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Creightonian

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Campus under the cosmos

LILIAN GARDNER
News Editor

A rare wave of northern lights appeared over Omaha last week, giving Creighton students an unexpected chance to see the colors of an aurora from campus — something typically reserved for far more northern skies.

Christopher Anson, Ph.D., a physics professor who also teaches astronomy at Creighton, said auroras this far south are unusual



SYDNI LEARA/THE CREIGHTONIAN

Creighton University students witness the geomagnetic storm on earth at CU's campus.

but become more likely as the sun nears the peak of its 11-year activity cycle. The display became visible Nov. 11 when a strong solar storm pushed auroral activity far enough south to reach Nebraska.

"The amount of activity on the sun varies every 11 years," Anson said. "During these very large storms like we had last week, particles reach our atmosphere and cause it to glow."

Anson drove north of Omaha to view the aurora after missing earlier displays last summer and fall.

"This time they were much clearer when I went," he said. "It was pretty interesting to see the colors this time."

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Space Weather Prediction Center (NOAA), the geomagnetic storm that made such a southern aurora possible is measured on a five-point scale, with the most intense storms (rated G4 or G5) capable of pushing auroras deep into mid-latitudes.

On the NOAA scale, G4 ("severe") geomagnetic storms occur on average "100 per cycle (60 days per cycle)" per their space-weather documentation. G5 ("extreme") storms are far rarer — about 4 days per 11-year cycle.

NOAA's research also shows how low the aurora can reach during strong storms: for a G4 event, "aurora has been seen as low as Alabama and northern California."

And as the storm intensifies, the normally high latitude auroral "oval" expands toward the equator.

One Creighton student who saw the aurora was Sydni Liera, a College of Arts and Sciences sophomore. She stepped outside of Davis Square around 9 p.m. after receiving a



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

The northern lights appear across the globe, including in Crescent, IA, around 10 p.m. on Nov. 11.

photo from her roommate.

"I got so excited that I ran outside, and I saw the colors," Liera said. "I've never seen anything like that before ... it was just captivating."

Because of light pollution, Liera said she could only pick out faint hues with her eyes at first — but using her phone's night-exposure mode, she captured richer shades on camera.

Anson explained that the red and green colors students saw come from charged solar particles colliding with oxygen in Earth's upper atmosphere. Lower altitudes produce more green light, while higher altitudes

(around 90 to 150 miles up) generate more red. Those details align with what scientists at NOAA and other agencies understand about auroral emissions.

He also warned that strong solar storms can have real-world impacts: they can disrupt radio communication, stress power grids and pose risks to astronauts traveling outside Earth's magnetic shield.

Because the sun is still near its solar maximum — the active phase of its 11-year cycle — Anson said more auroras could be in store.

"It's certainly possible ... but it's hard to say if we will or not," he said.

45 new parking stalls open for students

Partnering with a state-owned lot, Creighton University has expanded the student parking on campus through December with hopes to renew the lease next semester.

LILIAN GARDNER
News Editor

Creighton University has opened 45 additional student parking stalls for the remainder of the semester, according to an email this week from the Student Leadership & Involvement Center. The spots, located under the I-480 overpass at 20th and Cass Streets, are available to surface-permit holders on a first-come, first-serve basis Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. through December.

The added stalls come after frustration over overcrowded surface lots, especially

during the mid-morning and early-afternoon hours when many commuters arrive for classes.

Jessica Weaver, Creighton's parking technical specialist, said the university gathered complaints from "students, staff, employees ... from social media, direct complaints made to our office, whatever it is," and presented them to senior leadership in search of a solution.

"We take those all seriously," Weaver said. "One [issue] was obviously students needing to get to class ... The middle of the day is the worst time, between like 9 and 2."

Because most campus property is already used or under construction, Weaver said senior leadership began exploring lots not owned by Creighton. The new stalls are part of a partnership with a state-owned lot managed by an outside company.

"We reached out and said, 'How can we partner? How can we fill your empty spaces and help with our overflow of particularly students?'" Weaver said.

After negotiations, the university secured 45 stalls for the rest of the calendar year, with hopes of expanding the lease in the spring.

Weaver said the university is already discussing how to extend and possibly increase the number of spaces next semester, depending on how well students use the area.

"As long as our Creighton students are acting like Creighton students and not doing anything crazy ... and it becomes a successful partnership, they're going to continue letting us use it," she said. "We're hoping for more stalls."

The lot is shared with Central High School students who also lease parking there. Signage has been updated to clarify which numbered stalls belong to Creighton. Students may park in any of the labeled stalls; no additional permit or pass is required beyond a standard surface permit.

Weaver emphasized that the extension is intended to relieve some of the pressure on commuters who often struggle to find a spot during peak hours.

"It'll just be an overflow space that gives that little bit of comfort to those who are coming at 10, 11 ... to be able to actually find a spot and not have to walk 30 minutes from the other side of campus," she said. "The goal is this is supposed to be something that helps,

not add[s] more stress."

Some students, however, say the solution falls short.

Emily Fitzgerald, a freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences, said the shortage began early in the semester when many students "were requesting people to stay home ... because they accepted too many people."

She said the new stalls are helpful but insufficient.

"The ideas that they've had are trying to fix it," Fitzgerald said, "But the way that they executed afterwards ... there's hundreds of students who drive. What is the 45 more spots really going to do in the next three weeks?"

Fitzgerald also noted the importance of protecting Central High School students' access to their leased spaces.

"We don't want to put them at risk for having to get here at super early hours because they're afraid college students are going to take their spots," she said.

For now, the university says the temporary expansion is meant to stabilize parking until construction projects progress and longer-term plans can move forward.

Fly Together prepares to take off



PHOTO COURTESY OF CASEY HOAG

The Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., the president of Creighton University, presents a speech highlighting the Sports Performance Center initiative preparing for the groundbreaking addition to CU.

ELIZABETH JONES
Editor in Chief

Creighton University has officially broken ground on its new Sports Performance Center, a 50,000 square-foot facility that will include a dining hall, academic advising, sports medicine, psychology services, an outdoor training area, a new strength and conditioning space and gathering spaces for the university's athletes.

The Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., the university president, said the Sports Performance Center, which is part of the Fly To-

gether initiative, will be the crown jewel of an athletic village on the Omaha campus.

The Fly Together initiative was announced in September and is a donor-funded \$300 million initiative to transform and enhance the athletic and recreation facilities at the university. It includes 11 new or updated facilities on the eastern end of campus.

At the groundbreaking ceremony on Nov. 13, Hendrickson explained that he hopes the Sports Performance Center will help take care of each of the university's over 300 student-athletes.

"The Sports Performance Center is more

than just a building," Hendrickson said in his speech. "Its design and the activities that will take place there reflect, what we say on this campus in our Jesuit tradition, a sense of cura personalis, or caring for the whole person — or in this case, caring for the whole student athlete. And what better time than now to step forward and lean into the holistic aspect of our student-athlete?"

Marcus Blossom, Creighton's McCormick endowed athletic director, shared a similar sentiment in his speech at the event.

"This is truly a student-centered facility. When I arrived at Creighton more than four

years ago, one of our first steps was to ask our student-athletes how we could improve their overall experience," he said. "Their feedback was clear and consistent. Among the many suggestions received, two stood out above the rest: a need for more dedicated weight room and strength and conditioning space, and enhanced dining and nutritional services to support their academic and athletic demands. We heard them loud and clear, and we responded."

TURN TO "Creighton" PAGE 3



Weekly Campus Safety Report

This is a selection of incidents chosen by the Editor in Chief and is not a comprehensive weekly report. The full report is compiled in the Daily Crime Log which anyone can access in the Public Safety office located at 2222 Burt St.

- 1** November 14 - 1:57 p.m.
Public Safety issued a Ban and Bar to a male nonaffiliate who was reported to be going into the women's restroom of the Reinert Library.
- 2** November 16 - 1:38 a.m.
Public Safety responded to Atlas apartments after students reported seeing unknown individuals in all black attempting to pull on car door handles on the top of 30th level garage. (Not Pictured)

- 3** November 17 - 9:23 a.m.
Pub Safe responded to a woman lying on the sidewalk at 21st and Izard St. She was issued a Ban and Bar after she urinated on the facilities building. Her boyfriend was involved and issued a Ban and Bar. (Not Pictured)
- 4** November 17 - 3:18 p.m.
Public Safety was called to pick up Delta 8 THC gummies in Markoe Hall.

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20 years of bowls with CU



CHESELLE TABER/THE CREIGHTONIAN

Creighton University students create bowls for the 20th celebration of the Empty Bowls Project.

CHESELLE TABER
News Reporter

Creighton University's Empty Bowls project — launched two decades ago as a small ceramics initiative — continues to blend creativity with community service as it prepares for its 20th anniversary celebration.

The project is led by Amy Nelson, a Creighton art professor who helped transform Empty Bowls into a formal senior ceramics course in 2011. Since then, more than 300 students have taken the class, each contributing handmade bowls to support the Siena Francis House.

The anniversary celebration will take place Dec. 2, from 4 to 8 p.m., and Dec. 3, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Creighton Lied Art Center.

Students enrolled in the course are required to create 25 bowls each, complete service work at the Siena Francis House, and participate in workshops with the Miracles Addiction Recovery Program. The course also includes small art workshops and at least six hours of additional volunteer work.

During a recent visit to Nelson's ceramics studio, students reflected on the impact the class has had on them.

"I've learned a lot about service and how art can play a meaningful part of the journey," Tyler Christensen, a senior for the College of Arts and Sciences, said. Christensen has already completed his 25 required bowls and plans to make more before the semester ends.

Another College of Arts and Science senior, Nia Gathers, said volunteering through the course has shifted her perspective.

"Life is hard," Gathers said. "Volunteering at Siena Francis House has helped me to see humanity in people. Their life struggles are not who they are."

In preparation for the anniversary, organizers are planning a ticketed preview event featuring early access to the hand-crafted bowls. The annual sale will follow at the Lied Art Center, continuing the project's long-standing tradition of using art to support the community.

Nelson is also exploring a collaboration with the Theatre for Social Justice class to host a dinner theatre event in mid-November 2026, blending performance and service in a new way.

What began as a class assignment has evolved into a biennial fundraiser that has raised thousands of dollars for charity. All proceeds benefit the Siena Francis House.

"The new goal for the 20th anniversary is to raise \$20,000," Nelson said.

The celebration aims to showcase students' artwork while reinforcing Creighton's commitment to service learning, Jesuit values and community engagement.

Mock trial hosts invitational

SHELBY SEU
Assistant News Editor

Creighton University's mock trial and law school hosted their annual 2025 George McNary Bluejay Invitational. Aside from the two Bluejay teams in attendance, 10 other universities — about 17 teams total, as some universities had two to three teams — competed in simulated court trials at the Mike and Josie Harper Center and the Ahmanson Law Center on the weekend of Nov. 8.

"I was really proud of how everyone performed. While we might not have won every single round, you could see people's scores go up throughout the weekend, which is, as someone who was captain just for that weekend, was really cool to see," Logan Yogi, a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences and mock trial attorney, said. "And that's really the best part about why I like being a captain ... [be]cause it's really fun to see people improve and grow and change."

During the awards portion of the invitational, Creighton College of Arts and Sciences freshman Vanessa Trevino was awarded "Best Witness for Defense" and ranked 17 out of 20 on her evaluation from

the judges.

"Going into Bluejay [Invitational], I was really nervous. ... It was my very first mock trial competition, and I had no idea what to expect. Plus, I was doubling as a defense witness and a prosecution attorney. To know that I ranked on ballots in both roles was really surprising but so exciting too," Trevino said. "When I won my award for being a top witness, I was shocked but, more than anything, I was really proud of myself. It was a tough weekend, but I was so happy to see that my hard work paid off and that it was recognizable for the judges."

Yogi was awarded "Best Attorney for Plaintiff" and ranked 18 out of 20 on his evaluation from the judges. However, as he was called to fill in the position of captain at the last minute for the tournament, much of his feelings of accomplishment stemmed from his team's overall performance throughout the weekend. According to Yogi, he recognized that for many of his teammates, this was their very first time competing at the college level.

"I think for the vast majority of the people on that team, this was their first tournament and for everyone except for me, this was their first time doing this case for the

year. And so ... it's always very intimidating and it's always very nerve-wracking and it's always very overwhelming at first, especially if you've never done mock trial," Yogi said. "And so I think ... at the beginning there was a lot of nerves and hesitation towards everything, but once everyone did their first round, there was so much more confidence in the second round and then our scores went up and so it was really great to see people find more confidence in themselves to be able to do this."

According to College of Arts and Sciences junior Sam Fanson, the tournament director of the 2025 invitational, the competition itself was successful with participants being able to gain a balanced experience of fun and rivalry.

"When rounds aren't actively going on, it tended to be a more fun environment where it's a bunch of schools meeting each other and getting to kind of talk about the case. And there's a lot of inside jokes because the case is kind of crazy — there's a lot of weird facts in it — but when the rounds actually happen, it is very serious, [since] trial and court's going on. It gets kind of competitive sometimes, a little — I don't want to say aggressive — but competitive," Fanson said.

Creighton breaks ground



PHOTO COURTESY OF CASEY HOAG

Fly Together hosts groundbreaking ceremony, marking the start of construction on the Sports Performance Center, to be completed by 2027.

Continued from Page 2

Blossom added that the facility will help the university in recruiting and retaining top student-athletes because it allows Creighton to combine state-of-the-art athletic facilities and resources with talented coaches and athletes. However, he said it isn't just about recruiting or having training spaces.

"This will be more than just a building, more than just a training facility, and this is about far more than wins and losses. This investment is an expression of our deeper commitment to student formation [and] to create a community where connections flourish, friendships endure and our student-athletes have a home to learn, grow and support one another as peers and teammates," Blossom said. "This is what makes this new facility and the broader Fly Together project so exciting and so impactful."

The Sports Performance Center is set to be finished by 2027, and Blossom said that Creighton's athletic community is looking

forward to it.

"Our student-athletes are so excited to have a building like this where they get to learn together, mingle and also have all the athletic things they need. ... I think it just speaks to how we value all of our student-athletes. We didn't just build this for men's basketball or volleyball — we built it for everybody," he said.

Elizabeth Gentry, a sophomore on the women's basketball team, echoed this sentiment when she spoke at the event, sharing her gratitude and excitement for the new facility.

"Today, as we celebrate the groundbreaking of the new Sports Performance Center, I see how those small, everyday moments will grow into something even bigger," she said. "I can already imagine smoothies and meals shared, the shots made, the victories celebrated and the bonds formed in new spaces. ... I'm excited to see the new Sports Performance Center turn priceless moments into something even bigger for me, my team-

mates and future Bluejays."

Blossom thinks students that aren't athletes should be excited for the Fly Together initiative as well.

"The other part of the project is the non-student athlete [part]: the rec center, the walkways ... the quad, which is kind of part of the Fly Together too," Blossom said. "So, I think the best part about what we're doing here at Creighton is we're just taking care of everybody and everybody's important. ... The student-athlete part is just a component of the Fly Together initiative, and as they'll see as we have more groundbreakings and more reveals, the quality of the buildings that we're building for them [all students] is going to be on par, if not better. ... I think they have that to look forward to."

The Sports Performance Center will be located at 20th and Burt Streets, just west of the Ruth Scott Training Center. It is one of Fly Together's first projects.

Diwali lights up CU campus



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

The South Asian Student Association hosted an event in the Kiewit Fitness Center to celebrate Diwali, the Festival of Lights. The audience cheered on students during some dance performances.

ELIZABETH JONES Editor in Chief

A night of dancing, delicious food and delights brought the Kiewit Fitness Center to life during Creighton University's South Asian Student Association's (SASA) annual Diwali celebration.

Diwali, known as the Festival of Lights, is a religious holiday for Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, according to USA Today.

Before the performances kicked off at the event on Saturday, Nov. 15, SASA co-presidents Anjali Gujrathi and Rishika Kuntamukkla, juniors in the College of Arts and Sciences, thanked the audience for coming and emphasized the importance of Diwali.

"Before we begin the performances, we

just wanted to take a moment to recognize the meaning behind the Diwali celebration tonight. Diwali is the festival of lights, and in Hindu tradition symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and hope over despair. ... Even with these different stories, the heart of Diwali remains the same. It's a festival of renewal, positivity and the light we create together," Gujarati said. Then Kuntamukkla continued, "And that's why we're here today — to share that light, embrace our culture and celebrate this beautiful festival."

Following that speech, performers took to the stage to entertain the sold-out crowd. Most of the performances were dances choreographed to Bollywood songs, but two SASA members sang for the audience.

One of the performances was a break from Creighton's SASA and a return to the joys of childhood, with kids from Nisha's Dance School putting on a lively show. A class from Nisha's Dance School performed last year as well, making this performance a tradition for Creighton's Diwali celebration. The Diwali chair who choreographed the dances for SASA is a teacher at the school.

"It was her kids that were dancing, which was really nice [to see]," Gujarati said.

Following the kids' performance, SASA gave the audience members a chance to show off on stage for a dancing competition. Volunteers quickly learned simple choreography to a song from a Bollywood musical, and then the crowd judged who did it best.

The biggest performances of the night were the SASA group dance and the SASA executive team dance. While club members danced across the stage, the joy in the audience was palpable.

"After the group dance we all came together on stage, and we were looking in the audience, and we were like 'wow' [because] everyone was smiling and clapping for us and cheering us on, and that's when it really clicked for me that we did this — we created this event," Gujarati said.

That cheering audience was made up of about 550 people. Attendance for the Diwali event has consistently increased by about 100 people every year, according to Gujarati.

SASA began rehearsing these dances in early September, Gujarati said, putting in a lot of dedication to make sure the show was entertaining and well-prepared.

In addition to performances, the celebration included a meal catered by Desi Bites, five vendors and plenty of activities.

The vendors were local Omaha businesses: Yellow Trinket LLC, Nirmoksh Cakes, Matcha by Aydah, Riaa Fashion and BNB Bakery Omaha. Event-goers had the opportunity to browse the tables these vendors had set up and purchase their goods, including jewelry, food and matcha.

The activities, which attendees participated in without extra charge, were a bangle bar

where people could take up to four bangle bracelets, a pani puri eating competition, a sari draping game and painting your own diya (which is an oil lamp commonly used in India, especially during Diwali). They also had raffles where people could win a Four Sisters Boutique personal shopping experience, pickle ball set and candy or a Gandolfo's gift card and candy baskets. There was also a henna station.

This celebration means a lot to Creighton's community.

"[It was] so fun. It was such a good time. ... It's awesome seeing a filled-out [event] ... where everyone is there for you guys. It's a cool experience," Dev Ramdya, a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences and SASA member, said. "The food was great, you know, the atmosphere was great, all your friends are there. [During] the dances you're always a little nervous [because] you're on a stage with a bunch of people, but once you're up there the energy's awesome. It's really cool to see everybody too. Everyone did great."

Gujarati shared this love for the event and the people there.

"I think seeing the Creighton engagement [was my proudest moment], with Fr. Hendrickson [the Creighton University president] coming [and] seeing all my friends and family there," she said.

In addition to their Diwali celebration, SASA in general is really important to its members.

"Stuff like that [cultural organizations on campus] is super cool to see, because it is a group of people that you normally wouldn't be with unless this club existed ... and it is a great way to meet those people and see your culture, ... especially when you're not at home anymore," Ramdya said. "At home you have all the experiences and all the interactions with your culture, and then you come here. It's good to have that kind of familiarity coming here."

SASA's Diwali event ended with an open dance floor, and the gleeful audience became part of the performance as everyone joined together to dance and have a good time.



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

In addition to watching performances, Jays were able to receive henna and learn about Diwali.

Saint Motel entertains Jays



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

Fallapalooza featured Saint Motel (top left and right) and Almost Monday (bottom left and right) at the Admiral Theatre in Omaha. Saint Motel, the main act, sang and danced alongside the crowd.

FARRAH VELASCO Scene Reporter

The Creighton University Student Program Board held their beloved yearly tradition of Fallapalooza. This tradition involves a free concert opportunity for Creighton students, with different artists each year — this year's genre was indie and alternative with Almost Monday, an indie band from San Diego, opening and Saint Motel, an indie band from Los Angeles, headlining.

Held at the Admiral Theater this past Friday, students were taken on buses to the venue and were given foam glow sticks upon entering to wave around and enhance the

concert experience. Students also had the option to purchase Saint Motel merch at the table there.

To kick off the night, Almost Monday swept away the crowd with an impressive musical production. The bass guitarist, electric guitarist and drummer had the crowd get groovy and move from side to side. The lead singer and vocalist, Dawson Daughterty, interacted with the crowd and had them sing back to him, creating a fun and lighthearted atmosphere.

With a 1-hour long set, they played a few of their most popular hits, including "sunburn" and "cough drops" that really got the crowd hyped up and ready for Saint Motel's set. Al-

most Monday's style of music really captures that "I don't have to worry about anything" mindset and free spirit that some people have. It also feels kind of like a coming-of-age discography in which their songs are perfect for a road trip or even just chilling with your friends.

After the opening set, Saint Motel came out and brought more to the crowd. This set was curated with countless instruments, from various guitars, drums, trumpets, saxophones and even a piano! The members were all on stage just having a good time, and it became more of a jam session with the students rather than just seeing them as an audience watching them perform. This made it all the more per-

sonal and really encapsulated the feel and vibe of their music.

For their spin on classical style, Saint Motel brought out the piano and played their track, "For Elise." This song is their rendition of the original "Für Elise" by Beethoven. It includes the piano melody and creates a more modern, groovier version of the song which was very popular amongst the Creighton student-filled crowd as they danced and swayed their foam glowsticks back and forth.

Even for students who did not know the artists, the experience was a fun time. The yearly Fallapalooza always brings smiles across the board and will remain a widely-loved tradition by Creighton students.

Springsteen biopic exudes NE charm

EMMA O'DWYER Scene Reporter

"Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere" is an intimate portrait of Bruce Springsteen at one of the most creative pinnacles of his career — the making of his 1982 album, "Nebraska." For a Nebraskan audience, the film holds a particular relationship with the environment, due to its ability to capture the quiet, desolate landscapes of the American Midwest: one which deeply shaped one of Springsteen's most captivating artistic turns.

Jeremy Allen White embodies Springsteen with an understated performance that mir-

rors the raw essence of Nebraska. The film intentionally avoids glamorizing the typical rock-star persona stereotype and instead lingers in somber landscapes like those of dimly lit rooms, lonely highways and moments of introspection. Much like the album itself, which was recorded on a simple four-track tape machine in Springsteen's home — the movie is intentionally unpolished. It's raw, sometimes uncomfortable, but always authentic.

For Nebraskans, what stands out most is how the film treats Nebraska, not just as an album title but as an idea. The movie passive-

ly acknowledges the state's symbolic weight: wide-open spaces, moral gray areas and the sense of isolation that sits between towns. Springsteen's songs highlight stories of small-town criminals, working-class families and people searching for meaning on desolate roads — echoing the kinds of realities Midwesterners navigate. The film doesn't hit these themes overtly but rather alludes to the audience to recognize the unmistakable feel of the music dancing throughout the plains.

Director Scott Cooper leans into this atmosphere with slow pacing and a muted color palette, which to some viewers, may cause

some divide. It does, however, offer a tone reminiscent of Nebraska, gleaming on the album's darker character with its minimalism and emotional gratification.

Holistically, "Deliver Me From Nowhere" is less a traditional biopic, and more a meditation on how a quiet, overlooked part of the country helped shape one of America's most profound musical statements; something Nebraskan watchers can claim a unique connection to. For Springsteen fans, traditional rock enjoyers or even midwestern natives, "Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere" could be a new favorite.

Diwali dishes dazzle

LAUREN PACICCO
Opinion Writer

This past Saturday, Creighton's South Asian Student Association (SASA) put on an amazing Diwali celebration, filled with dancing, music, performances and delicious food catered by the Omaha restaurant Desi Bites. Every once in a while, you come across a meal where one dish surprises you, another comforts you and a third becomes the instant favorite — the kind you already know you are counting down the days until you have it again. That's exactly how this tasting experience happened for me at Diwali.

Let's start with the sweet sticky ball, gulab jamun, because I haven't seen or eaten anything like it before. Imagine a perfectly round donut hole, warm and lightly crisp on the outside, soft and cloud-like on the inside. Now drench it in simple syrup. That's gulab jamun. It has this combination of being super comforting but super indulgent. The syrup amplifies the sweetness without being overpowering. If you're a fan of desserts that are simple but deeply satisfying, this was very, very good.

But as great as it was, it played an entirely different role in the meal compared to the savory dishes. The gulab jamun is a treat meant to end things on a high note. The tandoori chicken, on the other hand, is the star that I kept thinking about long after the meal was over. This chicken was hands-down the standout of everything I tried, juicy, tender and seasoned with the perfect balance of flavor. Where the gulab jamun leaned into



sugary richness, the chicken leaned into a savory depth. The seasoning worked its way all the way through the meat, not just sitting on the surface. Out of everything on the table, the chicken was the one dish I kept returning to, the one I mentally ranked first without hesitation.

The naan played a huge supporting role, soft and warm with just enough browning to give it flavor. It worked with every dish — scooping butter chicken, sandwiching tandoori chicken or absorbing the extra sauce from the paneer. The green chutney added a fresh, bright pop that cut through all the richness on the plate. The chana masala and paneer butter masala rounded out the meal with hearty textures and deep spices, but they weren't as memorable as the chicken dish-



JONAH LAGRANGE / THE CREIGHTONIAN

The chicken main dishes were a standout at the SASA Diwali celebration, alongside the sweet gulab jamun and the naan.

es. The gulab jamun ended everything on a perfect sweet note: simple, soft, syrupy and comforting.

Tasting everything side by side helped me appreciate how distinct each dish is, even when they share similar spices. It was a great reminder of how food can be both familiar and completely new at the same time.

The myth of being involved

MAKAYLA PONCE DE LEON-WARD
Opinion Writer

College makes it feel like you have to do it all. We are told that joining clubs, attending every event and building the perfect resume are all key to a meaningful college experience. If you are not busy, then you are somehow not doing college life right. It seems as if the busiest students are the most successful or the ones making the most out of college. But that is not always true. Here is what I have learned: being everywhere does not mean you belong anywhere.

My first year of college, I signed up for multiple clubs, attended events and said yes to almost every opportunity. I thought being involved everywhere was the only way to grow and feel like I fit in. Of course, I was busy and felt like I was accomplishing a lot, but inside I felt drained and disconnected. Most of the time it felt like I was just there

to put something on my resume, not to build real, genuine connections. While I did make valuable friendships through some clubs, I realized that they were not the only place meaningful relationships could form.

Some of the most genuine friendships I have made in college did not come from clubs or leadership roles. They came from everyday interactions that were unexpected, such as texting a classmate about the homework, chatting with my neighbor in the dorm or accidentally walking into a classroom I thought was empty, only to find a group of people who somehow became my closest friends.

There is this common advice that if you are having a hard time making friends in college, all you need to do is get involved, join a club and go to events. But there is a lot more to it than that. Meaningful friendships can happen anywhere. Talk to the person sitting next to you in class and invite them to study

together or even talk to a stranger on the Mall. Those interactions may seem small but could lead to long-lasting friendships.

Overcommitting can get in the way of real growth. When every hour of your day is scheduled, it is hard to slow down and learn from experiences. Those quieter, less structured days make college feel real, personal and worthwhile.

Campus involvement is not bad. It can teach valuable skills and create amazing opportunities. But it is not the only way to grow. Students can make their college experience meaningful in ways that they feel are right for them. So, if you are feeling stressed about being involved everywhere, here is the truth: you do not have to do it all. You do not need to attend every event or hold every leadership position to have a meaningful college experience. The moments that stick, the experiences that change you, are what make college what it is.

Practicing (and perfecting) gratitude

ELIZABETH GRAVELINE, CECE SLADOVNIK
Opinion Editor, Assistant Opinion Editor

Thanksgiving is right around the corner. You probably don't need another reminder to be thankful; the season is full of them. This year, we invite you to take a different approach to gratitude.

Listing the things that you are thankful for can be a great practice for improving positivity and social awareness, but living out your gratitude is an even more fulfilling step to connecting to the people and things around you. Here are some practical ways to live out your gratitude this holiday season.

Take the extra step and let those around

you know that you are grateful for their presence. Hand-write letters to your friends, telling them how much you value them. Plan a special outing for a friend or romantic partner tailored to their interests, showing them that you admire their individuality. Call your parents and grandparents, just to chat and hear about their day.

Send an email or note thanking your professors. We all know not every professor is necessarily impactful, so it is important to show gratitude for those that are. Whether they led you to an epiphany, explained things in an enriching way, made you laugh or simply because you enjoyed the format of their

syllabus, every professor that influenced you in a positive way deserves to know it. Go on a walk and be grateful for the colorful trees. The red and orange leaves will not be here for much longer, and neither will the walkable weather. Embrace the beauty of the outdoors and your freedom to get outside and take a walk.

Don't forget about the community around you which meets your needs. Leave a positive online review for your favorite shop or restaurant. Business owners always appreciate knowing how their work impacts others.

In college, it can be easy to get into a cycle of comparison, seeing only the things you lack. Instead, focus on abundance. What

areas of your life have you been blessed in? Maybe you have an abundance of wonderful, caring friends, a knack for teaching or a talent for playing music. Think of a way to give back in this area of abundance, volunteering your time, talents or financial resources. Volunteering, especially with friends and family, helps you engage with your community and further recognize the gifts you have been given.

Sharing your gratitude with others improves your relationships and creates a cycle of kindness and a stronger community. This year, we invite you to act on your gratitude and GIVE thanks to those around you. Happy Thanksgiving!

Black Friday's demise

CLARA JOHNSON
Opinion Writer

The day after Thanksgiving is not just famous for the amazing leftovers. It's famous for the celebrated holiday of Black Friday, one of consumerism's biggest days of the year. Stores have team meetings to prepare for the crowds of people rushing through the door, lines can wrap around the block and shopping becomes a competitive sport.

And yet, as online shopping has grown in popularity, Black Friday seems to have lost some of its appeal.

Part of the downfall is mistrust in the deals being offered. In the past, retail has taken advantage of the mindset of Black Friday shoppers and offered discounts that weren't as influential as they seemed. Shoppers began to realize the switch and instead of continuing to fall for this trap, they changed their habits and protested the system.

Another reason you may not see the same horde of people at the mall is because for some, the idea of shopping with so many people is terrifying. The commercialized idea of a crowd fighting over a cheap TV or trampling each other to get to the Stanley water bottle section has deterred quite a few shoppers. Even if it's not the reality, the idea of racing around a store for an item that might just have sold out is not encouraging.

Perhaps the biggest detriment to the practice of being in line when doors open and giving it your all on Black Friday is Cyber Monday. The presence of online shopping offers a safe and verifiable alternative to pushing a shopping cart through a sea of people. With the added incentive of new discounts, it's become much easier to get Christmas shopping done from home.

It can be both an experience and an adventure to make the trip out to the mall, and as a college student it could save you some precious dollars on this year's gifts. In all honesty, if anyone is going to succeed in reaching the limited edition 50% off stock the fastest, our chances are better than most. This is not to say that you should be pushing the little old ladies out of the way — but your chance of success might be a bit higher than hers already.

For the die-hard shoppers with the ambition and street smarts to make it happen, Black Friday will never lose its appeal. Luckily for the rest of us, it's not our only option to get the job done. This Nov. 28, whether you're working a shift, pitching a tent outside of your favorite store or just enjoying Thanksgiving leftovers, I wish you luck.

XC battles at NCAA Regionals

ALLY SEEVERS
Sports Editor

The Creighton men's and women's cross country teams wrapped up their seasons Friday at the NCAA Regionals, facing one of the nation's most difficult courses at Oklahoma State's Greiner Family Cross Country Course. Despite missing key athletes on both teams, the Bluejays showed grit, growth and promise for the future.

"We ran pretty well today considering the athletes we had at the start line," head coach Chris Gannon said. "For the kids we had available to us today that were healthy, we ran pretty well. Our women's team moved up from where they were a year ago ... and the men's team, [who] lost a lot of talent last year between redshirts and graduation, performed pretty well."

On the men's side, Creighton competed with just one of the seven runners who ran last year's regional and finished 24th of 30 teams. Senior Eli Moore led the Bluejays in 98th place, crossing the finish line in 32:58.8 for his first 10K of the season.

"Eli ran a really smart race," Gannon said. "He's become a really mature runner and he knows his body. He moved up throughout the race, executed really, really well, and it's awesome to see that from a senior."

Junior Oliver Annus made his NCAA Regional debut with a 103rd-place finish in 33:01.5. Freshman Andrew Sauer (152nd), sophomores Lucas Bossinger (153rd) and Sam Berlinghof (155th) and seniors Dominic Ricci (164th) and Cole Haith (186th) rounded out the men's roster.

"That jump to a 10k, especially on this course, is a huge challenge," Gannon said. "You [have] got to be excited about where things are headed with a good group of people that will continue to be here next year as we continue to build. If you would have asked me a year ago, as much as we lost, this would be the performance today, I'd be pretty excited about it."

The women's team also showed progress, placing 27th of 32 teams — four spots higher than last year. Senior Carly Manchester led the Bluejays with a 116th-place finish in 22:34.2, shaving nearly a minute off her time from two years ago. Right behind her, fellow senior Anika Nettekoven closed out her Creighton career in 125th with a time of 22:42.4.

"It's awesome to see [Carly and Anika's] growth over four years here ... not just in running, but their growth in leadership and just leaving it all out here. Our team as a whole is in a better place than when they got here — that's the biggest thing I can ask for as a coach."

Freshman Reyna Heisserer finished 142nd in 22:52.4, followed by senior Katherine Soule (171st, 23:17.3), freshman Sophia Redler (197th, 23:50.2) and junior Sophia Valentine (205th, 24:10.2). The team competed without top runner junior Taylor Rorick, while freshman Atlee Wallman started but did not finish.

Oklahoma State swept the meet, earning both the team and individual crowns. Despite unseasonably warm temperatures and a punishing course layout, the Bluejays walked away proud of their progress and hungry for more.

Creighton now turns its attention to the indoor track season, with cross country set to return to action next fall.

Volleyball seals 12th title

CU clinches Big East regular season crown



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROB MORRIS

Creighton volleyball celebrates its 12th consecutive Big East Regular Season title, finishing off conference play a perfect 16-0.

ALLY SEEVERS
Sports Editor

No. 12 Creighton volleyball closed out the regular season with a dominant statement, finishing an unbeaten conference season and securing the program's 12th consecutive Big East regular-season title with a pair of road sweeps at St. John's and Seton Hall. The Bluejays did it with the same formula that's carried them all fall — clean offense, steady serving and a level of consistency that few teams nationally have matched.

Friday's win at St. John's marked Creighton's 46th straight regular season league victory, a new Big East record, and locked up at least a share of the title.

A night later, the Bluejays clinched it outright with one of their sharpest performances of the season, hitting a program-record .551 at Seton Hall to cap a perfect 16-0 run through the nation's fifth-rated conference. Across those 16 matches, Creighton only dropped four sets.

"I felt like our team really worked hard to be prepared for every match. It's all about not taking anyone for granted," head coach Brian Rosen said. "I think early on ... our team, especially some of our newer players, was a little caught off guard with how strong these teams are and that everyone's going to come in and give us their best. I thought we settled in as the season went on ... This is the best the Big East has ever been, so it's really impressive what they've been able to accomplish."

In Queens, the Bluejays hit over .400 in the match, led by senior outside hitter Ava Martin. With 13 kills on the night, she became just the fifth player in program history to surpass 1,500 career kills.

"She's just an incredible all-around volleyball player," Rosen said, "So good in all areas of her game — elite-level attacker, server, passer and just keeps getting better and better at the blocker and defender too ... She gets to the gym every single week and still tries to get better and help her teammates get better ... She carries a lot of weight for our team, and ... just really embraces the big moments."

Saturday's match at Seton Hall delivered arguably Creighton's cleanest outing of the season. The Bluejays swung with remarkable efficiency, hitting a program-record .551 with 41 kills and just three errors on 69 attempts.

Creighton also produced 14 service aces, one shy of a school record, with sophomore Saige Damrow delivering six — five of them during an eight-point run in the second set that broke the match wide open. Senior setter Annalea Maeder added five

more aces and guided the attack with 25 assists while hitting 4-for-4 herself.

"I thought [they were] two really clean performances, really good offensively in both matches," Rosen said. "I thought Annalea set a really good game ... I thought [we] were much cleaner, went on a ton of runs, hit our spots better."

For Rosen, the undefeated run and regular-season conference crown carried added significance. In his first year at the helm, he became the first Big East coach since 1993 to go unbeaten in league play in a debut season.

"To win our 12th straight and to do it in an undefeated fashion is something I'm really proud of, and proud of the team," Rosen said. "It sets the bar and the expectation really high for years to come."

The focus now turns to the postseason. The Bluejays will host Marquette in Saturday's Big East semifinals. The Golden Eagles pushed Creighton to five sets earlier this month and are fighting to secure an NCAA Tournament bid, as are Xavier and Villanova — two potential finals opponents.

"We're moving into this next phase of win-or-go-home time," Rosen said. "We want to have that mentality at the Big East tournament, that survive and advance tournament mentality to prepare us for the NCAA tournament ... We just want to make the season last as long as we can."

"This is the best the Big East has ever been, so it's really impressive what they've been able to accomplish."

**-Brian Rosen
Volleyball
Head Coach**

With the team playing its sharpest volleyball at the right time, the Bluejays look every bit like a squad poised for another deep December run. No. 1 Creighton faces No. 4 Marquette tomorrow in Milwaukee, with a spot in the Big East Championship match — and the program's 11th tournament title in 12 years — on the line. First serve is set for noon on ESPN+.



ALLY SEEVERS/THE CREIGHTONIAN

Redshirt freshman and Omaha native Brady Bragg celebrates after scoring his first career goal in the Creighton men's soccer match against then No. 23 Seton Hall to level the score, 1-1.

ABBIE GALLANT Editor in Chief

Ask Creighton men's soccer midfielder Brady Bragg and his younger sister, women's soccer forward Anna Bragg, what their relationship looked like growing up, and they'll both smile, laugh and point to the same moment. On opposite sides of the 'turfed' yard, they manned their own makeshift, two-cone goal, eying each other intently as younger sisters Kelsey and Addy chased the ball in the midfield and parents Scott and Jenny watched the chaos unfold.

In these intense backyard soccer battles at their home in Omaha, Neb., the idea of a tie was laughable — the Bragg siblings did not stop until a winner was crowned.

"There'd always be a winner no matter what, either racing in the middle of the street to determine the winner or something like that. But we'd [Brady and I] always be on opposite teams," Anna said. "I feel like we never played on the same team because that would probably be a little unfair and we never wanted to play with each other. We always wanted to play against each other."

That passion and friendly competitive instinct was only natural in the Bragg house. It was the kind of environment where soccer felt inherited as much as learned.

Everyone in the Bragg family played soccer, but it was their father, an Evansville Division I soccer alum, who helped steer all four children toward the game.

"Before we could walk, [my dad was] like, 'These kids will play soccer,'" Anna said.

Scott Bragg even turned the backyard of Anna and Brady's childhood home into a turf field, which served as soccer turf and putting green. His motivation for the backyard renovation might have come in part from his hatred of grass, Anna said, but it was also "just so soccer."

It was here that the infamous two-on-two battles for Bragg-ing rights were held in full force.

As the Bragg siblings grew up, Kelsey and Addy chose to pursue other sports over soccer, but neither Anna nor Brady could shake the game.

Though Brady was a year older, it was Anna who committed to Creighton first, in her senior year at Marian High School in Omaha.

It was the nudge from her club coaches that prompted Anna to seriously explore the possibility of playing Division I soccer. Not long after, she met Creighton women's soccer head coach Jimmy Walker and committed to the Bluejay program in Dec. 2023.

Brady's path to playing under the lights of Morrison Stadium began a little bit differently. After Creighton Prep won the 2023 state championship title his senior year, the call that followed, from Creighton men's soccer head coach Johnny Torres, gave Brady a walk-on tryout opportunity.

"[At the time] I didn't know where I was going to college, and I was like, 'You know what? I'll try [to walk-on]," he said.

In the Fall of 2023, as Anna began her senior year at Marian, Brady's first semester at Creighton was largely spent in the Rasmusen Center, training by himself or with a friend as he prepared for the upcoming walk-on tryout.

When his opportunity came later that year, Brady stood out among the four other walk-on candidates, convincing Torres and the Bluejay staff that he was the one to bet on.

Brady still remembers where he was when he got the call from Torres. Sitting on the couch in his freshman year dorm, he heard the words that would jumpstart his Creighton soccer career.

"I was relieved [and] really happy [when I got the call]. ...," Brady said. "They [the coaching staff] came in and they obviously saw something [in me] and it pushed me to climb that next ladder."

With one Bragg already on campus and freshly added to the men's team, the 2024-25 academic year brought Anna to Creighton's campus for her freshman year.

While Anna was stepping into the new world of collegiate soccer, her brother's second year didn't unfold the way he hoped.

In June of 2024, the summer before his sophomore year at Creighton and first season with the team, Brady broke his tibia in the first game of summer league.

Stuck on crutches for the 2024 season, Brady's first taste of college soccer came in an unconventional way: trying to find his place on the team while sidelined from the very game he had worked so hard to play.

"I was just trying to be around the guys as much as possible, boost them up [and] do anything I could on crutches," Brady said. "It

Sibling rivalry, shared triumph

Omaha natives Anna and Brady Bragg shine under lights of Morrison Stadium

was tough because I'd only spent two months in the spring getting to know the guys, but as that season went on, I became really close [with them]."

That year, Brady learned to contribute while out injured, but he also continued with a role he held since he was a kid — cheering on his little sister as she started to make her mark on the pitch.

For Anna in her freshman season, the lights shining down from Morrison Stadium were a lot bigger than those of Marian. She said the transition to the fast-paced style of college soccer wasn't without its challenges. However, she had a great model for the way to approach the field.

"Going into it, I had the same mindset as [Brady]. I really want to prove something to everybody and just step on the field, [and] if I can, be an impact in any way," Anna said. "Time just kind of helped with that. I saw the field for 10 minutes or I saw the field for 15 and then the next game, I'd want 20 [minutes]."

Through the ups and downs of Anna's first season and Brady's season-long injury, the two Bragg siblings always had each other to lean on.

"It's everything [to have that support]. We've both had such different journeys, yet gone through so much of the same thing," Anna said. "It's just easy to lean on each other for [everything] and we've done that for a lot of our lives."

That support — along with the competitive spark that defined their backyard battles as kids — carried into the 2025 season. Nov. 1, in particular, would prove significant not just for each soccer team's playoff hopes, but also a day the siblings would remember as one of their favorite shared moments on campus.

A double-header defined that Saturday afternoon, with the women's team battling St. John's and the men taking on then-No. 23 Seton Hall.

could respond with a goal of his own.

"I remember going off the field ... and everyone [in my family] was like ... 'Points for Anna!' Not saying Brady needed to score but like, 'Oh, let's see what Brady can do this game,'" Anna said.

The implications of Anna's goal were not lost on Brady or anyone else in the locker room before the men's team took to the pitch. Of course he was happy for his sister, Brady said, but he also knew that he had to even the score. The sibling rivalry was back in full force.

"I was like, 'Wow, another one. Awesome,'" Brady said jokingly. "We lifted weights right after that [game] and Scott, our lifting coach, comes up to me [and] he's like, 'You've got to score it now' ... and then Johnny and [Michael] Gabb were like, 'Did you see your sister score?'"

Brady would go on to do exactly that, scoring an eerily similar header to his sister's in nearly the same minute, giving the men's team the equalizer.

"I was sitting next to my mom [and then all of a sudden], 'He actually scored, oh my goodness!' It was a really cool, surreal moment," Anna said.

While two goals by siblings on the same day was a rare and memorable event, the Bragg family's presence in the stands — grandparents and cousins included — is a familiar and ongoing sight at Morrison Stadium.

"We have a lot of family in Omaha, so having them is just a huge benefit and a bonus and seeing them after the games. They're so proud of us," Anna said.

Even Scott Bragg, whose time at Evansville made him a longtime Bluejay skeptic, can now be seen wearing Creighton gear. It seems that all it took to put the Missouri Valley Conference rivalry to rest and make a Bluejay fan out of him was pride for his son and daughter ... and a little bit of Bluejay merch.

"He's wearing Creighton gear now," Brady said with a smile. "He's got a 'Creighton Dad' shirt [too]. ... He was never a Creighton basketball fan, any of that, but now I think he's turning."

As their second season wearing the white and the blue comes to a close, neither Brady nor Anna take for granted how unique it is to have a sibling along for the journey.

"Something like that doesn't happen where every day you're playing the same sport as your brother at the same college. That's insane to me and I don't think we've realized it enough that it's really special," Anna said.

And though they may not always say it aloud, each has been shaped by the other, learning lessons that go beyond the field.

"The biggest lesson I've learned from Anna is ... she's super resilient. Just seeing that is crazy impressive because I'll see her at her worst and she's like, 'I don't want to play soccer anymore,' and then she'll get up and fight right back through and play again and then do it again. ... It's really cool to see her commitment and her resilience in anything she does," Brady said.

What Brady sees in Anna, she sees in him: a drive and commitment that pushes her to keep going.

"[I learned from Brady that] you can do anything you set your mind to," Anna said. "Watching him go from not knowing where he was going to college in the spring of his senior year of high school and then watching him grind through the fall, do his soccer stuff alone, come out, try out in front of all these D1 kids ... and then end up making the team ... Now looking a year later, I'm like, 'Wow, you really can [do] anything you set your mind to.'"

From fierce battles in their backyard in Omaha to trading points under the lights of Morrison Stadium just down the road, the Braggs have blended sibling rivalry with a shared story of perseverance, hard work and unshakable support.



ALLY SEEVERS/THE CREIGHTONIAN

Sophomore Anna Bragg yells in excitement after scoring in Creighton women's soccer 4-0 win over South Dakota.

In the first match of the doubleheader, Anna opened the scoring account in the 31st minute, rising through traffic to head a curling corner into the net and hand Creighton a 1-0 edge. With her goal on the board, attention shifted quickly to seeing whether Brady