

A visual of the logo that is causing so much controversy. This is one of six logos that the school is currently using, but it is the only logo to depict a person.



CAPTAINS LOGOS REVEALED

new mascot image creates tension among students

Maggie Sheridan | Editor-in Chief

At the start of a year unusually challenging for all schools, with a move from in-person to distance learning, the Loudoun County community has had to adjust yet another change: the change of mascot from the Raiders to the Captains. The school board voted to change the mascot over the summer, and the school was given less than two months to find a new one.

To start the mascot selection process, the SCA created a Google Form for ideas. Students could submit their ideas for a new mascot through the form and then the staff and SCA members voted on the top ten and narrowed it down from there.

SCA President **Samantha Welstead** admits it was a strenuous process to finally come to a decision for the good of the school. "There were definitely disagreements between the members of the Student Council," she said. "Narrowing it down was extremely challenging, especially with trying to get everyone to agree."

They narrowed it down by eliminating mascots similar to other schools in the area as well as those that could be potentially controversial. This process eventually helped them reach the top three choices and then the students voted.

Although the mascot change came as a shock to many, they are

slowly adapting. Over time I got used to the fact that the mascot had to change," said senior **Adrianna Kopp**. "I voted for the Captains thinking that it was the best fit and closest to Raiders."

The change of mascot has created a variety of opinions amongst students at our school, and one of the new logos is a main topic of interest. The school released six logos, with five of them being words or letters. The sixth, a visual representation of a captain, has drawn more attention than the others.

"I don't like the look of the male mascot," Junior **Adia Davis** said. "When I voted, I assumed the mascot would look more like a pirate
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The County Chronicle is produced by students in Newspaper Journalism I, II, and III under the direction of an adviser. Topics are student-chosen, student-researched, and student-driven, but all content is subject to administrator review.

Letters to the editor:

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OPINION

the captains deserve a better logo and here is why



Of the newly-released logos to represent the new Captains mascot, all but one are variations of the school's initials, LC, or the word "Captains."

Michaela Scott and Maggie Sheridan, Editors-in-Chief

The logo selected to represent the Captains is an insult to the diversity of our school. With all the talent at our school, choosing stock art that a supposedly professional company "provided" is an insult to our students.

Of the six images released, five consisted only of only the word "Captains" or the initials "LC." The sixth featured a helmeted, masculine face.

Most agree it looks more like a construction worker or baseball player. If the school is going to make such a dramatic change, it is only fair to include us in part of the decision making.

The process in choosing the new mascot was incredibly rushed due to the nature of the BLM movement and other trends; additionally, students felt like they weren't given enough opportunity to partake in the mascot modification, according to Instagram polls on a student-run LCHS update account.

In the process of choosing a mascot, students and community members submitted an idea for a potential name. Then, our school's administration narrowed the suggestions. Next, student council members chose several names which were then approved by the administration. Finally, the student body could vote on an official name from the top three selections.

The process of changing the logo was squeezed into the last few weeks before the school year, the choice had minimal student contribution, and the chosen image received immense amounts of negative feedback from unapproving students through social media.

Part of the issue comes with the challenging nature of the mascot, which is different from many teams, which have an animal. Embodying the entire student body in one human logo is a challenge.

"The Captains are really so many different things, there is no one embodiment; I saw a sweatshirt and ballcap, other people saw a soldier, others saw a fireman. It is not one primary logo, it means different things to different people," said Principal **Michelle Luttrell** of the new logo.

Some argue that the mascot and logo was changed primarily to eliminate discrimination and hate against people of color; however, one image of the mascot has been countless categorized as appearing to embody a white military man. Many students have spoken out through social media and have taken a position on this issue which prevents further diversity through the school.

One particular post on Instagram relating to the logo has over three hundred comments, most of them complaining about it. One comment says, "It looks like we are being represented by a construction worker." Another says, "If they wanted to pay homage to our NJROTC program, why is the logo an Army captain and not a naval captain?"

Luttrell has made it clear that this militaristic image isn't the only current logo, however it is the most commonly presented graphic, it is the only personification of the mascot, and has drawn the most attention. "I've actually had a number of people come to me and say it actually looks like an African-American man," said Assistant Principal **Mark Patterson**.

It also appears as though the image of the man was taken directly from Shutterstock, a stock photo site, as "soldier," and is not an original logo.

"That image was one of the last ones a vendor had sent forth. We chose it with the understanding that it was not going to be the logo that defined the school," Luttrell said.

Although the logo of the male is the one that has drawn the most attention, different groups within the school are using different logos. "I think Athletics is using it more so than any other group," Luttrell said. "Other groups on campus are using some of the other logos when they're

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OUT WITH THE OLD

what is happening to the raider markings at school?

Alexis Shugars | staff writer

With the change of our mascot before this school year, from Raiders to Captains, LCPS is forced to change most of the markings in school that have to do with Raiders.

LCPS is funding these changes per the School Board's decisions. For athletics alone, it will cost \$500,000 to change everything from Raiders to Captains. "We had to do a cost analysis on replacing items in each department," said Athletic Director **Kathleen (Kate) Cassidy**. "Based on those numbers various funding was given to the different departments."

"With a school that was built in 1954 you can imagine the number of items needing to be changed," Cassidy said. "I have lost count. I know we have 108 clocks in the building that will need to be changed out." Although many Raider items will be switched out, others will remain.

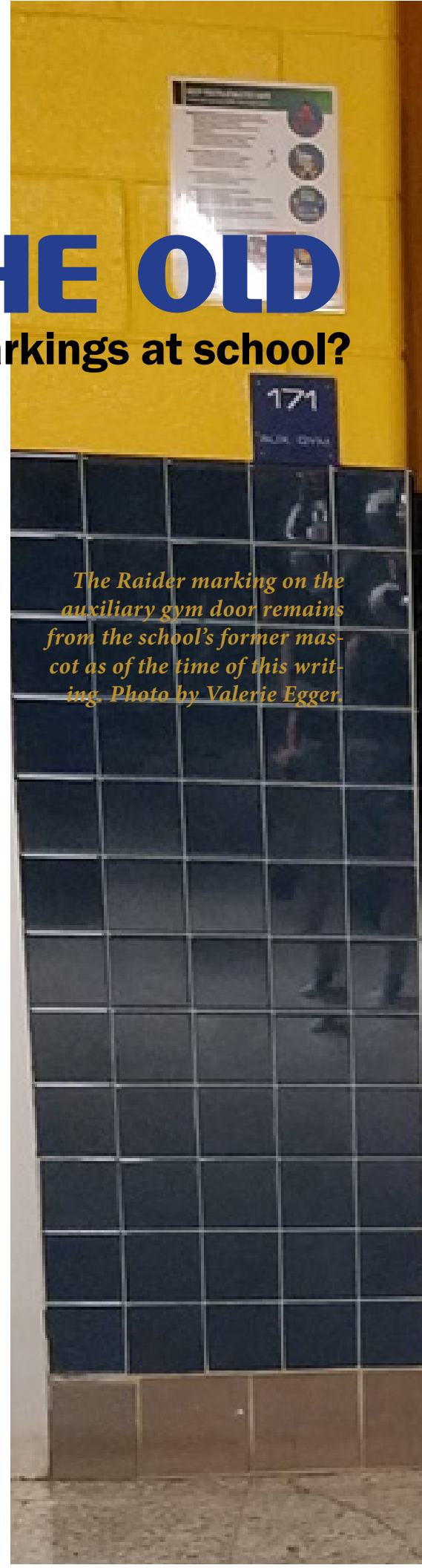
All of the championship pictures located in the athletic wing will stay on the walls. Murals left on the walls by former Senior students will be left for now, and LCPS will wait to see

where the conversation goes with Loudoun County Public Schools.

The administration decided to phase in the changes based on highest need. The first priority is athletics, and the second is the school store. Most schools only get around \$10,000 to start up their school store. "We really pushed back and fought hard to get three times that amount for our school, because we have a great marketing program and the school store is really thriving," said Principal **Michelle Luttrell**.

Currently, all markings in the school still remain Raiders. "We are going to keep the things we have in place because if we don't get the stuff replaced, if the money's not there and you guys start to come back on campus, we need to have things for you guys to use," said Luttrell.

"I didn't feel it was appropriate to under the cover of night, clear the entire campus of all things that say Raiders," said Luttrell. She emphasized that this is a process worthy of conversation among students. "You can't just erase history," she added.



The Raider marking on the auxiliary gym door remains from the school's former mascot as of the time of this writing. Photo by Valerie Egger.



NEWS BRIEFS

captains remember those lost on 9/11

Alexis Shugars | Staff Writer

On September 11, 2001, tragedy struck when a series of airline hijackings and suicide attacks hit the United States, sending the world into sorrow. Every year, America remembers the victims who lost their lives on this day.

At Loudoun County High School, the students and staff remembered September 11 by putting out miniature American flags all over the front lawn of the school. These flags remind by passers of the anniversary of the tragedy.

In 2016, students who were part of the Young Conservatives club came up with the tradition. “Since 2016, students have set up the flags, but this year, due to COVID restrictions preventing students from being on campus, staff members set up the display on the front lawn,” said Principal **Michelle Luttrell**.

The flags are put up a few days before September 11, and remain there for several days after the remembrance. “A flag is placed on the front lawn for every life lost on 9-11-01,” said Luttrell.

Beside putting flags on the front lawn, Loudoun County High School also remembers those lost during the morning announcements on the anniversary of the attack. “Some teachers take the time to discuss the significance of the event with their students,” said Luttrell.

Luttrell said the school will continue to remember the tragedy by displaying flags on the front lawn in future years. “It is a very special and moving tribute,” said Luttrell.



American flags set out on the front lawn of Loudoun County High School. Flags have decorated the lawn annually since 2016. Photo: Alexis Shugars

main office undergoes important renovation



Members of the front office staff enjoy working at their new front desk, which is part of LCHS main office renovation. The school is currently closed to most students, but faculty members work in the new office space, following social distancing protocols. Photo courtesy of Kathy Garrison.

Alexis Shugars | Staff Writer

For the last several years, Loudoun County High School has been preparing for the renovation of the main office. Engineers and architects first came to put a plan together a couple years ago, and have been planning ever since then.

“The District decided to update all of the schools that did not have a double-layer of security for the main entrance,” said secretary Amy Perkins, who spends most of the school day in the main office. Even though security was the reason for this renovation, the impact of those changes caused the whole main office to be revised. This was to ensure that the sec-

ond bank of security doors would fit inside the given space.

These second bank security doors remain locked during school hours. “All visitors will have to enter the main office, whereas before, they could easily bypass the office and walk through the school,” Perkins said. “Once in the lobby, they will have to be buzzed into the office. If we determine the visitor is a threat and don’t want to admit them into the office, their only choice is to leave.”

Some of the other new additions to the main office include a new front desk, an added enclosed workroom area, a new

office for attendance secretary, Mercedes Keener, and security cameras installed in the main lobby and office.

Fortunately, COVID-19 didn’t impact this renovation that took place in the summer. “Most students, unfortunately, have not seen the new changes,” Perkins said. “The staff that have seen it, have said that it looks much nicer.”

“In my opinion, the changes are very positive,” said secretary Kathy Garrison.

Perkins agrees. “The renovations have made the school more secure and safer for students and staff,” she said. “The front office also just looks a little nicer/neater.”

BLACK LIVES MATTER

movement prompts students to call for change

Olivia Dewan | Staff Writer

Following the controversial May 25 killing of **George Floyd** by police officer **Derek Chauvin**, students at Loudoun County High School, along with many other citizens around the country, immediately started protesting the injustice, calling for change.

Floyd's death helped raise awareness for Louisville, Ky. citizen **Breonna Taylor**, who was killed by police during a forced entry of her home on March 13.

"Breonna Taylor's case infuriates me because she was just laying in bed," sophomore **Jada Venson** said. "Yes, her boyfriend had a weapon but she was asleep and [the police] shot and killed her."

Among those whose lives the BLM movement has touched are several students at Loudoun County High School.

Students wanted their voices to be heard as they called out, demanding these wrongs to be righted.

A very common way of doing this was social media.

"I think the most important part of the Black Lives Matter movement was social media because it allowed everyone to participate in the movement," sophomore **Anna Takemoto** said.

But not just social media played a role. A protest was organized in Downtown Leesburg on May 31. Hundreds of people, including students, showed up to speak out.

"I thought the protest was so powerful," said junior **Charlotte Penberthy**. "At a certain point I broke down to tears just thinking about all the

innocent people killed by the ones whose job is to protect us."

After the protest things did not slow down. Once again students flooded social media, and Instagram feeds were blooming with pleas for people to sign petitions to put those responsible for the deaths of Floyd and Taylor in jail.

"I signed so many petitions," Penberthy said. "Some of the more notable ones are Justice for George Floyd and Defunding the Police."

The Black Lives Matter movement has opened many eyes to the issues that people of color face, it has changed the way some students see the world.

"BLM has brought awareness to the struggles all people of color face and made me believe that overcoming systematic racism is something that everyone needs to be fighting for," Takamoto said.

The BLM movement aims to raise awareness about racism and its impact on people. Many people of color have been discriminated against, including some of our own students at Loudoun County.

Venson told a story of the time she was judged for the color of her skin.

"While babysitting my paler cousins I took them to the park where a woman approached us, asking if they were okay," Venson said. "I explained that I'm their cousin and babysitter and they are more than fine. Then, as I sat down to give them lunch, a police officer pulls up and asks me for my ID and for me to call their parents."

Like others, Venson hopes the

BLM movement will help raise awareness for the impact of racism in society.

Over the summer, the mascot at Loudoun County was changed due to its ties to slavery in the past, so the students went from being Raiders to Captains. The new mascot eliminated the school's association to slavery that not many people were aware of.

"The Raiders moniker has Confederate roots, paying homage to **John S. Mosby**, who commanded a battalion of Confederate soldiers known as Mosby's Raiders, Mosby's Rangers or Mosby's men," Blue Ridge District Representative **Ian Serotkin** told **John Battiston**, a reporter for the Loudoun Times.

Many students agreed with this new change due to the push for equality around the world and their school. Students, including Takemoto, signed a petition to change the mascot.

"I made sure to do thorough research beforehand so I could educate myself," Takemoto said, speaking of when she signed the petition.

Even after all of these steps students have taken to bring light to racism, they believe the Black Lives Matter movement still has a long way to go.

"In my opinion I think the BLM movement has come a long way," Penberthy said. "But there is much more growth needed to change the culture of our country."

While most students participated in some form of the Black Lives Matter movement to illuminate a problem and bring justice to it, some



are concerned about those who used the movement as a trend, trying to gain more followers.

“It’s infuriating when people use the movement as a trend or an aesthetic, but really caring and showing people that you care can make a big difference,” Takemoto said.

Many students are still trying to

stay active in the movement even though it is no longer “trending” and Instagram feeds have gone back to normal.

“I still continue to research and spread information,” Venson said. “I am satisfied with what we have changed so far but BLM is far from over.”

Charlotte Penberthy and Isabel-la Mitchum protest with the other supporters of the BLM movement in Downtown Leesburg. The rally took place on May 31, 2020, and attracted students from Loudoun County High School, along with many others.

SUMMER OF PROTESTS



younger generation speaks against inequality

Lorenzo Salas | Staff Writer & Photographer

This summer was one filled with uncertainty due to the coronavirus forcing many people to stay home. However, the death of **George Floyd** inspired protests leading the people to become more politically active. The protests happened on a national scale, and on May 29, 1,500 marched in Downtown Leesburg to protest injustice for African Americans.

“I go to protests because I want to stand for what is right,” junior **Sabrina Maena** said. “If no one is going to stand for what is right, I am going to stand.”

Maena believes that older generations underestimate her generation's involvement in policies. “I feel like teens are active in protests and deserve more credit. I saw as many teens

as I did adults during the protest.”

From one protestor to another, junior **Sophie Hylton** gave her opinion on the protests. “I am very happy with our community,” Hylton said. “We kept it peaceful and we stated we were unhappy. Although our efforts were noted, not many changes were made.”

While there were many people who supported the movement and came to protests, there were many who did not support the movement. “My sister was told she's not the country look bad at the protest by a man and we almost got hit by a car on Street,” Hylton said. “The people who are mainly against us were older men, white, and I think that shows the divide between our generations,” Hylton said.



Top left: Junior Sabrina Maena holds a sign while listening in on the BLM speech. **Top right:** Junior Sophie Hylton holds a sign promoting speaking up for people. **Middle:** Rows of protesters marching in Downtown Leesburg showing they care. **Bottom:** Junior Gigi Gerrior promote peace and love with a Bob Marley sign. Photos by Lorenzo Salas



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LEAVING THEIR MARK

Seniors personalize the parking lot

Maggie Sheridan | Editor-in-Chief

Though many students look forward to a parking lot full of splashes of color and design, Loudoun County seniors have not been able to paint their parking spots for several years. This year, that will finally change.

Principal **Michelle Luttrell** made the ultimate decision after she presented her ideas to LCPS for approval. The SCA executive board and Senior Delegate were the ones that were in charge of pulling this together. These members include seniors **Sam Welstead, Stella Celentano, Caleb Rexroad, Fiona Flaherty, Jackson Chinn, Safa Saad, Erika Maliska, Sean Rombach, and Caroline Zanetti.**

Math teacher and SCA sponsor **Matthew Prince** created a proposal with AP US History teacher, Psychology teacher, and fellow SCA sponsor **Nancy Thomas.** “We were told to wait to see how some of the other schools pulled the event off during COVID. After we observed and communicated with the other school administrations and SCA, we revised our plan,” said Prince.

Prince explained that the process was a complete team effort and many people worked together in order to make it happen. “Ms. Thomas and I were talking just after we had come up with the proposal for the SCA to review and thought it would be really awesome if we could make this whole thing digital,” said Prince. They then presented that idea to the group.

One member of the SCA who was very hopeful for this was senior

Celentano. “When we were campaigning for SCA, it’s something everyone really wanted to do this year and I am really excited we’re able to do it even though we’re currently doing online school,” said Celentano.

Seniors were charged twenty dollars in order to participate, which will go towards painting over the spots with black paint next year. This will take place near the end of next year. The school couldn’t charge the normal amount for spots since students are currently unable to use them.

Celentano was surprised by how open Luttrell was and glad that Prince and Thomas were also on board to help. “They were all a big part of planning and letting us do it. Mr. Prince and Ms. Thomas seemed very eager to help,” said Celentano.

Students are required to buy their own paints as well as any other supplies. They get four hours to paint each day. Painting will officially start Saturday the twenty-fourth and will be that Saturday and Sunday as well as the following Saturday and Sunday.

This new decision has improved the lives of several seniors. Senior **Caroline Curtin** said, “We are all super excited to hear about this news. I think the school felt badly that we wouldn’t have a normal senior year, so they wanted to give us something to look forward to.”

Although this has brightened many moods, it has also made others upset. “There are some people who didn’t get parking spaces due

to the limited number available, who are disappointed they won’t be able to take part in this special event,” said Curtin.

Painting spots is also a way for the seniors to show off their creativity and be unique. “I decided it would be a very Caroline thing to make mine a picture of Remy from ‘Ratatouille,’” said Curtin.

“My friends are doing different quotes from shows. One friend is doing a quote from the show ‘The Office’ and my other friend is doing a quote from the show ‘Arrested Development.’ I also have friends who are actually drawing something pretty,” said Celentano.

Everyone involved with the planning is looking forward to seeing the finished products. They are also glad to have influenced positive change that benefits the seniors at school.

“It took a lot of collaboration and many outside hours contacting other schools and laying out the design for the event. It was great to be a part of because as a problem came up someone would step up with a solution and it was great to see everyone working together towards a common goal,” said Prince.

Students express creativity and start on the painting of a spot in front of the athletic entrance. A wide variety of colors pop against the black asphalt. Take a spin through the lot to see more of these works of art. Photo courtesy of Matthew Prince.



DISTANCE LEARNING

On March 12, 2020, Loudoun County Public Schools closed in response to the newly-declared pandemic. This year, students and teachers have had to adjust to a new way of learning. In this section, we follow the constantly-changing nature of distance learning.

SCA PRESERVES SCHOOL SPIRIT IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Michaela Scott | Editor-in-Chief

In the age of COVID-19, schools across the nation are struggling to bring together their student body and preserve the pride within each class in high school. However, Loudoun County High School's Student Council Association is working day after day to connect the community, despite the distance between each individual.

SCA is an ambitious group of leaders at LCHS, and takes the form of a student authority government, with each member being elected in the springtime to serve for the following year. This assembly of class officials is the foundation of the majority of school events and has the duties of annually putting together a variety of school-oriented activities, such as homecoming week, powderpuff games, tailgates, spirit days, pep rallies, and fundraisers.

"Our operation normally consists of many events we bring to County, and even just small projects that contribute to uniting the classes, like our PEER projects," said junior **Kenly Howerter**, SCA news anchor and member of the communication team.

The student council has had to make significant adjustments to suit this year's differences and changes. This alteration has eliminated

numerous plans and typical schools events, yet they are figuring out brand new ways to bring back the excitement of schoolwide participation. The assembly's goal is to normalize this year as much as possible and keep the high energy.

"SCA's objective during this unprecedented time of distance learning is to engage students as much as possible and boost school spirit virtually," said junior **Charlotte Penberthy**, spirit committee member. As of now, LCHS cannot do powderpuff, sports, and multiple in-school projects, like decorating the halls. Although, recently SCA is implementing weekly challenges students can participate in and earn class points; spirit days are also being incorporated each week and class points are tracked publicly throughout Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter.

With virtual communication, challenges are bound to occur in the process of adaptation and SCA has endured multiple setbacks within the start of the year. The team has expressed the difficulty getting the student body opinions to the faculty because of the online barrier. The chaos of separation has also been a contributing factor; SCA, as a club, only meeting at the end of the week to plan certain events and projects has led to less

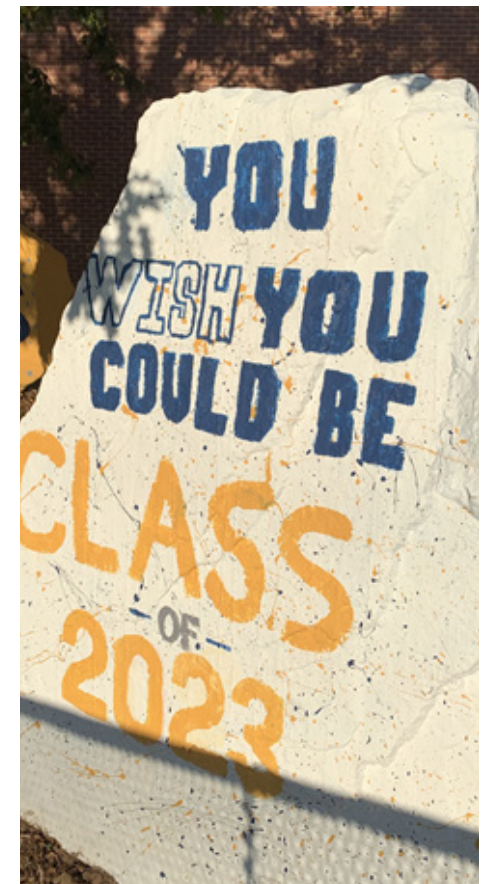
accommodations with connecting distantly.

"We are trying our best to make sure our student body feels as comfortable as possible with this new normal, especially the freshman," said SCA news anchor junior **Nathan Gribbin** said. "We want them to know what they are doing and feel welcome because being brought into an environment where they can have a real human interaction isn't an option at the moment."

Despite the obstacles the student government faces, the staff has already accomplished several projects and enterprises, like the newly painted class rocks, informative morning announcements, High School 101, and organization of the school mascot, Each activity is a form of normalization to the 20-21 school year.

"High school 101 was different this year because of the virtual aspect, however it maintained a welcoming atmosphere to the upcoming class of 2024," said Howerter. "Painting the school rocks was also a major accomplishment because each class could collectively decide what their rock would say and it's a great way to help unite each grade."

The SCA encourages students to suggest ideas for the school as a whole. Students can reach out to any member to put this into action;



they are open to any recommendation and are hoping to hear from each other to uplift and strengthen the school community.

“We’re all taking things one step at a time, bringing new opportunities to the table, and we all hope we’ll be back in school soon to fur-

ther function at full capacity,” said Gribbin. “Keep your pride full of hope, and your head high because we are all focusing on the bright future our school family anticipates on in the upcoming months.”

The 2021, 2022, and 2023 class rocks make an appearance outside the athletic wing at LCHS. SCA’s rock painting project during quarantine invites students into the new school year.



REMOTE BUT CONNECTED

teachers adjust to distance learning

Olivia Zavadil | Managing Editor

This year has posed many unique challenges to our community, including the transition from in-person to fully distance learning. Students have had to figure out how to combat not only the lack of social interaction that in person school would normally provide, but how to successfully integrate into online learning.

The decision to send Loudoun County students fully online this year came after much debate and community backlash to the previously proposed two-day hybrid schedule.

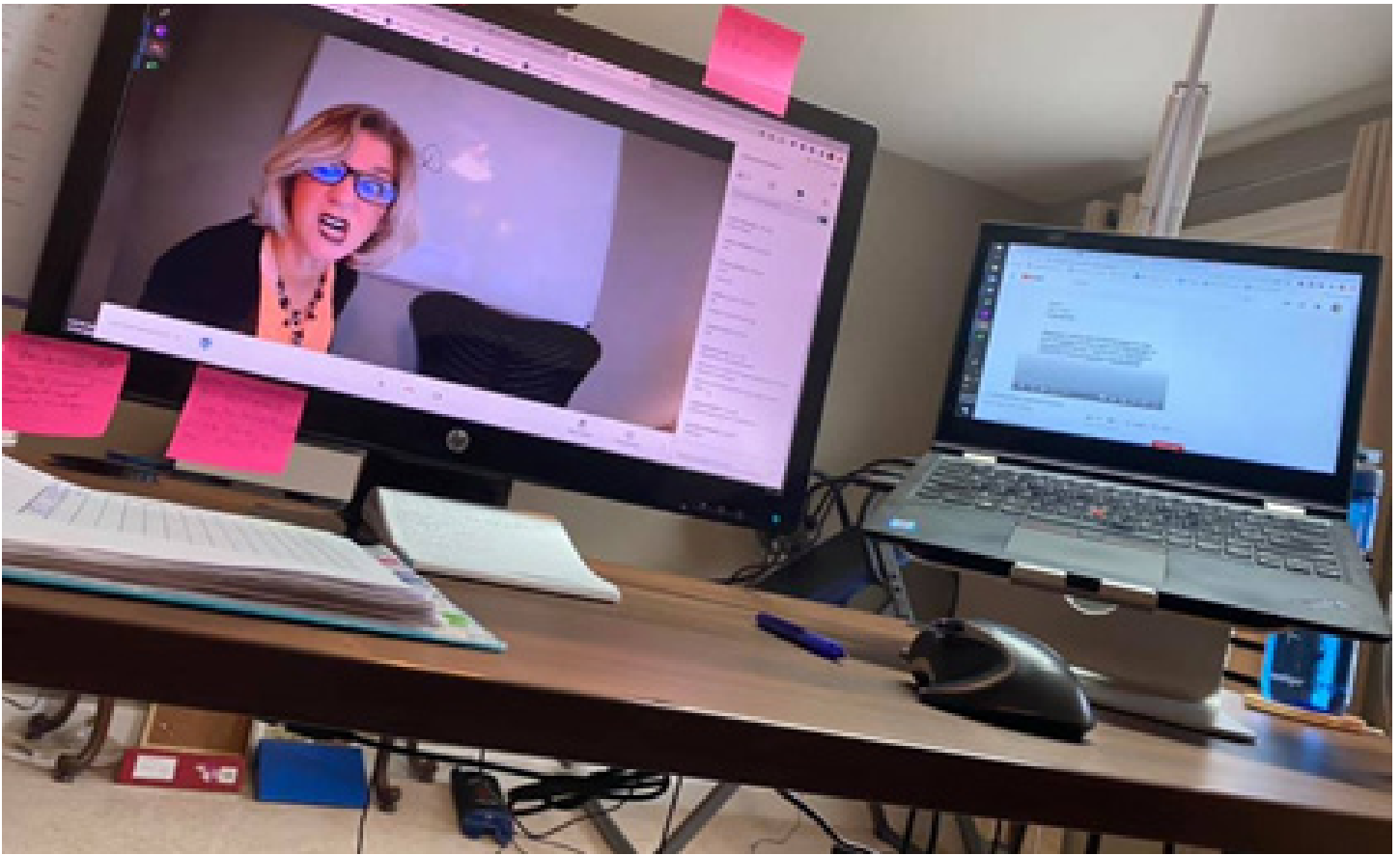
While much of the response to the new system has centered around students and their adjustment, another vital group is often overlooked: teachers.

“Distance learning is not an ideal situation, but teachers are making it work with a lot of help from students who are also giving it their best,” said English teacher **Arlene Lewis**. Lewis, like many other teachers, has been forced to adapt to new ways of teaching and new styles of connecting with students.

Lewis nods to the fact that one of the biggest adjustments to online teaching is the difficulty of forming personal connections and bonding with her students.

“I miss the real interaction with students, and because so many students keep their cameras off, I honestly wouldn’t know some of my students if I saw them in my neighborhood,” Lewis said.

Similarly, science teacher **Terri Moulds** finds it difficult to read stu-



Math teacher Peggy Carnes celebrates Halloween virtually with her students. Teachers such as Carnes have had to find unique ways this year to keep students engaged during online classes.

dents when teaching virtually. “It’s so much easier in school,” she said. “You can see facial expressions, you can see confused students, you can see hands coming up, you have engagement. Those first couple weeks of school were hard because I just missed it so much.”

In terms of the schooling software used by the county, the technological adjustment has been no walk in the park either, according to many teachers.

“I did not anticipate that I would spend so much of my time troubleshooting technology,” Lewis said. “I am frustrated, as are students and parents, that the technology doesn’t always work the way it is supposed to on any given day. Teachers, including me, have been ‘kicked out’ in the middle of a Google Meet.

The transition to online learning is

difficult enough without that!”

Even the most experienced teachers have struggled with the transition, and are constantly searching for ways to bring elements of the classroom into online learning.

“I try to do little things in my class, start geeky conversations about Marvel characters, ask questions about books students are reading, tell lame jokes,” said math teacher **Karen Carr**. “But the interaction is definitely missed.”

“This is my twenty-second year of teaching, and it is nothing like what I have experienced before,” Carr said. “From having to learn a ton of new technology to readjusting my lessons, to trying to find ways to interact with students. It is definitely different.”

“I was not really surprised that we wound up online to start

school,” said Lewis. “I couldn’t see how they were ever going to coordinate hybrid learning even though I know that other school districts are doing it.”

There is some hope for the teachers and students that have been missing that interpersonal interaction. Starting in late October, Loudoun County Public Schools began sending back select groups of English language learners, special ed students, and select elementary students. Secondary students are expected to return for the second semester, though with the pandemic as a still-developing situation, nothing is certain.

“The first few weeks were difficult,” says Moulds, “it’s a trade off, but you know, we have to protect the community and I think that’s important.”

QUARTER 1 DISTANCE LEARNING CHALLENGES

administration offers leniency

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Try refreshing the page or check our status at status.schoology.com.

Michaela Scot | Editor-in-Chief

“There is a lot that happens with facial expressions,” Assistant Principal **Katie Post** said. “Reading the room becomes a whole lot harder when you can’t see people, because faces say so much.” The administration at County has been continuously working this past quarter in hopes of bringing LCHS students a school year that isn’t too altered because of the global pandemic; however, several issues involving the process, like tardies, connectivity, and assign-

The image shows the infamous error message on distance learning platform, Schoology, which has been a primary issue for LCPS. Many students and teachers log on to DL at the same times; therefore, it isn’t uncommon for technology to crash or be unable to load.

ment errors have been brought into question.

The most commonly occurring problem facing distance learners and educators is wavering connectivity. Connection errors are an inevitable part of any virtual platform, but administrators are working with the school board and are gradually figuring out ways to have Phoenix and Schoology working more efficiently for the school users all across the county.

Assistant principal **Mark Patterson** acknowledged that programs will inevitably have issues, so there is some leniency compared to issues such as tardies during a normal school year.

“I’ve had several issues logging into Schoology, sometimes I am late because the platform crashes, but the staff is most accommodating and very understanding of technology errors,” junior **Nina Segura** said.

Administration officials are encouraging the staff and students to balance some of the confusion. Difficulties, especially relating to attendance, has become a more serious concern because it is state mandated. School administration has slightly eased back on tardy regulations and are addressing them with respect to distance learning disturbances, and accepting student emails explaining the lateness.

“Students may not always make it to class on time, and if it happens we are going to treat it lightly,” said Patterson. “We must hear from a parent sometime that day to confirm the absence, but we’re not trying to come after you.”

Another concern that has been increasingly mentioned with students during the past few months is the rising confusion of where assignments are placed on virtual platforms, like Schoology. Many

students are unaware of where tasks are placed in the online classroom because they don’t know all the features of the website, leading to missed assignments and forgotten due dates. High school students are expected to adapt to the new learning environment, and understand exactly how a program works, but school officials aren’t providing students with that specific information.

“Although every teacher and student is learning as we go through, several tutorials and connectED links were released through email to County families prior to the beginning of the school year,” Principal **Michelle Luttrell** said. “But, a training session will most likely not cover everything you’re going to need to know about an online learning website.”

LCCHS administration emphasizes the importance of patience and limiting frustration because of the online inconveniences, but many students like sophomore **Sofie Steel** started off the year already distraught. “My parents forwarded me a training clip sent by the admin and I thought it would take the first day jitters off my plate, but the video just left me with more anxiety and more questions about Schoology,” Steel said. “Honestly, it wasn’t the most beneficial tool.”

A final complication students have expressed throughout the time of this experience involves use of cameras. Whether it’s teachers politely asking students to participate for regular classroom function, or in order to ensure integrity on exams, cameras can be beneficial, yet the public schools administration has no final authorization on this requirement; furthermore, teachers feel like the camera option is leading to reduced schoolroom engagement because of minimal participation,

and silence during lessons.

“Even though teachers feel like they’re speaking to icons, rather than people, it’s still a division level issue due to the vision council, not our school admin,” Luttrell said on October 2. “Cameras have been a persistent topic of discussion recently, but our school has no permission to enforce that kids put on their cameras because there are many good reasons why someone doesn’t have it on.”

Additionally, the school administration wants to express that the learning setting is certainly altered, “There is not a way to perfect the virtual environment, so we have to learn to adjust,” Luttrell said. Teachers are stepping up to create lessons and study tools in ways they’ve never completed before, making it a different place for everyone together.

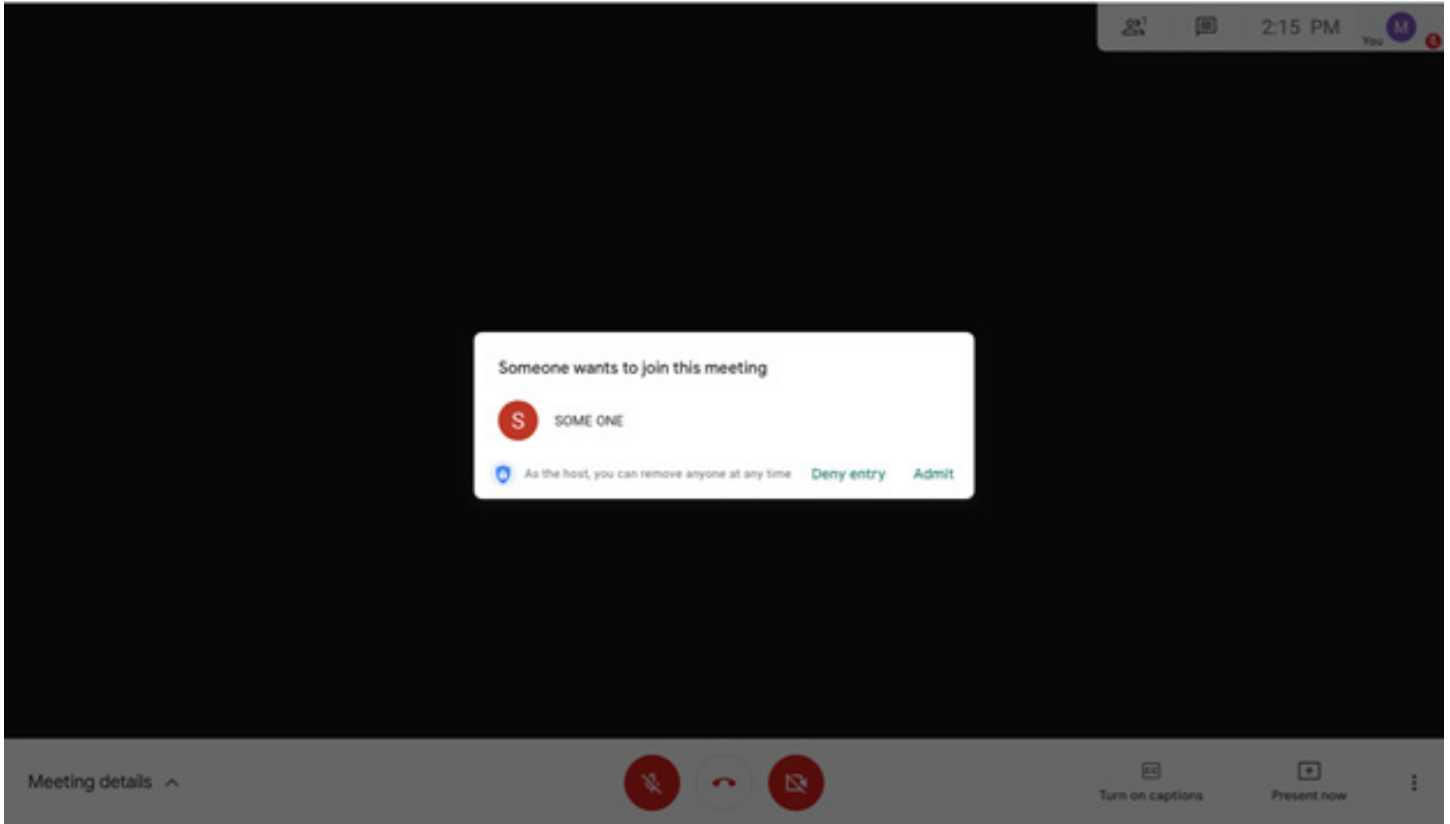
“Teachers, administrators, and students are all in a weird situation,” Post said. “Comprehending and learning is just slower when it involves a screen, and that is the barrier we’re facing. It’s difficult, but we’re all showing up everyday to support you.”

Despite the connectivity errors that occur, LCCHS administrators have been quickly addressing the disruptions and the majority of the complications that have taken place throughout the span of the first quarter. Although some tools which produce an ideal form of learning are missing, the school community as a whole is positively contributing to the overall outcome and greater good of the 20-21 school year.

“It’s hard being in school alone, it’s hard not seeing your faces, we miss your faces, and we miss you,” Luttrell said. “It is easy to feel self-defeated, but we’re all in this together, giving each other grace, and we are all making the best of it.”

UNINVITED

students intrude on google meets, disrupt classes with vulgarities



A hypothetical example shows that teachers can now allow or deny entry by uninvited Google accounts into a class session. As users of Google Meets' beta version, Loudoun Schools provides feedback and experiences improvements, such as the improved controls, in the meeting tool over time.

Liberty Harrison | staff writer

As online school progresses new problems arise, and with them new solutions.

One of these problems, experienced with the use of Google Meets, is live class bombings, hackings, or interruptions, which primarily took place during the first weeks of the school year. This phenomenon happens either when a student gets into a class they aren't a member of or decides to disrupt their own class. These disruptions include a wide variety of activities, some of which include presenting images or videos against school policies and without teacher permission,

playing audio, often at high volume, that go against school policy and without teacher permission, and the students themselves using vulgarities, or slurs against minorities.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon has happened multiple times at LCHS, with many students experiencing these interruptions.

Sophomore **Carlos Escobar** experienced an incident he estimates to have lasted between one and two minutes. "There was a random person that came into the classroom saying something around the lines of 'what's up guys,'" he said. "However, a few seconds later music was being blast-

ed through the speakers making it impossible to hear anything."

Sophomore **Laysha Ricci** experienced a different type of interruption.

The interruption took place during the middle of class. "The teacher had stopped talking," Ricci said. "One guy turned on their mic. He just started to make random noises which in the moment were funny, but soon became annoying." Ricci's teacher asked the student to stop talking, but someone else joined in instead.

The "Broken Window Syndrome" is applicable to this situation - one student in class creating a disruption can trigger another student to join in.

Some students may also be inspired by internet celebrities to engage in 'bombing' Google Meets.

"In reality, this is more of a laughing joke, due to the fact that big internet stars have done this before, where the students give out the code for these meets and then you see the event unfold," Escobar said.

According to the New York Times, videos and live streams of harassment in Zoom meetings, a platform similar to Google Meets, are appearing in rising numbers on sites like YouTube and Twitch. One popular YouTuber streamed himself bombing these meets for 6 hours, and a video about crashing college classes gained over 4.2 million views.

Another facet of this problem is that students from all over the county can get into LCHS Google Meets.

"These two guys didn't go to LCHS, I actually knew them because I used to go to their school," Ricci said.

However, LCHS administration has protocols in place to deal with this situation.

"We have been in touch with administrators from across the county to communicate a disruption from students outside of our school," said **Katie Post**, assistant principal. "We can easily find what school they attend and then we send videos to the administration so they can take the appropriate steps. Other schools have done the same for us as well if an LCHS student has caused a disruption in their classes."

Ricci's experience at the start of the year also shows that the learning curve for teachers caused by the use of new technology and programs can exacerbate the issue.

"The teacher soon became annoyed and tried to block them," Ricci said. "In his attempts to do so, he blocked an actual student who didn't do anything, by accident."

Other teachers take a different approach to solving the issue, especially for shorter interruptions.

"She just addressed that we need to be more courteous and have more respect for the classroom environment," Escobar said on how his teacher responded to the situation.

These Google Meet interruptions can last any amount of time, but sometimes the effect of the disruption can last longer than the actual event.

"The class was disturbed for probably, I think, maybe fifteen minutes because they just added comments and made noises," Ricci said. "I feel like this just affected how the whole rest of class went since the kid who got kicked out was very confused and the teacher wasn't very happy about the outbursts."

The majority of attitudes towards these interruptions seem to be the same.

"For most people, it's just annoying, you're trying to learn and you've got people who are just making it hard for the teacher to teach and for the other students to learn," said **Mark Patterson**, assistant principal.

School administration has worked to address the issue, both through communication to the wider community and internal problem-solving efforts.

"There was an email that was sent to me by Dr. Luttrell apologizing for what happened," Ricci said.

The administration has come up with an innovative solution to efficiently and effectively respond to the Google Meet hackings.

They sent out a Google form, where teachers could report interruptions and include video. "The teachers were filling it out pretty quickly, we were actually able to turn it around that day," Post said.

"We were able to reach out to families, and try to contain it, or if there

was harm done to try to address that," Post said. "It was important, there were some things that were happening that were really harmful. We acted pretty quickly because it happened so quickly. We kind of worked on the fly."

Indeed, the amount of Google Meet disruptions has seemed to have been greatly reduced since the first weeks of school.

"I'm really proud of how we did it," Post said. "The communication was great, and I felt like we were able to create safer spaces because for a little while it was a little crazy."

Not only have the actions of administrators impacted these incidents, the teachers' familiarity with the computer applications themselves has made a difference. Teachers can now decline entrance requests. They know how to monitor meetings, and have become more comfortable muting students who cause distractions.

"As far as what's reported to us the number of reports of any problems with folks doing inappropriate things in their Google Meet rooms has gone down dramatically from the first week of school," said Patterson. "So we're hoping that people have gotten the message, that no, you really can't do these things that are going to interrupt the flow of learning in the class. Silly noises, saying inappropriate things, jumping into classes where you don't belong, we'll deal with those and we'll deal with them quickly."

In the end, it seems as if the problem has been largely resolved, and has turned into a learning experience.

Post said the tools they have used to address the online issues could still have a role once in-person learning starts again. She said Google Forms' ability to update in real time was a useful feature, making it something that the school may utilize in the future. "So it's this idea of what can we learn in this weird environment," she said.

“NEW



with pandemic, mascot change, and delayed season, Sims looks forward to the final season of his high school football career

Tariq Sims, the star wide receiver for Loudoun County High School, warms up for late night Friday football during last year's season. Sims now prepares at home for his last high school football season, which is scheduled to begin in February, according to VHSL guidelines. Photo courtesy of Jim Klimavicz.

FOR ALL OF US”

Tariq Sims believes that he is a senior now makes him one of the people on the football team that people look up to.

“But being a senior has made me feel like I am being looked up to by a lot of the lower classmen which makes me push myself even harder to set an example for them to carry on the legacy we have created at the county,” said Sims.

Sims thinks the season will be different without having their big crowds due to the COVID 19.

“Of course we love our fans, parents and students who come to support us, if we focus enough on the game and have team energy I’m pretty sure we will be fine but it will be a huge loss in our history because we get pretty big crowds,” said Sims.

The pandemic has helped Sims establish his outlook about taking everyday seriously and giving your best at all times.

“Don’t take everyday for granted,” said Sims. “Make everyday count, every rep count. It could be your last year playing football ever again. You don’t want to grow old saying ‘I wish I could’ve broken this record.’ Make that happen so the kids under you can watch that and be like, ‘man, I want to do the same thing but better.’”

Due to coronavirus, their workouts just started, but he has been getting workouts in with a few of his teammates.

“As a team we just started doing workouts recently due to COVID and the cancellation of our season, but me and a couple of guys always got together and ran routes or did field work to stay in shape, and get better on our agility,” said Sims.

Sims, a D1 athlete next year at Old Dominion University, is feeling really good about the work he has been putting in and helped him earn a scholarship.

“Being a D1 athlete is an amazing feeling because it’s something I have been working for my whole life and it was definitely very hard to get here,” said Sims. “I’ve been doing this sport for 11 years and to see that my work has paid off to get to where I am at right now. It’s only making me more motivated to keep on going. You have to do the lit-

tle things to get here, like grades are most important when it comes to being a D1 athlete, but the most important part of it all is getting the education for my family and graduating.”

As Sims focuses on his last year at county he is ready to be a leader of the new renamed Captains. The Loudoun County School Board voted to replace the former mascot “Raiders” due to its associations with slavery.

“Once a Raider always a Raider, but to me it doesn’t really matter we are still the same, and we have a new coaching staff, so yes it is different to an extent because this is new for all of us but it doesn’t change how we are going to approach the upcoming season.”

Head football Coach **Matthew Redienbaugh** believes Tariq can do big things this season.

“As soon as Coach Reidenbaugh saw me he said that I can do huge things this upcoming season and I look forward to it,” said Sims.

As he looks beyond high school, Sims thinks Old Dominion University is a good school for him, in terms of both education and the athletic department

“Well when I was thinking about picking where I wanted to continue my next four years, I wanted to go somewhere I could make a difference at, not just a school that wins games all the time,” said Sims. “I Looked at it as I want to go somewhere I will feel comfortable with the coaches and players. They have a great business program and that’s the main reason, obviously, because education comes first. Then the fact it is by the beach is also a huge plus, it is an FBS school and I want to win a championship and play in a bowl game.”

When he considers his future, Sims feels confident about his decision to attend ODU.

“I was very proud, one because it was my first full ride scholarship offer and because it’s actually a pretty well known school in Virginia, the coaching staff is amazing, my future teammates are already family, we even have a group chat, my position coach **Tony Lucas** is a cool guy who I can talk to almost about anything.”

PRESEASON PREVIEW



Caleb Rexroad flies in for a layup in the first quarter of the state quarterfinals vs. George Washington. After a Summer affected by a pandemic Caleb Rexroad found new ways to prepare for the upcoming year. Photo courtesy of Jim Klimavicz

Matt Starchville and Casey Hughes

Senior Guard **Caleb Rexroad** was coming off one of the then-Raiders' best seasons ever. He helped the team reach the state quarterfinals while earning all conference honors just before Loudoun County Public Schools closed to in-person learning, and before VHSL made the decision to cancel spring sports.

The team ended with a historic season as they won the district championship and performed well in the state playoffs. Rexroad credits some of the team's performance to Loudoun County's student section, ranked No. 1 in the district. Not only did the student section hype up the team, they also got in the visiting team's heads and threw them off their game.

"We do feed off the crowd and had the best student section last year," Rexroad said. "This season will be very different from last year because there won't be the same atmosphere as if there were fans there. We are practicing locking in and not focusing on no fans or fans. We will need to feed off each other since there won't be a crowd."

Many basketball players have resorted to paying to play travel over

caleb rexroad plans for a repeat historic season

the summer to fulfill their basketball cravings. Rexroad and fellow senior forward **Nate Brown** are no exception.

“This summer I played on a team with Nate Brown and we were on a prep team that went to many tournaments to further our college recruitment process,” Rexroad said. “The biggest tournament we played in was a National Tournament in Myrtle Beach. We also went up to Philadelphia and went undefeated there.”

Rexroad hopes to channel his summer experience into the upcoming season. The Captains lost many seniors that were key parts in their scheme on offence and on defence. This season County will have to lean on the rising juniors to contribute more to the team. Some of the juniors have had varsity experience and some haven't yet.

“Last year the seniors were a big part of our success,” Rexroad said. “We have a solid core of guys coming back. Between the returning starters and the experience of some of the juniors, we are all excited for this season. I believe that the juniors are all ready to step up.”

Rexroad expects big things this season. He also hopes the County team can ride off the accomplishments of last season and have a great year no matter how long the season is,

“I expect to grow a lot as a player,” Rexroad said. “I mean, we had two of the best offensive players in potentially the state in Matt Anderson and Mark Siegal last year. I was kind of that third option, which I accepted because we had those two guys.

But this year I really expect to make a pretty big jump, and hopefully All Conferences which I definitely want to get again. But even All Region and All States. I'm looking to go up into those tiers even with the shortened season.”

Rexroad is a hard worker. In a non-COVID-19 year he would have been working with his trainer four or five times a week. He would have been lifting and playing pickup with friends nearly everyday. He also would have had travel games every weekend. However when the pandemic hit he had to change up his approach to training.

“I worked hard in the offseason on strength, conditioning and getting my weight up. I ended last season at 158 pounds and during this quarantine have gotten myself up to 170 pounds,” Rexroad said. “My basketball workouts consisted of stationary shots and doing every drill 100% as if I was in an actual game.”

The first few months after school shut down, Rexroad spent time shooting in his driveway. “I would just go outside and work on set shots and dribbling a heavy ball,” he said. “Just trying to improve my form a little bit from last year to this year.”

To condition, Rexroad frequently ran at six every morning, followed by pushups, situps, and pull ups. “It was all basically bodyweight stuff...as much as I could get in,” Rexroad said.

It's no wonder Rexroad is so dedicated even during the pandemic. His passion for basketball started at an early age.

“I started playing basketball when I was about three or four,” said Rex-

road, whose father played in college and introduced him to the game. I played upward for a couple of years and when I first started I wasn't that into basketball. As a child I was more into baseball until I went to middle school and then I got tired of baseball.”

Once Rexroad hit middle school he started to focus on baseball and continued to work on his game.

“I started to focus more on basketball and training four to five days a week,” Rexroad said. “This was the point in my life where I fell in love with basketball. This is where I also started to see some development in my game.”

Rexroad came into high school with high hopes of playing basketball. He had a great tryout and was able to make it on varsity as a freshman, which was a huge accomplishment for him.

“When I got onto varsity as a freshman that is when I figured out that I had decent abilities in basketball,” Rexroad said. Though he didn't play much as a freshman, he played more as the years progressed. “Then, last year was my best year as I made All Conference for the first time,” Rexroad said.

Although the team has changed a lot over the course of his time at County, they will still have the same goal in mind, playing at a high level and making another state playoff run.

“This season even with all the changes in players and all the new juniors joining the team I believe that County basketball is here to stay and we will make a good run for the playoffs again,” Rexroad said.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

photo feature: students social distancing edition

Michaela Scott | Editor-in-Chief

Over the summer and extended social distance and shelter-at-home mandates, students were forced to isolate with their families, which offered a chance to bond much more than they ever had before the global pandemic struck. Some teens picked up hobbies, like painting, skateboarding, and exercise; others followed safety precautions to travel among their families. Students submitted photos of what they have been doing in their pastime to make up for the things 2020 has restricted.



*Left top: Junior **Riccardo Iasci** skates at the Wy'East Mountain Academy in Sandy, Oregon. "I was lucky enough to be able to practice during this time, but we all wore masks and followed COVID-19 guidelines to insure safety the whole time we were in the skating school," Iasci said. Left bottom: Senior **Audrey Luhr** stayed at her father's house in Nebraska during the early Fall. "My dad lives in Nebraska, so it was nice traveling a bit over this crazy time. My favorite part of being here was my nature walks around this lake!" said Luhr. Below: Junior **Isabella Mitchum** on a hike in Montana with her sibling. "Over quarantine I visited Montana with my family when they came home from college," said Mitchum. "It was really great to get out of NOVA for a little."*





Above, left: Sophomore **John Penberthy** and junior **Charlotte Penberthy** swim with siblings in Arizona during late July. “The highlight of my trip was White water rafting in the Colorado river through the Grand Canyon. Surprisingly, the water was pretty cold, but refreshing from the humid air,” Charlotte said. Above, right: Junior **Stephen Massaquoi** celebrates a quarantined birthday with family. “I got to safely celebrate my step sister’s birthday with our cousins during the summertime,” said Massaquoi. Below, left: Junior **Imani Stringfellow** stands at Oceanside Pier in Ponto Beach, California. Stringfellow visited her family there for Thanksgiving, making sure to follow strict COVID-19 guidelines. “I was so lucky to visit the beach every day I was here,” said Stringfellow. Below, right: Sophomores and Juniors, (left to right) **Joey Fitzpatrick, Hunter Whitt, Daniel DeLargy, Wilson Kern, Lillian Kern, Maris Kern, Owen Fisher, Payton David, Mason Stuck** share their quarantined family vacation in the Outer Banks, North Carolina.

Disclaimer: In compliance with governor’s orders, all school-sponsored activities followed physical distancing and mask requirements, but due to the nature of COVID-19 limiting school activities, the community was invited to submit pictures for the yearbook. Many of these photos occurred on private residential property and therefore may not conform to the regulations binding school-sponsored activities.

THEATER DEPARTMENT TRANSFORMS CHALLENGES INTO UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Sophia Hylton created this sculpture, "Regret," for a technical theater project. Even as learning has had to be transferred to a virtual setting students have been able to work physically with props and materials they have access to at home.

Liberty Harrison | Staff Writer

As distance learning continues, all LCHS classes have been affected, but many elective courses have faced unique challenges because of the content of their courses. One such elective is Drama class, which has dealt not only with the problem of transitioning to online classes but also the retirement of the LCHS theater art teacher of 42 years.

Drama students and **William Staggs**, the new drama department teacher, agree that technology can lead to difficulties during class.

"There are many differences because of online learning," said sophomore and Drama II student **Kathryn Blackwood**. "Our warmups feel a little more awkward happening in front of our families, and the physical space that we're working in is different."

"We definitely aren't able to be as physical as last year, and it's kind of awkward doing a two-person scene when you're the only one in the room and looking at a camera," said junior **Sophia Hylton**, Technical Theater II student, and assistant director and stage manager for the first play of the year.

Online learning may also affect new theater students more significantly than experienced ones.



"Since I've been doing drama for so long it's muscle memory to me, but I can imagine being a new student in the department and feeling absolutely lost," Hylton said. "There's definitely a lot to learn, and in this case the best way to learn it is in person. You can mimic what you see and listen to directions, but without being there you miss a lot of the process that goes into learning how to act."

Not only does the virtual setting put up barriers for interactions, but it also can malfunction, disrupting communication.

"When Schoology or Google isn't cooperating, we have to get creative," said Staggs. "On the flip side, theatre is an active class and, as such, the virtual environment makes that somewhat difficult."

The way students take part in class has also been affected by the online setting.

Staggs admits that the county's prohibition on requiring that students use their camera can cause

some problems. "It does, particularly in theatre," he said, noting that most students in his classes keep their cameras on and engage. "I think they participate 'differently.' The virtual environment calls for different types of participation."

Hylton misses using the tools available at school, as well as the ability to build physical sets. However, even with new problems created in an online environment, students agree that they are still enjoying drama class, and even enjoy some of the challenges online learning presents.

"I've enjoyed how creative we have had to be to get the message across, like using props around the house and pushing your limits physically to catch audience attention," Hylton said. "As for tech, I've learned so much about the world of online tools to help tech theater people like me." "I'm glad I got to see this part of theater from a different perspective."

Although prevented from doing some activities, everyday theater class-

es have found ways around the challenges presented by online learning.

“In a normal drama class we all get on Google Meet and turn our cameras on since acting is physical and vocal,” Blackwood said. “We do a warm-up question to get creativity flowing and also an actor’s warm up, which involves physical movement, vocal warmup, and mental preparedness. Then we go into whatever activity we are currently doing.”

“In theater we really jumped right into things again right away, with a few little projects like a group commercial and some two person scenes with a vague prompt, similar to what you would see during an in-person theater class,” Hylton said.

Drama class has already covered several topics through online learning, including general improvisation activities, Shakespearean monologues, and open-ended dialogues, while technical theater has worked on safety protocols, elements of design, and sculpture creation.

Both Drama and Technical Theater classes have incorporated a variety of online resources to aid in transferring in-person classroom activities to a virtual setting.

“Right before this interview I had to design a small stage environment on some modeling software that will be presented in class,” Hylton said. “...We’re about to turn some of our virtual designs into augmented reality so that we can project them on things like a hologram when we can finally get into hybrid learning again.”

Drama class has found ways to create a virtual theatrical production, an original mashup of Edgar Allan Poe’s works, allowing students the opportunity to practice their skills.

“We started off with an idea,” Hylton said. “Since all of our officers really love Edgar Allan Poe, we have been wanting to do something with

his works for a very long time.

The drama officers then brought this idea to Staggs, who found a script for the play, entitled “Midnight Dreary,” written by one of his theater associates. Since then auditions, call-backs, and the creation of a cast list have been finished.

After confirming the cast list contained several drama officers, students who assist in the running of the drama department, the director and assistant director decided to modify the script, by adding several other of Poe’s works to produce a unique play.

“Staggs and I decided to make this an opportunity for us to all work together to create a story,” Hylton said.

Given the original creation and adapted content, the play will have a multifaceted atmosphere.

“It will be a little scary—Poe’s work is scary!—but it will be fun,” Staggs said.

The play will be created by different actors, filming separate parts of the play which will then be edited together. This method of production will maintain county safety protocols while allowing for multiple people to participate together in the production.

“We have no choice but to record the performance and post it online, but if the county agrees we might be able to have in-person rehearsals with some of our smaller groups,” Hylton said.

The virtual play is already underway, with auditions completed and students having received their roles, but a date for the release of the production has not yet been set.

Blackwood, who auditioned for the play earlier this month, confirmed she was chosen to participate.

Although technological issues have already been dealt with in rehearsals and new issues may arise with this novel method of production, the play’s participants are confident

that they will be able to work around them.

“I don’t think there should be too many issues since we have some pretty smart people in the tech crew,” Blackwood said.

“We have been using Google Meets for the rehearsals so far, and there’s always an issue with lag or delay, and of course bad wifi,” Hylton said. “Cameras freeze, audio cuts out, whatever you think could go wrong already has. We’ve all been really patient during this time, and decided to take things slowly.”

The theater department will be charging money to watch the production, using a digital payment method.

“We haven’t decided what the fee will be, but it will be minimal,” Staggs said.

As the year has progressed, much of the theater department have looked at this adapted form of class as a learning experience.

“This has possibly only taught us something more about acting though, because now we have experience working around situations and finding creative solutions,” Blackwood said.

Although many miss in-person classes, and do feel some anxiety about the uncertain duration of the distance learning environment, mostly they have continued to enjoy the online theater department experience.

“I believe it will get boring and repetitive, but theater students tend to be really good at staying engaged and working hard,” Hylton said. “After all, we have a passion for it and work together to come up with new ideas and ways to stay interested. Although we all are itching to go back, I believe that together as a group we can last in this kind of learning for at least a little while. As long as we have the promise of going back, we can keep our hopes up.”

WITH ASPIRATIONS OF STARDOM, ELISHEVA DESSER

RELEASES HER FIRST EP

Olivia DeWan | Staff Writer

For many, the dream of becoming a music star seems impossible, but for junior **Elisheva Desser**, this dream has already become her reality.

At just sixteen years old, Desser jumped into her music career. On September 25, Desser released “Sixteen,” her first EP. An EP is a collection of songs that is too short to be called an album, but is more than a single song.

“I’ve been making up songs since I was four years old,” Desser said. “I used to make up lyrics and have my dad write them down in a journal for me.”

Throughout her entire life Desser has been connected to music, she would make up her own songs and tunes.

“Throughout pre-K and third grade, I didn’t have a writing pattern, I just wrote down melodies and a lot of “la la la’s,” Desser said.

She was raised in a religious household, so her parents limited the types of music she was allowed to listen to.

“When I was younger, I was only allowed to listen to Christian radio,” Desser said. “My parents got me a CD player one year, and I stole my mom’s Adele CD, which is what started my love of pop ballads.

“I didn’t have access to whatever kind of music I wanted until my freshman year in high school, when I got my first iPhone and computer,” Desser said. “I didn’t even know certain genres existed. I got into all sorts

of different music from oldies, to alternative, hip hop, R&B, and artists that don’t fit into one genre.”

Though she was introduced late to certain genres and songs, Desser didn’t let that hold her back.

“I expanded my music taste a lot that year and I learned to write songs in other genres,” she said. “But I’ve always been best at writing a catchy pop song.”

As her talents grew, she started experimenting with different songs and writing patterns. She would write love songs and songs about heart-break, even though she herself had not yet experienced those emotions.

She took what she heard from pop songs on the radio and used that to influence her early writing.

As she got better at songwriting, she started to use music to understand herself deeper instead of writing for fun.

“Writing eventually became a way to emote and understand my own thoughts, rather than just a space to be creative,” she said. “When I create music, it makes me happy and it helps me through whatever I may be facing.”

Though Desser admits to having a natural talent, she understood that in order to get better she would need the help of more advanced songwriters/musicians.

“I was taught by **Beckah Shae** and **Jack Shocklee** on how to perfect the way I wrote,” Desser said. “I learned syllable count, how to better follow a storyline, and things I had never

considered thinking about when writing.”

Jack Shocklee is a professional music producer, with several of his songs heard on radios across the country. He’s married to Beckah Shae who is an American Christian-pop singer/songwriter. Shocklee has a producing studio in Nashville, Tennessee.

“In 2018, Jack Shocklee made the track to “Freedom’s A Fight” and I flew out there in February to write the song to it with Beckah Shae,” Desser said. “I had never collaborated with another songwriter before, and she taught me a way of writing that was so unlike anything I had heard.”

Desser is fond of the producer and songwriter and explained how they supported her throughout her entire journey.

“Jack and Beckah are close family friends and they taught me so much about the industry and about how my faith relates to my music,” Desser said.

Together, Desser, Shae, and Shocklee worked on the Sixteen EP. Desser would fly down to Nashville to Shocklee’s music studio and record and work on her songs there.

“Beckah Shae and Jack Shocklee are the co-writers and producers of the EP,” Desser said. “Not only did they do such an incredible job on the tracks, helping me get the vocals and melody’s right, but they also poured into me spiritually and emotionally.”

Desser worked on her EP for three weeks, constantly working to perfect her songs so they would be ready to



Elliesheva Desser (aka Caleny) poses for her photoshoot featuring her Sixteen EP. In addition to her EP, she also has a single. Photo courtesy of Elisheva Desser.

be released. Her "Sixteen" EP consists of four songs, "Happy Anyway", "Why Don't U", "Freedom's a Fight", and "Don't Give Up".

In addition to creating her EP, she came up with her show name, deciding to go by "Caleny" instead of Ellie.

"Every version of my full name was already taken on Apple Music," Desser explained. "We wanted something unique. My middle name is McAleny, so I thought about just doing 'Caleny' so that it's a part of my name, but not something other people have used."

When her EP was finally recorded and produced, Desser had a different job to do besides songwriting and singing. She had to start promoting her work so people would know that there was a new, talented, young artist in town.

"I mainly used social media to promote my album (which is a 4 song EP)," Desser said. "A lot of my friends put it on their Instagrams and shared it with other people."

Desser's best friend, **Mia Deladurantaye**, was a huge supporter of her and her work.

"I've known Ellie since we rode the same bus in sixth grade," Deladurantaye said. "I genuinely love her music and I would still listen to it even if I wasn't friends with her."

Along with her best friend, Desser said that her parents also inspired her to become a songwriter and that they were some of her biggest supporters.

"I would say that my parents played a huge role in what I have accomplished so far," she said. "From a young age my parents always encouraged my dreams and pushed me to go for what I wanted. My mom and dad believed in my potential and financially supported me in recording."

Desser was incredibly proud of her EP along with all of her supporters. She worked hard on all of her songs,

but was able to pick a favorite

"Why Don't U" was very personal so I felt nervous releasing it," Desser said. "But it's my favorite song off of the EP"

Deladurantaye agrees.

"My favorite song for sure is 'Why Don't U,'" Deladurantaye said. "I remember when Ellie walked into [the] school library after getting back from recording in Nashville, and I loved it as soon as I heard it."

Desser's love for music only grew throughout this entire process, she never once strayed from her goals, her path, or her faith.

"I think music has the power to impact anyone's life," she said. "Music is a God given gift and I don't know what life would be like without it. Music is something that is universal, but also personal. By listening to music, anyone can feel related to and connected. It can change the atmosphere of a room."

When she released "Sixteen," she wasn't just doing it for herself.

"I hope that the songs I released help people in some way," she said. "Whether they just needed a song to relate to, or a happy song to sing along to, I want my music to positively impact my peers, and people I don't know."

During her journey, Desser solidified what she already knew; she wanted music to be her career in her future. She's aware that the music industry is tough, and oftentimes shows no mercy.

"Singing and Songwriting has always been viewed as a career for me," Desser said. "As I've gotten older, a part of me hoped that I would find another career that I found interesting because of how hard it is to make it in the music industry. As a junior in high school, my goals haven't changed, and I would like to be a singer/songwriter, and write

songs for other people. Recording in the studio throughout the past few years has only reassured my dreams and helped me realize that music is something I want to do for the rest of my life."

Desser intends to keep working on her music and improving her skills, she plans to hopefully release another EP, or maybe even a full album.

"We haven't discussed what the next plan of action is for recording, I think that we'll see how the EP does and put more small EPs out until hopefully, something blows up," she said. "In the next EP, I would expect to see more originals. I've been doing a lot of writing and I have a lot of songs that could potentially be recorded."

On September 28, 2020, Desser attended her "Sixteen" EP release party, officially making her first debut as an upcoming artist.

"Congrats @calenymusic on your #sixteen EP release," Shocklee commented on one of his Instagram posts. "Super proud of you!"

Deladurantaye was also ecstatic for her friend.

"I was extremely proud of her because she had been working so hard for so long," Deladurantaye said.

Desser herself could hardly believe that she had successfully produced her first EP.

"Releasing the album was exciting and relieving because we had been waiting to release it for so long," Desser said.

Her music can be found on Spotify and Apple Music under her show name, Caleny.

"Being in the studio, I learned a lot about professionalism and I've gotten better at recording as time has gone on," Desser said. "Some of my favorite memories are in the studio and creating the EP felt like a dream come true."

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meet english teacher jason bryant

Jason Bryant poses as a Renaissance man named Nathaniel Butler. Bryant worked at the Renaissance Festival in Maryland in 2010. Photo courtesy of Jason Bryant.



Olivia DeWan | Staff Writer

Jason Bryant, a new English teacher at LCHS, recently joined the County community, but his path to teaching is different than most.

Bryant grew up in Minnesota and was raised by his grandparents. Later on, he graduated from high school and went into college.

“I did my undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and my grad work at American College of Education,” said Bryant. “I loved the freedom with time and the

chances to become part of my campus community.”

Bryant has worked as a LPCS teacher for 15 years. He taught at Riverside, Freedom, and Broad Run high schools.

Bryant loves teaching, even though it wasn't his original plan of action.

“I actually went into my undergraduate coursework declared as a major in political science,” said Bryant. “I wanted to either become a lawyer or a politician.”

Many students become teachers because they had who inspired them to do so. Bryant was the opposite.

“I didn't really have a teacher as inspiration in my choosing to become a teacher,” he said. “I have always wanted to serve and help people.”

Bryant is able to sympathize with students who have a harder time, or even struggle through school.

“I had a tough time during my high school career personally and academically and I really identify with the struggles of young adults,” said Bryant. “I therefore committed my life as a person and teacher to serve families and young adults, working to help them become better people and stronger academically.”

Bryant taught for years before he decided to take time off to become a professional actor.

“I was a stand-in and body double for Hollywood actor **Billy Crudup** during the film *Thin Ice*,” said Bryant. “It was awesome being a part of building a movie.”

Bryant starred in a few theatrical productions.

“I also played the lead role in a very reputable, professional dinner theatre production, ‘Over the River and Through the Woods,’ turning down a role in a play produced at The Ordway

Theatre,” said Bryant. “The role in this very funny play was very near to my heart, being raised by my grandparents.”

“Achieving an IMDb credit in only a year’s time of professional acting work was such a wonderful adventure,” he said. “Another great experience was being a part of the release party for HBO’s ‘Black List, Volume 3,’ working as talent for their release party in Minneapolis,” he said. “I have many great memories of teaching and performing!”

Through his acting, it gave Bryant more insight on how he wanted to teach.

“The arts allow me to contribute and convey the power of the story to my students,” he said. “The students are an audience, and the arts have influenced me to seek creative ways to present my students with universal themes through stories that nudges them to come face-to-face with themselves and their own constructs about the world, people, and cultures.”

Bryant has a passionate love for the arts.

“The arts offer a wondrous way to leave the cares of the world behind and give an audience an experience, transporting them into lives, settings, and situations of others like and unlike themselves,” said Bryant. “The arts reflect soul, and what a privilege and responsibility it is to share that with the world!”

Acting and the arts gave Bryant a unique experience that some can only dream of. In addition to acting, Bryant has had an affinity for a second unique career choice.

“I worked as a sword fighter and street actor for one season with the Maryland Renaissance Festival,” he said.

When in class learning about “Beowulf” or “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,” his previous knowledge of sword fighting or wearing

heavy chainmail armor helps students understand the difficult writings of the ancient texts.

In addition to being a teacher, actor, and sword fighter, Bryant is also a father. His son is a junior in high school.

“He is about ready to embark on his own life journey,” said Bryant. “He represents the best of me, and I am proud to be his dad.”

Bryant’s students all appreciate their new teacher.

“I think Mr. Bryant is an amazing teacher,” said **Sydney Howard**, a sophomore in his honor’s English class. “He’s very welcoming to all students. Every day he greets each student as they come in and just talks to us, making it all fun.”

Sophomore **Donovan Claybrooks** agrees.

“Mr. Bryant is an interesting teacher with a lot of personality,” Claybrooks said. “His lectures are very informative.”

In return, Bryant cares a great deal about his students.

“I am always going to put them first,” said Bryant. “I will be flexible with deadlines, be available for extra help, and provide opportunities for them such as retakes.”

Though he’s willing to give students any help they need, he also expects students to show an equal amount of effort in return.

“However, teaching and learning, if truly an organic process, requires both the student and the teacher to be successful,” he said. “It simply cannot be effective unless students are willing to meet me halfway in the teaching and learning process.”

Like many teachers, the only thing he wants is for his students to succeed.

“My goal is to provide students a place to feel supported, cared for, and understood,” he said. “I want their English class to be an experience where

they feel comfortable to take risks and engage in every lesson.”

Like everyone else, Bryant has been challenged during the 2020 school year. Due to the COVID-19, he had to figure out how to best help his students over distance learning.

“This year has been a challenge given distance learning,” said Bryant. “But as a new teacher at County, I have had to learn the school culture and my fellow colleagues from afar and without meeting students and staff in person!”

In addition, Bryant talks about how distance learning has proved difficult.

“Distance learning feels very impersonal,” said Bryant. “But my goal is to keep things simple, focus on what is best for my students, and work hard to make English class engaging, fun, and challenging!”

Outside of teaching, Bryant enjoys watching sports, meditating, and video gaming.

“I am also a Superman fan,” said Bryant. “Even my license plate on my car is Superman themed!”

In addition to being a Superman fan, he’s also a huge fan of the band “Queen”.

In the future, Bryant hopes to become more involved with Loudoun County and all the things the school has to offer.

“I am not part of any clubs or activities yet,” said Bryant. “But I hope to one day sponsor clubs and possibly coach for LCH.”

Though Bryant doesn’t sponsor any clubs at the moment, he gave a generous donation to the LCHS UNICEF Club during their Baskets Battling COVID-19 fundraiser. He’s already an active member of the County community regardless that this is his first year at the school.

“This will be my twentieth year as an educator,” said Bryant. “I am proud to be a Captain!”

LIBRARIAN FINDS

HISTORY AND CONNECTION

IN COUNTY'S ARCHIVES



Emily Banner | Staff Writer

Librarian **Tonya Dagstani** recently made an interesting discovery. “I came across boxes of these really cool articles from the history of Loudoun County High School since 1954,” she said.

“It smells like an antique store because it’s so old,” Dagstani said about one of the volumes.

While students aren’t at school, the librarians are taking the opportunity to clean up the library. One thing found within a scrapbook was a card with the code of conduct for the Quill and Scroll, an honors society for journalism students. “They’ve got all these programs, and a lot of them are hand-done,” Dagstani said.

The scrapbook is also full of old photos of the banquet and induction ceremonies, carefully labeled.

What triggered her interest in this was a 1963 edition of *The Loudoun Raider*, which included an article about the school fashion board. The members would attend “...a weekly modelling class in which they will learn to practice poise and good grooming, and to model various types of clothing,” the article reads.

Dagstani found many parallels between the past and the events occurring in the world now. “They’re addressing a lot of the same things that we’re facing now, they talk about social justice and in some of the articles they’re talking about a polio drive,” she said. “A lot of the things that we’re facing now, we kind of feel like this is all brand new, but generations before us have dealt with similar issues and it’s interesting to see those takes on things.”

Above: a page from the 1963 Loudoun Raider about the fashion board. Right: The 1957 yearbook featured the theme of foxhunting throughout. It was being used as a metaphor for the school, related to the fact that Middleburg is horse country. Photos courtesy of Tonya Dagstani.



CONTINUED STORIES

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and I feel like he looks more like a construction worker.”

Kopp also has a mixed opinion about the look of the Captain. She believes the school could have invested more time in the logo of the Captain. “I don’t know why they went on the Internet and used a picture off of Shutterstock and called it the new logo,” Kopp said. “I just don’t think it really represents the school.”

Although Davis is unhappy with the new look, she had also voted for the Captains. “I thought it had a nice ring to it and would be the easiest transition for the school looks-wise. I think people would identify with the Captain the most since a Raider is quite similar,” Davis said.

Kopp envisioned the new mascot looking more like the Christopher Newport Captains and was confused when she saw what it actually

was. “I just assumed it would look more like the pirate one at CNU and I think it would look more professional if they had done it that way,” said Kopp.

Another source of contention is that students were unable to vote on the new logos. Many assumed they would have an option pick from a variety of options, but they were just presented with them later.

“They could easily create a Captain logo that appeals to everyone and isn’t just a militaristic looking man,” said Kopp. “In order to make it more appealing I would make it more original and maybe get art students to design something.”

Welstead said the opinions were quite mixed when the new logos were shown to students during the mascot reveal. She knew that some people would be upset with the mascot either way and would find a way to hate it, especially if they

hadn’t wanted the mascot to change in the first place.

“Most people were fine with the name Captains, but the physical appearance of the Captain caused people to be upset because they assumed it would look more like a naval Captain,” said Welstead.

At first, Assistant Principal Katie Post was also unsure about the male mascot logo. “I warmed up to that particular logo once a friend told me it could be interpreted many ways. For instance, it could embody the Captain of a sports team, or the Captain of the ROTC, or even a Captain of the community,” said Post.

Although there have been many issues surrounding the mascot, it is important to look on the bright side and realize there can always be improvements made. “It’s all about the student’s attitude and what they make of it,” said Welstead. •

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campus are using some of the other logos when they’re putting out formal communication or creating spirit wear,” said Luttrell.

Another cause of concern amongst students was the lack of student involvement. They felt as though they did not have a say in choosing the logos and it was a surprise to everyone. When making big decisions for the school, they would like to be included or have their input heard.

When asked if they would let students help with design ideas for the logo, Administration seemed open to suggestions and said that could be a topic of discussion with the Student

Council, but the last time the student body designed something for the school was back when the original mascot was designed and it was the embodiment of Moseby’s Raiders. However, they agree it is certainly something to revisit with Student Council members and take into consideration.

“When schools select new mascots in Loudoun County, it has just been a practice that language and possible mascot ideas are usually just sent to vendors so that we can do some mock ups and have options from the vendors for consideration,” Luttrell said. “We just received submissions to

choose from.”

The main issue is really just the fact that students had no choice but to be okay with this image. We have many talented art students at our school, and many would be more than willing to submit possible ideas for a logo that would better suit the school.

Student involvement is the key to success and shouldn’t be underestimated. The school should let us brainstorm logos that would better fit the school as a whole.

Teachers' Pets



Karen Cortes | Managing Editor

In a complicated year like 2020, one of the few ups for teachers is spending more time with their pets. Teachers submitted pictures of their four legged best friends as they continue to teach virtually.



Clockwise from top: **Diann Landau** has a horse named Mi-thrandir, which she gets to ride more frequently during the pandemic. **Kathryn Ives'** cat Beebs brought a rodent inside and proceeded to eat it while Ives taught. **Arlene Lewis'** a cat Allie is "forbidden to come in her office" because she walks all over Lewis' keyboard and will bite Lewis if she tries to remove her. According to Lewis, the cat has gotten naughtier over quarantine. **Jarod Brown's** chocolate lab Cashmere walks more than ever since the pandemic started. **Lacey Conrad** has a dog named Hershey, two cats called Mini and Peaches, a frog called Diggory, and two leopard geckos named Yoshi and George. **Nicole Kezmarsky's** rescue dog Louis has an ongoing fight with a UPS employee that parks outside her house. **Kelly Darling's** springer spaniel, Mae, "she sits on the couch behind my desk and is usually on camera for my students to see!" **Jane Yocom's** yellow lab Tank thinks "the start of block 4 and 8 are a signal for him to get his dinner."

