, and I say we use it either on a cornerback or linebacker. Build that defense up now that Lock will have all of his weapons back healthy on offense for this season.

An exciting offseason for Denver is bound to happen with plenty of options on the table. I look forward to seeing what newly signed General Manager George Paton does with this team for his first offseason with the Broncos.

EVERY STUDENT'S VOICE

ASPIRING TO GIVE EVERY STUDENT A VOICE:

This is our mission statement at The Mystician. It is often said that in higher education, we grow as people and become who we are through learning and experience. We know you would like to let yourselves be heard, and this new addition to our student newspaper is just the way to do that. You will often see our reporters and columnists out and about getting interviews. If you would like to have your voice heard here, answer openly and honestly to them and allow your picture to accompany your opinion.

North Dakota Senate Bill 2121 proposes the state adopt a primary seatbelt law allowing authorities to stop drivers and/or passengers for not wearing seatbelts and fining them \$50.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE PROPOSED SEATBELT LAW?



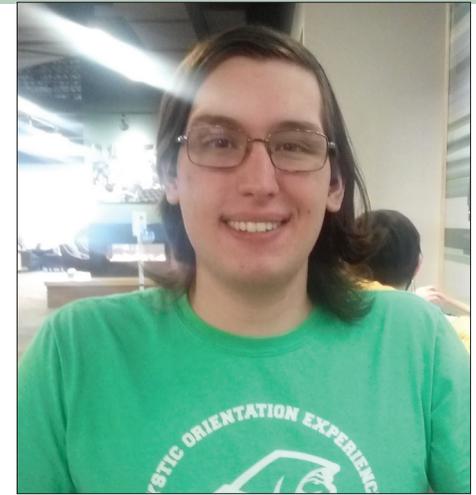
"I think it should be enforced because if it isn't it should be, because it's an important part of driving, because if it isn't it should be, because if you're a responsible driver you're gonna be responsible for your life and the life of other people around you. So I think it's a good idea because I mean if they know that they might be pulled over for it, it's just another reason to kind of put on your seat belt. Just right now if they're not really going to be pulled over for it, it's just another reason not to put it on, so I think it's really important. Like I said it's just another thing to keep us safe."

-Kenneth Kersey-Russell, BSC Student



"Yes I think that it's an important law and that everyone should always wear their seatbelt. I've seen too many news articles of people dying because of a roll over and flying out of the car because they weren't wearing a seatbelt."

-Therese Wehri, BSC Student



"I think they are a good idea. Just because people should know just to wear their seatbelt because it's a safety hazard for them to keep them safe. It's not just the airbag but it's a seat belt to go along with that because if they don't have that then their airbag doesn't go off they'll just shoot right through the windshield. And so it's good to see if officers will enforce that because then people will realize 'Oh I need to make sure I wear my seatbelt,' even if they do forget then police officers will be able to warn them and make sure that they are wearing their seatbelt and remind them."

-Henry Kersey-Russell, BSC Student and Gamers Club President

The North Dakota legislation has recently submitted a proposal to update the seatbelt laws in the state, making it so that they are able to pull over drivers and/or passengers who are not wearing a seat belt and giving them a fine of fifty dollars.

This is something that I agree with doing.

There have been a plethora of studies done over the years that tell you that seatbelts do indeed save lives.

Thirty-four other states have seatbelt laws in place and it's time for North Dakota to join them. There have been too many times where I have read about crashes where the driver is not wearing a seat belt.

The time to do something about it is now.

-Amy Doll, BSC Student

I think when the Jan. 11 article "Legislation aims to tighten North Dakota seatbelt law" from The Bismarck Tribune, said expanding the law would ruin the freedoms of some people that those freedoms could be cut short for others. I find the seatbelt law proposed by the Williston Senator is a decent idea. They may go a little far with some things in regards to law, but there's a reason something like this would be proposed. It's to keep people from being mangled up during a car accident. Because of this, I don't think this law restricts freedom.

It allows those that like their freedom, like me, can enjoy it safely. The article stated that North Dakota had about 84 percent seatbelt usage compared to 48 percent two decades ago. So, things like this, in my opinion, are to make sure freedoms can still be enjoyed.

-Jon Fettig, BSC Student

New laws are always a topic of discussion and arguments. The new seatbelt law introduced for the next North Dakota Legislative Assembly is no different.

The new law would allow police officers to stop motorists if they are not wearing their seatbelt. In my naivety, I honestly thought this was already the case. Having a family with kids, I wholeheartedly agree with this new law; I want my family to always be the safest they can be.

I also want my family, friends, and everyone else to be as safe as they can be. I agree with Sen. Brad Bekkedahl when he said "A tougher seatbelt law would promote safety for all drivers." I support the new law and would be happy to see it pass.

-Jessica Linder, BSC Student

I have mixed feelings about this bill. Personally, I always wear my seatbelt, no ifs, ands or buts. I always also make sure my passengers are wearing their seatbelt as well.

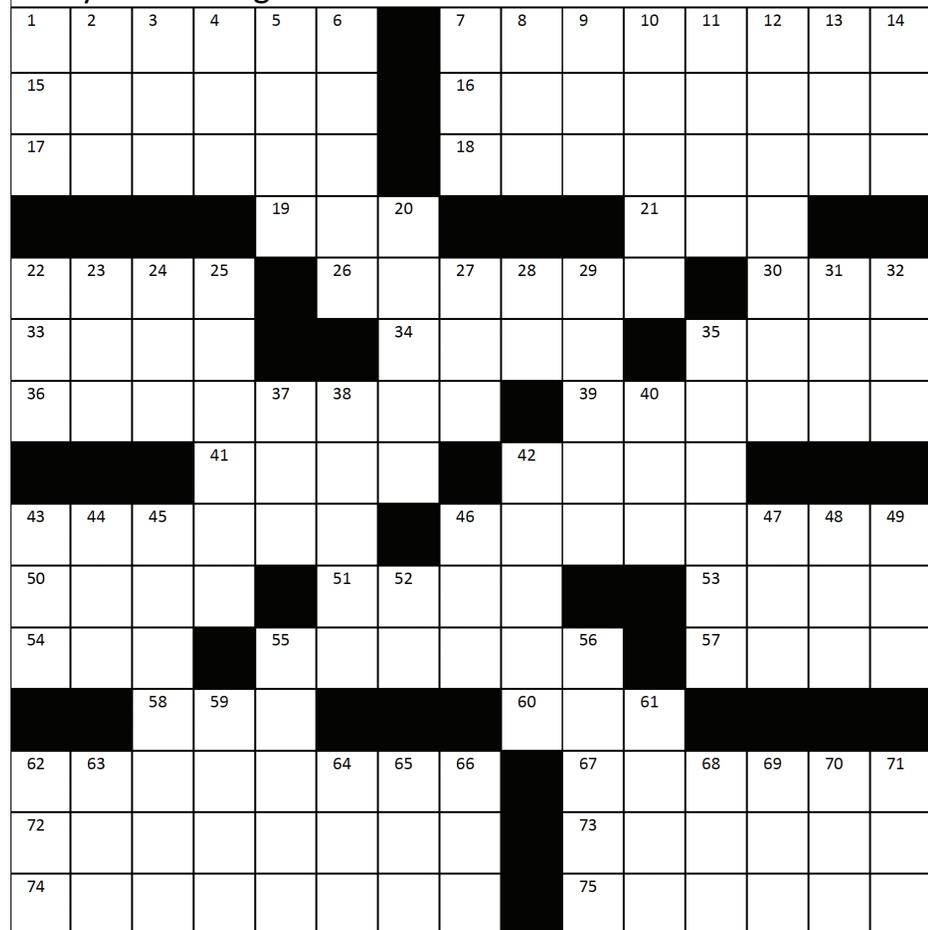
The pros of wearing your seatbelt have so much evidence behind it. It is proven to save the lives of many.

However, I have heard of stories and evidence that wearing your seatbelt can also kill you. There is more evidence supporting the importance of wearing your seatbelt than there are to not wear it.

A seatbelt can save the lives of many and I feel like there is no difference between who is driving and who is not driving in the car.

-Madalyn Olson, BSC Student

"They Run through It" Michael R. Tomanek



ACROSS

- *1. Tree collection
- 7. 701
- 15. Natural
- 16. Post-apocalyptic genre
- 17. Bird at home
- 18. Voters
- 19. ER people
- 21. _____ or mouse
- 22. Sand or mouse noun
- 26. "Get it?"
- 30. Ft. Worth sch.
- 33. Commander aboard 32-down
- 34. Cold War intl.
- 35. Police officers
- *36. Tributary to the Red
- 39. Leaders
- 41. Property title
- 42. Top-shelf steak sauce?
- 43. For purchase
- 46. The ones with an *
- 50. Follow the rules
- 51. Standing Rock protest intls.
- 53. Salad dressing base (abbr.)
- 54. Apple variety
- 55. Flex fuel car
- 57. Take a mulligan
- 58. A long time _____
- 60. Grain container
- 62. Collectible's value indicator
- 67. Penny metal
- 72. Sinner
- 73. Set up a tent site
- *74. The "Show Me" state
- *75. A mouse in Toulouse

DOWN

- 1. Shark appendage
- 2. Indivisible
- 3. ER people
- 4. Consume
- 5. Flower holder
- 6. Bob's Burgers' regular
- 7. Include

- 8. Reuben bread
- 9. PC key
- 10. _____ to Kill (2 words)
- 11. Musical conclusion
- 12. Shoe style
- 13. Compass pt.
- 14. FEMA beacon
- 20. _____ of Silence
- 22. QB's goals
- 23. Cheer exclamation
- 24. 4-down (in the past)
- 25. Bimonthly candy bar?
- 27. Employ
- 28. Minnow's intls.
- 29. Baseball mistake
- 31. ER procedure
- 32. Enterprise's initials
- 35. Witty
- 37. Electric swimmer
- 38. Dependent
- 40. Brow prefix
- 42. Go off script
- 43. Alley-_____
- 44. Timberwolves' org.
- 45. Writers Amy or David
- 46. FM news radio
- 47. Adam's mate
- 48. It might get spared
- 49. _____-Line Railroad
- 52. One in a six-pk
- 55. Slang \$100
- 56. Slices and _____
- 59. Some toothpastes
- 61. Repetitive naughty deed
- 62. Michael Stipe's grp.
- 63. Bird prefix
- 64. A ___ I ___
- 65. Church bulletin abbr.
- 66. Before Lanka
- 68. Jeremy Piven's edu. film
- 69. Golfer's even
- 70. UK Lp company
- 71. Fast-spinning meas.

WORD SEARCH

FEBRUARY 2021



- Balloons
- Candy
- Card
- Cupid
- Decorate
- Dinner
- February
- Flowers
- Gift
- Groundhog
- Heart
- Hibernate
- Holiday
- Leap year
- Pennsylvania
- Phil
- Pink
- presidents
- Polar bear
- Punxsutawney
- Shadow
- Snow
- Treat
- Weather
- Valentines day

CALLING ALL MYSTICS

Have you been occupying yourself with any new creative hobbies over quarantine, such as writing, photography or drawing? We have a way for you to show off your skills! Submit short stories, poems and artwork to Figments of Imagination, Bismarck State College's literary magazine. The Figments Staff will have submission boxes around campus, as well as an online submission forms coming soon. If you can't wait or have any questions, please email us at BSCFigments@ndus.edu, and get creative! -Figments of Imagination Staff

Figments of Imagination



Volume 28

THE SWORDS THAT SLASH ETERNALLY



Dante Ames

REPORTER/
COLUMNIST

SoulCalibur 6 is an epic video game that has easy-to-learn combat, a phenomenal retelling of an already excellent story and the roster selection of characters stays fresh with new characters being released every several months.

The winter break gave students the opportunity to relax and spend time with loved ones, and it also gave them the chance to spend more quality time with their video games. SoulCalibur 6 and its predecessors is a game series created by Bandai Namco, a Japanese video game company. The SoulCalibur games, including SoulCalibur 6, are an ongoing franchise where two players fight each other with their chosen characters. SoulCalibur 6 originally released in 2018. Steam is an online store where gamers can purchase and store their video games. Many times throughout the year, Steam will have sales, and over this most recent winter break they had a sale on the game SoulCalibur 6.

Much of the gameplay for SoulCalibur 6 has stayed the same as previous titles, but the developers have added a couple of new additions. The reversal edge system allows

players to defend against an oncoming attack and quickly strike back, alongside a slow-motion effect. The developers also modified the classic soul charge system that appeared in previous titles. As always the developers included a character customization mode and a player versus player mode.

Almost every single one of the original SoulCalibur characters has been put into SoulCalibur 6, except for Li Long, Rock and Seong Hanmyeong. Many old characters from previous titles have also made a return such as Amy, Cassandra and Hilde. In almost every SoulCalibur title, there are guest appearances, such as Link from The Legend of Zelda in SoulCalibur 2. In SoulCalibur 6, there have been a few surprise, playable guest characters such as Haohmaru, Geralt and 2B.

Also with the new installment of the series comes two new story modes. The Soul Chronicle is the retold original story from the original SoulCalibur with a few tweaks since the game introduces a new timeline to the series. The main plot follows Kilik, the protagonist, as he ventures from his dojo to seek out and destroy an evil sword. Within the Soul Chronicle, the player is able to play through each character's story as it reveals their involvement with the main story.

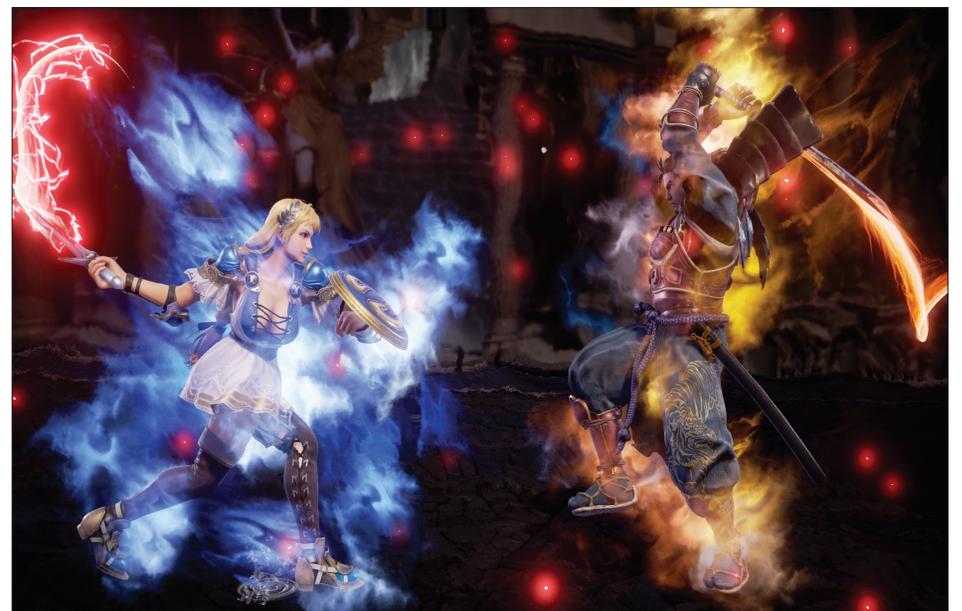
Then there is the Libra of Souls where the player makes their own character and must stop the antagonist from using their powers for evil. The game throws the player

into the story by defining their character's appearance. As each game in the series comes along, the character creation gets more intuitive and unique. With this installation, the player is able to pick a race that ranges from human to demon to being a mummy. As in previous titles, there are body sliders, a wide range of colors to use and clothing options for any type of character. After the initial prologue, the player's character travels throughout most of Asia and Europe meeting canon characters from the Soul Chronicle storyline and fighting nefarious evil-doers along the way, essentially becoming one of the most powerful warriors in the universe.

The final boss battle takes place in an ominous and cursed castle in Europe, where the antagonist, Azwel,

is a powerful opponent, but dealt with fairly easily. Using any combination of horizontal swings, vertical slashes and numerous kicks will inevitably allow the player to best him. Though said methods will work, the player can easily take advantage of the new defensive reversal edge system that will bash their opponent down if they win and give a significant increase to their soul gauge. The soul gauge allows the player to press a single button to unleash a devastating ultimate final move which is very flashy and deals a ton of damage with minimal effort, but the player must be careful when using said move because it is blockable.

Sophitia engaged in reversal edge with Mitsurugi. (Credit: IGDB)



"CHAINSAW MAN" STANDS ABOVE MANY MODERN COMICS

By Robert Mechaley III
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Because of the quarantine in Spring of 2020 and the lack of new media at the time, it seemed high time to get back into comics. Thanks to the wide array of apps that offer unlimited reading with a subscription, I was finally able to catch up on the 2018 run of "Archie" and read "Sweet Home." There was one Japanese comic, a manga, that stands high above the rest: "Chainsaw Man."

Tatsuki Fujimoto's "Chainsaw Man" was released in Weekly Shonen Jump, a publication aimed toward action series in mid 2019. The comic oozes story, style and impactful scene placement. Our protagonist is Denji, a down-on-his-luck teenager forced to pay off his father's debts to the mob with his only companion, a devil dog named Pochita.

Denji only wants to be able to go

to school, have jam and bread for breakfast and fall in love. His bosses in the mob, now zombies, have other plans, as they cut the duo up and drop them in a dumpster.

Pochita sacrifices himself to fuse with Denji, turning him into the powerful half human, half devil: Chainsaw Man. Post rampage, he is discovered by a devil hunter named Makima, whom he agrees to work for in exchange for his life.

Denji is not the average Shonen protagonist, normally depicted as young kids with can-do attitudes and rebel streaks. Having been a workhorse since he was eight, his development is deeply stunted and combined with his teenage hormones, it makes his motivations a little crass. As he learns to work and be friends with his fellow devils and devil hunters, he becomes more well-rounded.

The other characters get phenomenal depth as well. Aki, a loner and Denji's

higher up in public safety, opens up and learns that it is better to form lasting relationships. Power, a devil, becomes less arrogant and impish, as she and Denji slowly become each other's shoulders to cry on.

The second strength, style, comes from the rough looking art that Fujimoto pens. The lines and shading are not as clean as his Jump contemporaries, which is not a problem. This allows for detailed backgrounds and stark facial expressions that add to the conversational and action-oriented scenes. Moments of tension and character interaction have a new layer of added depth that appeals to me in a way that comics haven't for some time.

The panelling of the scenes adds to the comic overall. When turning the page to the next panel, there is a genuine level of added tension or delivery on the punchline to jokes. When the most powerful devil hunter

walks away saying that Denji and Power's training is done for the day, the next page reveals he is lying. When there is a big introduction of a powerful being, the act of turning the page adds an interactive tension, inviting the reader to choose staring upon the visage of the embodiment of darkness.

Of note besides the other points, the pacing does not suffer. There are abundances of twists and turns; the story lines do not overstay their welcome, and the character's growth feels organic. Sharp tongue-in-cheek writing makes ten dollar words unnecessary to relate to the characters.

For a comic that delivers and goes wild with its absurd premises, this is a great quarantine read. There is so much more I could unpack, but I think this is a story worth experiencing more than talking about. "Chainsaw Man" can be read through the free Shonen Jump app and the Shonen Jump English language website.