



Left: Seniors Lorelei Murphy, Sadie Leigh, Laney Kyle, and Callie Keys pose for a picture on the sidelines. Right: Jacob Luizer and Luke Yeager perform a cheer stunt with Tae Herron as the flier. Below: seniors Hailee Forlenza, Corinne Bonamassa, Hailey Kalinowsky, Sydney Howard, Maddi Potts, Vanessa Donyina, Gabby Morris, Sara Hickman, and sophomore Taylor Keys (bottom left) and senior Stuart McGuinness, junior Nathan Hartman, senior Thomas Tyler, and junior Chase Kibble (bottom right) watch the game from the bleachers at the Powerbuff game. Photos courtesy of Olivia Powers.

TO DESTRESS AFTER PSATS, STUDENTS ENJOY POWERBUFF GAME

Alexa Sterner & William Kluttz | Staff Writers

After the PSAT on October 12, students gathered to watch the annual Powerbuff game. Previously known as the Powderpuff, the game allowed each grade to have a team.

The game was flag football, and each game lasted fifteen minutes. The freshmen played the seniors, and the sophomores played the juniors. The seniors and juniors won the first round, but in the end, the seniors won this year's Powerbuff

game.

“When the seniors won, it made me feel good because I’m a part of that class. So of course, I’m going to support my class and, we pretty much knew we were gonna win, even though it’s a pretty close game,” senior **Tae Herron** said.

Herron was a cheerleader during the game. His favorite part about being a cheerleader was flipping and getting thrown in the air.

Junior **Madison Ruff** loved playing in the game and said it was “super fun.” If there was another, she said she would absolutely join

again because it was a great experience.

“On a scale of one-ten? 100,” Ruff said. “I play volleyball and my dad played college football.”

Playing volleyball and having a dad with a football background helped Ruff prepare to play in the Powerbuff.

Freshman **Nalen Singh** also enjoyed playing, saying it was fun and her favorite part was her team. Singh also plans to participate in any future games.

Overall, student reaction was positive. With most students enjoy-

ing the afternoon, there were only a few suggestions for improvement.

“I think they should have done tackle football,” sophomore **Luke Soloman** said.

“I thought it could have been better and it could have been more interactive with everyone,” freshman **Riley Bensimon** said.

However, most students had a great time whether on the field or on the sidelines or even cheering in the stands, and many are looking forward to the next Powerbuff Game. “It was cool,” Soloman said. •



Attendance zone changes possible: School board facilitating review, hundreds of students to be impacted



Construction is underway on Davis Avenue, visible from the Loudoun County High School parking lot, for White Oaks Farm. The new neighborhood will consist of 160+ single family homes, according to the contractor, William A. Hazel, Inc. New students moving into the neighborhood would further inflate LCHS's enrollment, which is already above capacity. Photo by Evelyn Kuzminski.

Evelyn Kuzminski | Layout Editor

Current freshmen and sophomores may find that this is their last year as a Loudoun County Captain, following the school board's attendance rezoning plans to reassign several neighborhoods to Tuscarora High School instead of LCHS.

On June 28, 2022 the school board adopted a meeting calendar to review attendance zones for Ashburn and central and eastern Loudoun middle and high schools, including Leesburg high schools Loudoun County, Heritage, Tuscarora, and Riverside.

Any changes the school board adopts would be made with the intention of maintaining a relative balance in school enrollment numbers, and would take effect for the 2023-24 school year. While the review process does not guarantee changes to attendance zones, schools that exceed their capacity are more likely to be rezoned.

LCHS is one of only a few

schools under review that are currently overenrolled - by 159 students, or 12% of its base capacity. If no changes are made, that margin is expected to increase over the next several years, to 13% next year and 19% by the 2028-29 school year according to enrollment data and projections released online by the school board on October 13, 2022.

The first zone proposal was also released on October 13. With this zone change, some neighborhoods currently assigned to LCHS would be reassigned to Tuscarora High School, including Shenstone, Colts Run, Kestockin Farm Estate, Roxbury Heights, Monroe Manor, and Crescent Place. This plan would reduce enrollment projections to 99% of capacity by the 2028-29 school year. Other high schools and middle schools would also see zone changes with this new plan.

However, in the event of a zone change, not all students would be rezoned. Rising seniors will stay

at their currently assigned school. Other groups of students, including rising juniors, rising eighth and fifth graders, and siblings of rising seniors, may be granted permission by the school board to remain at their current school, according to Policy 8160, which details exceptions to any attendance zone changes.

The calendar adopted to implement the review process includes 8 meeting dates throughout the remainder of 2022. There will be multiple public briefings and hearings throughout the review process, where the public is encouraged to provide their input. Adoption by vote for any zone changes is currently scheduled for December 13.

More information can be found on the LCPS website, including frequently asked questions, relevant policies, and meeting details. School board meetings involving zoning discussions will also be streamed in a live broadcast. •

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New bell schedule spurs mixed reactions among students



Students crowd the hall at dismissal. With the new schedule, the final bell rings at 4:18, which is fifteen minutes later than previous years. Photo by Cat Pizzarello.

**Evelyn Kuzminski | Layout Editor
& Cat Pizzarello | Managing Editor**

This year's new bell schedule may seem like a minor change, but it's not popular with the school community. Students have reported a plethora of problems with the new schedule, ranging from interference with their work schedules to late end times for their after-school activities.

"The time is all off and it's just weird," junior **Gracelyn Daniel** said. "It doesn't feel right at all."

The school day has shifted fifteen minutes later, now starting at 9:30 and ending at 4:18, with the hope of increasing the reliability and safety of student transportation, as well as addressing the county's bus driver shortage, according to a statement from superintendent **Scott Ziegler**.

For many students, a later release is a significant hindrance to their afternoon commitments. "I personally don't like it because it takes away from my after-

noons and activities that I already planned," junior **Emily Landicho** said.

Math teacher **Rick Ricci** sympathized with the busy schedules of his students. "It gives students less time with regards to their working hours and trying to make money."

"I get home so late and it's hard to work now," junior **Liza Pavlenko** said in regards to her working hours, which she mentioned starting at 5:00, less than an hour after dismissal. Junior **Fabiola Mendez**, who also has to balance schooling and her job, further justified Pavlenko. "I have no time to get ready," Mendez said.

There is also a profound impact on student-athletes, whose after-school games and practices already often lead to late nights, now made even later by the new schedule. Later nights can lead to reduced time in the evenings spent on academics and time unwinding.

Although students generally disapprove of the late release, many appreciate the later start time. The extra fifteen minutes have given students time to fully prepare for their day and take care of their personal well being.

"I get to have breakfast now because I have extra time," Mendez said. Freshman **John Ayoub**

said he prefers the later schedule because "it gives me more time to sleep in," a sentiment all students share. Freshman **Lilly Johnson**, a member of the varsity cheer team, pointed out how the schedule can benefit student-athletes specifically: "Some people need a good night of sleep for practice."

Pavlenko also mentioned the opportunity it gives her to socialize before classes start. "Hanging out with friends before school is nice because it's not too early to do that," she said.

"I have morning practice, because I do cheer for the team here. I like that we start later so I have time to go home and get ready for school," Johnson said. For students with earlier practices like cheer, the later schedule helps students prepare for school in the mornings.

Based on an informal survey we conducted, there appears to be a general consensus that ideal school hours would be 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, starting and ending the day earlier. "I would like to see starting at 8:00, but I know the teens might hate me for that," Ricci said. However, many students share the preference for an earlier school day.

"I think it should go back to the way it was," junior **Jason Orellana** said. "School is better when it's earlier." •

i-Ready test mandatory for all grades, not just freshmen

Hannah Winegar | Staff Writer

This year, students had until September 23 to complete the i-Ready reading test, despite being told last year that juniors who passed their SOLs wouldn't have to take the test again. This year, though, that is not the case. Originally just freshmen were supposed to take the i-Ready, but at the beginning of the year, it was mandated by the school board that all grades needed to take the test.

The LCPS administration was "instructed by the school board that all high school students would be taking the i-Ready assessment," Reading Specialist **Valerie Rife** said. "I think it was to show the growth of reading comprehension in students from this year to last year due to the pandemic."

When it comes to every grade taking the i-Ready, even if the juniors had passed their SOLs, opinions are strongly similar among members of the English Department.

"The English Department as a whole did not agree that that's how it should have gone. We wanted to just test freshmen,"

English Department Chair **Beth Williams** said. "So we weren't in agreement with what the county is doing with that."

"As a team in our building, we had originally wanted all of the ninth grade and tier three students who are two or more grade levels below to take the test," Rife said. "There's a kind of a balance between testing kids too much in my opinion."

It is important for the ninth graders to take the i-Ready so that the teachers can get a baseline of where the students are with their reading comprehension. Same for the tier three students to see their growth from the previous years, Rife said.

AP Literature student, senior **Natalia Settipani** expressed that she was annoyed that they had to take the test. "The videos seemed as if they were addressing children," Settipani said.

Even though it was said that only freshmen had to take the i-Ready this year, it is important for students to take the test so that teachers can see which students might need more help with certain skills such as their reading level,

Williams said.

"It does give us a good database and a baseline for kind of where kids are at with their reading level so that we know which kids might need some help with it," Williams said.

Rife agrees that the i-Ready test is important for finding out students' reading levels. "It is one measure to see where people are."

When students who take the i-Ready fall below their grade level, it gives teachers the opportunity to help and make sure students get up to their grades reading level.

"If we find that they are below grade level we work with them to bring up their reading skills and get them up to grade level," Williams said. "We give them a couple of other diagnostics to see if it's an accurate reading on their level."

While feedback is important and the test can give insight on whether or not students are on reading level, some wonder if students take it seriously.

"I don't think the i-Ready test is necessarily unreflective of student knowledge because of how lengthy it is, but because I know

many students will start randomly answering questions because of the length as they want to get it over sooner," Settipani said.

Settipani isn't the only student who thinks the i-Ready was lengthy. "While I was taking the i-Ready test, I found myself losing focus because it's a long and repetitive process," senior **Emily Orledge** said.

Orledge expressed that she would have rather have done a more engaging activity in class instead of the i-Ready. "That way teachers could still evaluate what students need to learn," Orledge said. "And it could be a more fun process."

Before it was decided that every grade was going to take the i-Ready, there was a plan put together to assess students' reading levels.

"It was just going to be ninth grade that we were going to test, then students that were below grade level last year, we were going to work with them since we already had their scores from last year," Williams said. "And if you'd pass the SOL then obviously you're on grade level for reading." •

No more free lunch. Students have mixed reactions to the end of the pandemic-era program.

Last year's free lunches gave students comfort in knowing that they were always going to be well fed, whether they had packed a lunch or not. What about this year?



Left: A 2022-23 Loudoun County High School lunch... but don't be fooled, the cookie costs extra. The FDA currently requires all schools in the U.S. to serve a fruit and vegetable each day, along with a milk or juice. Right: This is the "White Chicken Chili" served at Loudoun County High. Each day, along with the hot entree, students have the choice of buying a sunbutter and jelly sandwich as a substitute. Photos by Rachel Edgar.

Rachel Edgar & Maisy Davies | Staff Writers

As we began our 2022-2023 school year, the discontinuation of free lunches came as a shock to many students. Last year's free lunch was available thanks to a pandemic-era, federally funded policy that provided free school lunches to all U.S. kindergarten through 12th grade students during COVID. Unfortunately, that privilege ended in August 2022, before the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

The current exception to that policy is if 50% or more students in a school qualify for free or reduced price for school lunch, school-wide free lunch will be

provided. This can be found in Title 1 of the Federally Funded Program. At Loudoun County High School, not only are people upset about not being able to access free lunch if they forget their own, students are very aware of peers who may truly depend on the meal provided by the school.

"I think that if they were free it would help kids who can't really afford lunch," junior **Sneha Mehta** said. "Food should be a priority for kids, and school lunches should be free. It's the minimum."

Currently, of Loudoun County High school's 1,500 students, only 17.9% students are currently enrolled in free or discounted

lunch. Lunch at Loudoun County High school currently costs \$3.15, a price that does not include a chip of choice, cookie, or bottled water. While the FDA and USDA have guidelines and rules on public school lunches, the local school authorities make the specific decisions on what is made.

Along with the concern for students' food safety and stability that may have been affected, some feedback on the quality of lunches made it seem that students are less okay with lunches now that they are back to full price. Students in a study hall disagreed over the quality of the entrees. Senior **Izzy Zemani** explained, "this bowl of like

chicken, it was really greasy. It was nasty," but quickly an anonymous student in the class clapped back, "I like that one!" Students around the school, anonymously surveyed in various classes, describe the school lunch as being a "3/4 out of ten" or "50/50," "unpredictable," with one saying, "A lot of the time it's not really cooked all the way... like it's sloppy or there's stuff wrong with it." However, one student made the point that "If it's free, I will eat it. Food is food." Looking into the near future, the school lunch quality could be improved, but it is still food, and many are dependent on school-provided meals. •

Student-led LGBTQIA+ walk-out organized by Felicity Banner

“We would like to have our pronouns, to be respected and protected”



Felicity Banner (they/them), organizer of the walkout at Loudoun County High School, stands in front of the students participating in the walk-out. Banner is holding a Non-Binary pride flag. Photo by Alexis Gustin.

Rachel Edgar | Staff Writer

A student-led walkout took place on September 27, supporting transgender students rights and protesting against new model policies that put transgender students at risk in Loudoun County. This walkout was organized by sophomore **Felicity Banner**, and resulted in over 60 students participating.

Banner, a sophomore here at Loudoun County High School, planned the walkout just over a month into the school year. Banner described that with great help from the Pride Liberation Project, “a grassroots organization, completely student led,” and principal **Michelle Luttrell**, they were able to do it. With a “tiny bit over a week” to make it happen, the realization that “all right, this is actually happening!” fueled Banner's fire to bring it to life.

The walkout was a response to new policies being introduced to Virginia students, and Banner recalled the day they came out. “On the Friday that all the news came out, everyone was really angry,” Banner said. The policies were a Virginia Department of Education draft, making it so that parents are required to give written approval for students to be referred to by their preferred gender pronouns.

Banner gave credit to the Pride Liberation Project for helping inform them on what to do and how

to do it, explaining the guidance to be “so that we are educated and rightfully angry, than just being angry and not knowing exactly what's happening.”

The Pride Liberation Project describes itself on the website to be “The only student-led organization advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights in Virginia. We're entirely led by high school students, and work to create empowering schools and communities for all LGBTQIA+ students in Fairfax County and Virginia.”

The announcement of the walkout was spread solely through word of mouth. Banner explained, “we weren't allowed to put anything up around the school,” since the walkout wasn't allowed to be advertised publicly. However, Banner was still very satisfied with the outcome, stating it was “way more people than I expected.”

Along with being the organizer of this walk out, Banner is a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, and has friends who are too. They explained the dynamic of the situation, being that “We would like to have our pronouns, to be respected and protected.”

On the day of the walk out, 10:45 a.m., 62 students gathered on the front steps of the school. The sun was out, students were present, conversing, various pride flags waving around amongst everyone. Banner explained purchasing over

80 flags with the plan to donate whatever was left after the walk-out, but not needing to. “There were none left, they were gone, it was great,” Banner said.

Banner overall felt that the walkout “went great.” They made the point that “even though we were a tiny bit smaller than than some of the other walkouts, it was really great and it felt awesome.”

This was Banner's first time speaking to the press, meeting LCPS's public information officer **Wayde Byard**, and truly organizing an event this great. Banner described the feeling during the days leading up to the event. “Everyone

was just freaking out, like this is happening,” Banner said.

Banner described what school looks like for some of their friends at other schools, how some of their peers struggle with not being accepted. “I have some friends who go to other schools, they get called slurs 24/7,” Banner said.

Banner feels that Loudoun County High School is more inclusive than others in the county, explaining “I'm glad that I'm in a school that's much better.” While “there's still bullying, theres still people who call you names because your queer. We're definitely making a stand.” •



On September 27, 62 students gathered at the front of Loudoun County High School. These students were there in support of trans-students rights and protection. Photo by Neal Augenstein.

Renovation transforms school art room

Berek Harrison | Staff Writer

Last summer, renovations were completed to the art rooms after almost two decades of requests.

According to art teacher **Stephanie Woshner**, one of the main reasons for the renovation was lack of space, especially compared to the newer schools like Lightridge and Independence. “Our whole art department could fit in one of their art rooms,” Woshner said. “They are nicer than what I had in art school. Like when I was in college.”

Woshner believed the recent renovation has been needed since the art room was renovated two decades ago. “The renovation to the art room was done to increase the amount of usable classroom space,” Woshner said. “We needed to get the sinks against the wall so that it opens up more space.” The renovation also allows for more storage of

student work, which was lacking before, according to Woshner.

The renovation is giving more students the ability to follow their passions, Woshner said, allowing more students or teaching assistants in the room. “There’s a better flow, better storage, better organization,” she said.

The renovation gave students improved storage and much more room to work. Originally, the sinks in Woshner’s art room were on an island. “In a small space like that, it just eliminated some of the class,” Woshner said. “It made too much of the classroom unusable.” Before the renovation, large flat files were used to store artwork. They took up too much space and were replaced with vertical storage slots. “Whoever designed the room [originally] did it very poorly,” Woshner said.

The renovations had originally been scheduled for the summer of 2021, but other construction around the school

took priority. “It didn’t happen because they had to do all the room dividing upstairs on the second floor,” Woshner said. “So we were kind of upset and disappointed.”

Woshner and art teacher **Kyla Jenkins** met after the renovation was delayed to find other ways to increase space. They made a plan to move the clay area into the unused courtyard. “We did suggest it to Dr. Luttrell, and she was on board, but they just went with the original plan,” Woshner said.

Like most projects that are requested of the district, the art renovations left school administration little choice about when construction would begin. One challenge of getting a renovation done is getting it approved. After a renovation request is sent to the county by the school principal, the school doesn’t have much control over whether a project is accepted, and when

it is implemented. “It’s not really the school’s administration that makes that decision,” assistant principal **Mark Patterson** said. “We don’t have a great deal of input here at the school.”

Students have the ability to contribute to changes to our building. Students are always welcome to make suggestions to principal **Michelle Luttrell**, according to assistant principal Mark Patterson. This can include suggestions from “students or faculty or parents, community members,” Patterson said. “We need all perspectives.”

While the county is processing future renovations, students can appreciate the huge improvements to the art room.

“Last year was really cramped. Like I couldn’t even get to like through the tables,” sophomore **Are Alcon** said. “But with the renovation, the tables are more spaced out, so there is much more room to work.” •



Student artwork is stored in the new vertical storage slots. Photo by Berek Harrison.



Above: Photos of the art room before and during renovation. Photos courtesy of Stephanie Washner. Below: The newly-renovated art room features sinks in a more space-efficient location, among other improvements. Photo by Berek Harrison.



Cross country team welcomes new coaches

Alexa Sterner & Taylor Helfer | Staff Writers

This fall, students are joined by two new voices on the track. This year, the cross country team welcomed LCPS teachers **Jeff Rudy** and **Seth Beck** to join head coach **Courtney Campbell** in teaching students and athletes to become better people.

For assistant coach Rudy, who teaches dual enrollment English, this wasn't his first year coaching cross country. In fact, this is actually his 17th year as a coach. But, the road to coaching hadn't even originated from his love for running. In high school, Rudy didn't even have a cross country team.

Rudy's athletic director at his last high school asked him to become a coach simply because he exercised. Though he hadn't run cross country himself, he immediately researched the sport. "My athletic director paid for me to go to coaching clinics to study with some of the best minds in the running world: college coaches, professional coaches, and olympic coaches. I'm still amazed at who I've spent time studying under," Rudy said.

After learning about cross country and studying from other professional and even olympic coaches, Rudy has had to learn how to balance being an English teacher and a coach. It wasn't always easy.

"I've learned over the years to juggle teaching and coaching, practices every day after school, the long bus rides to and from meets, and Saturday Invitationals," Rudy said. Perhaps the most difficult day-to-day challenge is simply the physical act of preparation for so many jobs. "Work satchel. Lunch pail. Gym bag. There's a lot to lug into school

every day, but I'm sure all student-athletes can relate to that," Rudy said.

Rudy coached at Strasburg High School for around 17 years. Strasburg, located 50 miles west from Loudoun County, only had about 600 students in the entire school, meaning his team was very small.

"Our team was small and every runner counted," Rudy said. At County, Rudy enjoys seeing so many students on the team.

Rudy says he still has some challenges to overcome as a coach. Rudy says that he "hates losing more than I like winning." That is why he takes his coaching seriously and pushes his athletes in order to teach them essential life skills for their futures.

"I know most of my athletes aren't interested in running in college, but I can instill in them life-long lessons about time management, exercise, sportsmanship, work ethic, friendship and camaraderie," Rudy said.

All of Rudy's experience and opportunities have allowed him to become one of the best coaches he can be. In fact, in 2019, Rudy was said to be the Cross Country Coach of the year by Northern Virginia Daily.

"He's very encouraging and inspiring. I have learned a lot from him and he educates me on the techniques to make me a better runner," freshman runner **Caitlyn Kozowyk** said.

Unlike Rudy, Beck has never coached a cross country team before. Not only has he never coached, but he had never run cross country as a sport. But, he loves running and thought this would be a great opportunity.

Beck said he loves cross country "because I love to run and the whole running community as a



Coach Rudy and Coach Beck pose in front of the cafeteria while stretching before practice for the day. Rudy and Beck both joined the cross country team this year as assistant coaches. Photo by Cat Pizzarello.

whole."

As well as coaching in his free time, Beck is working as a second grade teacher at Arcola Elementary School. The steps into becoming a coach here were definitely tough but rewarding.

The baseball coach at Strasburg, **Matthew Landers**, reached out to him about a potential opportunity. "He knew I loved running. Then he introduced me to Coach Campbell," Beck said. The rest is history.

With the introduction of Beck and Rudy, the cross country team is bonding well together. Everyone is pushing themselves to do better.

"They have a great community of runners. Everyone is doing a great job of pushing themselves to beat their personal record," Beck said.

Being a cross country coach and being a teacher on top of it all

takes up a lot of free time each day, but along with the athletes, Beck is pushing himself to beat his own personal record.

Beck enjoys "Spending time together, encouraging each other, and pushing each other to reach our goals."

While Beck is coaching people to become better athletes, he is also coaching them to have life skills. Beck describes the team as a "great community of runners."

The guys team has placed in the top 10 which is great. Five girls all ran under 23 minutes for the 5K, which means the girls have a chance of making regionals. Looking to the future, Campbell states, "I hope it goes well. I hope they keep going with the two of them and Coach Perkins, who is a volunteer assistant. I have a really good coaching staff." •

Varsity football makes history with a comeback win over Tuscarora

Tae Herron | Staff Writer

Varsity football made history this football season by knocking off the team that's been our problem the last few years.

The Captains were successful on September 30 against the Tuscarora Huskies in football for the first time in seven years.

"It was awesome," head coach **Matthew Reidenbaugh** said. "Kids did a great job, players had a great week of practice, so I'm just proud of those guys to cap off a great week of prep with a win."

This game was preparation for the playoffs due to the bad weather, skill of the other team and the good

coaching.

"I thought it was a great preview for what we're going to see in a month from now in November when we start getting to some playoff games," Reidenbaugh said. "You're going to see good teams, you're going to have bad weather and you're going to need a great week of practice."

Despite having a key player missing against a good team, the team were still able to get the big win.

"We're really fortunate to have a lot of great backups, you know, it was such a big team win," Reidenbaugh said. "I thought the guys

continued on page 9



Senior tight end Joey Fitzpatrick started the Captains' 0-14 comeback run off when he scored their first six points of the night. The Captains were later successful 20-14. Photo courtesy of Jim Klimavicz.

continued from page 8

that needed to step up stepped up, and they had a great night did a great job.”

After losing 14-0 in the first seven minutes of the game, the Captains were able to get it together after fixing simple problems.

“Our assistant coaches did a great job fixing some things on defense, and once we fixed that it was just easy to settle into the game, and we got a couple of stops and then you know, the rest was

history,” Reidenbaugh said.

It started when captains scored their first touchdown of the night to make the score 6-14, which was scored by senior tight end **Joey Fitzpatrick**.

“I had our first touchdown to put some points on the board,” Fitzpatrick said. “It got us really energized and put a spark on the team when down 14-0. It helped bring the team hopes back alive.”

They then scored again after a good fumble recovery, which was

stripped by senior middle linebacker **Matthew Jackmore**.

“We were losing 6-14 at that point, and we needed a big play, and I got a strip and my teammate **Aaron DiLorenzo** recovered it for a touchdown,” Jackmore said.

With the Captains still down on their comeback run 12-14, they scored again and converted on a two-point conversion to help them win 20-14.

“I was looking for an open man to throw the ball to, but then I

saw a hole that my good blockers created and I used it and ran for 50-plus yards and a touchdown to put us in the lead 18-14,” senior quarterback **Zach Hensh** said. “Then we decided to go for the extra two points, which we were successful with when I gave it to Dean to run it in.”

MaxPeps rank the Captains in the Top 30 of all Virginia high schools as playoffs are only a few games away and they remain undefeated. •

Cece Tomaszewski is a Junior Olympian



Cece Tomaszewski dribbles the ball upfield for a shot on goal versus Heritage High School on October 17. LCHS won against Heritage. Photo courtesy of Jim Klimavicz.

Alexa Sterner | Staff Writer

There were 90 seconds left and the game was tied in the fourth quarter. Then the coach called a corner where sophomore **Cece Tomaszewski** was the striker. Tomaszewski scored on the corner and won the game for her team at the National Club Championship.

Through her travel hockey team, Metro Field Hockey Club, Tomaszewski developed the skills necessary to play in the Junior Olympics.

“I wanted to play ice hockey and then a family friend convinced my mom to have me try field hockey, and then I liked it,” Tomaszewski said.

Tomaszewski started playing

field hockey in third grade and has been playing for seven years.

Though field hockey makes life busy, “It’s like a de-stressor,” Tomaszewski said. “I get to see my teammates around school and it’s really fun, lots of friendships came from it.”

Tomaszewski was at home when she received a call from **Ralph Goodwin**, head coach of Metro Field Hockey Club. Goodwin told Tomaszewski to check her email, where it was announced that she was admitted into the Junior Olympics.

“I was probably speechless for about five minutes,” Tomaszewski said.

Prior to being selected, Tomaszewski joined a field hockey team called Nexus. Once athletes

sign up, the thousands of players are divided into regions depending on their location. Through extensive selection processes, players are then eliminated by cutting the teams in half for each region, continuing until the best players, a total of 144 athletes, are left. Finally, they go to the Nexus championship.

That is the selection process for the Junior Olympics.

For pre-game rituals, Tomaszewski says her songs rotate weekly and play what she is feeling. Usually in the club league, Tomaszewski always wears a certain necklace. Before the high school games, Tomaszewski taps the end of her stick three times on the ground before the referee blows the

whistle, which is a thing with her dad.

But more than good luck rituals, Tomaszewski focuses on skills she can demonstrate.

“I try and be a good leader to my teammates, and always try and be positive and helpful and just try and be the best teammate that I can be,” Tomaszewski said.

Tomaszewski describes herself as a good leader as a player.

“My parents were always really supportive and same with my friends,” Tomaszewski said. “Especially **Katie Clark**.”

Clark went to the Junior Olympics and played on the same Nexus team with Tomaszewski.

While playing for the Junior Olympics was exciting, Tomaszewski admits it was stressful at times, especially since college scouts tend to watch these events.

“How you play in every game and your body language, and how you manage, all of that plays into effect about how colleges see you,” Tomaszewski said.

She tries to stay positive or she says it affects her game. She also tells herself, “Even if I mess up, I say it’s okay”.

For future plans, Tomaszewski says she wouldn’t want to go pro because you can’t get paid for it, but Tomaszewski wants to play in college.

Tomaszewski thinks that someone who isn’t quite sure about playing field hockey should try it.

“It’s a really great sport, and you’ll find a lot of great friendships and teammates throughout the time,” Tomaszewski said.

Tomaszewski has learned so much from being in the junior olympics, but some things that stand out are “have fun with it, really enjoy it,” she said. “It can get really stressful at times, but just think about the good moments, stay positive, and keep working.” •

Athletic Hall of Fame 2022-2023



Along with a County game pass to visit any of our high school games, inductees also have their picture hung on the Athletic Hall of Fame wall with their name, year and title. The wall displays inducted members dating back to 2014. Photo by Cat Pizzarello.

Cat Pizzarello | Managing Editor

The Annual Athletic Hall of Fame inductees of the 2022-2023 school year have been carefully selected, honoring this year's athletes, coaches, administrators and supporters who excelled in the athletic department here at our school. Those inducted must be nominated by any member of the community that thinks would be worthy of the award.

Athletes who compete in sports as a high school athlete are eligible to be inducted into the Hall of Fame 10 years after they graduate. Coaches, administrators and other supporters are eligible for this membership five years after they leave County.

All individuals nominated for this must have a great deal of respect and dedication to Loudoun County sports and display their "recognition, distinction and excellence" towards the sports department. Board members of LCHS then come to a decision of who will receive the honor of being inducted.

This year's inductees include contributor and coach **John Brown** (1986-1997), coach **Sherrilyn Hanna** (2004-2017) and her daughter, a volleyball player and coach, **Julianne Hanna** (2006-2010), basketball and soccer player **Brittany Batts** (2007-2011), track and field thrower **Sara Ballenger** (1979-1983), and track and field long distance runner **Tommy Curtin** (2007-2011).

JOHN BROWN

Brown taught at JL Simpson Middle School for thirty-two years while also coaching basketball and golf at County helping them win several district and region championships and going on to state championships as well. Brown's daughter, **Jenica Brown**, took over the girls varsity volleyball team. "The program before was getting killed. I mean getting destroyed and I said we got to do something."

"I had 157 girls for volleyball. Four days a week," Brown said. Still remaining today, Brown created an after school girls volleyball program at Simpson to help prepare young girls for varsity high school volleyball.

Brown has two kids, Jenica and **Jared Brown** who were also involved in the sports programs at county and whom he believes deserve this honorable award over himself. "I don't deserve it. I mean, I love County. I love it and I don't get back as much as I should," Brown said.

Now retired, Brown says that he runs an "uber service" for his four grandkids. "My wife was lonely so I retired. My last year of teaching was just fantastic though," Brown said.

"Always encourage. I'm the ultimate encourager. Don't set limitations on kids," Brown said. His advice to teachers, coaches and administrators was simple. "encourage, encourage, encourage."

JULIANNE & SHERRILYN HANNA

A vital part of the girls varsity volleyball program the first time the team went to state championships, Julianne Hanna and her mother, Sherrilyn Hanna both were a part of County volleyball for many years, playing and coaching.

"I graduated in 2010, then went off to college and then came back to coach, got rung into it by my mom here," Julianne said. Julianne coached JV volleyball for three years, while her mother, Sherrilyn, coached at Simpson and took over the program before coming to County to coach JV and varsity for a few years.

"Somewhat always remembered, although the pictures are fading," Julianne said in response to being inducted. Julianne expressed that as a competitive player that always strived for success, that she feels very honored to be a part of County

still. Julianne and her mother's time at County came with many successes. "We won four state titles and then I took to retirement," Sherrilyn said. Both admit that the state championships were undoubtedly the best parts of their careers at County.

"Particularly the first two years we went to states, we had bus loads of kids coming to cheer us on," Julianne said.

"We were the team on top," Sherrilyn said. "The student section was amazing." This was the first time that County's volleyball team had really been noticed. "Lots of pride in the team and their school," said Sherrilyn.

Following her "glory years" at County, Julianne went on to play volleyball at the University of New Mexico, then transferring a year later back to her hometown Missouri and attending Central Missouri University. "Ended up getting injured and the doctor said I was done," Julianne said, noting that it took her a while to understand, "Sports does not define me."

An analogy Julianne said for all high school students was what she called the "Snow Globe Effect." "You're in a little bit of a protective bubble [in high school] because you don't have all of life's responsibilities, but you are being put in a situation where you are having to make some important decisions, that to you, are life or death," Julianne said.

"The only time I was able to breathe during the season was the last few points of each state finals," said Julianne. Always a fighter, Julianne helped her team through the multiple state championships. "When you're County volleyball, everyone is on your back."

BRITTANY BATTS

A part of County's basketball and soccer teams for her four years at County, Batts took part in many of the girls basketball

team's state championships and state semi-final games. "Played basketball for four years at Gannon University. I started coaching right out of college and now I coach back at Gannon," Batts said.

"It's really nice to come back home for a bit and see some familiar faces," Batts said. Batts described County having a "very supportive atmosphere" and hopes that it is still like that to this day.

One of her core values while playing at County and now while coaching is building strong relationships with your teammates. "Relationships drive results, and I think that is why we were so successful because we got along so well," Batts said.

Relationships were of utmost importance to her and why she believed the team had as much success as it did. "To understand each other on the court, if you develop relationships off the court you will see a lot more success on the court too," Batts said.

SARA BALLENGER

On the track and field throwing teams all throughout high school and into college, Ballenger has had many accomplishments within her throwing career. Following throwing in high school, Ballenger went to Ricks College, now Brigham Young University-Idaho, then 2 years later going to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, both on full athletic scholarships.

"Never paid an ounce for school... They gave me a stipend to spend on shoes and clothes, anything I would need for the sport," Ballenger said. When attending a Division 1 school, Ballenger explains that you are now an employee representing the school.

"It was a team sport, even if it was individual," Ballenger said. The county girls track team back then would regularly go out for pizza and ice cream after

practices. “It was really a good collaborative team, we worked really well together,” Ballenger said.

As for school life at County, Ballenger enjoyed her time as a LCHS student. “I had fun in school and I was also a big part of the marching band,” Ballenger said.

“I won state champion in high school as a junior when I wasn't even supposed to be anything,” Ballenger said. Winning again as a senior in high school, Ballenger continues to set records in her college career at BYU winning national junior college shot and discus. “There have been a lot of good memories along the way,” Ballenger said.

TOMMY CURTIN

Cross country, track and once professional runner, Tommy Curtin, who still holds the 3200m race record at County, is the final

inductee. After running for county, Curtin ran at the collegiate level at Virginia Tech.

“I was super successful running wise. I won a lot of ACC titles and was also one of the best in the nation near the end of my college career,” Curtin said. Curtin finished runner-up in the NCAA 5k and graduated from Virginia Tech with a bachelor's in sociology, “Which I will likely never use,” Curtin said.

Succeeding in college, Curtin continues his running career as a professional athlete sponsored by a company “to run me in circles.”

“They paid me a salary and paid for all my gear and travel. Really cool gig honestly,” Curtin said. Curtin has had success professionally, most notable for his second place finish at the US Road 5k Championships in 2017.

Curtin was the only inductee that seemed to have mixed feel-

ings on his induction. “I actually no longer run and running isn't something I think on much any more because there's some sadness there,” Curtin said. “There are a lot of things I was never able to accomplish in the sport that I wanted to before I stopped running.”

Near the start of the pandemic Curtin got COVID-19, coughing so hard that he herniated a disc in his spine that prevents him from running to the extremes he did before.

“Now I work a boring (unless you're a tech/computer nerd) desk job doing Tech Support for an email cybersecurity company and I recently moved back to this general area,” Curtin said after making the decision to give running a break. “Loudoun County High School did get me a pretty wife that's been with me through this whole journey though,” Curtin said.

County cross country and the many sports at county have many traditions and rituals that take place before big competitions. “Our pre race team chant right before a race was 1, 2, 3, SMOKIN' BOOTS,” Curtin said.

“My favorite race memory: In college I won my first ACC title in a pretty tight race,” Curtin said. Only winning by 0.15 seconds, Curtin's coach jumped onto the track to celebrate. “Then he shouted some...colorful words in the general direction of the rival team's coach,” Curtin said. “I think I won out of sheer desire to win and not really talent or ability necessarily.”

Some advice for the high school students of LCHS, “High school sort of sucks,” Curtin says. “People have stuff going on that you won't ever realize and younger people's cruelty (whether intended or not) is honestly horrible sometimes.” •

VARSITY SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

- 9/1 vs. Millbrook 34-14 W
- 9/9 vs. Potomac Falls 26-0 W
- 9/16 vs. Broad Run 27-6 W
- 9/23 vs. Valley 42-14 W
- 9/30 vs. Tuscarora 20-14 W
- 10/7 vs. Dominion 63-6 W
- 10/14 vs. Lightridge 27-7 W
- 10/21 vs. Indepence 27-21 W

VOLLEYBALL

- 8/13 vs. John Handley 0-3 L
- 8/25 vs. Riverside 2-3 L
- 8/30 vs. Briar Woods 2-3 L
- 8/32 vs. Stone Bridge 0-3 L
- 9/06 vs. Broad Run 3-0 W
- 9/08 vs. Lightridge 3-1 W
- 9/12 vs. Tuscarora 3-0 W
- 9/13 vs. Valley 3-1 W
- 9/15 vs. Dominion 3-2 W
- 9/19 vs. Rock Ridge 1-3 L
- 9/20 vs. Heritage 3-2 W
- 9/22 vs. Park View 3-0 W
- 9/29 vs. Broad Run 3-2 W
- 10/03 vs. Lightridge 3-1 W
- 10/06 vs. Tuscarora 3-1 W
- 10/11 vs. Dominion 0-3 L
- 10/12 vs. Valley 0-3 L
- 10/13 vs. Rockridge 0-3 L
- 10/17 vs. Heritage 3-0 W

CHEER

- 2nd in 4A Districts Competition
- 1st in 4A Regions Competition

FIELD HOCKEY

- 8/22 vs. Freedom 6-2 W
- 8/24 vs. Independence 0-5 L
- 8/25 vs. Woodgrove 1-0 W
- 8/30 vs. Stone Bridge 4-1 W
- 8/31 vs. Briar Woods 2-3 L
- 9/06 vs. Kettle Run 6-0 W
- 9/13 vs. Park View 5-0 W
- 9/15 vs. Liberty 5-0 W
- 9/20 vs. Broad Run 4-0 W
- 9/22 vs. Lightridge 2-0 W
- 9/28 vs. Tuscarora 7-1 W
- 10/03 vs. Dominion 0-1 L
- 10/6 vs. Valley 0-1 L
- 10/12 vs. Rock Ridge 6-0 W
- 10/17 vs. Heritage 7-1 W

CROSS COUNTRY

- 9/03 Hood College HS Invitational - Varsity Boys 17th, Varsity Girls 22nd
- 9/17 Escape The Rock Invitational - Varsity Boys 4th, Varsity Girls 10th
- 9/21 Oatlands Mini #1 - Boys 2nd, Girls 4th
- 9/24 Oatlands Invitational - Varsity Boys 36th, Varsity Girls 56th
- 9/28 Oatlands Mini #2 - Boys 4th, Girls 3rd
- 10/12 Lightridge Meet (BW, LC, R, JC) - Varsity Boys 1st, Varsity Girls 2nd
- 10/15 Third Battle Invitational - Varsity Boys 14th, Varsity Girls 14th
- 10/25 Dulles District XC Championship - Varsity Boys 6th, Varsity Girls 7th
- 11/02 Region 4C XC Championships - Blake Connor & Randy White advanced

GOLF

- 8/3 - Curly Licklider Invitational - 1st place - Low Medalist - Nick Alexander (68)
- 8/8 - George Pavlis Invite - 4th Place out of 21 Teams
- 8/11- LCPS Championship - 2nd place
- 8/15 - Dominion Match - LOSS - 176-167
- 8/16 - Potomac Falls Match - TIE
- 8/23 - Loudoun Valley Match - WIN 147-163
- 8/29 - Tuscarora Match - WIN
- 9/6 - Lightridge match - WIN 153-164
- 9/8 - Broad Run Match - WIN
- 9/13 - Heritage Match - WIN 148-154
- 9/14 - Rock Ridge - WIN
- 9/20 - Bryan Gunter Invite - 1st Place - Low Medalist - Nick Alexander (66)
- 9/22 - Dulles District Championship - 1st Place - Low Medalist - Nick Alexander (68)
- 10/6 - Region 4C Championship - 1st Place
- 10/18 - Class 4 State Championship - 3rd Place (All State Performers: Liam Howard (71) and Nick Alexander (72))

Wellness Wednesday in photos

Tae Herron | Staff Writer

Family and Consumer Science teacher **Dorene Kuebler** hosts Wellness Wednesday to help de-stress students from school. Once per quarter there are different activities for students to participate in for an hour to start their day. Activities include watching a movie, playing games, and drawing to help students relax their minds from school work which can be very stressful. •



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1) Mateen Hooshman, Ian Myers, Caleb Cruz, and Jady O'Donnell compete in a Uno game.

2) Students gather in the auditorium to watch the TV show Schitt's Creek.

3) Liv Miller, Sharon Manni, Penelope Kern, and Camryn Kolodziej decide to start off their Wednesday making some cupcakes.

4) Starting a good Wednesday off lifting some weight done by junior Gavin Goetsch.

5) Sketching is being done by senior Spencer Wride to release some school stress.

Photos by Tae Herron.

School counselor Jarrel Taylor supports students



Jarrel Taylor pauses in his office between appointments. Taylor's duties include making schedule changes and collaborating with parents and students, so most of his time is spent meeting with students. Photo by Karen Martinez.

Karen Martinez | Staff Writer

During his teenage years in high school **Jarrel Taylor** was told he wasn't college material by his school counselor which didn't have a positive impact on him. "I had a school counselor who basically told me I wasn't college material, so I wanted to be something different than what I had experienced," Taylor said. This incident made him realize that he wanted to be someone better than what he had.

Taylor now tries to have a positive impact on others, especially on students, and specifically students of color, by influencing them and encouraging them to challenge themselves by taking advantage of their opportunities.

"I originally planned on being an accounting major but quickly realized that I was not a math person," Taylor said. After realizing that being an accountant wasn't for him, he started to think about being a school counselor.

The people around him motivated him by tending to tell him personal details about their lives and always asking him for advice. This is when he decided to switch from an accountant major to psychology in his

freshman year of college.

This is Taylor's second year at LCHS working as a school counselor. Taylor has been working with us as a community for the past two years after working at Rock Ridge High School. Throughout his career he has made new memories, experiences, and friends.

"The students are very balanced, where I came from, it was almost as if everyone was kind of competitive at times," Taylor said. Taylor has had different experiences at both LCHS and Rock Ridge High School (RHS). He prefers working with his current students and colleagues.

"Overall the environment is very friendly and we have supportive staff and teachers," Taylor said. So far Taylor has had a good experience working with new students, counseling colleagues, and parents.

Apart from enjoying his experience at LCHS, Taylor makes sure his students feel like they aren't alone when going through rough patches in their lives. He understands that high school can be overwhelming for students. Whenever a student has a problem Taylor tries his best to help them out and make a big impact on them no matter what the situation might be.

"The number one thing I'd say to a student going through a hard time is don't go through it alone," Taylor said. Students going through a hard time majority of the time think they're alone and don't speak up, but there are many trusted adults who can help, such as school counselors.

"Make sure you are sharing your issues with someone you trust, whether it's your parents or friends," Taylor said. It's never too late to tell someone like a school counselor what you're going through rather than staying quiet. "You're never in trouble for falling down, we just want to make sure that you are utilizing the supports that are in place to help you get over the thump," Taylor said.

Although Taylor enjoys being a school counselor because he gets to learn more about his students, there can come a component where it can get stressful. Students bringing in problems unexpectedly and working on academic schedules can weigh down a school counselor. Many counselors think that it's unfortunate how parents may think all they do is work on academic schedules which can make school counselors feel very unappreciated and unimportant.

"It's very important that we have

self-care outside of school, like making sure we're getting plenty of sleep, doing activities we enjoy, hanging out with friends," Taylor said.

There are multiple ways a school counselor can relieve some stress from work. Besides getting plenty of sleep and doing enjoyable activities a school counselor can take some mental days off, having good mental health means being able to serve students. "Making sure that our self-care is our main priority is good because if we don't take care of ourselves, then we probably wouldn't be able to serve our students in a proper way," Taylor said.

Overall, Taylor aspires to serve and inspire others, especially his students this year, and to be the role model he didn't have back in high school. For the past two years he has had an enjoyable experience working with new students and colleagues, making new memories with us as a community and will probably do so depending on how things may go for Taylor.

"The best aspect about being a school counselor is knowing that you have impacted somebody else's life in a positive way," Taylor said. •

After pandemic, teachers embrace normalcy

Tae Herron | Staff Writer

Teachers are relieved to be back into the regular routine of seeing their students after having to deal with things like interacting with a faceless student on a screen, worrying about whether the students are listening, and having to be in a classroom by themselves.

After having schools shut down abruptly on March 12, 2020, teachers moved to online learning through Google Meets, where they looked at virtual icons online to indicate that a student was present. Few, if any, students turned their cameras on, so it was never clear if they were engaged in the lesson or not.

“It is a relief to teach students and be able to see them instead of an Among Us icon,” English teacher **Tracie Lane** said about returning to in-person learning. “Being in person means that I can observe when students are off task or struggling with instruction.”

The feeling of being back into a normal environment feels really good to staff and teachers after shifting from online to hybrid learning, which happened

in early 2021, when teachers had to teach most students online and some in person.

“Hearing all of the students talking, laughing, hugging and engaging in conversation warms my heart,” Reading Specialist **Valerie Rife** said. “I truly enjoy seeing student's expressions and the freedom they exhibit without fear.”

Staff were struggling with things being different due to COVID and are still struggling since students got addicted to their devices since they were on them all the time during COVID.

“I think the cell phone policy this year is a direct connection to how attached students got to their phones during the pandemic,” English teacher **Beth Williams** said.

Teachers were frustrated with how students have got addicted to their devices and feel like the class has changed because of it.

“It's been such a horrible distraction and especially for me as an art teacher, it's made the quality of work suffer greatly.

The art has been good but not as good as in years past, when everyone was less attached to their devices.” Art teacher **Kyla**

Jenkins said.

The last two years were really a challenge for staff with having to teach and do their jobs differently than normal with school completely virtual, then some virtual some at home, then required masking August 2021 with in-person learning, to optional masking.

“I hated teaching via Google Meet. It was awful lecturing at 25 little black boxes with little to no responses. I was so worried about the students as well, not knowing if they or their families were doing okay with their mental and physical health,” social science teacher **Jamee Robinson** said.

Teaching online was very uncomfortable for staff members with them looking at just icons because most students chose to keep their cameras off.

“My camera was off all the time and during that time I will be playing my Playstation with friends because online learning was difficult for me to understand,” senior **Dylan Nguyen** said.

Teachers were ready for the switch back to students in the actual classroom instead of on

the computer screen.

“Digital instruction and having to teach how to do everything virtually instead of in person was very draining,” social science teacher **Pamela Davidson** said. “The expectations of teachers and students alike were astronomical. We all tried our best at the time, but it's been a wonderful reset button for the classroom and school in general.”

The pandemic made students' actions different after most students learned at home for over a year.

“In my experience, students learned how to voice their needs and become strong self advocates,” CTE teacher **Stephane Longchamp** said.

Building relationships with students feels more special this time since it's been a while since staff was actually able to.

“The need to build a relationship with students has never been more prevalent. This relationship allows us to challenge students to think critically, but allow them to know that we will be there to support them along the journey,” Math Teacher **Jarrod Brown** said. •

Underclassmen courts: Students divided over the new addition to Homecoming

Olivia DeWan | Co-Editor-In-Chief

Sparkling lights, glittering dresses, the Friday night football game, are all things we associate with homecoming. During the pep-rally, the underclassmen would stare longing from the bleachers as seniors performed humorous skits on the gym floor, in awe of how their older peers could do this without embarrassment. Normally, the senior class elects twenty candidates to the royalty court. The underclassmen aren't involved in the election portion of the event.

That's changing this year.

Now, the freshmen, sophomore, and junior class elect two people to their own courts. The process starts with self-nomination, then the grades voted for the people they wished to represent their class. This election is completely separate from the upperclassmen voting court, which also starts with self-nomination.

“I think having more of the school participating in home-

coming, the more fun it will be for the school as a whole,” senior and SCA President **Alex Ahedo** said. “The underclassmen get their own separate court so they can still be involved.”

Underclassmen are the majority in attendance at the actual dance. As a general understanding, upperclassmen tend to skip it in favor of other activities, such as a dinner in DC.

That leads into the big question: do underclassmen deserve to have their own courts if they are the ones who participate most in the dance?

“Most of the people who go to homecoming are underclassmen so it is only fair if they receive something that increases their enjoyment of the homecoming traditions,” Ahedo said. “It is so fun for all the classes to see who would be put on the court from their class.”

The new idea was proposed by the SCA in order to encourage inclusion of all grades.

“We thought the entire school would be more invested if it was not just limited to seniors,” SCA

sponsor **Jamee Robinson** said. “Seniors have a lot of events that mark their final year in school, but Homecoming is for everyone.”

However, not all agree.

“It just seems like it's taking away from the seniors,” senior **Melinna Wightman** said. “I can see the juniors having their own court, but other than that I don't like it.”

According to Wightman, underclassmen should not have their own court because they are too new to the school. They haven't experienced all four years, and therefore, can't appreciate the time and persistence it requires to reap the senior benefits.

“I think it's unfair to the juniors and seniors,” sophomore **Jordan Garman** said. “Having the underclassmen more involved just seems unnecessary.”

Many students worried that this would be the start to the removal of more senior privileges.

“The underclassmen courts have no effect on the senior court or any of their traditions,”

Ahedo said. “The underclassmen only receive a small recognition during the homecoming pep rally. They do not walk out during the football game or perform a skit, which are the seniors' traditions.”

The inclusion that the SCA is seeking seems to come at the cost of seniors' anger.

“Underclassmen should not have more participation,” senior **Kimberly Terry** said. “They can do homecoming court in their senior year. It's a thing to look forward to, just like prom. It will be harder for us seniors to have that experience we waited for.”

In addition, a handful of underclassmen expressed their own concern with the change.

“I think it's kind of dumb to have underclassmen up there on the court,” sophomore **Katelyn Lederman** said. “I don't think it will make it less enjoyable, but I think it might give some students a “superiority complex,” because they'll be like “I was on hoco court when I was a sophomore.”

In contrast, many underclassmen are excited about their courts.

"It's really cool," freshmen **Brooklyn Dungan** said. "Everyone gets a say."

While the student body might be at odds regarding the homecoming courts, the senior class candidates have still been campaigning hard. Instagram is flooded with posters and videos to rally the support of voters.

"I still don't feel great about it," junior Ava Pietrzak said. "Lots of the seniors don't want to go because of it, and now that I'm an upperclassman a ton of my friends are refusing to go as well."

Some of the challenges of this change still need to be ironed out.

"We are still working out the logistics," Robinson said. "For example, when, where, and how do we recognize the underclassmen court while also balancing recognizing that this is seniors' last Homecoming, especially with this current senior class who, at the present time, have had their high school experience most affected by COVID?"

The compromise was as follows: recognizing the underclassmen at the pep rally and leaving the tradition of recognizing the female court at the football game.

"I would love to see the Court as a representation of school spirit," Robinson said. "For example, some schools base the Homecoming Court on who dresses up the most for Spirit Week and the Homecoming "King" is crowned based on student votes after having seen costumes and such. The SCA will be discussing the format of the Court in the future and will probably put together some sort of device to collect student thoughts." •



Seniors **Ej Faal** (right) and **Leina Young** (left) campaign together, both hoping for victory. Faal made bracelets that said "Vote Ej" and passed them out at school. Photo from Ej Faal's Instagram story.

Thoughts From The Hoco Queen, Leina Young



Photo by **John Klimavicz**

Q: How does it feel to be Queen?

A: "I was honestly so surprised! I was so happy that I did it because I know my parents were so proud of me in that moment."

Q: What do you think about the underclassmen courts?

A: "The underclassmen courts were a nice addition. Hoco is a school-wide event, so it makes that the courts would be too."

Why County Captains stand for the Pledge of Allegiance

An informal poll sent out to Loudoun County students exhibits students' confessions about their knowledge of the pledge.



The American flag waves proudly over the iconic front lawn of Loudoun County High School each day. Like all Virginia schools, County recites the Pledge of Allegiance every morning, but students are not forced to participate. Photo by by Maisy Davies.

Rachel Edgar & Maisy Davies | Staff Writers

The Pledge of Allegiance is a symbol of the alliance between citizens and non-citizens of the United States. Although it is recited every day in schools across the nation, it is infrequently taught that reciting the pledge is a choice for every individual. The United States

Constitution is based on the core value of freedom, and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance is a choice. The 2022-23 Student Rights and Responsibilities booklet for Loudoun County Public Schools echoes the Code of Virginia in stating that while the Pledge will be recited daily, “no student shall be compelled to recite the Pledge if the student or the parent or guardian

objects on religious, philosophical, or other grounds to the students participating in this exercise.” A recent poll of over 70 students reveals that about half of participants stand during the Pledge of Allegiance with 12% saying they “never” or “sometimes” stand. Some students' reasons for not standing include inequality in relation to “justice for all,” religious

freedoms, and citizenship. Some even describe America as “a cult.” On the other hand, students who do stand explain their reasoning as respecting that “people died for our country” and “it is tradition,” while some admit to simply following the crowd. 66% of the responses admit to not knowing the history behind the Pledge or why it is recited daily. Do you? •



A BRIEF HISTORY OF



THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1892

Francis Bellamy writes the Pledge of Allegiance to celebrate the 400th anniversary of **Christopher Columbus's** landing on American soil, writing an accompanying passage for **Daniel Sharp Ford's** magazine Youth's Companion in an attempt to make the country more patriotic. The first pledge is recited in American schools.

1923

The words "my flag" are replaced with "the flag of the United States of America".

1942

The "Bellamy Salute," a hand gesture reminiscent of the "Heil Hitler" Salute, became the focus of unwanted attention after the rise of fascism and World War II brewing in Europe. Congress amends the law to say that the Pledge of Allegiance should "be rendered by standing with the right hand over the heart."

1954

President Eisenhower requests the addition of the phrase "under God" to restore religious faith in America.

1998

A lawsuit is filed in Florida to remove the phrase "under God" from the Pledge. The lawsuit is dismissed.

2000

A lawsuit is filed in California arguing that forcing students to recite the words "under God" violates the First Amendment. This is dismissed by the Supreme Court.

2005

Parents joined the 2000 lawsuit in Sacramento, California to have the phrase "under God" removed. However, the lawsuit is denied by the U.S. Court of Appeals.

2014

Massachusetts Supreme Court rules that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance is patriotic, and not an act of religion, and therefore the words "under God" do not discriminate.

Students and teachers react to Queen Elizabeth's death

William Kluttz | Staff Writer

While **Nancy Thomas'** government class was going on, the news of **Queen Elizabeth's** death broke. "One of my students...broke the news while we were in class and I just wanted to cry, she actually said, 'Are you crying?' and I said 'yes.'"

"I wasn't too in touch with British politics, so I'm alright."

- Johnny Penberthy, 12

"(My Mom) was devastated. She was crying. She was texting me all day. She was sad about it. It was awful."

- Will Frye, 11

"I was saddened to hear about Queen Elizabeth's death – I lived in Scotland for 2 years and Bermuda for 2 years, so I grew up seeing her face on everything, including the money I used... I think it will be very interesting to see what happens to the British monarchy going forward since I don't see any of the current royals having the same allure that she did, but I could be wrong. But it makes me wonder how much longer the monarchy will be around."

- Jamee Robinson, teacher

"Personally, it doesn't really affect me, so I don't really care."

- Cameron Harper, 10

"It broke my heart... I think it's because the relationship is more with her former daughter in law **Diana**, because Diana and I were the same age and I stayed up and I watched her wedding... and then I watched her funeral. So it was just kind of sad."

- Nancy Thomas, teacher



A BRIEF HISTORY OF

QUEEN ELIZABETH

1926

The Queen was born on April 21, 1926, in London.

1936

Originally, she was not expected to become Queen, but in 1936, her uncle, **Edward VIII**, abdicated the throne to marry the twice-divorced American **Wallis Simpson**. Her father, **George VI**, ascended the throne.

1944

The then princess Elizabeth was 13 when World War II began, and in 1944, at age 18 she was a truck driver and mechanic.

1947

In 1947, she married **Prince Philip of Greece**. The next year, Prince Charles, now **King Charles III** was born, the first of four.

1952

In 1952, Elizabeth's father, King George VI, died.

1953

Now Queen Elizabeth was crowned on June 2, 1953, at only 27 years old. One thing done by numerous monarchs throughout the world is the practice of knighting famous people from their respective countries. Among the people the Queen has knighted include **Winston Churchill**, **Paul McCartney**, **Elton John**, and **David Attenborough**.

1992

In 1992, the year the Queen described as her "Annus Horribilis" had involved a fire at Windsor castle, and the dissolution of the marriages of three of her children.

2002

In 2002, Queen Elizabeth celebrated 50 years as monarch, however this year also involved the deaths of her sister, **Margaret**, and her mother, also named **Elizabeth**.

2015

In 2015, the Queen became the longest ruling monarch in British history, passing **Queen Victoria's** previous record of 63 years.

2021

However, on April 9, 2021, the Queen's husband, Prince Philip, died at age 99 after 70 years of marriage.

2022

The following year, on September 9, the Queen herself died. She was 96, had ruled for 70 years, and had seen 15 prime ministers during her rule. Although as queen she never had any political power, throughout the UK, she was met with huge crowds of people saying their goodbyes.

Why I don't care that the Queen of England died

Liberty Harrison | *Co-Editor-in-Chief*

I have listened with confused disdain as much of the world around me began to grieve the death of former **Queen of England, Elizabeth II**, a woman who inherited title, wealth, and prestige through an outdated legacy of nepotism and who stood as a symbol of the fruits of English colonialism, fittingly represented by the jewels on the crown that symbolized her rule. The world mourned a woman who, despite overseeing the gaining of independence of over 55 countries, never apologized, in word or action, for the atrocities committed by the British Empire and who allowed several acts of colonial violence to happen under her reign. They tearfully bid goodbye to a woman who sought to protect her son, **Prince Andrew**, in the wake of pedophilia, rape, and sex trafficking allegations, choosing to reinforce rather than break the pattern of the rich and powerful using their privilege to protect even the most repulsive among them.

One of the most far-reaching and poignant legacies of the British is colonialism. The book, "All the Countries We've Ever Invaded: And the Few We Never Got Round To" by **Stuart Laycock**, tallies the countries Britain has never invaded as only 22. But more important than simple invasion is the long term exploitation, violence, and ruin that British colonialism brought to countries throughout Africa and Asia.

Although the most active period of British imperialism was over by the time Queen Elizabeth II began her reign, some acts of violence were still carried out under her supervision. One particularly horrifying example is the Mau Mau insurrection in Kenya, where in retaliation against Kenyan fighters, millions of Kenyans were tortured in detention camps.

As **Susan Kent**, author of "Africans and Britons in the Age of Empires" said in a Readers Digest interview, "She did not order or implement the actions [but] appears to not have done anything to prevent or constrain them either." Says Kent, "On the contrary, she celebrated the empire, remaining silent, publicly at least, while thousands and thousands and thousands of people in Africa and South Asia suffered at the hands of colonial administrators."

Many will argue that the queen had no real power by this period in history, but this is not exactly true. She continued to have influence over some governmental procedures throughout her reign, but

maybe more importantly, she was a beloved public figure to much of the world and a figure looked up to in global politics, and when she chose to allow a person to be pictured in friendly relations with her, or sought to speak on an issue, she had extensive impact on public opinion. That she chose at times specific people and issues to associate herself with shows that she understood the power of her influence. The fact that she chose not to bring that power to bear against colonial suffering is telling.

Apartheid South Africa also existed for nine years during Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Queen Elizabeth II also had a close personal relationship with **Nelson Mandela**, who she publicly supported in his fight against apartheid rule, and she also maintained a cordial public image with **Kwame Nkrumah**, the leader of the movement for Ghana's independence, and eventual first president. Queen Elizabeth II did travel throughout large swaths of Africa as she oversaw various countries' liberation.

Some have criticized her work, arguing that "benevolent colonialism" continued exploitation with a facade of morality, and to a certain extent I would have to agree, but it is true that she also made a real impact on the politics of the time, and in assisting to a degree in the independence of African nations subjected to British colonialism.

Despite this influence, however, the queen never publicly apologized for the transgressions committed by the British Empire against its colonies, just as she also never returned "The Great Star of Africa," a 530-carat jewel used in her scepter, and "The Second Star of Africa," incorporated into the Imperial State Crown, to the country they were mined from. These two jewels were cut from the "Cullinan Diamond" mined in South Africa and reportedly 'given' to the British Empire during its colonialism over the country. The Kohinoor Diamond, set in a crown worn by Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation, was also never returned after being taken by the East India Company as part of the Treaty of Lahore after the British won the first Sikh War, taking over territory throughout India forcefully as part of their colonizing conquests.

Jewels like these are direct symbols of colonialism, but the British monarchy, and Queen Elizabeth II specifically, never made any movement towards returning the jewels, nor towards support for reparations for the countries they exploited during the rule of the British Empire.

The Queen, who through a mix of public and private finances has

a net worth of approximately \$426 million, and the monarchy, which according to Forbes has a combined wealth of around \$28 billion, have inherited much of that money from prior generations.

Forty five trillion dollars, according to economist **Utsa Pantnaik** in the Columbia University Press, was taken from India from 1765 until 1938, over seventeen times more than the total annual gross domestic product of the UK today according to Aljazeera. **Robert Beckford**, current Professor of Black Theology at The Queens Foundation, estimated trillions more in physical wealth (not counting the work of enslaved Africans), to have been exploited from Africa during the era of British colonialism, in a documentary broadcast by BBT Channel 4. British companies still control around one trillion dollars worth of key mineral resources in Africa from their involvement snaking back to colonization, which is just another example of stolen African power continuing to be inherited by British hands, and from British hands to the monarch's hands through the chunk of taxes that go to supporting the ostentatious lifestyle of the royals.

Although it is hard to estimate the almost uncountable amount of revenue generated by enslaved people for those British subjects monstrous enough to keep them, the British government certainly attempted to when paying out billions of pounds in compensation to those who owned slaves once the practice was outlawed in the UK in 1833, according to Dr. **Nick Draper** from the University College London. In a National African-American Reparations Commission article he wrote, "as many as one-fifth of wealthy Victorian Britons derived all or part of their fortunes from the slave economy."

How is all this dirty money being used today by the monarchy? Travel, communications, utilities, and paying the lawyer bills and settlement fees for alleged rapists sons it seems, as Elizabeth II proved recently.

People never seem to benefit from having everything handed to them on a (literal) silver platter. The Duke of York, Prince Andrew, is no exception. After maintaining a lovably rambunctious image of playboy, titled "Randy Andy" by the British media, Andrew's exploits were exposed as more reprehensibly repulsive than roguish along with many other high profile individuals who associated with **Jeffrey Epstein** and his child sex trafficking ring.

After the fallout from Epstein's arrest, **Virginia Giuffre**, 39, brought a civil sexual assault case against Prince Andrew, who she accused

of sexually assaulting her, 17 at the time, on three occasions.

The prince and his legal team came to a settlement agreement with Giuffre and her legal team, ending the ongoing lawsuit in what many reported was an attempt by the monarchy to protect its tattered reputation.

How exactly did Prince Andrew, who has a reported net worth of five million dollars, pay the exorbitant legal fees and settlement?

The Daily Telegraph wrote that Queen Elizabeth II would be paying for her son's defense team, from income sourced from her private Duchy of Lancaster estate, and after deciding to settle, the Queen also paid around two million dollars towards Prince Andrew's twelve million dollar settlement.

The Queen, after ensuring no real consequences will be faced by Prince Andrew, did almost nothing herself in the form of punishment beyond stripping Andrew of many of his titles. She let him keep his residence, the Royal Lodge in Windsor, and his royal guard, and ensured that the monarchy continues to pay him a stipend.

Prince Andrew is just one failing of an institution that rewards DNA and marriage contracts rather than character and work ethic, an institution that Queen Elizabeth II was a symbol of, doing her best to protect its legacy to her dying days.

Despite what I would qualify as failings, the late Queen Elizabeth II was not someone I would describe as evil. She was a hard worker, remarkably down to earth for the Queen of one of the most powerful nations in the world, and a woman who despite the controversies around her kin and status, rarely induced direct criticism, but she was also a human figurehead and humans, despite what we might want to believe are fallible, layered creatures that contain both good and evil, and generally unworthy of being looked upon as symbols for anything other than the duality of man.

That is why I don't care. I don't celebrate her passing, but I also don't mourn. Her death has instigated numerous questions and calls for justice. It has also opened the door to hope for a more modern, forward-looking monarchy, willing to address the concerns worldwide of the effects of British Colonialism. This is exactly what we should be focusing on. The world doesn't travel to lay flowers at the grave of a Zimbabwean child who died of malnutrition, I don't see why her death means more than solving the issues created by the legacy she represented. •

Five books that will tug on your heartstrings

Hannah Winegar | Staff Writer

We all know the struggle of picking a book to read for English class that captivates your interest. These five books will get you through the 15 minutes of reading all while keeping your attention. Give one of these books a read and even share your own book recommendations on the County Chronicle's Twitter account: @CountyChron.

1. Let Me Hear a Rhyme (read this if you like optimistic books)

Three teenagers coping with the loss of their best friend/brother find his old song books

and publish his songs to try and get his voice heard even after death and to help fulfill the dream he had of becoming famous.

2. The You I've Never Known (read this book if you like plot twists)

A teenager and her dad decide to stay in a town after traveling the US her whole life, but something unexpected happens, making her question her whole life and everything she's come to know.

3. Refugee (read this book if you like learning about the past/current problems of the world)

Three different stories of refugee children going on hard journeys to find somewhere safe to live away from their home countries because of war and unlivable conditions. Some of the side characters are real, and the events are based on actual stories of refugees. The stories take place in 1938 in Nazi Germany, 1994 in Cuba, and 2015 in modern day Syria.

4. Butter (read this if you like books based in a high school setting)

A teenage boy decides he is going to over-eat himself to death on New Years and starts a

website for his cause. He quickly becomes popular because of what he plans on doing and he starts completing off a to-do list with his new friends but finds himself having second thoughts.

5. All That I Can Fix (read this if you like books that have serious topics but are also comedic)

A teenage boy becoming self-reliant after his father's failed suicide attempt has to take care of his house and tries to help out his friends and family with their problems, all while exotic animals that got released from a nearby zoo is terrorizing the town. •

The man in the band: learn about Donovan Claybrooks, County's favorite alto-saxophonist

Olivia DeWan | Co-Editor-in-Chief

The Captain's Crew roars, shouting on the top of their lungs and stomping their feet under the Friday night lights, decked out in school spirit. However, it's not the football team they're cheering for. It's senior and alto-saxophonist **Donovan Claybrooks**.

"I started playing saxophone in 6th grade," Claybrooks said. "I always thought it was a cool instrument and my mom really liked saxophone players."

Claybrooks has been playing the alto-sax for the last seven years, picking it up when all students were forced to play an instrument their first year of middle school.

For many, they dropped their instruments at the first opportunity presented, but Claybrooks did the exact opposite. He went all-out and joined music classes.

"Donovan is a section leader and soloist for the marching program," music teacher and marching band director **Darron Young** said. "He is one of the finest young musicians I've worked with."

A section leader is essentially the same as a captain for sports. They train members on expectations, instrument maintenance and care, what it means to be a part of the band, and mentor the younger members.

The Marching Captains have won Nationals three times, and Claybrooks was there for two of them.

"When I was a freshman, the saxophone players who were upperclassmen always tried to help me along," Claybrooks said. "This is a huge reason why I am as good as I am."

And make no mistake, Claybrooks is good.

He has won a partial scholarship from the Catoctin School Of Music, but you don't get to where Claybrooks is without hard, constant work. Claybrooks practices for an average of five hours a week.

He also plays several solos in the Marching Captains performances.

In addition, Claybrooks was invited to play the National Anthem as a soloist on October 21 at senior night, which was the last home football game of the regular season.

"It was scary, but I wanted to have fun with it," Claybrooks said. "I felt like I did pretty well, but I still think I can do better."

Claybrooks agreed that his performance was following a legacy and a huge honor.

"The soloist last year did it, and I really wanted to do it as well," Claybrooks said. "It was a super cool experience."

On another note, Claybrooks explained some of the challenges that come with playing the alto-sax.

"Trying to maintain my tone is pretty difficult," Claybrooks said. "It's especially hard when I'm playing outside because the weather affects turning."

In the Marching Band, Claybrooks is more than just a soloist; he's part of a team that competes to win titles for County.

"The bus rides to competitions are always really fun," Claybrooks said. "They're also kind of unhinged."

But it's not just away-performances that brings the energy. On their home turf, the Captain's Crew makes sure to show their support for Claybrooks. The student section is often overflowing with people hanging over the fence and jumping on the bleachers, cheering for him.



Donovan Claybrooks nails a solo on September 23rd. The Captain's football team won 42-14 against Valley, accompanied by the Marching Band's performance. Photo permission by Caroline Jenn.

"It feels amazing," said Claybrooks. "Never in my life could I have ever imagined people chanting my name."

Claybrooks is one of many reasons why the Marching Band is so popular and wins so many competitions.

"Donovan is mature beyond his years as a musician and a performer," Young said. "His talent and personality have helped to make this season a success."

Music for Claybrooks, however, will extend beyond high school.

"In college I plan to major in

music education or jazz studies," said Claybrooks.

Outside of music, Claybrooks enjoys playing basketball, gaming with his friends, and watching anime.

In addition to his other interests, there's no doubt that the saxophone plays a huge role in his life, and adds to who he is as a person.

My dad has always been my source of inspiration because he's always encouraged me to do what I want," said Claybrooks. "I love everything about playing the saxophone." •

Artist of the issue: Student photographer captures the beauty of Leesburg

Taylor Helfer | Staff Writer

In the town of Leesburg, junior **Liza Pavlenko** is surrounding the town in flashes of light and clicks of her camera. Learning from her grandfather and father, who are both photographers, Pavlenko has learned tips and tricks in order to develop her unique style.

The road to starting photography was actually inspired by her dad, but of course her own photography class which she took last year.

"I really started getting into it [photography] last year because I took that class. Before then, I never got into it really," Pavlenko said. Even though Pavlenko took photography last year and can no longer take that class, she still expresses that she enjoys taking pictures of the people around her.

Through the help of her relatives and the mentorship of her photography class, Pavlenko has been able to shape her own photography style into something unique. Even though it has taken time, it has helped her grow her photography skills.

"I have taken advice from my dad, but through learning his style I've kind of developed my own," Pavlenko said. Even

as she is still learning about her own personal style, Pavlenko hopes to pursue a career in photography to showcase what she has learned.

Students can only take photography for one year, but many, including Pavlenko, have completed projects that reflect progress in their photography careers over that short period of time. In fact, a favorite project of Pavlenko's helped her gain new information about ways to take pictures.

"We set the camera on this bulb setting. So you wave the light around to create a picture and take a picture of that, which I think is really cool," Pavlenko said. The process of learning through these assignments helped define Pavlenko's style.

When it comes to advice, Pavlenko has had a lot to help make her better. The advice that she has learned from others, could potentially aid other photographers in need of mentorship.

"Definitely try out a bunch of styles and not be set on a certain way to photograph things. Develop your own personal style by trying a bunch of different things," Pavlenko said.

Kyla Jenkins, who was her photography teacher, mentions how Pavlenko's pictures were

different from many other photographers she has seen. She has even helped develop that "dark and moody vibe".

"In general, her work was different because she liked darker images, very kind of rough around the edges, but in a really good kind of indie photographer sort of way," Jenkins said.

With the help of developing her style through mentorship of her teachers and father, Pavlenko has made unique pictures. When talking about what makes Pavlenko a good photographer, Jenkins states, "She was really willing to take risks, which is something I look for in a good photographer." •



Juniors **Jana Sami** and **Cora Wildman** pose in a photo taken by **Liza Pavlenko**. The photo captures the often indie and moody vibes that characterize Pavlenko's photography. Photo permission by **Liza Pavlenko**.

Milestones IN PHOTOGRAPHY HISTORY

FIRST CAMERA

The first camera was introduced by **Joseph Niépce**. It was named the "daguerriotype."

1816



FIRST PICTURE

Joseph Niépce captures the first photograph named **View from the Window at Le Gras**. Which took around 8 hours to capture.

1826



COLOR CAMERA

The first color camera appeared on the market by the **Lumière brothers**. But, colored photography didn't become popular until the 1970s.

1907



INSTANT IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

Polaroid introduces the first form of fast image development. This let you view your picture shortly after it was taken!

1948



SPACE PHOTOGRAPHY

With this 35mm camera, astronaut **John H. Glenn Jr.** took a color image of his orbit mission around Earth. This paved the way for space photography.

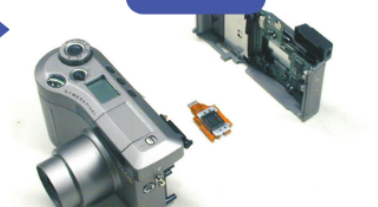
1962



DIGITAL CAMERA

In 1990, the first digital camera was introduced by **Steven Sasson**. This camera allowed you to capture in digital memory.

1990



PHONE CAMERA

With the invention of the phone camera, photography has skyrocketed. Now, people can take pictures and share them with friends electronically!

2000s



SOURCES

Photos courtesy of Smithsonian Open Access.

<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/brief-history-of-photography-2688527>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/article/milestones-photography>