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DINKYTOWN CRIME CAUSES INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE AND QUESTIONS OF "WHY NOW?"

Klaus Solko co-executive editor

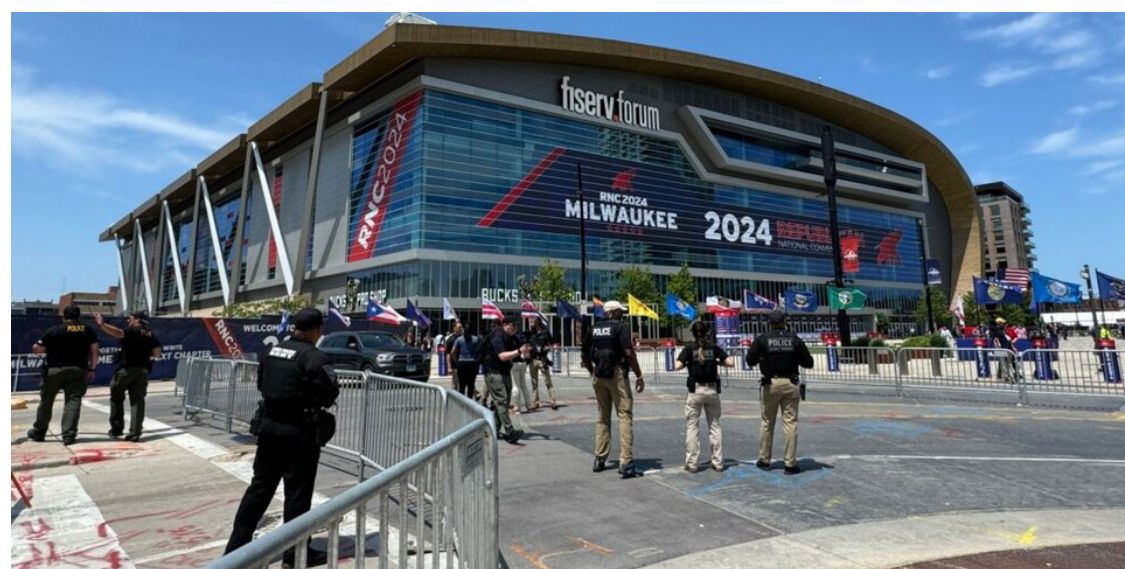


Photo of the 2024 Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, uploaded by Yeny Garcia on April 15, 2024,
sourced from Wikimedia Commons

On Sept. 4, around two in the morning on Fourth Street Southeast in Dinkytown, Minneapolis, there was a stabbing. Police responded to the scene at 2:33 a.m., where they found a man with multiple stab wounds in his torso. There were also bystanders on the scene who recounted that the assailant and the victim were in a fight that had evolved into the stabbing.

A short time after, Minneapolis Park police found Nicholas Steven Nunez Rodriguez skateboarding in Elliot Park. KSTP has not shared what identified Rodriguez as the assailant; however, as he was

being taken into custody without being questioned, he said, "If you guys reach in my pocket, the blade that I did it with is in there." Rodriguez is looking at a charge of second-degree assault as of Sept. 8.

In the same seven-day period, on Sunday, Sept. 6, there was a shooting near 4th Street Southeast and 13th Avenue Southeast in Dinkytown. This shooting happened around 2:40 a.m. Once police got onto the scene, they found two men with gunshot wounds. Both men were originally taken into critical care but were in non-life-threatening condition by the end of the day.

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**Dhari RisingSun-
Doud**
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Police detained multiple people on scene and arrested one man who had a handgun without a permit. This man was booked at Hennepin County Jail for a weapons violation. However, he has not been publicly connected to the shooting itself.

Many news sources have spoken to University of Minnesota students about their feelings about the recent crimes, but Dinkytown is also a common hangout spot for Augsburg students. I spoke with Augsburg Community Advisor Emma Stanley, who said, "A few of my residents were actually really close to Dinkytown the night of the incident. They heard the gunshot and that's how they were alerted that something was going on."

Stanley went on to say, "I really wish there were timely warning message systems; I think it would be really helpful to keep people safe. Especially for newer students who are new to the area." A lack of awareness in the Augsburg student body about crimes happening nearby

seems to be a theme, along with a lack of awareness about how students could get information about crimes happening.

Many students that I interviewed, including myself, were first made aware of the shooting from parents' expressed concerns through text messages and phone calls. Having parents concerned for one's well-being seems to have the pattern of increasing student anxiety separate from their actual worry about the crimes themselves.

After the crimes, University of Minnesota Police Chief Michael Davis has said students should expect to see more officers around, especially on weekends, and his department will be partnering more with Minneapolis police, whose visibility will also increase, according to CBS News.

An Augsburg Student who works in Dinkytown, when asked about the crimes, said, "The only reason this was made as big a deal as it was is because of welcome

week and the holiday weekend. A bunch of parents freaked out, and they needed a show of power. It would be much better if the police were consistent with their presence and prevention instead of putting up huge barricades every now and again."

I also interviewed Tess Munshower, Assistant Director of Campus Life, on how she felt about the recent crimes and how often Augsburg students are over in Dinkytown. She does not believe that students should avoid Dinkytown; instead, she thinks that students should be vigilant and cautious in any well-populated part of Minneapolis or any city.

-AISA Welcome Back

Augsburg Room, Sept. 23 @ 3:00 p.m.

-Somos America Latina Y El Caribe

Murphy Square, Sept. 23 @ 4:30 p.m.

-Wednesday Night Worship

Hoverston Chapel, Sept. 23 @ 8:00 p.m.

-Sembrando Nuestro Futuro Orientation

East Commons, Sept. 24 @ 4:00 p.m.

-Lego night competition

Hagfors 150A, Sept. 24 @ 6:00 p.m.

-Augsem Game Night

Hagfors 150, Sept. 25 @ 3:00 p.m.

-HWT First General Gathering

Hagfors 150, Sept. 25 @ 3:00 p.m.

-Family BBQ

Murphy Square, Sept. 25 @ 4:00 p.m.

-Fall Semester Kickoff

Riverside Park, Sept. 25 @ 4:00 p.m.

-Fall Retreat

Camp Eden Wood, Sept. 25 @ 5:00 p.m.

-Bluesy Burrito Bash

Murphy Square, Sept. 25 @ 5:30 p.m.

SPORTING EVENTS

-Men's Soccer vs. Saint Mary's

Edor Nelson Field, Sept. 22 @ 7:30 p.m.

-Football vs. Saint John's

Edor Nelson Field, Sept. 26 @ 12:00 p.m.

2026 Republican National Convention Delivers \$5000 Promise From Trump

Jessica Tezoquipa news editor

Sept. 10 in Dallas, Texas, the Republican National Convention was held in time for the midterm elections. Usually done during presidential elections, conventions being held for midterm elections have been seen as “places of mischief” and wastes of the party’s time and money, according to National Journal.

The 2026 Republican National Convention was championed by President Trump as he promised all adult Americans \$5,000 if Republicans win the House and the Senate in the upcoming midterm elections. This pledge has come as the GOP has received record-low ratings with issues of immigration, the Epstein Files, rising prices and an unpopular war in Iran. This \$5,000 “Trump Dividend,” being labeled as an empty promise by democrats, would cost \$1.3 trillion to pay a sum to 270 million adult Americans. Vice President Vance said these dividends would be funded by revenue raised by tariffs. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, \$475 billion has been collected since 2025. It is illegal under federal law to try and influence somebody’s voting by providing payment.

“I think [Donald Trump] is mediocre. I cannot think of a moment where he kept promises he’s made. Not in today’s economic world. I would need a lot more than 5,000 dollars to live through [the rest] of his presidency,” states Dhari RisingSun-Doud, an Augsburg student, in an interview with the Echo.

Trump’s presence dominated the convention, as speakers praised him as the “greatest leader of our time,” as stated by NPR news. “I’m asking you to pretend that I’m on the ballot,” Trump said on the first day. On the second day,



Photo of the Greenway in Dinkytown at night, uploaded by SidewalkMD on May 10, 2019, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

he stated, “You know what happens if you don’t vote? You go to hell.” In the 2026 primaries, the voter turnout for Democrats increased by 40% as opposed to a 6% decrease for republican voters.

“Common sense versus communist crazy” is a phrase that is very representative of the convention’s rhetoric, as many speakers share the same message. “For months leading into the convention, I worked with our team to build a clear,

consistent message around the contrast at the heart of this election: common sense versus communist crazy,” Lisa McClain said for The Post. “You don’t sympathize with terrorists, you don’t sanitize extremism, and you sure don’t ask the people of Michigan to send you to the United States Senate while surrounding yourself with people who despise America,” former Representative Mike Rogers said of Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic nominee for Michigan. This being representative of the overall mood of the convention not being focused on policy.

“I think [Donald Trump] is mediocre. I cannot think of a moment where he kept promises he’s made. Not in today’s economic world. I would need a lot more than 5,000 dollars to live through [the rest] of his presidency.”

- Dhari RisingSun-Doud

Auggie Alum Nina Makem is “Makem” A Name for Herself Post-Graduation

Evelyn Perkins sports editor



Photo of Nina Makem for Augsburg Media Day, taken by Kevin Healy on Oct. 18, 2024

Historically, Augsburg University has always been a pioneer and advocate for change. One example of this is the fact that Augsburg is the only college or university in Minnesota that sponsors a four-year women's wrestling team. One of the best athletes to ever go through the program, Nina Makem, has recently started her professional wrestling career with Team USA. I had the pleasure of emailing with Makem to discuss her experience as a professional wrestler and the impact Augsburg had on her success today.

Makem said that some of the toughest challenges in transitioning from collegiate to professional wrestling happen off the mat. “One thing people don’t always talk about is how difficult the transition can be beyond wrestling itself. Once college ends, you’re responsible for finding ways to fund your training, travel, competition expenses, and everything that comes with pursuing wrestling or any other sports at this level. Finding sponsorships and financial support can be challenging, especially when

you’re still trying to establish yourself as an athlete. Traveling to tournaments, staying in hotels, paying for meals, transportation, training and recovery adds up quickly. You’re not just competing against the people on the mat, you’re also navigating the financial realities of being a high-performance athlete,” Makem said.

Makem credited Augsburg and the wrestling team for helping her remain positive and resilient during these challenges. “My teammates and coaches pushed me to hold myself accountable, believe in myself and keep working even when things weren’t going my way. The culture at Augsburg also taught me the importance of hard work, resilience, consistency and competing with confidence. Those lessons have carried over directly into my life as a high-performance wrestler,” she said.

Makem excelled as a high-performance wrestler. During her collegiate career, she was a four-time All-American, an under-20 World Team member, and a three-time under-23 World Team member. Since graduating, she has been a three-time under-23 Pan-American champion for Team USA, has lived and trained at the Olympic Training Center, and competed with elite athletes. “I feel incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to train in an environment surrounded by people who have the same goals and dreams that I do. Being in a room full of people who are all pushing themselves to become better is something I don’t take for granted. It reminds me every day that I belong in these spaces and that there is always another level to reach,” Makem said. With elite competition comes intense

pressure to succeed. Makem said she combats that pressure by focusing on small victories. “One thing I’ve learned throughout this journey is that success isn’t always about the biggest win or the next medal. Sometimes it’s about continuing to show up, especially when nobody else sees the work. Every day I train, I’m not chasing wins; I’m chasing the strongest version of myself. I’m excited to see where that mindset takes me next, and I’m grateful for everyone who has supported me along the way. From my Augsburg community to my coaches, teammates, family, friends, and everyone who has believed in me, thank you. I carry that support with me every time I step on the mat.”

“Being in a room full of people who are all pushing themselves to become better is something I don’t take for granted. It reminds me every day that I belong in these spaces and that there is always another level to reach.”

- Nina Makem

Minnesota Vixen Seize National Championship in Legendary Run

Kaia Anderson online publishing coordinator

On July 26, the Vixen won their first national championship at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium. While many players have attended Augsburg, such as Sam Anderson and Ashley Waalen, the team's offensive line coach, Michele Braun, started coaching at Augsburg in fall 2025 as an assistant coach for the men's football team. Then, in the spring of this year, she was appointed head coach of the new women's flag football team.

Braun played for the Minnesota Vixen for 20 years. She was an original Vixen, joining the team in its first season in 1999. After she retired in 2019, she became part of the coaching staff. On Monday night, Braun joined me over a Zoom call to talk about this most recent Vixen season. During the interview, Braun wore a red-and-white Vixen sweater and showed me her blue championship hat. She was very friendly and showed a clear passion for women's football.

The Vixen are the longest continuously operating professional women's tackle



Photo of Michele Braun talking to Minnesota Vixen players, taken by Wendy Nielsen and Devin Ramey

football team in the nation. The first two teams were the Minnesota Vixen and the Lake Michigan Minx. "It was ironic because a lot of the Twin Cities or Minnesota players who tried out made the Lake Michigan Minx team, and a lot of the outstate and superstar players they had were on the Minnesota Vixen. Well, we ended up losing every game," Braun said. After this first season, many more teams were formed in places like New York, Tampa Bay and Houston. "It just grew," Braun said. When asked how it feels to coach the team she once played for, she answered, "It's very humbling. I always felt a sense of giving back. I put 20 years into this team, and I really wanted to give back to the next generation of players."

This past season, the Vixen played nine games with only one loss. The first game was against the St. Louis Slam, their rival. This game overlapped with the final game of the Augsburg flag football season, so Braun was unable to make it to St. Louis with the Vixen. She promised the team that if they won, she would go outside to

yell and celebrate. Until April 25, the Vixen had never beaten the St. Louis Slam. This game set the tone for the season, launching the Vixen into an incredibly successful run where they went 8-1. The one game they lost was to the Slam a month later. Braun described this loss as a wake-up call, saying they had to get into gear before the championship games.

When they arrived at the championship games, the Vixen dominated, winning 42-14 in the final against the Pittsburgh Passion. "I never go into a game thinking anything is going to be easy, but I tell you, after the first five minutes I was like, this is really easy, like we got this," Braun said. After 27 years dreaming of the moment—20 years as a player and seven as a coach—this was a huge moment for Braun, who seemed to get emotional while describing the win.

"Oh, it was glorious [...] it was just as glorious as you think."

"After 27 years dreaming of the moment—20 years as a player and seven as a coach—this was a huge moment for Braun, who seemed to get emotional while describing the win."

- Kaia Anderson

The Curious Case of Separating Art From Artist

Avery Cheeseman arts and culture editor

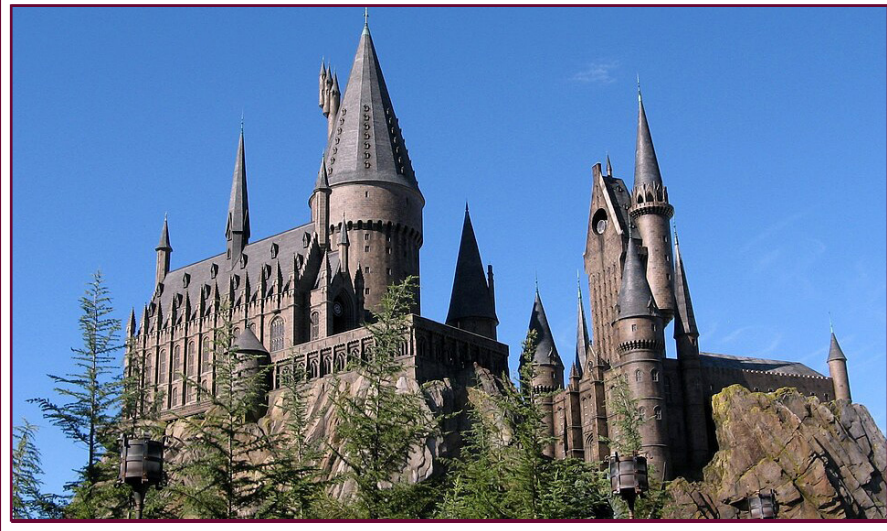


Photo of Hogwarts Castle in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, taken by Carlos Cruz on June 25, 2010, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

I know that I am far from the only person who grew up watching and reading the Harry Potter books and movies. As I grew and morphed into my teenage years, my interest in this series grew and morphed into the Marauders spinoff fandom. This piece of media has been in the public zeitgeist for nearly 27 years. This coming winter, the new series remake will be released on Dec. 26.

My feelings on this series have greatly changed the more that I have grown and built up a better repertoire of literary works that I enjoy far more than this series. However, beyond the very real literary critiques of J. K. Rowling's writing, world-building, and sprinklings of casual bigotry, there lies a question that I find extremely imperative to answer. Can we actually separate the art from the artist?

This question has been floating around the internet for the last few months as we all wait to collectively see what to make of the new TV series based on Rowling's original book series. Over the past few years, Rowling's first casual

bigoted tweets against trans women have evolved into full-on support of transphobic campaigns and organizations that are fighting against the rights of trans people in the UK. Rowling created her own personal fund called "J.K. Rowling Women's Fund" that is directly funded by the wealth she garnered through her book sales, merchandise sales and movies. It is not possible to separate the art from the artist in this case, as the art is actively funding the artist's transphobic tirade that has real implications on the lives of trans people within the UK.

According to Augsburg student Klaus Solko, "I've seen people talk about separating the art from the artist when the artist is dead." As Rowling is still alive, this sentiment is rendered inapplicable. The next question of separation lies within the artwork. According to Solko, "their prejudice is in their work; you're not separating it." Solko goes on to tell me that "the work cannot be separated ideologically from what they believe because their ideology is in their work." Rowling is neither dead nor is her work

free from the bigoted ideology that is quite literally found within the words that she has written in her books.

Having discussions about the ethics of the art we consume is an extremely important thing that we must continue to do. If the art we love is actively supporting bigotry and hate or has this sort of ideology written clear as day in its pages, we are most certainly responsible for aiding in its wake of destruction. We must examine art and media that we put our money, time, and energy towards, as it has real-life implications beyond just the pages of our favorite books. When an author or artist is actively using the wealth they accrued to support organizations that go directly against our own values, we must re-examine our support.

"It is not possible to separate the art from the artist in this case, as the art is actively funding the artist's transphobic tirade that has real implications on the lives of trans people within the UK."

- Avery Cheeseman

Review: “Adults” is the Gen-Z’s “Friends,” But Better

Elliot Hilden co-executive editor

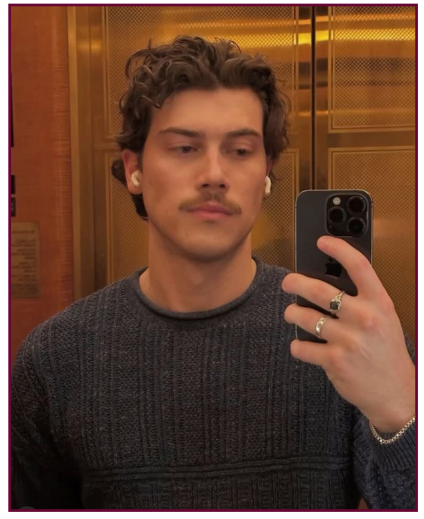


Photo of Jack Innanen, taken by Jack Innanen in 2025, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

Warning: Spoilers for “Adults”

If you are looking for a new show to obsess over, look no further than “Adults,” an original comedy series following a group of friends in their mid-twenties as they navigate the world of early adulthood while living together in Samir’s childhood home. The main friend group in the show is made up of neurotic yet caring Samir, adorable girlfriend Billie, chaotic and loyal Issa, “friend slut” Anton, and Paul Baker. While the show primarily revolves around that group, there is also a star-studded cast of guest appearances throughout the show, such as the incomparable Julia Fox.

While I love all the characters deeply, I would say my favorite is Jack Innanen’s character Paul Baker, the sexually fluid Canadian who meets the rest of the group in the special prequel episode “Marathon Day.” At the beginning of the show, he and Issa are dating, but over the course of the two seasons, he and Anton, played by Owen Thiele, have a slow-burn love story that is absolutely immaculate.

“Adults” very recently aired its second season on Aug. 27, and it has since blown up online due to its relatability among young adults today. It has been compared to shows like “Friends” and “New Girl,” and I wholeheartedly agree. I love how this show features realistic portrayals of what it is like to be a struggling twenty-something in the modern day, while also feeling instantly classic. It also does a wonderful job of exploring how social media affects life today.

“I love how this show features realistic portrayals of what it is like to be a struggling twenty-something in the modern day, while also feeling instantly classic.”

- Elliot Hilden

I believe that one of the best parts of “Adults” is the commitment to the bit. The show frequently features meta-commentary, such as Issa’s line in the opening sequence of season two, “it’s season two, Paul Baker, we’re doing a one!” I love this style of comedy, where the characters aren’t aware that they are in a TV show, but use that wording as a nod to the audience. Another bit that I love is the way that characters almost exclusively refer to Paul Baker by his full name, and refer to “Paul” and “Baker” as separate identities of his.

My favorite episode of season two is episode four, “Raccoon.” The episode follows “Acid Night,” an event hosted by Issa and Paul Baker where their group all takes acid together. Right after taking the acid, a raccoon walks through the living room, which leads to the group all scrambling to get rid of it before the acid hits in 30 minutes. Issa and Paul Baker later individually reveal to Billie and Samir that they actually want to use Acid Night to have a serious conversation about their relationship. This episode is genuinely so funny and chaotic; I could rewatch it a million times and still find it entertaining. Between the messiness of Billie and Samir trying not to intervene, the chaos of the raccoon, and Anton’s suspicions and eventual breakdown over his faults in the situation, it is an iconic piece of media that is worth watching the rest of the show just to get to see it.

All episodes of “Adults” are available to stream on Hulu, and given that the entire show is only around eight hours total, you basically have no reason not to watch it.

Think Critically, Ditch Technology-Based Courses

Lennon Krueger *contributor*

Coming into the school year, I know many students had mixed feelings about being back in classes, whether it be their major isn't their passion anymore or excited to be with their friends; their school year was starting. To many students' dismay, professors have been introducing classes as paper-only. Our faculty certainly remember a time when all classes were paper only, which points to the relative ease this switch should have. As nice as it is to have a pocket supercomputer able to answer any of your questions, we solved those issues in the past with things like dictionaries, thesauruses and the like, so what is the real issue?

When looking at a tech-only class, it is easy to imagine the bill being given to the student for purchasing a laptop or similar devices to handle their work for the course, and while this used to sound outrageous, many students have laptops and phones that are very reusable for these courses, making tech-only a truly viable option. As for paper only, students need to purchase non-renewable supplies, whether it be pencils and pens, notebooks, or flashcards to study up on terms. While inexpensive, many will tell you that pennies add up quick, and point to this to say paper-only sucks. I don't think so. Many studies have shown better retention when using handwritten notes as opposed to computer-driven notes, and it really isn't that tough to go out and get yourself a 30-cent notebook and 30-cent folder to hold additional assignments.

Why the switch? More often than not, the answer is AI. With the invention and innovation of large language models,

the internet has been poisoned with thousands upon thousands of artificial and fabricated articles, videos, and, importantly, assignments and tests. The capabilities of AI increasing have only caused it to be a more rampant problem, and similar to other addictions, it is up to us to say no before the legislature's painstakingly slow pace can catch up. In some classes, professors have required the use of AI to check your own work and to learn from. My biggest issue with this is not that the professors are assimilating new tech into their courses or that every prompt abuses absurd amounts of water, but with the students' learning. AI has revolutionized many ways to learn, but often fabricates things for the benefit of the prompter's emotions. If I showed up to a class that said AI was required for the

“The capabilities of AI increasing have only caused it to be a more rampant problem, and similar to other addictions, it is up to us to say no before the legislature’s painstakingly slow pace can catch up.”

- Lennon Krueger

course, I would personally be outraged. Why not just let AI pass the class for me? What's the point of learning if I could just have AI do all the work for me? Why am I at college if AI is completing my degree?

The switch to paper-only is of high friction. I love my laptop, my desktop, and staying connected with my friends via my phone. Whether it be listening to music or white noise to help me study, technology has helped immensely in my journey through life. Knowing this, going back to paper only is a smart option. It forces learning and effort back into the brains of the people, not the workings of their computers. Time and again, it has shown that the disruption of required effort deteriorates the brain. If paper only is a way to guarantee that my peers and I are not losing more brain health while paying to go to college, that is a fine sacrifice to make. It's all our brains on the line. If you want to be important, learn to be consistent, to give and take feedback, and don't offload your executive functions for the sake of laziness.

Are No Phones in Class Really Worth Compromising Student Safety?

Alexis Aryeequaye contributor

When I was in eighth grade, my middle school suddenly banned cellphones the day before winter break. Not in class, not during passing time, not even at lunch. After years of being the only middle school in our district to allow phones at school, the policy abruptly changed. I remember the mass outrage. Rumors, direct complaints to the administration, a kid in my grade even drafted a petition to present to the principal, to no avail. When we came back from break, phones were completely forbidden at my school for the remainder of the school year and for the following ones. 14-year-old me had one strong opinion that now, as an 18-year-old college student, still remains true: schools (and the world at large) aren't safe enough for bans or heavy restrictions on cellphones.

“Reality morphs the use of a cell phone. It is no longer just a device for social media or entertainment. For students, it is a lifeline.”

- Alexis Aryeequaye

Let me lay out a statement that most people will agree with: phones are distracting. You tell yourself that it'll only be ten minutes of scrolling, until an hour passes. All of a sudden, you've abandoned all other commitments and forgotten what you wanted. People get so immersed in the

digital world that they tend to neglect their real-life responsibilities. In fact, according to the Harmony Healthcare IT, the average American spends 5 hours and 16 minutes on their phone daily; also, according to the Pew Research Center, half of Americans report that they spend too much time on their phones. In general, we could all benefit from a phone cleanse, especially students who have extracurriculars and school commitments. However, in an age of school shootings, mental health issues and societal worries, phone bans simply aren't productive or necessary.

According to the Sandy Hook Promise, every day in the United States, 12 children die from gun violence, and another 32 are shot and injured. Gun violence is the number one cause of death in young people living in America. This awful reality morphs the use of a cell phone. It is no longer just a device for social media or entertainment. For students, it is a lifeline. Parents deserve immediate, direct confirmation that their children are safe, and students need a way to communicate with their families during moments of extreme crisis. Total bans sever this vital connection, increasing panic for both students inside the building and parents waiting on the outside, as well as increasing even more anxiety and concern. Beyond physical safety, the medical needs of students have to be taken into account. Many students rely on their smartphones to manage medical conditions, such as tracking glucose levels for diabetes, or to keep in touch with parents about after-school jobs and transportation.

In addition, the modern mental health crisis can't be forgotten. As a student with mental health issues, having a

consistent connection to my family and friends is a must—even during school hours. Instead of teaching students how to foster healthy relationships with their technology and encouraging healthier habits, schools prioritize institutional control.

Ultimately, schools should focus on education and digital literacy instead of confiscation. Implementing smart, classroom-specific rules where phones are put away during lectures satisfies the need for focus. Total school-wide bans are an unnecessary and dangerous overreach in a world that requires constant connectivity for basic survival. Phone bans don't belong in schools, and the well-being of students is what matters most.

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OPINIONS

The First-Year Friendship Guide I Wish I Had

Avery Cheeseman arts and culture editor



Photo of the Oyate Commons, taken by Klaus Solko on Sept. 17

College is a lot to take in, no matter what year you are; I remember how I struggled to get situated my first semester. I remember feeling overwhelmed and unsure of how to make friends. I know this fear is palpable to many new students this year at Augsburg. But fear not! Readers, I come bearing a list of ways to make friends on campus. I hope that by the end of this article you will have one or two new ideas on how to make friends.

You can start by joining a club. It is relatively easy, and while it may seem cliché, unfortunately, in this case clichés do work. Find one to two clubs that interest you—Auggie Life has no shortage of club events posted weekly. Meeting friends is a lot easier when you have a shared common interest. Asking your Community Advisor questions about clubs or extracurriculars they are involved with is also a great way to get the scoop on any fun clubs that you might not initially think of. For commuters, you may think this is not an option for you. However, as a commuter myself, I have

found no shortage of clubs to join. Do not be scared to get involved in clubs; they are not just for residential students! Making a study group can also be a great way to make friends. Do not be afraid to sit next to people in class, because a group of 2-5 people who you sit near in one or two of your classes can make an excellent study group. Making time to study for even 30 minutes a week could be a great way to get to know your fellow classmates and also keep up with your schoolwork. It can be hard to schedule social times while balancing schoolwork, and this is the perfect solution to both.

This next one might seem like an odd idea, but I have found that carrying extra supplies that people might need is a great way to make friends and start conversations. Bringing things like extra pencils, erasers, Post-its or hygiene products is great to have on the go for yourself, but it is also a good way to start conversations and help out your classmates.

Lastly, be the first person to reach out. It is easy to wait for someone else to make the first move, but you need to take the initiative into your own hands. You are losing a lot of potential friends by waiting for somebody else to introduce themselves. I promise you that it is not as embarrassing or weird as you think it is. Everyone else wants to make friends just as bad as you do.

Keep these four things in mind when making friends, and I guarantee that by the end of the semester, you will have met tons of new people. The last biggest piece of advice I can give freshmen regarding making friends is to be willing to be a little bit cringe and put yourself out there. To be cringe is to be free.

“It is easy to wait for someone else to make the first move, but you need to take the initiative into your own hands. You are losing a lot of potential friends by waiting for somebody else to introduce themselves.”

- Avery Cheeseman

Short Story: “Out of Breath”

Emerson Pieper staff writer

The first thing Cole notices is that he can't feel his hands, which is—fine, probably. He doesn't need his hands to run. His fingers curl anyway out of habit more than sensation, arms pumping in rhythm with the rest of him as the spikes on his shoes strike against the track in sharp, relentless beats. The world has narrowed down to lanes and breath and the burning in his muscles. His lungs pull in air that doesn't feel like enough, too cold as it scrapes down his throat.

Don't slow down. He repeats the mantra in his head as he pushes himself forward. There's shouting somewhere, from the crowd or his teammates, maybe his coach. He isn't sure. It all blurs together, distant and muffled. He focuses on the back of the runner in front of him and the space between them. He just needs to close that gap.

His stomach twists. He knows his body and its warning signs. Knows the exact moment things tip from manageable to inevitable. He isn't there yet. He can hold it together a little longer.

His foot lands slightly wrong, and the jolt runs straight up his leg. For a second, the world tilts. Cole clenches his jaw and keeps running. Just ahead, he sees Luke leaning against the fence, sunlight catching in his hair. He's talking to Jack, but every so often his eyes flick toward Cole with a smile when their eyes meet.

Or at least Cole thinks so. Cole knows that smile. He's spent enough time watching Luke from across the track to know the difference between the one he gives everyone and the one that

pulls slightly higher on the left side of his mouth. This one is for him. Probably.

His chest tightens, but it has nothing to do with the race. He swallows and forces himself to focus. The runner ahead of him falters, and that's all Cole needs. He surges forward, slipping past on instinct. His legs push harder, faster, carrying him toward that dangerous edge where pain and adrenaline blur into something almost like panic. The finish line is there.

His vision tunnels, the edges of the world going soft and dark until there's nothing left but the white line stretched across the track. He crosses it. Three steps later, his body finally betrays him.

***“His vision
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He crosses it.
Three steps later,
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betrays him.”***

- Emerson Pieper

Cole stumbles off the track and into the grass, hands braced against his knees, head dropping as his lungs

heave. His entire body pulses with every heavy, wrong-feeling heartbeat. He should feel good; he won after all.

“Hey—Cole, you good?”
Someone asks nearby.

He doesn't look up. Just lifts a hand in a vague, dismissive gesture as he catches his breath. “I'm—” His voice comes out rougher than he wants. “I'm good.”

“You want water?”

“I'm fine,” he snaps, sharper this time. If he says it enough, it might start to feel true.

The guy hesitates, then backs off. His footsteps retreat into the noise of everything else. Cole stays like that for a second longer, just until the worst of it passes and his breathing settles into something close to normal again.

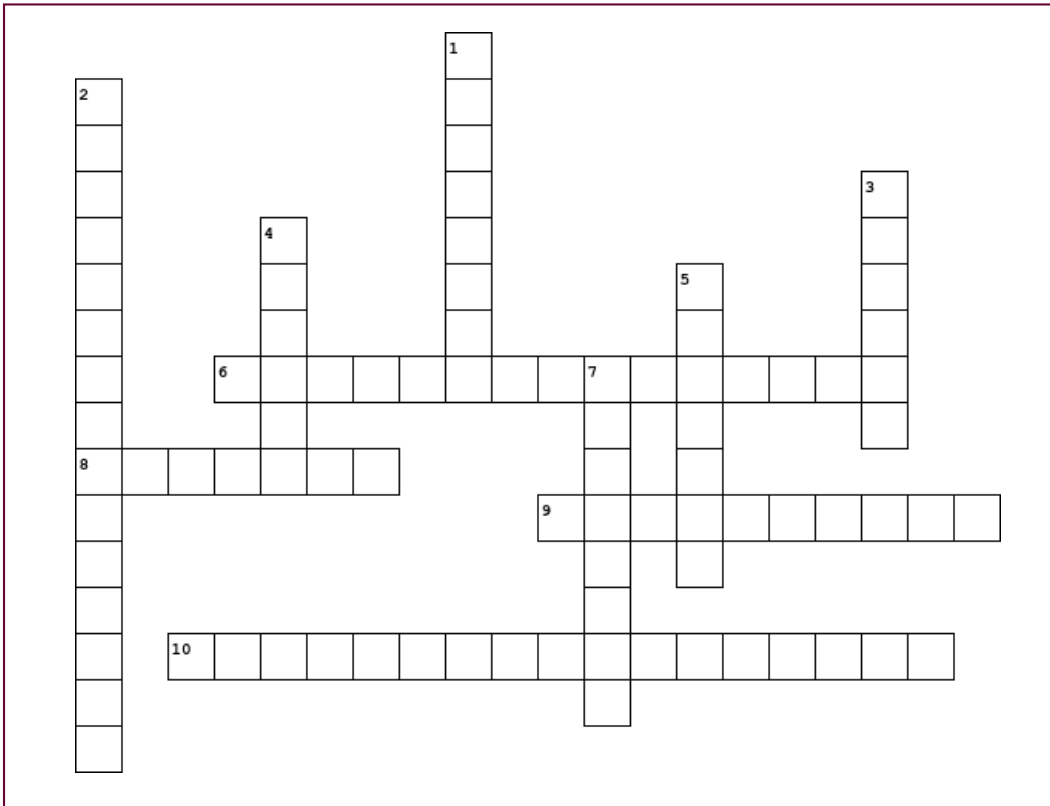
He straightens slowly, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. His hands and legs are still shaking, but he ignores that. Someone shouts his time from across the field, and it sounds impressive, but Cole barely hears it because he's focused on the fact that Luke is walking toward him.

“Hey,” Luke says when he reaches him, breathless despite not having run. “I almost thought you were gonna lose.”

Cole laughs. Or tries to, because it comes out all thin. “I won.”

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Comics Crossword



Across

6. This gothic family has a catchy jingle that'll make you snap twice after saying this.
8. Satirical modern workplace humor, following an engineer with the same name as the comic.
9. The ORIGINAL fat orange cat.
10. The name of this beefy man and his DND-esque title, originated in Pulp Magazine 1932.

Down

1. "I hate Mondays."
2. This mischievous young boy and his imaginary furry friend.
3. Give him some spinach, and he can do just about anything.
4. This old comic strip inspired the totally hit TV show, "Riverdale," starring Cole Sprouse.
5. "I got five pieces of candy. I got a chocolate bar. I got a quarter. I got a rock."
7. This human-looking alien has a seemingly infinite array of Superpowers.

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