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The Volante



Gestring reflects on time at USD

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President Gestring retires after 9 years

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On Oct. 14, the University of South Dakota's President's Office made an announcement on behalf of President Sheila K. Gestring stating that she will soon be retiring from the university. President Gestring has been the standing president for the past nine years, a position that she will be handing over at the end of the 2026 through 2027 academic year.

With her time at the University coming to an end, The Volante sat down with President Gestring to reflect on her time as president.

When looking back on your time at USD, what would you say has been your greatest accomplishment as president?

"I don't think there's a single building or program or anything that I would consider a greatest accomplishment. I would like to think it's helping position the University of South Dakota for long-term success. We've created an environment where students are able to thrive and get a sense of belonging. I hope that's what individuals would look to as some of the greatest achievements in my time here, and certainly that was not one person that did that. That was the entire campus: faculty, staff, students, donors, alumni, friends, lawmakers, and on and on."

What motivated you to pursue a career in higher education? How has that motivation changed since taking on the role of president?

"I had started in state government, and an opening popped up at the Board of Regents, and I thought higher education really is an opportunity to participate in a profession that really changes people's lives and trajectories for the better. And I just really wanted to be a part of that, and it 's been the best decision of my life."

Before taking on this position, had you ever imagined yourself being in a role such as this? If so, has your time as president fulfilled those expectations and how?

"I never anticipated being president of the university. No, I had actually thought I'd probably retire in the finance field within higher education, but becoming president was the honor of my professional career, and it has more than fulfilled everything I expected it might be."

Is there a specific moment or achievement from your time as president that while may not appear in an annual report means a great deal to you personally?

"Several moments that would never appear in a report, but those moments interacting with students, where they might say something like, 'You know, I'm really glad that you challenged me to step outside my comfort zone, or I'm really glad we got to know each other, or this piece of advice really helped me.' An email recently that I received from a student was incredibly thoughtful, and it just reminds me of how brilliant and thoughtful our students are overall, all the time. Those are the moments that are really special to me."

What do you hope will be remembered by students and faculty members alike regarding your time at USD? Is there a specific legacy you would like to leave behind?

"Not a specific legacy in particular. I imagine that those that are that remain get to define what that legacy is. The person leaving probably doesn't, but I hope that people will remember that I care deeply about the university and its people, and approached every decision with the long-term interests of the institution in mind."



Vivica Kreul | The Volante

How did you know that it was the right time for you to step back from your role as president? What do you hope to gain from retirement?

"There are a lot of things that go into making that decision, but I think leadership transitions can be really healthy. And I felt that the university is so well positioned right now that it's a perfect time to let the next generation of leaders build on the momentum. And as for stepping away from this particular opportunity, it allows me to step towards a new opportunity and spend more time with family. I don't think I'll ever regret making the decision to spend more time with my family."

What preparations are underway or in discussion to help the transition in leadership go smoothly?

"Working with the Board of Regents to make sure that they're talking with campus to hear what campus would like to see in the next leader, putting together a leadership profile. They'll be here in the next few weeks, and then they'll start advertising, asking for nominations for individuals to serve on the search committee. I'm putting together a leadership sort of transition document for that individual, so that the handoff can be very smooth in that way."

Do you plan to stay connected to the university or the Vermillion community after your retirement?

"Absolutely, yes. My husband and I, we've been here for 20 years. We raised our boys here. We have a wonderful home on the river, just a few miles from here, and all of our friends are here. So we'll be cheering for the oats and supporting USD just in a different capacity, and we'll always be connected to the university and committed to USD."

What is the biggest lesson that being in this role has taught you?

"The biggest lesson, I think, it goes back to that communication, and you can never over communicate, and doing it early and often, and making sure that people are part of the process, and appreciating all of that input, because sometimes you might think, 'oh, I don't want to bother people with that, but it's not a bother.' People are eager to participate, and that's wonderful that our campus is that eager."

For the full interview, check out The Volante online.

Clay County cuts funds

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On Sept. 29, the Clay County Commission approved funding cuts for the 2027 budget in a 3-2 vote for multiple non-mandated programs and county employees pay, saving about 24,000 dollars. Non-mandated agencies are services the commission can choose to provide.

These organizations include: Feeding Vermillion, South Dakota Teen Court Program, Public Libraries, Public Transit, "Grow Vermillion" campaign through the Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company and the Clay County Conservation District.

The 4,000 dollar annual funding for the Vermillion Public Library covers library services for Clay County residents living outside of Vermillion. The investment historically waived the $50 annual non-resident card fee and provided. The library provides seven-day-a-week access to a variety of different library services and resources.

"I've always talked about needing to trim the budget and I always tried to wait until - I do wait until the last minute, hoping something else will happen," said Travis Mockler.

Mockler is the Chairman for the Clay County Commission. He meets with department heads as the chairman in April and May to get an idea of what they're thinking. Everybody gets the full budget in July and they examine where they can save money because "everybody's tired of high taxes and everybody's costs are going up."

Daniel Burniston is the Library Director for the Vermillion public library.

"It's disappointing to see after ... 100 years of good faith effort on behalf of the county to see themselves willingly dismiss the services the library provides," Burniston said.

The Vermillion Public Library is open seven days a week, totaling 73 hours per week. Most of the library's funding comes from the City of Vermillion. The library had over 68,000 people come through their doors in 2025 with over 98,000 items checked out. They hosted 621 programs and almost 10,000 people attended them.

"The library director came in and spoke to us before we had to cut them ... he told us that financially they're fine," Mockler said.

There was discussion that Clay County residents could still use whatever was in the library and that they had access to materials without a library card.

"There are 616 county residents who have a library card and have used it in the last three years," Burniston said.

There are families who come in for story time, participate in a summer reading program, check out books, use the computers, etc. The library can assume the costs and allow county library holders to continue having cards or start charging out-of-town residents a $50 annual fee. This is a decision the library board will have to discuss again in their November meeting.

"Traditionally library usage goes up during bad economic times because people decide not to buy books and resources and not to subscribe to things like Spotify and Amazon Prime," Burniston said.

The library can be a return investment with the activities that families don't have to pay for. These activities are led by staff who are experienced working with an age group and collaborating with community members. These programs cover different spectrums of ages and interests.

"I can't honestly say what it's going to be used for because it's like a savings account, rainy day. You know, things could happen," Mockler said.

Mockler described how there's always something each year. Last year, when the police station was turned into the treasure state attorneys, they didn't know that it was a requirement to change the sprinkler system. That was $144,000 that they weren't planning on spending.

"It's not going to force us to cut anything immediately, but it will mean ... when [planning] our activities in 2027, we're going to have $4,000 less to work with," Burniston said.

On Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 9:00am, county residents can share their feedback.

"We encourage any of our community members who value the library or their services, especially those who live in the county to go to that meeting and or call or email their commissioners and tell them why it's important to them," Burniston said.

Campus Happenings

Harrington Lecture & drag show



Jean Caraway, of the Department of Psychology, delivered the 74th annual Harrington Lecture on Oct. 26 in the MUC Ballroom. The lecture, titled "Fence Posts, Lodgepoles, and the Ivory Tower: Building Community amidst the Cottonwood."

Nathan DeGreef | The Volante



USD Spectrum's biannual drag show took place last Thursday, carrying on a tradition that has been part of campus life since the 1990s. The MUC Ballroom was filled with students, faculty and community members as the show featured performances from professional entertainers and amateur participants.

Nathan DeGreef | The Volante

VPD introduces Blue Envelope Program

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The Vermillion Police Department has recently implemented a new program to help bridge gaps between officers and local community members.

The NPS-AID Blue Envelope Program is geared towards individuals with specialized needs, who may face communication barriers when dealing with distressing situations.

Vermillion Police Chief Crystal Brady emphasized that "it's always helpful when officers go into a situation, that they know as much about the situation as possible." The Blue Envelope Program is designed with accessibility in mind. Those that need a communication accommodation can pick up an envelope at the police station, and place any materials that may be helpful to officers inside.

"So if somebody hands them this blue envelope, they will understand that the person maybe not verbally communicating with them or something is because of this, not that person refusing to talk to them. So then they can adjust their response to the situation," Brady said.

Brady emphasized that while some may view routine traffic stops, or run in's with law enforcement as trouble free, others may not find it as easy to handle.

"Somebody that is on the autism spectrum might have some issues with sirens, lights, having somebody talk to them and it can be overstimulating. So hopefully, this will let the officer know that the person is on the autism spectrum, and you know, to use more direct communication or to kind of help with the communication, but also maybe they can do some things differently to help with that overstimulation," Brady said.

USD Director of the Office of Accessibility Angela Jackson explained that individuals on the autism spectrum or with other communication disorders may have varying reactions to interacting with the police.

"I think having information upfront that that individual has a communication disorder or disability would be important for someone who runs into a situation like that, they don't know what to do, and then the officer might overrespond, underrespond, think the person's having a seizure, call an ambulance, and there's really that's just the person's disability, right? And they're not, they're having difficulty communicating. Some of these students that we're seeing freeze. They absolutely freeze," Jackson said.

While there may not be a vast majority of individuals who utilize the program, it is one that the community finds necessary.

"I don't know that officers come in contact with people that are on the autism spectrum a ton when they're on traffic stops, but it does happen, and we've had numerous people come in and get the envelopes. So, you know, there is a need in the community for it," Brady said.

These envelopes are free of charge and will continue to be offered at the Vermillion Police department to individuals with autism, caregivers, parents, or individuals who feel as though they may be helpful to them. For more information regarding the Blue Envelope Program contact (605)-677-7050 or visit 1250 Stanford St, Vermillion, South Dakota.



VPD's new Blue Envelope Program allows residents on the spectrum to alert law enforcement of their needs. The envelopes can fit within a standard glove box and are free.

Juliana Oltmanns | The Volante

Mission Statement

The Volante covers issues relevant and interesting to USD students. Faculty, staff and community members are welcome readers, but the newspaper is written and presented for a diverse community of students from the students' point of view. The paper should provide a variety of information, entertainment and educational opportunities for the readers. The Volante encourages everyone to write letters to the editor. The Volante wishes to be viewed by students as respectable, objective, accurate, fair and trustworthy. If you have comments, concerns or questions, please contact The Volante email at volante@coyotes.usd.edu. The Volante is distributed Wednesdays during the academic year free of charge locally with the cost of $1 for each additional copy. One year subscription rates are $40, which solely covers the mailing costs. The Volante does not endorse, promote or encourage the purchase or sale of any product or service advertised in this paper. Advertisements are the sole responsibility of the advertiser. The Volante disclaims all liability for any damage suffered as the result of any advertisement in this newspaper. The Volante reserves the right to refuse any advertising.

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The Volante welcomes letters to the editor in regards to campus, local, state and national issues. Letters will be edited for clarity and length and will be printed as space allows. Please limit letters to 300 words or less. The Volante reserves the right to hold letters for publication in a later issue. Submissions must include the author's name, address, telephone number, year in school and major or job title. Letters must be exclusively for The Volante. We will not publish anonymous letters.

Send letters to: Al Neuharth Media Center 555 N. Dakota St. Vermillion, S.D. 57069

Email to: volante@coyotes.usd.edu

The deadline for letters is 5 p.m. the Friday prior to publication. Letters must be typed and fewer than 300 words.

The 2026 midterm elections

The local voting impact

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The 2026 United States Midterm elections are less than a week away. South Dakotans will vote in nine different candidate elections, ranging from state representatives to attorney general and state auditors, and four main amendments to vote on.

The amendments are creating a trust fund for any unclaimed land (Amendment K), requiring a 60% approval threshold for future constitutional amendments (Amendment L), a move to disallow those who are not United States citizens to vote in future elections (Amendment J), and a move to restrict Medicaid expansion below 90% of the program's cost (Amendment I).

Voting is the primary way to state what a citizen wants and doesn't want in your government as a democracy. According to The Independent Voter Project, only around 64% of South Dakota residents are registered to vote, with ~52% being Republican voters, and ~47% combined being voters for other parties (21.7% Democratic, 25.1% Independent, 0.6% other).

"Our democracy still holds rest on our ability to our elected officials accountable, and our ability to turn out to vote," Dr. Julia Hellwege, associate professor of Political Science, said.

However, while statewide voting is important, Michael Card, Ph.D in Political Science emphasises the importance of municipal and local voting as well.

"You're concerned with what's going on in your local community, but we often don't think about it, we just live it... that's why local government is important. It affects your day to day life, and it's something you can do something about," Card said.

While national voting focuses on fundamental rights, local voting focuses more on intermediate community amenities and business, such as allocating funds for new businesses to move and renovating parts of Vermillion.

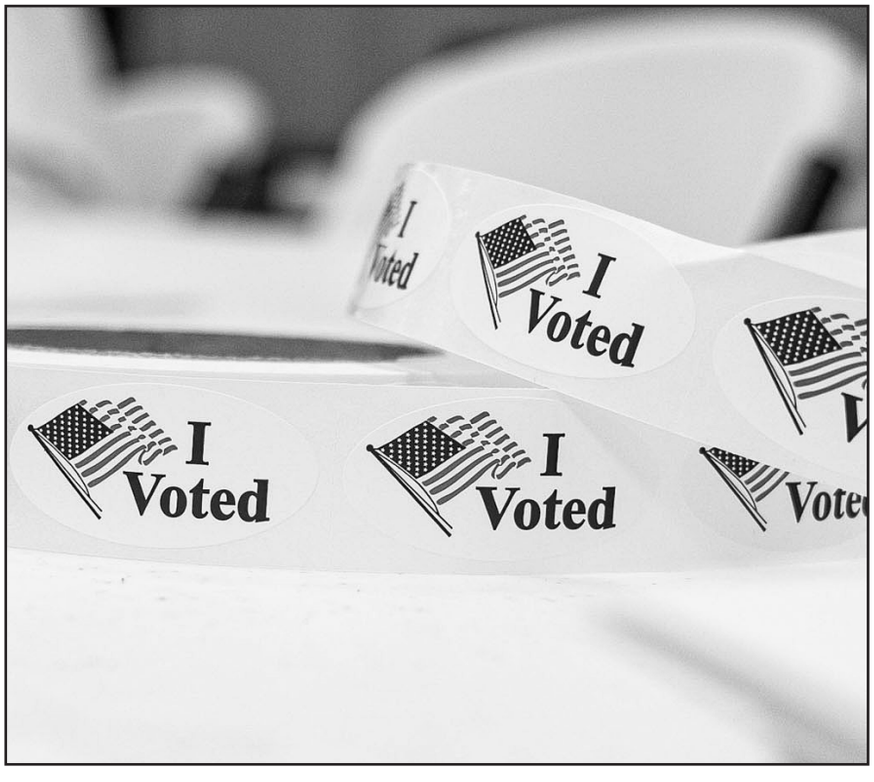
"Are the amenities what you'd hope to be? Is the ability to do things outside the residence hall, maybe outside the university, so you can truly take a mental and physical break from being on the university campus, and those are things that are going to affect you every day," Card said.

Municipal and county voting is more connected to statewide legislations, however. In 2026, South Dakota passed a law stating that municipal and school elections on even years will be held during major election dates (Primary Election day on June 2, and General Election day on Nov. 3). Although this does not affect Vermillion, it does affect other counties outside of Clay County.

"However, other communities, where some more students might be from, where they might still be registered, might actually have local municipal elections held now at the same time as well as possibly school board elections," Dr. Hellwege said.

The 2026 National Midterm Elections are held on November 3, 2026, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Early voters could've started voting since Sept. 18, and the voting period ends Nov. 2. While it's important to understand what is being voted on, it is also important to vote both statewide and county wide, if possible.

"Those really impact our day-to-day lives, so our refuse and waste, our water, our law enforcement, our streets and roads, our snow removal, all of those decisions are made at the city and county levels," Dr. Hellwege said.





Voting ends November 3rd. Ballot examples can be seen online so voters are aware of the issues they'll be voting on.

File Photo | The Volante

Title IX comments on 'Cornell 7' incident

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Title IX is an office at USD that deals with a variety of issues, such as sexual assault. Ashley Lemons is the Title IX Coordinator and explains the importance of Title IX on campus.

What is the difference between making an informal report, filing a formal complaint, and requesting a formal investigation?

Informal Report:

"An informal report is a way to notify the University of South Dakota's (USD) Title IX Office of an incident or concern involving possible sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or other conduct that may fall within the University's applicable policies or jurisdiction.

Any person, including a student, faculty member, staff member, or other individual, may submit a report. A report may concern conduct involving a member of the University community or conduct that may fall within USD's authority to address.

Submitting a report allows USD to assess the information received, provide information about available resources and supportive measures, and explain possible options for addressing the concern. An informal report does not, by itself, constitute a formal complaint or automatically initiate a formal Title IX grievance process.

The University's response will depend on the nature of the allegations, as well as applicable law and policy."

Filing a Formal Complaint/Requesting Investigation:

"A formal complaint is a written document submitted through USD's Maxient reporting system. A formal complaint may be submitted by the complainant (alleged victim) or signed by the Title IX Coordinator, as permitted by law.

Individuals may access the University's reporting forms through the USD Equal Opportunity and Title IX webpage. The University also provides reporting information through campus materials, including QR codes which are placed throughout the USD campus.

After receiving a formal complaint, Title IX reviews the allegations to determine whether they fall within the scope of Title IX. This includes assessing whether the alleged conduct, if true, would constitute sexual harassment under the applicable laws.

If it would, Title IX provides written notice to all parties and forwards the case to an investigator, who will reach out to the parties and witnesses for interviews.

If the allegations do not meet the requirements for Title IX, we assess whether other policies or procedures apply, such as whether there are any student misconduct issues. If so, we would refer the case to the appropriate department."

Resolution Options and Hearings:

"The parties may decide to voluntarily enter into an informal resolution process at any time prior to resolution. Informal resolution is not appropriate in every case, and both parties must always agree to all the terms of the agreement in order to make it enforceable.

If the matter proceeds through the formal grievance process, there will be an investigation, hearing, and a determination of responsibility. Any disciplinary sanctions or outcomes will be ultimately determined by the President of the University."



What happens when a student reports an assault but is not ready to participate in an investigation?

"First, it is important to note that USD's Title IX office is concerned not just with compliance, but we also want to provide a compassionate, empathetic experience for our students.

When a student reports an assault but is not ready to participate in an investigation, Title IX provides information about available resources, reporting options, and supportive measures. The student will be informed about the process for filing a formal complaint and may be referred to campus police or local police, depending on the facts of the case. The student will also be given information about Sanford Hospital, so that they can get an examination to preserve any evidence, if they wish.

Supportive measures are available regardless of whether a complaint is filed or whether the student wishes to participate. Supportive measures may include changes to housing or class schedules, restrictions on contact between parties, counseling resources, academic adjustments, campus escorts, or other appropriate assistance. Available supportive measures vary from case to case.

A student does not have to decide immediately whether to participate in an investigation to seek support or learn about available options."

How does the university determine whether a reported incident falls under Title IX or another university policy?

"When USD Title IX receives a report of possible Title IX violations, it reviews the information provided and determines the appropriate next steps under federal and state law and University policy.

As part of this process, Title IX will contact the person who is alleged to have experienced the violation to offer an intake meeting. During this meeting, Title IX gathers additional information, explains available resources and offers supportive measures. Title IX also discusses the student's options.

If the reported incident does not fall under Title IX, it will assess if the conduct falls under another department such as University police or Dean of Students, among others."

For the full interview, check out The Volante online.

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Prologue: The largest gap in modern day education is the teaching of Logic. It is the science of thinking straight, clear, and correctly. Math is the science of correct numbers, quantity, measurement, and geometry figures. While Logic is the science of correct ideas and applying those ideas. The only place I have seen Logic as mandatory in school was at UC, University of Cincinnati, 1968-1972 where lawyers "to be" were forced to take Logic. I advocate that all science degrees in college and university have 2 years of Logic study mandatory.

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Prologue: A historical juncture point in Logic and Mathematics should have been the year 1900 when Max Planck announced the start of Quantum Mechanics that physics is discrete and not continuous. But, then, all mathematicians should have been alert and asked themselves the question, since physics is discrete, should not mathematics also be discrete and the Reals as not the true numbers of mathematics? Trouble is, mathematicians are not forced to take Logic in college and universities and so they come out unlikely to think straight, clear and correctly.

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Prologue: Symmetry is a part of consistency which is a major topic of Logic. If Gauss and Maxwell had studied Logic to think straight, clear and correctly, they probably would not have made their gigantic mistake of thinking magnetic monopoles do not exist, for in the Maxwell Equations, there is symmetry between electricity and magnetism, thus, applying logic, it is understood the magnetic monopole must exist along-side the symmetry of the electrical monopole.

Advanced True Logic// logic textbook by Archimedes Plutonium

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Prologue: Rutherford, Geiger, Marsden undertook a famous experiment from 1906-1913 in that they were on a quest to understand the interior of an atom in the Gold Foil Experiment where they shot alpha particles into gold atoms. Their conclusion was that since some alpha particles bounced back to the source at 180 degrees, that Atoms had a dense nucleus. They sadly overlooked the fact that the bounced back alpha particles exited faster than what they entered the gold atom, meaning, that Atoms have No Nucleus, but instead have a Proton Torus with thrusting Muons inside, and, that which in a head on collision-- bounced back the incoming alpha particles. If Rutherford, Geiger, Marsden had taken Logic while in college or university, they would probably have gotten the correct answer to the interior of atoms.

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Watching “Off Campus”, on campus.

Reading “ACOTAR”. I <3 Rhys

Wearing a Jackrabbits shirt to the pregame. Orrrrrr maybe not. definitely not

Getting your Greek letters tattooed on your arm.

Showing up for the 7 a.m. tailgate party.

Cheering on the Coyotes. #GoYotes!

Painting your face gold to watch the game from Carey’s.

Respectfully debating your roommate on who should’ve won “Love Island”. BRINITY 4 EVER

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Football finds their stride

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Colton Tolly | The Volante

The University of South Dakota (USD) Coyotes football season is in full swing, coming off an important win against the No. 8 University of North Dakota (UND) Fighting Hawks this past Saturday 26-23 in an overtime thriller.

The Coyotes in the first five games of the season were 3-2, ending their five game streak with back to back loses to Boise State and Youngstown State.

Since then, the Coyotes have gone 4-0 with some impressive wins to add to the confidence of the team.

Quarterback Austyn Modrzewski discussed what changed for the team.

"We all learned personally the hard way after Boise, we came out of that thinking we were better, looking at the rankings too much, we got whooped up by Youngstown, so I'd say that really woke up a lot of us. Each and every week, you come in with a new mindset, get better, you can't hold anyone down because it's college football at the end of the day. Anyone could win," Modrzewski said.

Modrzewski has thrown for 1,893 yards and 24 touchdowns, accumulating a 175.95 passer rating.

The Dakota Days game started off the win streak with a statement win over Indiana State 44-14 in which the Coyotes scored at least one touchdown in every single quarter.

The following week, the Coyotes took on Southern Illinois at home in a 31-10 win, a defensive showcase that has been prevalent all season.

Going on the road for their next game, the Coyotes took care of business against Murray State in a 48-20 win.

Now to the current day with a record of 7-2 and a potential to make a deep playoff run, the Coyotes are finding their rhythm.

Defensive tackle Chris Dixon, a captain for the team, detailed what the team has been working on over the season.

"Just sharpening our craft, making sure our technique and everything is up to par and just making sure we're on our P's and Q's," Dixon said.

"With each and every day, we focus on, at practice, getting 1% better." Modrzewski said.

Dixon has 28 total tackles, four tackle-for-losses, and is tied for most sacks on the team with three.

Something to note with the Coyotes is that they are undefeated in the Dakota Dome this year, so home-field advantage has helped the team find even more success.

The Coyotes enter the final three games with both momentum and excitement, but are making sure to not treat the next few opponents any differently.

Another captain of the team, linebacker Gabriel Hardman, and Dixon, talked about staying true to the process they have.

"Sticking to the process, coming in every single day and doing what we need to do to make sure we're at our best and people that come in here or come out of here, they know that they got to deal with us," Hardman said.

Hardman has 37 total tackles on the season and 3 forced fumbles, paired alongside a fumble recovery.

"They are just another nameless, faceless opponent. Can't make the moment too big, can't make it too small, so just go as a normal week as we prepare for anybody," Dixon said.

Next week's game is the highlight of the regular season for USD, facing off against South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, SD in a must win rivalry game.

After SDSU, the Coyotes host their final home game of the regular season against Northern Iowa. To finish off the regular season, the Coyotes will face against Illinois State.



The USD football team is currently 7-2, and working to continue their success.

Colton Tolly | The Volante



The defense celebrates during the Dakota Days game.

Colton Tolly | The Volante

Volleyball on a hot streak

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The USD women's volleyball team is closing their regular season as they wind down conference play over the next few weeks. The Coyotes are currently sitting atop of the Summit League standings at 7-1, with SDSU and Omaha at second and third, respectively.

Lenae Williamson has been the head coach of the Coyotes for over 13 seasons. With six games left to play in conference, she is confident the team will finish the regular season strong.

"I feel very confident in this group," Williamson said. "I know that we will continue to be challenged, but that this group will continue to show up and learn each step of the way," Williamson said.

Coach Williamson says the team has had the same expectations and goals from the start of the season to now.

"We are constantly working to be our best selves which ultimately would put us in the running for a conference championship and a tournament championship," Williamson said.

The Coyotes opened up the season with the Drake Tournament, going 2-1. The team then hosted the South Dakota Classic with wins over Utah Valley, Air Force, and Northern Iowa.

At the CSU/Wyoming Tournament, the team fell to Colorado State 0-3 but won 3-1 against Wyoming and 3-0 against UC Santa Barbara.

The Coyotes finished the non-conference stretch with two Big Ten matchups at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls with losses to Minnesota and Washington.

In conference play, the Coyotes lost their conference opener against SDSU 0-3, but have since won their last seven, including a rematch against the Jackrabbits on Oct. 25, where the team won 3-2 against the Jackrabbits.

A lot of the success has been driven from the returning veterans on the team. USD returned all but one of their varsity players, while adding two freshmen. One of those freshmen, Gabi Zackariasen, has played a key role in the Coyotes' success.

The freshman setter from Harrisburg, SD is a three time Gatorade South Dakota Player of the Year and has delivered on serving for the Coyotes.

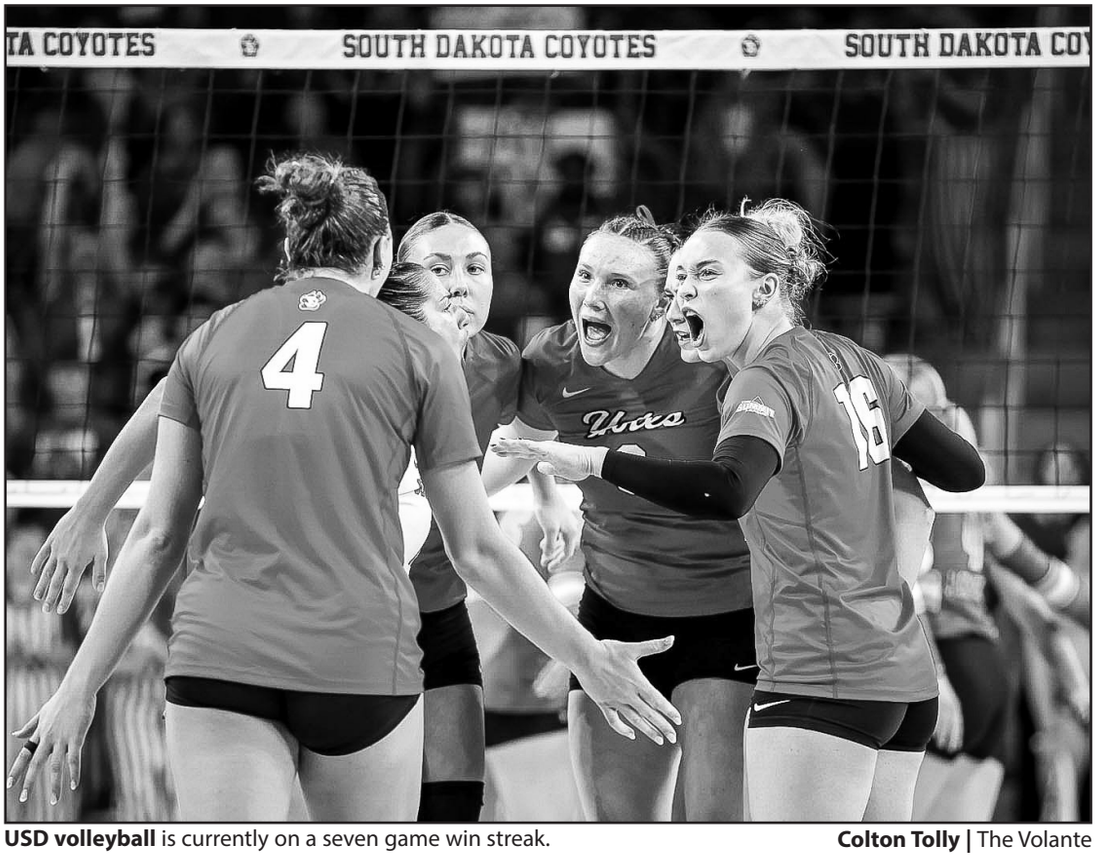
"She is a fierce competitor, and she shows up every day ready to learn something new," Coach Williamson said.

South Dakota has six games left on the regular season, with away games Kansas City on Nov. 5 and Oral Roberts on Nov. 7. The Coyotes will host four matches: Omaha on Oct. 29, St. Thomas on Oct. 31, North Dakota State on Nov.12, and North Dakota on Nov. 14.

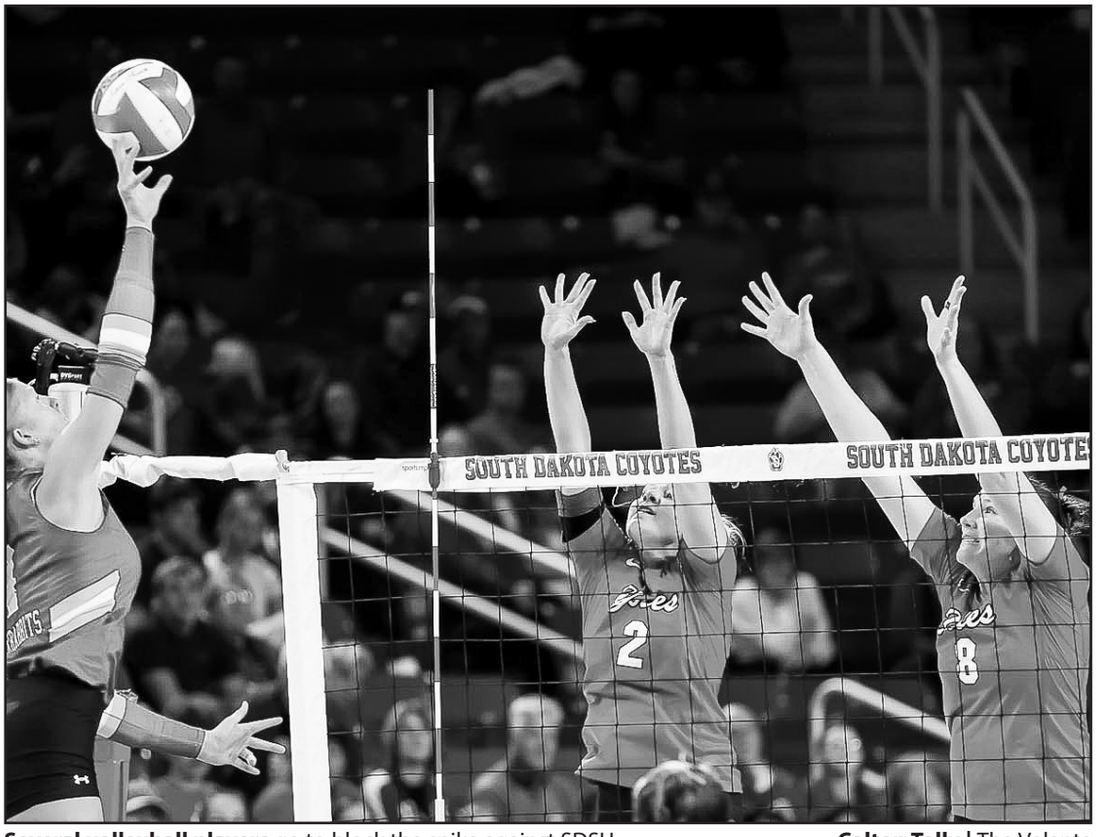
First serve for the Omaha and North Dakota games are set for 7 p.m., while the St. Thomas' game will start at 1 p.m. and North Dakota at 5 p.m. Williamson encourages the student body and community to come and rally behind this special team.

"My message would be to come on out and watch this team. They are fun to watch, and they are fun to support," she said.

For the Summit League Tournament, it will be hosted at the First Bank and Trust Arena in Brookings, SD. The dates for play will be Nov. 7 through Nov. 9. Information on standings, schedules, and tickets can be found on the Summit League website or the USD athletics webpage.



USD volleyball is currently on a seven game win streak. **Colton Tolly** | The Volante



Several volleyball players go to block the spike against SDSU. **Colton Tolly** | The Volante

USD athletics receive $1M gift

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Earlier this month, James "Jim" Clement, USD alumni donated $1 million to USD athletics for the department to use at their discretion.

Clement is a long time supporter of the Coyotes, dating back to his childhood. Clement grew up in Vermillion, SD, attending college here. His father was a former dean of the business school while Clement was growing up, so Clement has been involved with USD for almost his entire life.

"My earliest memories are memories that are earlier than anyone teaching or coaching there. And I have a great deal of pride in it as a result," Clement said.

The alumni currently works as a Senior Vice President at RBC Wealth in Rapid City, SD. He plans to retire at the end of the year.

Clement has offered his support financially to several different projects at USD, with the Dakota Dome and the Sanford Coyote Sports Center (SCSC) highlighting that list.

"It became apparent to me that this would be a gift that could help, and I did it in a way where it was not targeted at any particular sport or thing," Clement said.

Not only does Clement provide financial help for the University, but he also supports in any way he can.

"I make it a point on every Friday in my office to wear a South Dakota shirt," Clement said.

Because of the freedom of the donation, the athletic department gets to choose where they decide to put that money in. Jon Schemmel, the USD athletic director, detailed what the department will likely do with the donation.

"It'll be utilized primarily either for the capital projects that we're doing or... the increase in our ability to offer more scholarships to student athletes or scholarship enhancements, or even rev (revenue) share," Schemmel said.

Schemmel explained how donations make an impact on the department, emphasizing their importance to student athletes.

"Ultimately with it, the investments that we can take from donors and the donations that we get from them ... what that does is we know no matter what, on some level, that is getting invested to enhance the student athlete experience that we provide here at the University of South Dakota," Schemmel said.



James Clement makes an impact on USD in anyway he can. **Source:** GoYotes.com

Through facilities, scholarships and additional revenue sharing, it can enhance recruitment. An enhancement in recruitment means better athletes, which then generates even more revenue, creating a cycle that overall enhances the athletics department as a whole.

Schemmel praised Clement.

"His ties run deep here and his name is a popular one on this campus, and he is as passionate and as loyal a donor and fan as we have. His love for USD and for the Coyotes run throughout this entire institution. He is always a fun one to be around and you could never have a bad day around Jim Clement," Schemmel said.

Women's golf wraps up season

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Source: GoYotes.com

The USD women's golf team concluded its fall season with a third-place finish at the MSU/Payne Stewart Memorial in Springfield, Missouri, on Oct. 13.

The Coyotes competed in five tournaments throughout September and October under ninth-year head coach Brett Bennett.

Despite some challenges earlier in the season, South Dakota finished its fall schedule with its strongest performance of the year.

The team opened the season with a second-place finish at the NDSU Invitational in Fargo, North Dakota, on Sept. 8-9.

Senior Ella Greenberg led the Coyotes with a tie for fourth place, earning her tenth career top-10 finish and moving into second place in program history for career top-10 finishes.

South Dakota continued its fall schedule at the Redbird Invitational in Normal, Illinois, finishing eighth out of 13 teams, with Greenberg tying for ninth individually.

The Coyotes then traveled to Columbia, Missouri, for the Johnie Imes Invitational on Sept. 21-22. After sitting in eighth place following the first day, South Dakota improved three positions to finish fifth.

The team recorded a season-best round of 297 strokes, while Greenberg tied for eighth individually. Freshman Savannah Cagle also contributed with an even-par 72 in the final round.

South Dakota faced challenges at the Diane Thomason Invitational in Davenport, Iowa, finishing tenth out of 13 teams.

The tournament also featured a program milestone, as Cagle and senior Avery O'Donnell each recorded an eagle, marking the first time two Coyotes accomplished the feat in the same tournament.

The Coyotes concluded their fall schedule at the MSU/Payne Stewart Memorial, where all nine golfers competed across two teams. South Dakota's A team recorded its best single-round score of the season with a 291 in the opening round.

Senior Ava Schroeder led the team with an even-par round, followed by junior Eva Greenberg at one over par and sophomore Morgan Rupp at two over par.

The A team finished third with a three-round total of 899 strokes, improving by 13 strokes from its previous season-best 54-hole score.

The team's average of approximately 299.7 strokes per round marked the first time this fall the Coyotes averaged below 300 in a three-round tournament. Ella Greenberg led South Dakota with three top-10 finishes throughout the fall season.

With the fall schedule complete, South Dakota will shift its focus to the spring portion of the 2026-27 season.

The Coyotes are scheduled to compete in five spring events, beginning with the Rio Verde Collegiate Invitational in Rio Verde, Arizona, from Feb. 19-21. South Dakota will then travel to California, Missouri and Nebraska before concluding its season at the Summit League Championships at Longbow Golf Club in Mesa, Arizona, from April 25-27.

Celebrating Nepalese culture and community

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Culture has a unique way of bringing people together, bridging differences and creating a sense of belonging. On Oct. 17, the Nepalese Student Association brought together Nepalese students and people from different parts of the world, including members of the University of South Dakota community, to experience and appreciate Nepalese culture. Through vibrant music, games, performances and traditional food, the event offered a memorable celebration of Nepalese heritage and community.

"We're gathered here today to celebrate Dashain which is the symbol of victory of good over evil. We took this opportunity to come together to remind ourselves of our culture. We feel as a community that this event that NSA has been organizing has made it possible for all of us to be here. We have around 100 people celebrating including some from Nepal and even international students. So I'm very thankful to be here and I hope we'll continue celebrating this event in upcoming years as well," Debesh Jha, an assistant professor of Computer Science said.

The Dashain event is a festival filled with laughter, joy and the reunion of families after long periods apart. Nepal and many other countries look forward to this celebration throughout the year. It is a time when peace and unity bring people together.

Handmade kites hung from the ceiling. By the door stood a sacred display of tika and jamara. As guests entered the ballroom, they were surrounded with colorful traditional clothing. Mountain names, candles and the menu decorated the tables, creating an elegant atmosphere.

"The red thing over there is made of rice and it's called tika. The elders put it on youngsters giving them blessings like doing good in life and achieving the dreams they've always dreamed of. The green thing is called jamara which goes over the ears. It's a symbol of transition. When you do that, you have to touch elders' feet because we believe that their feet has seen everything so we take blessings from it. The small kites hanging throughout there we play with our cousins and brothers. It's a fun festival," Debesh Jha explained.

The night featured mini concerts, dance performances and a game called "How Nepalese Are You?" Songs played throughout the evening, and when the music paused, someone would volunteer to continue singing for a prize. These moments of laughter and joy reflected the happiness and sense of purpose that come from creating a community.

The menu included dhungro, lentil curry, goat curry with rice, aloo lo achar, or pickled potatoes, and lal mohan for dessert.

"My favorite part of tonight would definitely have to be the food. It's really good," said Pearl, a sophomore studying computer science.

With more people looking forward to similar events at USD, Nepalese Night showed how cultural traditions can bring people together and create a sense of community.



Students from the NSA serve Nepalese dishes to students, faculty and other community members.

Colton Tolly | The Volante



Nepalese Night featured different perfomances throughout the celebration.

Colton Tolly | The Volante



Over 100 people were involved in the celerations including students from Nepal and international students.

Colton Tolly | The Volante

Personality Profile: Michelle Turner

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Michelle Turner, assistant director of the University of South Dakota Student Counseling Center has spent 18 years creating balloon art through her business, Red Bird Balloons,

Turner earned a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling with a psychiatric emphasis from Boston University. She chose the degree because she enjoys working with people.

"It's honestly meaningful, and makes me excited every single day, so I love what I do," Turner said.

At the Student Counseling Center, Turner helps provide mental health care. She said she enjoys working with college students because of their willingness to try new things and the opportunity to see their growth.

Before coming to USD, Turner was the director of a student counseling center in Georgia, where she also taught a first-year experience class. The class collaborated with the Boys and Girls Club for service. While watching YouTube videos about basic balloon twisting, Turner discovered she enjoyed balloon art.

"It brought so much joy, it didn't matter the age, everyone loves a balloon," Turner said.

After the class, Turner continued twisting balloons. Her business gained popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

During that time, Turner went for a walk and found sidewalk chalk that people had created for others in the community to enjoy. She then began wondering how she could make a difference in her community.

That weekend, she made six balloon sculptures and placed them around Vermillion. She posted photos of the sculptures on Facebook and explained that she set them up as a scavenger hunt.

"The response was overwhelming. People loved it. It gave them something to look forward to." Turner said.

After receiving positive feedback from the community, Turner began creating balloon sculptures every weekend that summer. Several people nominated her for the South Dakota Hall of Fame, and she received the Act of Excellence Award.

When school started again, Turner had to reduce the amount of time she spent creating balloon art, but she continued making pieces frequently. Smaller pieces take her 10 minutes, while larger pieces can take an hour or more.

The largest piece Turner has created was an octopus sculpture representing her business in the homecoming parade. It ended up being the length of her car.

Although Turner does decor, sculptures are her favorite pieces to make because of the creativity involved. . She follows patterns for some of her sculptures but she is also not afraid to create her own designs.

"I can see them in a way that I just know how to shape them," Turner said.

Turner said balloons represent a light in her life and hopes people remember that there are many beautiful things to find throughout the day.

"There's always something to look forward to. Sometimes I think we need to remember that, " she said.

Turner chose the name, Red Bird Balloons because the cardinal is her favorite bird . She created the business' logo and does all the balloon work herself.



Turner with one of her creations for an event near Lee Med.
Submitted | The Volante



Turner's float for the Dakota Days homecoming parade representing **Red Bird Balloons**.
Submitted | The Volante

Bringing live music to the heart of Vermillion

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There are many small businesses lined up along Main Street in downtown Vermillion. There is one that looks like a movie theater from the outside but is actually a live music venue inside. That is The AV Lounge.

From electronic dance music (EDM) to bluegrass to noise projects, The AV Lounge has hosted every genre of live music for almost four years, amounting to more than 100 shows. Co-owner Joe Raiche wanted to create a place that did not just have music but was made for music.

"As a performer, a lot of times you're stuck in a corner, you're not given very good equipment, nobody is even running your sound, you're an afterthought," Raiche said. "So the idea is playing at a place that is for the music, where you are the thing that people are coming to see."

Raiche saw a hole in the local music scene and wanted to fill it. He first came to Vermillion for graduate school. Afterward, he was hired by the university, where he still works today. His history of performing and love for live music led him to start the business here with his wife.

"As new years of students come in, the hope is to get them through the door. For them to think 'oh there's stuff going on here that's not just going to a bar, and that's not just the same old same old,'" Raiche said.

The AV lounge hosts a variety of all-ages shows and has seen a diverse audience, from preteens to senior citizens. The venue also hosts a wide variety of performances, including comedy,live readings and poetry nights.

"It is an open and inclusive environment for all types of patrons," Owen Mechling, who has workeed on lighting design for The AV, said. Inclusivity is a priority for the owners. They have hosted events such as a pride prom to provide more people with a safe space.

The space lends itself to a listening atmosphere. Since it is a refurbished movie theater, all eyes in the audience go directly to the stage. Anyone from the very front to the very back still gets a clear view, along with the benefit of the theater's acoustics.

"The AV Lounge is the best place to watch a band's vision come to life," Mechling said.

The AV Lounge serves performers and audience members alike, providing a space to watch, listen and dance.

In addition to the performances it hosts , The AV Lounge offers a songwriter group and an album club. The album club is essentially a book club for albums. The album club meets once a month to discuss one "classic" album and one new album.

This year, the venue is trying something new: a Halloween-themed show. The AV Lounge is hosting an all-ages event called "The Black Cat Ball," presented by The Verm Cats. This show includes four hours of EDM music and a costume contest.

"Its a great opportunity to escape into the fog and lasers, be amongst people and listen to some good tunes," Raiche said.

The Black Cat Ball will be on the day before Halloween at 8 p.m. There will be a $10 cover charge at the door.



The view of the **AV Lounge from Main Street Vermillion**. Events are typically posted next to the front doors.

Madyson Jarrott | The Volante



The inside of the **AV Lounge has hosted several different performances** throughout the course of Raiche's ownership. The venue highlights the accoustics.

Madyson Jarrott | The Volante

Halloween movies for the holiday

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Halloween brings candy, costumes and scares. As one of the most popular holidays, Halloween has generated a plethora of movies, especially within one of the most-used genres in media: horror.

Horror can be watched at any time, as not every horror movie is specifically a Halloween movie. However the atmosphere of a good scare invites horror films onto the screen on an October night.

From family-friendly scares for children, to shocking horror movies that can make people afraid of the dark, Halloween offers a wide variety of films to watch. In honor of the famous holiday coming up in a few days, here's some Halloween movies to watch while celebrating the spooky season.

Starting off the list with a classic slasher series is the "Friday the 13th" franchise. Jason Voorhees is one of the most recognizable slashers in horror, and with 11 official films-10 original and one reboot- as well as a crossover with the famous Freddy Kruger, there is a wide variety of films to choose from in the series.

Viewers do not necessarily need to watch previous installments to enjoy a particular film in the series, so they can start at almost any point and enjoy a slasher classic.

From a summer camp to the hockey-mask-wearing killer traveling to space, viewers can find nearly any type of setting in the series. While the movies may not be the greatest horror films ever made, viewers can never go wrong with the classics.

Moving to a 2000s family classic, director Raja Gosnell's live-action "Scooby Doo" movies are a fun two-film series filled with humor and questionable jokes that most children may not understand. The films provide an enjoyable experience for viewers of all ages.

Laughable CGI and over-the-top plots that replicate the old animated series provide relief from the constant scares that Halloween can bring. Memorable performances, such as Matthew Lillard as Shaggy and Linda Cardellini as Velma, add a charm that is rare for live-action adaptations.

Overall, "Scooby Doo" is a humor filled flashback for both kids and adults.

Moving back to horror, the unique series, "Fear Street" is bound to turn some heads. The Netflix trilogy explores three different eras of horror, with the first film taking place in 1994 and using a retro style similar to "Scream" and "Stranger Things."

The second installment takes place in 1978 and has the feel of a classic camp slasher, similar to the previously mentioned "Friday the 13th." The final film takes place in 1666 and follows a darker folk-horror story before connecting the trilogy back in 1994.

The series offers a variety of horror styles with several different killers, along with genuinely scary scenes that do not hold back. Overall, the variety makes "Fear Street" a great binge-watch for the Halloween season.

Looking for a family friendly yet still scary movie? "Coraline" is the film to watch. "Coraline" does a fantastic job using stop-motion animation style to let its creative story flourish.

The film's great visuals are paired with a dreamlike atmosphere, creating a unique experience that is difficult to replicate.

For a movie intended for children, "Coraline" is surprisingly scary. Several moments induce anxiety and leave viewers unsettled because of the bizarre and, at times, off-putting the characters look and act.

Not only does the film look amazing, but it also sounds great. The voice acting matches the characters perfectly, and the score complements the visuals, making "Coraline" a great Halloween watch.

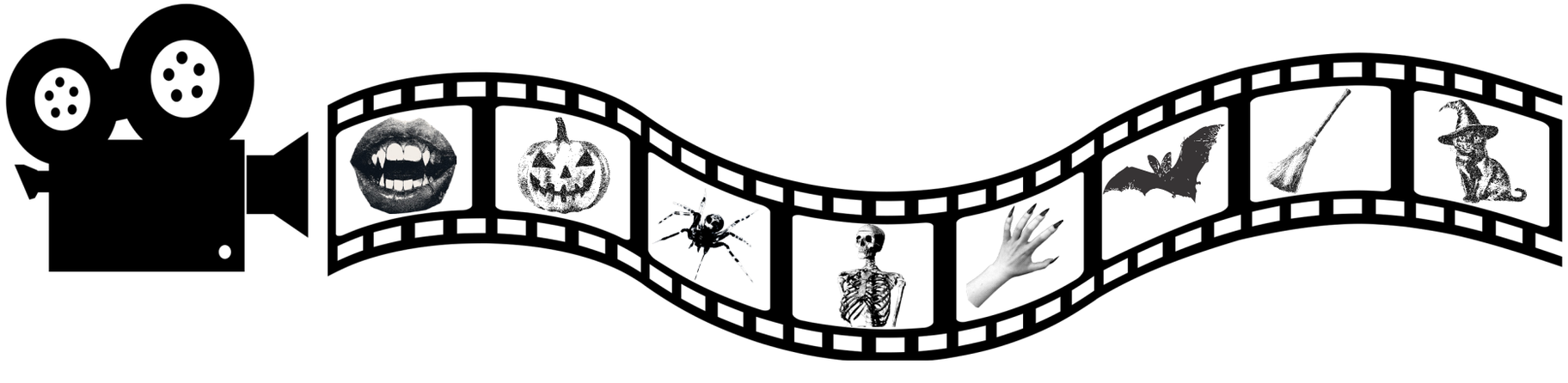
For science-fiction lovers, both "Alien" and "The Thing" are similar yet exceptional science-fiction horror films that can make viewers' hearts race.

Both films feature terrifying enemies, offer little chance of escape and center on extraterrestrial beings. Set in space, "Alien" (1979) emphasizes the isolation of a space crew trapped aboard a ship while confronting the frightening answer to the question: "Who -or what- is out there?"

The film's use of tight spaces and a power dynamic that is unfavorable to the humans creates an uncomfortable and frightening watch.

"The Thing" (1982) uses a slow burn of paranoia as a group of scientists stranded in Antarctica deal with an alien species that can perfectly assimilate and imitate any organism . As trust within the group begins to deteriorate, even viewers are left unsure who is and is not the enemy.

These were just some of the many Halloween and horror movies to watch during the upcoming weekend holiday, but the choices are nearly endless. In the end, it's up to the viewers on how they will spend Halloween night, but they should consider adding some of these films to their watchlist.



"The Spooky Science of Pipe Organs"

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On Saturday, Oct. 24, the National Music Museum (NMM) hosted a Halloween-themed event featuring songs performed on a 200-year-old pipe organ.

The event included a chance to discover how pipe organs work through the NMM's "Organ Experience," showcasing how a miniature, fully functional pipe organ is assembled by Anna Van Kley. Van Kley is the Museum Educator who led the hands-on workshop session of the event.

"We planned this event because we wanted to do a fun Halloween related program for October. When we think of spooky music, organs are common in a lot of Halloween music or movies, and we have a playable pipe organ on display, so we decided to host a special event for the holiday," Van Kley said.

The NMM will typically does an organ-related event each year, but it hasn't always been Halloween themed.

Songs including Hear Bach's "Toccata in D Minor" and "Gounod's Funeral March of a Marionette" were performed by Tommy Gress.

"He was a natural choice for us," Van Kley said.

The NMM chose Gress to play the organ with his previous experience as an intern working on the Myron Floren collection at the museum. He also plays an organ at a church in Vermillion.

The organ was originally installed in Zion Lutheran & Reformed Church, Orwigsburg, PA and was dedicated on Oct. 16, 1808. The organ was used in the new church until 1940 when a new organ was purchased. The Dieffenbach organ was saved by collectors and purchased in 1990 by the NMM.

Visitors were able to learn about the parts of organs and how they are made, and then even get to play on the miniature organ they helped build.

Mira Weber is a second year medical lab science major at the University of South Dakota who attended the event with Grant Kirk, a music education major from North Dakota State University.

"Honestly we had no idea this event was happening and we just stumbled upon it. It was a happy accident," Weber said.

Weber liked the history about the event, specifically how the churches in Switzerland were mentioned and how the churches managed the organs.

"That [building an organ] was an awesome way to teach, especially an audience that's not familiar with music, about how an organ works," Kirk said.

Van Kley had volunteers come up to the front to help put the organ together.

The next NMM event will be on November 6 at noon where Mariachi Los Caballeros will perform traditional mariachi music.



Gress performs "Toccata in D Minor" and "Gound's Funeral March of a Marionette."

Colton Tolly | The Volante



Gress describes the different parts of an organ and what is like playing it.

Colton Tolly | The Volante