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ECHO

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GOOGLE DETECTS AI CYBER ATTACKS DUE TO CODING VULNERABILITIES

Jessica Tezoquipa news editor



Photo of Department of Homeland Security secretary Markwayne Mullin, taken by Gage Skidmore on Dec. 21, 2024, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

Google has detected fully automated artificial intelligence (AI) cyber attacks coming from Russia and potentially China. AI can help engineers find vulnerabilities in the systems that everyday people rely on, but it can also be used to exploit those same vulnerabilities. The infrastructure supporting the modern world, specifically information technology, is a patchwork of interconnected systems. And that technology, dating back to the 1990s, is growing more vulnerable to the growing demands of modern humans and bad actors with AI tools.

According to the Google Threat Intelligence Group (GTIG), AI threats to cybersecurity have transformed from simple prompts to "autonomous multi-agent offensive frameworks—such as ARTEX, CAIRN, CyberStrikeAI, and PentAGI—to execute multi-stage intrusions at greater operational velocity."

Cyberattacks and attacks utilizing AI are not new, but we have now reached a point where AI models are capable of responding to patches and updates within minutes with zero human interaction. GTIG has found several actors using AI agents and with a low barrier of entry and huge scaling potential will likely continue globally. According to GTIG, these AI frameworks

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currently "trade stealth for velocity," and this much traffic leaves behind recognizable identifiers; they estimate that, over time, the sophistication of these activities will become more stealthy and require less human involvement.

"The world is too reliant on technology to have such a serious threat open to bad actors to use. We rely heavily on technology to navigate our daily lives, it affects communication, information, people being able to buy groceries or access their bank accounts. [This] could cause what people call a 'technological doomsday,'" states Augsburg student Graciela Ryan in an interview with the Echo.

A surge in outages like Nov. 12 with Microsoft having a global outage with services, Nov. 14 with the FAA grounding planes nationwide for the first time since 9/11 and Nov. 16 with accessing banking, do not have connections to cyber attacks, according to Department of Homeland Security secretary Markwayne Mullin. "I can tell you with complete certainty that we are not under attack — there's no cyber threat that's taken place." They could have connections to cyber threats, due to how fast software engineers need to push out updates to fix cybersecurity bugs. Within these updates, they can also cause outages. "Sometimes you do a patch, you push an upgrade in a system, it behaves abnormally, and it tips over, so to speak," said former United States Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Chris Krebs, in an interview with CNN.

"It's just another instance of something meant to 'benefit' us being used to breach our privacy, steal our data and cause havoc. Just look at companies' recent failed attempts at digital age verification to see what these people plan to do with these new tools," shared Griffin Briner, an Augsburg student.

AI agents work several times faster and longer than humans, making them excel at trial-and-error methods to find exploits all across the internet. According to CNN, 70% of the world's websites use a coding language originally created in 1993 called Personal Home Page or PHP. An outdated language being used for "your blog to the most popular websites in the world" can lead to vulnerability being found in one website and being replicated across hundreds of websites in minutes. Greynoise, an internet collection point, reported an attack that took place four days after the initial disclosure in which a bad actor likely used LLMs to build and test exploits for vulnerabilities, assemble a target list of organizations with similar vulnerabilities and execute a widespread exploitation campaign against hundreds of organizations. Greynoise also noted that this AI went from accessing this website to having full administrative permissions within minutes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

-PASU General Meeting: Hot Takes Edition

East Common, Nov. 23 @ 4:00 p.m.

-ALPFA kick off

HAGFORS 150A, Nov. 23 @ 6:00 p.m.

- Open Mic

The Sateren Auditorium, Nov. 25 @ 5:30 p.m.

- ALO All-Fall Extravaganza!

Student Lounge, Nov. 30 @ 6:00 p.m.

-ShareShop Free Winter Gear

Online Nov. 20 @ 12:00 p.m.

-Action for Community Transformation: General meeting

Marshall Room, Dec. 2 @ 12:00 p.m.

-AASA 5th General Gathering: Cultural Exploration

Hagfors 150 (FULL), Dec. 2 @ 3:00 p.m.

-Decompress December: A Night of Self-Care

East Commons, Dec. 2 @ 4:30 p.m.

-Upgrading Packet Ramen Workshop

Augsburg Univeristy Hagfors room 108, Dec. 3 @ 5:00 p.m.

-Book Club Fifth Meeting

Cedar Room, Dec. 4 @ 5:00 p.m.

-Posadas

East Commons, Dec. 4 @ 4:30 p.m.

-Puzzle Competition

Lindell 301, Dec. 9 @ 3:30 p.m.

SPORTING EVENTS

-Women's Basketball vs. Martin Luther

Si Melby Hall, Nov. 23 @ 7:00 p.m.

-Men's Basketball vs. UM-Morris

Si Melby Hall, Nov. 24 @ 7:00 p.m.

-Women's Hockey vs. Marian

Ed Saugestad Rink, Nov. 28 @ 5:00 p.m.

-Women's Hockey vs. St. Norbert

Ed Saugestad Rink, Nov. 29 @ 3:00 p.m

American Eel Seen in Minnesota Sparks Signs of Progress

Klaus Solko co-executive editor

The American Eel (Anguilla rostrata) is the only freshwater eel in North America. They have no federal conservation status but in Minnesota they are of "special concern." From 1991-2000 there were 39 sightings, which already is not that high but that amount plummeted to 13 sightings from 2001-2012 according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



Photo of an American Eel, taken by Kayt Jonsson, sourced from Wikimedia Commons

The species decline has not just been in Minnesota it has been seen throughout North America. In 2007 protection for these eels under the federal Endangered Species Act was requested by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This request was denied under as it was concluded the listing was not warranted. Another petition was submitted in 2010 also by USFWS but they are still not federally protected. Minnesota listed them as of special concern in 2013 just one year after Canada did. The decline of the American Eels population has been attributed to many sources, dams, parasites, commercial harvest, hydro power development and pollution.

On the topic of the federal protection for the eels one Augsburg student stated that it is "pretty privilege for animals. Beauty bias or charismatic species. It is called a bunch of things but it is super real and harmful in conservation efforts. I mean it is great for giant pandas. I hate giant pandas, but for animals that aren't cute they get screwed. No one cares about saving things like eels when they can be fawning over pandas."

In September, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) was on a biological monitoring trip in the Minnesota River when they caught one. This is only the fourth American Eel they have seen on these trips since 1990. MPCA sees this as a sign of progress and positive result of the projects that support Minnesota's watershed. "There's still some work to be done, but we're starting to see some really encouraging signs of progress," stated Dana Vanderbosch MPCA's commissioner for Water Policy and Agriculture to MPR.

"As a biology major and someone who has always cared about the environment and all the animals in it. It pains me to look at animals that are struggling to get by, especially an animal that helps the environment grow. So eels, even though they are predators, help the environment and the populations grow because they keep everything under control. So when one thing falls everything can fall. And it's a terrible, cataclysmic domino effect. If even a couple animals go extinct. And it is something that everyone should care about," said Augsburg student Sam Bartelt.

A reasonable connection for the more positive outlook for the American Eel in Minnesota is the Clean Water fund. The Legacy Amendment increased state sales tax by three eighths of one percent in July 2009. 33% of that revenue goes towards the Clean Water Fund. "Those funds may only be spent to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation," states Minnesota Legacy Tracker.

> ***"So eels, even though they are predators, help the environment and the populations grow because they keep everything under control. So when one thing falls everything can fall. And it's a terrible, cataclysmic domino effect."***
>
> *- Sam Bartelt*

Six Augsburg Athletes Awarded 2026 MIAC Honors

Kaia Anderson online publishing coordinator



Photo of Augsburg men's soccer, taken by Kevin Healy on Sep. 6

The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) announced its honorees for the 2026 fall semester, including student-athletes from both the men's and women's soccer teams. MIAC honors recognize students who have excelled in their sport. Augsburg honorees are Liam Paradiso, Christopher Plaza Alvarado, Asher Johnson, Finnur Mercier, Anson Karn and McKenna Nachreiner.

Paradiso was named to the All-MIAC team and earned Rookie of the Year honors. All-MIAC selections are decided by the coaches: each head coach nominates players, and coaches from other teams vote on the nominees. Coaches cannot vote for their own players. The players with the most votes in the conference receive the honor. Rookie of the Year is selected in a similar process; only true first-year student-athletes are eligible. Paradiso, a forward on the men's soccer team, played in 17 games for a total of 1,139 minutes and scored nine goals this season.

I had the privilege of speaking with Paradiso about the MIAC honors. I asked him about his feelings on receiving the honors and why he believed he won rookie of the year. This is what he had to say: "I am very grateful for my coaches [and] teammates who helped push me to become better from day one of practice. Coming into college, I didn't expect to play much, and I wanted to help and make an impact on the team the best I could. I think I received this honor because of my hard work and determination during the season. Winning Rookie of the Year and All-MIAC was amazing, and I am very grateful for the recognition that the MIAC is giving me."

Additionally, Johnson and Mercier both won All-MIAC Honorable Mention. This means that they both received at least three votes from other MIAC coaches, but did not make the all-conference team. Mercier is a first-year at Augsburg and is a goalkeeper on the men's soccer team. He had a total of 55 saves this season and faced 177 shots in total. This was Johnson's second season with the team; Johnson transferred in from Mercyhurst in 2025. He is a senior who has played for a total of 2,481 minutes during his time at Augsburg and has scored four goals during his two years.

Nachreiner earned All-MIAC honor for her performance on the women's soccer team. She is a current senior and plays forward. This season she played a total of 1,264 minutes. Nachreiner scored seven goals, including a hat trick against Saint Mary's, bringing her goal total to 19. This was her fourth year playing for the Auggies. During her first year with the team, she was part of the starting lineup for all 19 games.

While these honors are a great accomplishment for the individual athletes, they are also a testament to the successful athletic programs Augsburg has built.

WE'RE...

HIRING!

SPORTS EDITOR

The Sports Editor is responsible for curating the Sports section of our weekly publication. The position is paid by stipend, earning $60 per issue, meaning $600 per semester.

Those interested please contact echo@augsburg.edu with a resume and writing sample!

Auggie Football Players Stay Connected as Season Comes to a Close

Evelyn Perkins sports editor

On Nov 14, Augsburg football wrapped up its season against Hamline, competing for the Hammer Trophy. For the seventh straight year, Augsburg retained the trophy with a 37-14 win. Although the Auggies came away with the win, the game started rocky after Hamline scored on the opening drive. Augsburg quickly answered, scoring on a 19-yard touchdown run by senior running back Carter Johnson. The offense continued to click, adding a 1-yard touchdown run by senior quarterback Caden Rodkewich early in the second quarter. With 37 seconds left in the first half, Hamline answered with a 3-yard rushing touchdown to tie the game at 14 at halftime.



Photo of Frankie Montano and Corey DeLoach posing with the Hammer after the win, taken by Kevin Healy on Nov. 14

After halftime, the momentum shifted entirely to Augsburg. Augsburg scored 23 unanswered points in the second half, including three passing touchdowns from Rodkewich—two to junior wide receiver C.J. Ritchie and one to senior wide receiver E.J. Kilgore. Junior kicker Kevin Kargozar also contributed a field goal. Rodkewich capped his career with a standout performance, throwing for 286 yards on 19-of-27 attempts and three touchdowns. Reflecting on his preparation, Rodkewich said, "I knew it was going to be my last game, but it didn't really hit me until after the game that it was my last, so the preparation didn't feel much different. I tried to prepare like it was any other game."

Head coach KiJuan Ware echoed Rodkewich's sentiments about the significance of the matchup with Hamline. He said, "You're playing against guys you attended camp with, grew up with and know well [...] when you're playing against your old high school teammates, it's easier for the guys to be motivated for that type of game." Ware also expressed pride in Rodkewich's performance, saying, "The offensive line kept him protected and upright, and he delivered, so it was really good to see him finish it with his brothers."

Senior offensive lineman Alejandro Herrera also reflected on the emotional weight of his final game. "I felt at peace that things were wrapping up. It was the best week of practice we'd had all season. Everyone was trying to make the most of it because it was the last time we were ever going to be in pads together." Coach Ware ensured his seniors had time to savor their final week: "The seniors wanted to end their careers with a win, so we made sure we pushed that issue. The focus of the week was 'Finish.'"

Both Rodkewich and Herrera highlighted the importance of relationships built during their time at Augsburg. When asked what they would miss most, their answers were strikingly similar. Rodkewich said, "Definitely my teammates. Being around them every day and building relationships with them made it all worth it. I came to Augsburg not knowing anyone, but leaving four years later, I have a bunch of people I know are going to be with me the rest of my life." Herrera added, "The people. Spending time with all your friends every day, nonstop."

Looking ahead, Coach Ware said his focus in the offseason will be to recruit, retain and build great relationships. Although preparations for next year have already begun, he said he will miss this senior class: "Thank you, seniors, for leaving your mark, leaving this place better than you found it and helping us continue to attack success."

Augsburg Musicians Step Into the Semester's End With Moving Concerts

Finn Murdock contributor



Photo of Charlie Harding presenting at the Composer Concert, taken by Finn Murdock on Nov. 16

Augsburg musicians are wrapping up the semester with phenomenal concerts that showcase the considerable talent that is present in Augsburg's music programs. The Augsburg Concert Band, directed by Dr. Kenneth Green II, had its final performance of the semester on Sunday, Nov. 15. The program "Around the World in a Day," featuring pieces carefully chosen by Dr. Green, took listeners on a journey across the globe. The concert opened with "L'Inglesina," an Italian march, written by Davide Delle Cese. The lively and bold elements of the march, paired with the more restrained lyrical sections, really helped to exhibit the range and control each individual musician has over their instrument. If you were not watching the band perform in person, one might assume that the ensemble is double its real size.

Next in the program, the band performed "En Aranjuez, con tu amor" by Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo. The piece featured Braden Williams with a moving flugelhorn solo. The emotional, reflective theme of the music was shaped by the combination of Williams' bittersweet melodic line and the ensemble's expressive accompaniment. Later in the program, in Samuel Hazo's "Fantasy on a Japanese Folk Song," percussionists used ocean drums and the glockenspiel to generate the romantic atmosphere of the piece. The flute section and other woodwinds enacted flowing melodic lines that grew as the brass sections built thought-provoking harmonies that culminated in the most intense moment in the music.

Following this up on Monday, Nov. 16, seven Augsburg students showcased their own original compositions at the Student Composers Concert. The first piece of the program, "Forbade Lake" by Jordan Smith, is at the crux of Smith's compositional life's work. The dynamic flute and piano duet draws from the works of video game composer Go Ichinose. Next, Jay Damberg debuted his first-ever composition, "Praxis." "Praxis" uses the resonant qualities of the marimba to illustrate Damberg's personal journey with music. Thereafter, Charlie Harding's "Belonging" blends both acoustic and electronic elements to portray themes of meditation, reflection and nostalgia. The three-movement piece highlights the acts of testing, speaking, and remembering. "Lingering Fright" by Korey Groshel followed. The urgent and catchy piano melodies of "Lingering Fright" exemplify emotional uncertainty and the anxieties that accompany it.

Next, "Quartet For Buffalo Gap" by Sasha Blaylock uses the timbres of a string quartet to paint a mental picture of the natural landscape of Buffalo Gap in South Dakota. The thrilling rhythms and lively feel help create the exhilarating feeling of exploring breathtaking wilderness. Afterwards, Joey Kelly's "Winter" elucidates both the wild rides and more somber moments of the season of winter. The piece evokes a wide array of different emotions, including joy, sorrow and apprehension. The final individual composition of the night, Andres Johnson's "Swan Song," tells the story of the life and death of a young swan. The beautiful, yet bittersweet piece uses the piano as a narrating, guiding voice and the flute as the voice of the swan.

If you were at one of these performances or the Jazz Ensembles on Nov. 17 and left wanting more, there are a few more music events this semester. The Augsburg Symphony Orchestra and Choirs Concert is on Monday, Nov. 23, at 7 p.m. Lastly, the Augsburg Flute Ensemble has its concert the next day, Nov. 24, at 6 p.m.

Artist Spotlight: Yuna Cha

Yuna Cha is a graphic design student at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Through graphic illustration, she draws inspiration from architecture, natural elements, and abstraction to create freeform designs that explore experimentation, discovery, and creative freedom through process.

With this in mind, she extends beyond the boundaries of her cultural heritage, challenging conventional graphic design styles, breaking predetermined and historically followed rules of design as a way to evolve her own creative practice past her limitations.

Through her public installation “Remember,” she explores the modernization of traditional motifs by deconstructing and rebuilding upon representational symbols of the Hmong culture. Through this experimental approach, she creates new patterns that reflect her individual artistic style and evolving visual language.

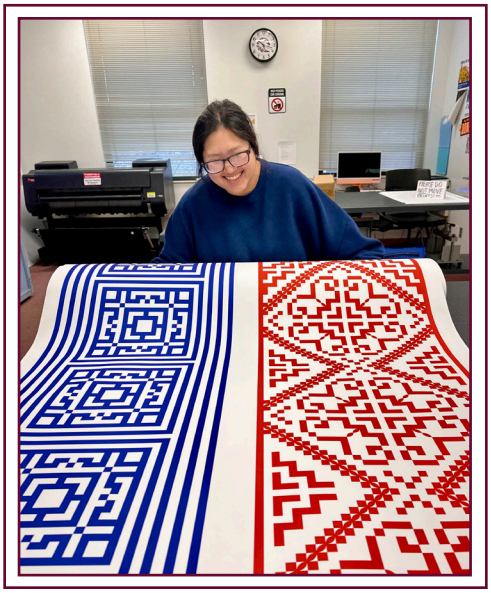
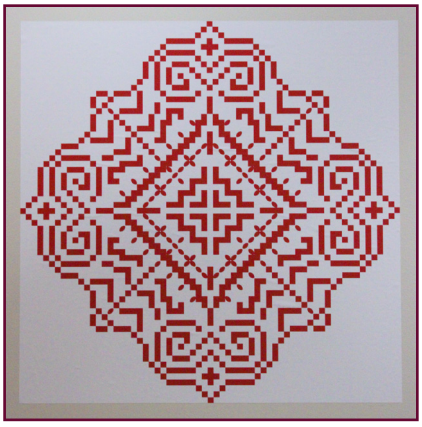


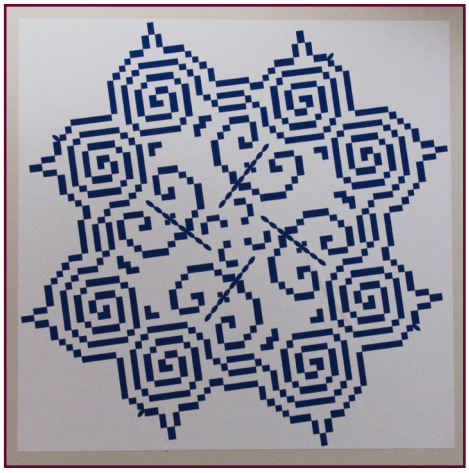
Photo of Yuna Cha



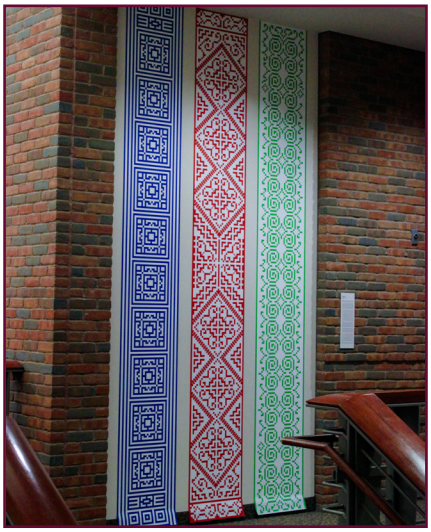
“Home” peel & stick recompositionable & vectors



“Abundance” peel & stick recompositionable & vectors



“Indiogo” peel & stick recompositionable & vectors



“Remember” peel & stick recompositionable & vectors

Are Advent Calendars Worth It, or Are They All Just Repeat Skims Scams?

Lauren Heseltine contributor

As most people know, advent calendars are popular gifts for friends and family during the holiday season. Who doesn't love waking up each morning to a skincare product or a piece of chocolate? Yet lately, one thing has been on my mind: are advent calendars truly worth the money they're sold for? Or are they just scams to get consumers to spend more money on unnecessary products?

The biggest example I have seen of an "advent calendar scam" for the 2026 holiday season is the calendar that was put out by Kim Kardashian through her brand Skims. The Skims Accessories Advent Calendar was sold for the retail price of $148. Many people online are publicly shaming Kardashian and the Skims brand for the calendar, including cheap, small items that do not feel worth the price customers have paid. The Skims calendar featured 12 days of "holiday-themed" accessories including: satin scrunchies, several keychains, bra-strap headbands and even a pack of three bobby pins, most of which do not have Skims branding on them. Following the negative publicity Skims was receiving, the company offered refunds or free store credit for those who had already purchased the calendar. Like many others, I was disappointed but not surprised by the lack of care that seems to have gone into this advent calendar.

This epidemic of lackluster calendars doesn't seem to be a new thing this holiday season. It has been a trend I've noticed over the past few years, with rising costs due to inflation and tariffs. On the other hand, I have also gotten to take a look at some of the "good" or "worthwhile" advent calendars, like the Flower Knows Dreamland Advent Calendar for 2026. The Flower Knows advent calendar retails for $412, which seems rather pricey for gifts that are all surprises, but the company has already put the calendar on sale for $259.

The Flower Knows calendar features exclusively full-sized makeup products, including an eyeshadow palette, lipsticks, glosses, perfume, blush and even a hand mirror that is perfect for testing out all of a customer's new products. In comparison with the Skims advent calendar, the Flower Knows products paint calendars to be a "steal." It is easy to see why there has been such a large discourse online about whether advent calendars are worth the cost as a whole. However, I feel that it is up to each individual consumer to decide if an advent calendar is truly "worth it" for themself.

"Following the negative publicity Skims was receiving, the company offered refunds or free store credit for those who had already purchased the calendar. Like many others, I was disappointed but not surprised by the lack of care that seems to have gone into this advent calendar."

- Lauren Heseltine

I've never been particularly interested in hair accessories or expensive makeup that I'll only use once or twice a year, so I've found a lot of joy in finding unique advent calendars that may not be up everyone's alley. It's more fun to try something new and filled with Christmas wonder rather than something that is stuck in a sad cardboard box. My personal favorite advent calendar I've come across this year is from a slime company called Peachybbies. The Peachy's Advent Calendar retails for $120 and has 12 days of fun slime surprises and clay kits to build yourself. Slime hasn't been as popular as it once was, but it's still a holiday staple in my book. As someone who has always enjoyed fun sensory experiences, I found that the unique textures of each individual slime and the cool little critters you get to build out of clay might just be the best advent calendar of the season.

Hollywood is Failing Us with Body Negative Beauty Standards

Alexis Aryeequaye staff writer

In past decades, being thin equaled success, regardless of what industry you worked in. It was seen and celebrated as the ideal stature, with celebrities promoting weight loss programs, and media like America's Next Top Model and The Biggest Loser fueling the thinspiration craze of the 1990s and 2000s. After years of the status quo, the 2010s ushered in a new wave of body positivity and acceptance. For the first time in history, young girls and women weren't being encouraged to hunch over toilets and take laxatives to achieve the "perfect" body. If you didn't know much better, you'd assume that the days of public body shaming and glamorized crash dieting were over.

Recently however, the cultural zeitgeist has shifted and regressed with the rise of GLP-1s, "body checking" and social media scrutiny over appearances. The progress made by the body positivity movement in the previous decade has been replaced by a renewed obsession with thinness, disguised under the increasingly popular umbrella of health and wellness.

Recent celebrity discourse has exacerbated a decade-long societal battle with these problems, with Ariana Grande being a textbook case study of how deeply ingrained society's obsession with thinness has become. Throughout the promotional campaign for Wicked, Grande's noticeably slender appearance sparked widespread commentary across social media, with users debating her weight and speculating about her health. While some expressed concern, others treated her appearance as another beauty standard to admire or criticize.

While celebrities have every right to make decisions about their bodies, the public's response to their transformations reveals something troubling: society continues to associate thinness with beauty, discipline and success.

The emergence of medications like Ozempic and Wegovy has further complicated this conversation. Originally developed to treat conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and obesity, GLP-1 medications have become cultural phenomena, frequently discussed alongside celebrity transformations and beauty standards.

To be clear, there is nothing inherently wrong with using these medications for medical purposes. However, when weight loss becomes a status symbol rather than an individualized healthcare decision, we risk reinforcing the same harmful attitudes that body positivity sought to dismantle.

Social media only amplifies the problem. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram have normalized body checking, calorie tracking and endless comparisons between people's appearances. Algorithms reward dramatic transformations, while comment sections dissect celebrities' bodies as though their weight were public property.

Perhaps most concerning is the message this sends to younger generations. Girls growing up today are witnessing the same impossible expectations their mothers faced, only repackaged through influencer culture, wellness trends and pharmaceutical advertisements. We've replaced magazine covers with curated Instagram feeds, but the underlying message remains unchanged: your body is a problem that needs fixing.

The resurgence of thinness as a beauty standard exposes the conditional nature of society's supposed acceptance of diverse bodies. Body positivity was celebrated when it was fashionable, but its influence appears increasingly fragile when confronted with another profitable beauty trend.

The weight-loss industry thrives on insecurity. When consumers are convinced their bodies are inadequate, there will always be another product, program or procedure promising transformation.

Ultimately, the issue isn't whether someone chooses to lose weight. Bodily autonomy includes the freedom to pursue weight loss without judgment. The problem arises when society treats shrinking bodies as evidence of morality. If the body positivity movement taught us anything, it should be that our worth cannot be measured by a number on a scale.

We cannot claim to embrace body diversity while simultaneously celebrating thinness as the ultimate achievement. Until we challenge that contradiction, society will continue recycling the same damaging beauty standards under different names.

Cory Fleck Sees Value in Campus Connections and Tech Truncations

Kaia Anderson online publishing coordinator

Cory Fleck is a professor of psychology here at Augsburg University, and has been full time teaching for six years. Fleck is very well liked within the psych department, with many students praising his teaching style and ability to engage students with the course material. On Monday Nov. 16, we sat down to talk about his teaching experience, how he got into teaching, struggles with tech and the advice he would give to incoming freshmen.

Fleck began teaching in grad school at the University of Minnesota, which he did not enter with the goal of becoming a professor. Instead, it was something that he stumbled upon after teaching his first class, where he went "oh, I like this, this is what I want to focus on." During grad school he always worked on research projects, including one on sleep deprivation.

His classes tend to be a mix of lecture and discussion, with discussions allowing students to engage with the lecture content. To create discussion questions, he picks things that he himself would be curious about. Fleck also utilizes his other teaching friends and colleagues if he needs help or inspiration when creating or changing a class. He also has revamped his process of keeping track of what needs to change in classes. Instead of going "Okay I got to remember next semester to fix that three times and then not do it," he now keeps a running document of everything that needs to be updated.

About halfway through we turned to the current state of students and artificial intelligence (AI) within the classrooms. Fleck describes himself as "a little more optimistic" than others, "While attention is harder, I see more effort being directed towards trying to pay attention." However, he has taken measures within his classes to try and get students to cut back on technological distractions and to discourage the use of AI. He says "with tech specifically it's gotten a little bit tough at times. At the end of last semester I hit a bit of a breaking point with it where there were enough people texting when I was talking. And it really does make it hard to teach a thing when you see people doing that, and you know they aren't hearing a thing you're saying." This semester, Fleck has launched a soft ban on technology within his classroom. Phones are to be put away out of sight, and students who use computers or I-pads must have wifi turned off.

"With tech specifically it's gotten a little bit tough at times. At the end of last semester I hit a bit of a breaking point with it where there were enough people texting when I was talking. And it really does make it hard to teach a thing when you see people doing that, and you know they aren't hearing a thing you're saying."

-Cory Fleck

In regards to freshman, Fleck says "I think that people underestimate as freshman how much you can build relationships early, like you're gonna want a letter of [recommendation] or reference or something later on." He encourages getting to know faculty, peers and getting involved with organizations as soon as possible, "[it] can start immediately." It is also important to be conscious of how they are presenting in class - are they goofing off or always late? According to Fleck, this is something that professors do notice. And most importantly, remember that you have learned things! These skills that we have been developing in classes can be used out in the world in both casual and professional environments. These bits of advice have been on his mind as of late, as Fleck is also in charge of designing a new class for incoming psych students to help set them up for success in their chosen degree.

Please feel free to reach out to Fleck if you have any questions about how to further relationships with faculty, about the psych major or bus routes as he is a major fan of public transportation.

Short Story: “Carrying the Kindness”

Micah George contributor



Photo of Micah George, taken by Sam Bartelt on Nov. 19

Loreen was a small kind girl who always thought that kindness would be key to making things easier in the world. She believed that as long as she was kind to the world, then the world would be kind back. She would travel around her town in search of anyone who was in need of her kindness. When it was someone who got hurt and was scared, she would comfort them by saying, “It’s okay now. You’re safe.” If she ever saw someone begging on the streets, she would give them money and sometimes food. “You need it more than I do.” she’d said. Even if it was helping an elderly crossing the street. Nothing could stop her from spreading her kindness all over town.

But Loreen’s family was the complete opposite. They weren’t bad people, they just believed that not everyone deserved kindness. “Loreen, you have to be careful of who you help. Your kindness could be taken advantage of,” they would say. But Loreen knew that they were just being selfish and unwilling to help those in need. She promised herself that one day she would change the way her folks saw people. And thankfully, that day came when she was hosting a kindness awareness event at the local school. All parents and family members were invited to this event. Loreen’s parents were there too, but only because she was hosting the event. Loreen’s mother sneered at all the kindness posters and messages around the gym. Loreen’s father, on the other hand, seemed quite impressed by her daughter’s work. As soon as everyone sat down into their seats, Loreen stood up on stage and took the microphone.

“Good evening, everyone. And welcome to my Kindness Awareness event. This is a special event that will teach everyone in this room why kindness is important. And to do that, I’ve made a special slideshow presentation to help me explain.” she said. She grabbed a remote and turned the slide show on. She then explained how kindness could make an individual’s life much easier, and in turn they would be kind to you. She kept explaining each slide and she scrolled through them. As she was doing this, her parents were actually starting to see what she was saying. When Loreen got to the slides that explained what would happen if they weren’t kind, they finally understood why Loreen was always so kind hearted to all those around her.

After the slideshow was finished, Loreen stepped off the stage and towards her parents. “Loreen, we’re sorry. We had no idea that kindness was so important,” her mother said. “We want you to know that we’re very proud of you for helping all those citizens out. Your event really helped us open our eyes,” her father added.

“But Loreen knew that they were just being selfish and unwilling to help those in need. She promised herself that one day she would change the way her folks saw people.”

-Micah George

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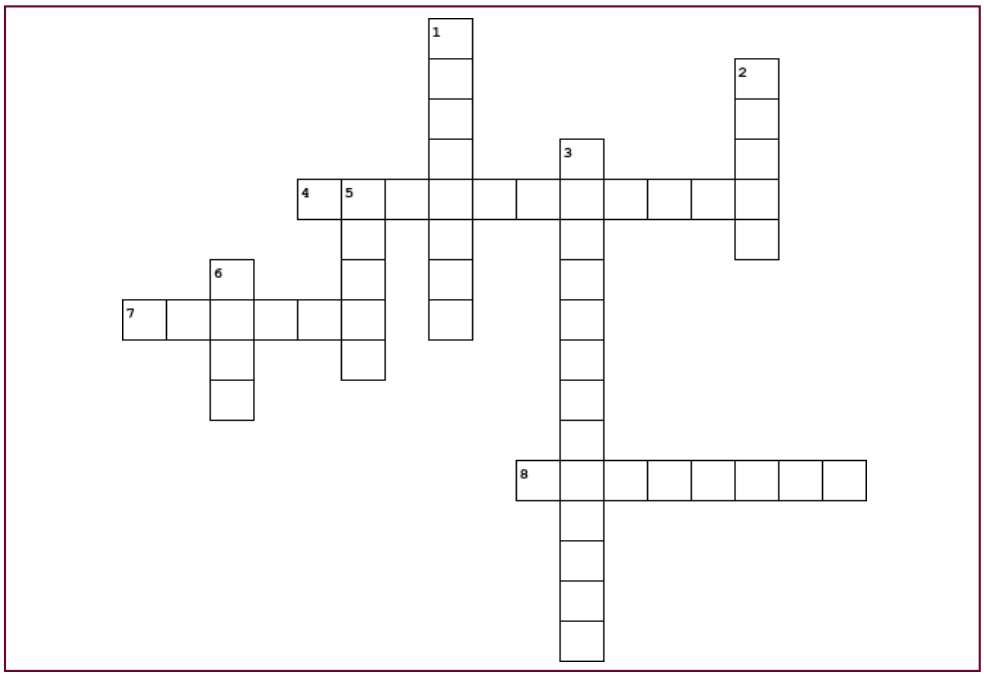
Thanksgiving Traditions Crossword



Across

4. The day after Thanksgiving has some pretty good deals
7. Every year since H.W. Bush, the president has done what to a turkey to free it from slaughter
8. Snap it in half and see who gets the wish

Down

1. Eat too much turkey, and you might fall into a -
2. Watch the giant balloons go by in the "- Day Parade"
3. A modern spin on Thanksgiving where you get together with your pals
5. This NFL team has been playing Thanksgiving Day almost every year since 1934
6. A footrace is held every year the "Turkey -"

Last Week's Answers:

1. JG Wentworth
2. Nike
3. Skittles
4. Statefarm
5. Geico
6. Tootsie Pop
7. Flex Tape
8. Snickers

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