

Seniors Jordyn Chambers (left), Emma Galvin (center), and Laasya Narne (right) shelve books and organize supplies at the Sycolin Creek Elementary School library. They chose to volunteer at the library for their community service, which takes place during the last month of school. Seniors may choose to participate in Outreach instead of attending school after AP exams are administered. Photos courtesy of Sophia Kuzminski.

CAPTAINS OUTREACH

seniors spend their last days giving back

Evelyn Kuzminski | Layout Editor

Classrooms have been a bit emptier than usual recently, but there's still nearly a month left of school. Where is everyone?

The absences are mostly from the senior class, many of whom are participating in Captains Outreach this month. Captains Outreach is a school-sponsored community service project in which seniors can perform 50 hours of community service in lieu of school attendance after AP exams are administered.

"I think the Outreach program is very innovative," senior **Sarah Charah** said. "It gives the students the chance to learn lessons through real life experiences."

For her Outreach project, Charah is donating her time to the

Evergreen Mill Elementary School library, where she is excited to be working with little kids. Charah has prior experience working with kids, through her participation in tutoring and Educators Rising.

Seniors submit their own ideas for their Outreach project. Proposals are approved by faculty before students begin their service. Projects may be completed in a group or individually, and require both an LCHS and a community sponsor to help coordinate and record service hours.

Volunteering at middle or elementary schools is a popular Outreach project, but it's not the only option. Others are volunteering at Camp Highroad, the animal shelter, or other local businesses.

"I chose Outreach because I wanted to help the community in

a fun way," Charah said. "To us it may seem little or not important, but it's everything to those principals, camp counselors, clinics, or whoever else people chose to help."

For many students, Outreach is another item on the senior year bucket list, along with their last homecoming, followed by prom and graduation.

"Since I was a freshman and heard about Outreach I got excited," Charah said. "It's a chance to spend time with friends I'll miss when we are all away at college,"

Charah also admires Outreach for the experience and lessons it imparts on students. It takes them out of the classroom, away from the quizzes and notes, and gives them a more authentic real-world experience.

"We get to escape the high school bubble and make real progress in our community," she said.

"It also teaches discipline, responsibility, patience, and leadership. And honestly, when the senioritis gets really bad, it's hard to do any more work, so this new environment [students] will be in can offer something refreshing."

Captains Outreach is a valuable, unique, and enjoyable way for seniors to close out their high school careers. It's a win-win for both the community and the students, leaving the former especially with meaningful lessons and experience that they can carry with them in their future endeavors.

Charah acknowledged the lasting impact of the Outreach program: "It will be something [students] remember forever." •

Brighton Lieu named graduation commencement speaker

Ethan Weiss | Staff Writer

Graduation is quickly approaching. On Friday, June 17 the class of 2022 will officially finish their high school career and prepare to move into the next part of their lives. Graduation is a way for the class to be together for one last time and celebrate their accomplishments and inspire them for the future. This year, seniors were invited to audition to be considered for the role of commencement speaker, and after the application process, senior

Brighton Lieu was named the commencement speaker. "I feel incredibly honored and lucky," said Lieu.

Lieu will attend the University of Virginia to study Cognitive Science and Linguistics. "I have always loved UVA and considered it my second home," said Lieu. He had a decorated high school career including being the president of the Model United Nations Club, a co-captain of the Academic Team, a member of the Improv Team and heavily involved in the theater department. These accolades show

the hard work he put in during high school. Lieu says he feels ready to deliver the speech because of his time in the theater department. "I'm not one who gets much stage fright anymore," Lieu said.

The commencement speech is a large part of the graduation and will convey a message to both the students and the parents. "I don't want to reveal everything, but I will tell you this much. We go to school in a pretty unique building that, just like the class of 2022, has changed a lot," Lieu said.

It's the main goal of the speaker to get across a message that they believe in and others can also support. "Learning isn't just something to be done in the classroom, if you can begin to love learning and just be curious you're not just doing yourself favors, but also helping the world be a bit richer of a place," Lieu said.

While Lieu is keeping the rest of his speech secret for now, those who attend the graduation of the class of 2022 on June 17 will be able to hear the whole thing. •

OPINION

Should we demolish the school in order to build a new & better one?

Lorenzo Salas | Staff Writer

Students shuffle into Mr. Rudy's English class and file into their small desks that are clumped together in groups of five. As the teacher goes up to teach his class, he pushes away his small cart in order to reach the Promethean board. At 540 square feet, the English classroom is barely the size of the average household living room. This summer, the room was twice the size but then was cut in half to make more classrooms to account for overcrowding.

Due to the class being cut in half, the original HVAC system had to be moved, so temperature is a mystery to students who learn there everyday. Some days, the air is stifling and others, students shiver without a sweatshirt. This forces Mr. Rudy to open the windows to somehow stabilize the temperature. As he opens the windows, multiple students complain as their Chromebooks are dead and there are only two student outlets, so they are forced to relocate, awkwardly shuffling closer to the outlet. As he asks us to open our Chromebooks, the internet is unstable due to the spotty Wi-Fi. This picture paints a sad reality as these students are forced to learn in an environment that isn't up to standards. With temperatures being unstable, no room to move around, bad internet, and no electric outlets to charge computers, the learning conditions in that classroom are worse than when students were forced to endure during distance learning.

Not only are these learning conditions bad but our school is overcrowded to the point where the teachers suffer. Our school is overflowing and the main issue of this is the district lines. A kid who lives right across from Heritage would be sent to County.

Another issue with the overcrowding is that the teacher numbers remain the same. These teachers are forced to work in a classroom cut in half with the room not working and having the same number of students you would have in a bigger classroom: half the space but with the same number of students, not to mention all

the technical issues.

But what solutions are there? School board meetings often include discussions of redistricting some County students to surrounding high schools. Other plans include extensive renovations. While there aren't lots of concrete ideas and everything's up in the air, one idea has been to demolish the school and relocate the students to trailers or elsewhere while the school is rebuilt to be up to standards.

Splitting the classrooms in half is a cheap solution. These classrooms were renovated quickly, with renovations being rushed and not even finished by the time the school year started. Even if the renovations were conducted with more time or care, there are still the same number of students sitting in now half the square footage.

The Virginia Department of Education recommends that high school classrooms are 700 square feet in size. Many of our classrooms struggle to meet that size as they were originally built, not to mention the classrooms that were cut in half.

Demolishing the school would allow for the creation of classrooms with care and attention. Park View High School has been in the news recently, with its physical building being compared to state-of-the-art new schools such as Lightridge. It's the same issue with County: there is only so much that renovation can accomplish when the school was designed for use with 1950s populations.

Another positive of demolishing the schools would be to help accommodate the elective departments in our school. Many of the elective departments in our school are under-resourced compared to other schools like Heritage, many of the electives equipment are out of date, and the space in some of these classrooms are cramped.

The art department has a very difficult learning environment as both of the classrooms are different sizes with one half the size of the other. Desk clumps make it difficult to move and there is a giant pillar blocking the teacher's viewpoint from the clay area. If we

were to demolish and rebuild the school, then the art department and other electives would have their classrooms built with more attention to the needs of learners in the 21st century. We could even use the previous classroom as a blueprint on what not to do.

This solution would be more effective than renovation. Some have suggested turning the adjacent courtyard into another classroom, but these types of renovations are restricted to the current footprint.

Some might argue that destroying the school would be to destroy the area's heritage and history. However, keeping history shouldn't come at the expense of our students. Many students have to come to school everyday and learn in terrible conditions. They have to learn in a class with no space to move, uncontrollable temperature, and they aren't guaranteed a bathroom as even in its best conditions, the number of bathrooms here falls far short of the newer high schools, even Heritage.

The current renovations in the school serve nothing but to be a bandaid on an open wound. These renovations do nothing to address or fix issues going in class and are a cheap attempt at fixing an issue that runs deep.

Many people in the community have attended this school and many are very vocal about their high school career here, leading to vocal support to keep the school the same as it is a staple of Leesburg and Loudoun County.

Should we stifle the learning environment just because 50 years ago this school was the first one in the county? When this school was created it was an all-White school as Black students were sent to Douglass High School. Then, the mascot was the Raider, which was a Civil War hero who fought for the Confederacy. The school was started and created with racism at its core, and recently we decided to change our mascot to better represent our community's values. Likewise, to keep the school the way it is simply because of it being historical is doing a disservice to the students who are trying to learn. •

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Students de-stress on Wellness Wednesday

Alexis Shugars | Staff Writer

On March 16, students of Loudoun County High School participated in an activity of their choice, in an attempt to start off the school day stress free. Students were able to choose from a variety of different activities such as Uno, watching “The Office,” yoga and many more.

1 - Freshmen **Kelsan Giamporcuro** (left) and **Berek Harrison** (right) play a long and tactical game of Connect 4 in room 214.

2 - **Isabelle Bruce**, senior, works on her story for Creative Writing in room 203.

3- Juniors **Chris Sledd** (left) and **Carlos Escobar** (right) play a strategic match of chess in room 253.

4 - Sophomores **Jill Bittner** (left), **Sophie Wiggins** (middle), and **Camryn Kolodziej** (right) pose with their delicious decorated cookies in the cafeteria.

5 - Junior **Sutton Taliaferro** (front left) plays a game changer



1



2

card in an Uno game against juniors **Max McKnight** (back left), **Jada Venson** (back right), and **Evelyn Schkei** (front right).

6 - Junior **Adrian Calvert** takes part in rock painting in room 125. Calvert decided to paint a picture of a frog on the rock that he brought to school. •



3



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6

Students share opinions on Wellness Wednesday

Alexis Shugars | Staff Writer

Wellness Wednesday was originally put into the school day as a way for students relax and to distract students from the stress of their school day. It also provides opportunities for students to explore new hobbies and meet new people. Family and consumer science teacher **Dorene Kuebler** described this day as “a way for students to enjoy school without the academic side of it.”

Although the main purpose of Wellness Wednesday is to improve the mental health of students, is this actively happening? Assistant Principal **Katie Post** expressed her curiosity in students’ opinions on how Wellness Wednesday has impacted their mental health. “My assumption is yeah, but I would want to hear from the students, because what I see might not be what their experience is,” she said.

The County Chronicle sent out a survey to the student body, and 63 Loudoun County students responded with split opinions.

Senior **Ricky Rodas** writes that he also had a positive experience with the most recent Wellness Wednesday. “I don’t feel like I’m at school, and it gets my mind off school too,” he says.

“I like and enjoy Wellness Wednesday because it’s a good

way to boost students’ morale and energy, to help us relax and decompress a little from the stresses of school,” says senior **Amina Conteh**. She adds that the one downside to the morning activity is that “we don’t have Wellness Wednesday as often.” Conteh suggests hosting Wellness Wednesday at least two times a month or even having the whole Wednesday as a “major mental day off.”

On the contrary, other students are quick to express their negative opinions on Wellness Wednesday, saying it’s not necessary and simply a waste of time. “School should be meant for learning and Wellness Wednesday is a waste of time,” said junior **Michael Aho**.

Senior **Brenna McManus** claims that Wellness Wednesday “causes more stress than it is worth.” McManus adds that she knows of very few students who genuinely look forward to the day. “All we want is a little bit of extra study hall or a nap,” she said.

Within those students who have a negative view on Wellness Wednesday, many agree with McManus that they would rather sleep in. “I feel like it would just be better to have us come into school late rather than having to choose something that we don’t actually want to do,” said junior **Amelia Spadaccini**. •

First annual Women's Summit

Student leaders host workshops to present exciting topics



Senior Mallory Little presents her workshop on “How to find your artistic passion” to a group of eager listeners. Photo courtesy of Matthew Prince.

Alexis Shugars | Staff Writer

On March 21, Loudoun County High School hosted its first annual Women’s Summit. During this assembly, a handful of students had the opportunity to present a workshop on a topic they found interesting and inspiring. The presented workshop topics ranged from emergency medicine to ways to break into the recording industry.

During the Women’s Summit assembly, students were granted the opportunity to choose one of six workshops, following this year’s theme of “Breaking Barriers.”

Senior Ceci Stewart was first confronted with the opportunity to present her own workshop on “How to Start Your Own Business” for the Women’s Summit thanks to her current experience owning a small jewelry business. Stewart was im-

mediately drawn to the idea of presenting and “the opportunity to empower young women and others and teach them how to start a business,” she said.

Stewart expressed the importance of what her workshop meant to her as well as her thankfulness for being able to share her knowledge on the subject. “I feel very honored to have been a part of the First Annual Women’s Summit and to specifically have been asked to present,” she said.

“I hope my audience learned not only how to start their own business but also all of the key factors into owning their own business,” Stewart said. “I also hope that if they do decide to open their own business, the knowledge I presented to them will help immensely.”

Junior Kathryn Homa was also of those selected to present a workshop at the assembly on the topic “Emergency Medicine: How to Get Started/Emergency First Aid Essentials.” Homa settled on this topic because of her experience at Loudoun Rescue as an EMT.

“I’ve been super involved with my rescue station and I love volunteering as an EMT,” she said. “It is so awesome to be able to make a real

difference in the community and see how the work I’m doing positively affects others.”

During her presentation, Homa shared with attendees about her experience as an EMT and taught them how to take blood pressure with both a sphygmomanometer and a stethoscope.

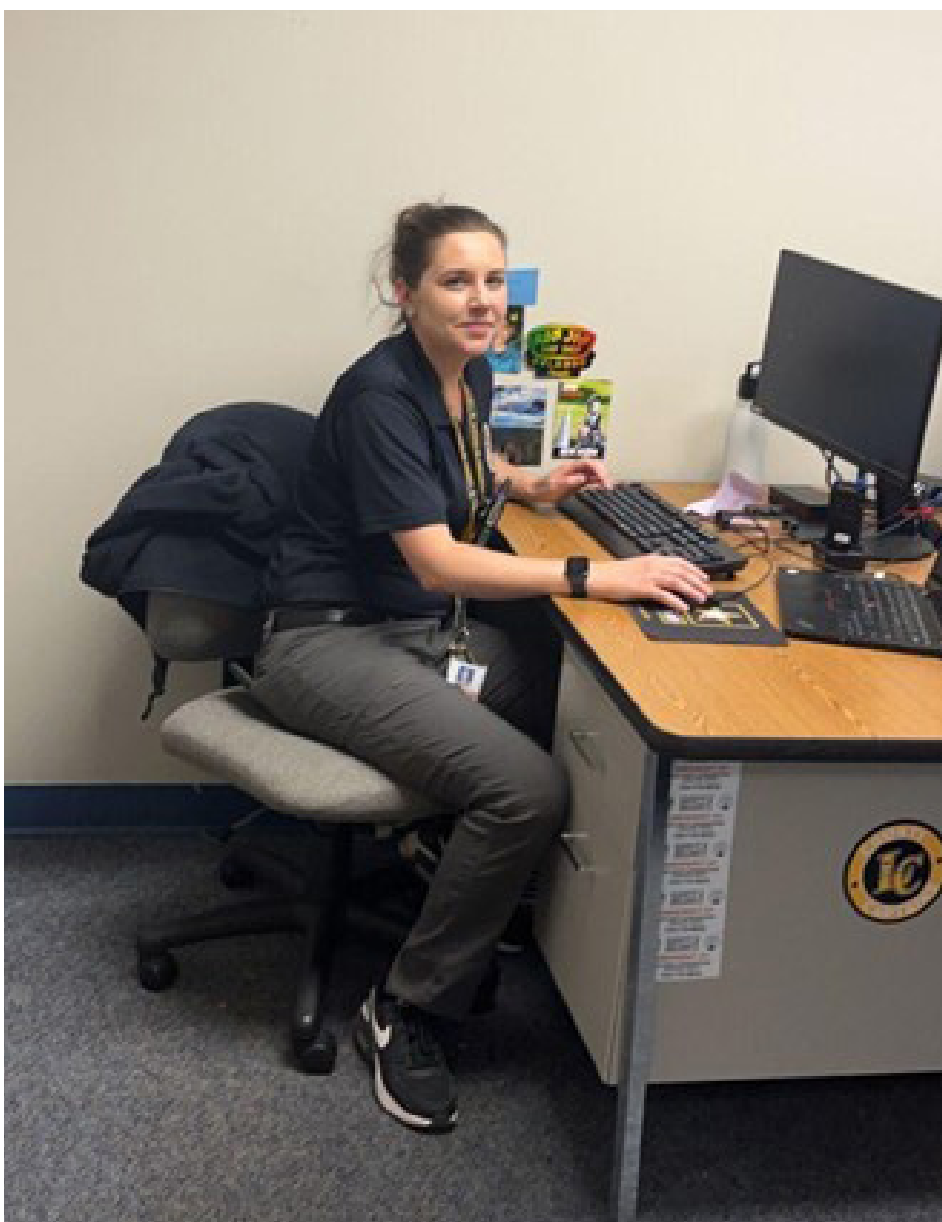
“I hope that my audience gained a sense of what it is like to be an EMT and some basic first aid essentials,” Homa said.

Senior Mallory Little presented her workshop on “How to Find Your Artistic Passion.” She originally only signed up to be on the planning committee, but after a suggestion to be a presenter on the topic of art, she swiftly took the opportunity.

“Art has always been something I could turn to and practice no matter what stage of life I’m in,” Little said. “It’s the rawest form of human expression, so it’s important to keep it alive.”

She wishes for her audience to gain a sense of inspiration from her presentation. “Sometimes looking within yourself can be difficult, but a nudge in the right direction can be a great start to creating something,” Little said. •

Stacy Beltran brings leadership knowledge to County



Safety security officer Stacy Beltran works in her office, which she is not in very often because she is usually walking around the halls. Photo by Jevonte Herron.

Jevonte Herron | Staff Writer

Former Army sergeant Stacy Beltran is already used to managing a group of people. As a sergeant, she often managed five to eight soldiers.

Now, the number she looks after is much larger, but after being in charge of adults, looking out for a school full of teenagers is not that bad.

As a safety security officer, Beltran works with the school resource officer to help protect student safety at school. According to Beltran, safety security officers are involved in any school safety issues while school resource officers get involved with anything that becomes a legal issue. Safety security officers have a pretty simple task, but it’s not an easy one.

Beltran says her main task is to provide a safe and secure environment to all students, staff, and visitors.

Beltran enjoys communicating with the different students at our school.

“I enjoy getting to talk a little bit when we pass in the halls or while I am at the cafeteria,” Beltran said.

Beltran also enjoys when she is at the school events.

“I also enjoy partaking in class activities when invited to. It’s good students know I’m not just around to escort them to the office,” Beltran said.

Beltran is a rookie at being a school security officer, but she looks to become a veteran after having different jobs that have helped her succeed at this one.

“This is my first school year working as an SSO and I am looking forward to many more,” she said.

Beltran was an attendance secretary, a sergeant in the US Army, and coached a fitness class in the years leading up to her time as a Captain.

Being a sergeant gave her leadership experience, which she can use as a school security officer.

Although she liked her other occupations, this is her favorite job so far. Beltran says she likes this one more because it allows her to have the summer off to spend with her kids, and it is always something new to do everyday. Beltran tries her best to enjoy her normal life when she is not at work.

“I mostly enjoy spending time with my husband and two kids whenever I am not at work. I also enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and traveling whenever possible,” Beltran said. •

Amelia Anderson

A pageant queen's inspiration for aviation

Olivia DeWan | Online Editor

Flying thousands of miles above the ground at break-neck speed. Alone in the cockpit navigating through the vast expanse of the sky. These are not the typical activities one would expect from a pageant queen, but for sophomore **Amelia Anderson** that is exactly what a pageant entails.

"The Miss America Organization and the Miss America Outstanding Teen Organization are one of the top scholarship opportunities for women," Anderson said. "And a lot of people think it's only a beauty pageant when really it's a scholarship pageant."

The prize for winning Miss America Outstanding Teen is a full-ride scholarship to colleges such as Hollins University.

The Miss America's Outstanding Teen is in conjunction with The Miss America Organization for young women ages 13-18.

"My mom was the director for the pageants, and I just kind of thought that it would be amazing for me to get to one of these universities," Anderson said.

The pageants have different events that all candidates must attend. First is the interview where candidates speak with the judges. Next is the evening gown portion followed by physical fitness, and then talent.

"The evening gown event is my favorite because I've always loved big, beautiful dresses," Anderson said. "I also like just getting dolled up."

In addition to wearing extravagant dresses, each candidate must also have a platform.

"It's basically how you want to change the world, or what you want to do to help a certain group, and bring light to different issues," Anderson said. "If you win a local pageant you are encouraged to go out and implement your goals."

For her platform, Anderson is mentoring young girls who are interested in aviation. She volunteers at Hillsboro Charter Academy, which is an institution dedicated to STEAM education. At the Academy is a group of girls called GEAR (guiding, engineering, aerospace, and robotics), which is the main group Anderson works with.

Anderson smiles at the thought. "I go in and I talk to them about aviation, and I play around with their drones and other technology," Anderson said. "I'm also going to meet with a Girl Scout group to talk to them about aviation, and so they can get their aviation badge."

The platform, as Anderson

describes it, is how you want to implement changes you want to see in the future.

Anderson's focus in many aspects of her life, including pageants, is aviation.

"My dad is an airline pilot, my mom and my grandmother are flight attendants. Then two of my great grandfathers were pilots, so it's kind of in my blood," Anderson said. "I took my first flight when I was 12 or 13 and I loved it so much. People say there's an aviation bug, like, 'you got bit by the bug,' and that's exactly what happened to me."

Currently, Anderson flies glider planes, which has no engine and relies on lifts in the wind. She started flying gliders in October of 2020, and Anderson will soon be completing her checkride, which is a hands-on examination pilots must take in order to get their flying license.

"You have to take and pass a written test in order to take the checkride, and so I took the written test once and I did not pass, which kind of hurt," Anderson said. "So it took me a little while to get back up and take it again, and when I did I passed."

Anderson then competed in a pageant named Miss Skyline Drive on January 8 where she was first runner up. The original winner had to step down because she could not "fulfill her duties as her title," so Anderson stepped up.

"It really made me happy because I get to share aviation now with a lot of people," Anderson said. "Once you have a social media presence like Skyline Drive people start to listen and they get inspired, and they understand more about what you're promoting. So I am super happy that I get to encourage people to find aviation and see if they like it."

For the next part of her pageant career, Anderson plans to compete in the Miss VA Outstanding Teen competition. The pageant is held each June at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, during the same week as the Miss Virginia pageant. The winner is chosen to represent Virginia in the Miss America's Outstanding Teen pageant.

"I am really excited to meet the other girls and learn about their platforms, and what they're passionate about," Anderson said. "I'm a listener, I love when people talk about stuff that they're passionate about and I love when I talk about stuff that I'm passionate about."

Anderson described the different ways the candidates interacted with



Amelia Anderson won first place in Miss Skyline Drive's Outstanding Teen pageant. Photo by Kimberly Needles Photography.

each other.

"They have social events for everyone. They will have a dinner or outside of the pageant there are several fundraising events and activities," Anderson said. "There was one called Purseanality, and so it was basically girls putting a bag together and doing a runway walk. People then auctioned off the purses."

The money at those fundraising events goes to the scholarship awards and funding the Miss Virginia pageant.

"There are several different types of scholarships that the pageant has," Anderson said. "If you win an evening gown you get a little money for that, and there is one for interview as well."

According to American Experience, The Miss America Organization has distributed over \$150 million in educational grants, and those grants are available to women who participate in local, state, and national Miss America programs.

"They make it possible for every candidate to win something," Anderson said. "And pageants are

very glorified on TV. There really isn't much drama. Yes, there are some people who are very extreme about pageants, but it's an amazing community and everyone is so supportive. It's great meeting new people."

Even with her extensive experience in pageants, Anderson still gets nervous in some areas when she is competing.

For Anderson, the most nerve wracking part is the interview. "The first time I did it my voice was so shaky," Anderson said, laughing. "I would also add the anticipation when they announce the winners. The pause is so long, and they do it on purpose!"

Regardless, pageants have given Anderson a plethora of tools she plans to use later in life, especially when applying to college.

"It's given me so many skills, such as interview skills. My directors point out when I say 'um' or 'so,' or I pause for too long. I've improved my public speaking and I can come up with answers on the spot, which I never would have been able to do before without pageants." •

Lack of classroom space proves challenging



Students get settled in for independent reading to start class with English teacher Beth Williams. Class is held in one of the rooms that was cut in half during the summer to create an additional room. Photo by Valerie Egger.

Hannah Winegar | Staff Writer

Loudoun County High School was designed in the 1950s, when classes were run much differently. No one had Chromebooks or phones, and students were expected to sit passively in neat rows while the teacher led lessons. Education has evolved since then, but the classroom footprints of our building have remained the same.

Over the years Loudoun County has become overcrowded with students. Being an old school, there are already several classrooms that do not meet the Virginia Department of Education recommendation size.

Of the 70 rooms measured, 39 fell short of the recommended 700 square feet for high school classrooms. Most of the rooms that meet or exceed the state's recommendations are science classrooms in the newer wing of the school.

The room sizes became even more complicated when it was decided for rooms to be split in half. The construction for this was started during the summer but finished after the school year began.

The result was that several classrooms have fewer than 500 square feet. For comparison, according to decorsnob.com, the average living room size in the United States is 340 square feet. Imagine having a class of 25 students meeting in a room not much larger than your living room.

While cutting the rooms in half added more classrooms to try to solve the overcrowding issue, it produced a new problem: classes containing too many students for the room size.

"It is very difficult to teach in different size classrooms," World Languages and Cultures teacher Matthew Landers said. "It is dif-

ficult, almost impossible, to walk around while I am instructing."

Social Science and Global Studies teacher Phil D'Arcangelis shares a similar opinion.

"I can't move around as much as I'd like," D'Arcangelis said. "It's uncomfortable and a little invasive."

English teacher Allie Strosnyder said that even students have complained about feeling cramped in the rooms.

"The guitar room is so small I almost kneed a kid in the face," junior Evan Sutton said. "We were very cramped."

Sutton isn't the only student that has had problems with the classroom sizes.

"I was sitting at the end and a girl was sitting at the side, and she would constantly push her chair back into mine, where I had to sit so close to the desk," junior Layla Maye said of one of the classrooms that had been cut in half this summer. "It sucked. It was a big number of students in that class, so it was always really cramped."

Many of the teachers have had to modify the way they teach to accommodate the size of their classrooms.

For most teachers, the small class size impacts their ability to do group lessons. English teacher Tracie Lane wishes that the seating arrangements could be more reflective of the needs of her lessons. "It is very challenging to conduct a group discussion where everyone can see and respond to each other," Lane said.

English department chair Beth Williams agrees. Her classroom is only about 470 square feet. She speculates that with a larger classroom, "we could do more group work, use the interactive board

more, do activities that require movement, and do gallery walks in the room."

Some teachers that work at Loudoun County have seen the rooms at the newer schools and feel very strongly about the differences between Loudoun County's room sizes.

"It is quite embarrassing that we are even having this conversation," Landers said. "The lack of equity between the older schools and the newer cathedrals that are being built, is insulting to those who work in the older buildings."

Recently the future of the school has been discussed as to whether or not the school should be rebuilt or substantially renovated in coming years.

Social science and global studies teacher Kevin Hale prefers keeping the historic school standing. "I love the history and legacy of our school," Hale said. "I will make due with the small size because the only real alternative would be to tear down the school and build a three or four story new building. That would be a travesty."

However, D'Arcangelis has a different opinion. "It really needs to be demolished and rebuilt. Sad, but true. It's inefficient and has a lot of issues from water damage to improper ventilation to just looking old and ugly."

English teacher Kathryn Ives suggests a more neutral solution. "Knowing that they are larger, my thought is that the school system can solve the problem without having to make a fancy new school for us here at LCPS," Ives said. "Instead, they could redraw the school zone lines so that our student numbers were lower. We don't necessarily need bigger rooms; instead, we need fewer students in each room." •

Lack of space prevents over 100 students from taking food courses

Matt Starchville | Staff Writer

With our school being the oldest in the county, comes classroom limitations. Our culinary arts room is affected by this with not having all equipment necessary to run class smoothly on a day to day basis without bending some rules. Dorene Kuebler teaches Intro to Culinary Arts, Gourmet Foods and PEER and notices the outdated equipment first hand.

Culinary Arts and Gourmet Foods require a lot of specialized equipment that other classes don't require, so the lack of updated equipment can cause issues for the classes. "We have stovetops and ovens," Kuebler said. "We have all kinds of cooking equipment along with refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, washers, and dryers." Although these provide enough to run a well functioning kitchen and classroom, the classroom still lacks essentials. For instance, the culinary arts classroom lacks a fan for ventilation while cooking. "We don't have a fan in this room, so that makes it difficult," Kuebler said. "We have to open windows, which we don't mind doing, but we aren't supposed to open the front windows. So every time it starts getting smoky in here, we have to break the rules and open them."

Along with the essentials, there are needs for the classroom that would improve the overall classroom and make the equipment more modern to match the other newer schools in the county. "We used to have regular refrigerators and freezers like the ones you have in your house, which had a lot more room than the refrigerators and freezers that we have now," Kuebler said. "The school bought us commercial refrigerators without asking us about them and took our other refrigerators away. Now, we have two commercial refrigerators, instead of the three regular refrigerators that we had before. The two commercial refrigerators don't have nearly as much space in them."

Our culinary arts classroom is smaller than the newer schools which puts a cap on the number of students that can take the class. With many students signing up for the class, it becomes an issue because then they have to deny students entry into the class. "The state says we can't have any more than five students per kitchen. We have small kitchens, so we have a twenty student maximum in this class. Just this year we had to tell almost 100 kids that they couldn't sign up because we already had eight full classes." •

Art teachers: space impacts learning



Lorenzo Salas | Staff Writer

Last summer, the Loudoun County High School art teachers were told to expect renovations to the art rooms as a way to get more room to teach and create art. However, as of May 23, the art room hasn't gotten the renovations. Art teacher **Stephanie Woshner** said, "They were supposed to do renovations over the summer. But that was put off."

That reason being that classrooms in other locations were being cut in half to create additional classrooms, primarily in the English and language hallways. "It's supposed to happen this summer," Woshner said. "They'll rip out the sinks, give me more countertops and cabinets, and that wall becomes student storage," Woshner said. While the renovations are meant to improve the room's space, it doesn't make the room bigger.

The art department severely needs those renovations as the current rooms aren't up to the standards of other schools. Heritage High School senior **Devan Partangle** sent us photos of the art rooms at Heritage, and those photos help illustrate the differences between the resources at our schools.

The Heritage art department has three rooms, one for teaching and creating, one for storage, and one dark room for photography. The teaching room has plenty of space for desks, storage, and countertop space for students to create. The dark room has space for developing photos and storage. And lastly the storage contains many things like art supplies, art projects, and yarn. These photos show a thriving art community at Heritage to have these luxuries. Our art department fails to compare this.

Our art rooms have a severe lack of space and breathing room for teaching and it impacts our learning environment. "The room can only

hold a small number of kids," Woshner said. "For example, that sink could be replaced with a desk."

While Woshner acknowledges that nothing is broken and all the equipment works, she is more concerned about storage and space. "It's more about the layout and space of the room," Woshner said. "If you compare the layout and departments at Independence and Lightridge, our whole department can fit into one classroom." Woshner also complimented the Heritage art department by saying it was better than her college's art department.

Woshner struggled with tables at the beginning of the year. The art department got rid of their tables due to what they thought would be upcoming renovations. When those renovations were postponed and they had no tables, they had to scrounge around to find tables and found some in the nick of time. "You just don't know what can happen," Woshner said.

Fellow art teacher **Kyla Jenkins** agrees that lack of space is an issue.

"Working in a tiny art room has been extremely frustrating for us," Jenkins said, noting that there is not enough room to spread out. "We don't have enough cabinets or flat surfaces in my classroom," Jenkins said. She showed us how she was able to recycle a desk and turn it into a shelf to store some of the class projects.

"Being able to teach the content we are required to teach, we don't have the space to," Jenkins said. "Sometimes we have to adapt spaces that weren't meant to be used."

Jenkins noted that the latest renovation the art department had was in the late 1990s. "What's mostly frustrating is the lack of space to do things," said Jenkins. "As a photography teacher, cameras are hard to come by. Film is hard to come by. We have to use a program on Chromebook called FRAME." FRAME allows students to log on to a virtual machine using their Chromebooks to access high-end software such as Adobe Photoshop. Jenkins described her issues with FRAME as hating how it is missing

features because it needs a graphic card and other software does not, and it also requires a mouse.

After last summer's disappointment, Jenkins was optimistic over hearing that the fine arts was possibly receiving a renovation over the upcoming summer, noting that more students would like to take art than can currently fit.

Woshner and Jenkins have been forced to teach a sixth class, while the normal contract load is five classes. Soon, the school will need to hire another art teacher. "Where are they going to go?" Woshner asked, noting that additional staff will not solve the problem of a classroom shortage.

In fact, Woshner noted that the art room is occasionally used as a science room. "We're limited on space but our numbers keep increasing," Woshner said.

"They are not rezoning like they should," Jenkins said, referring to the long-discussed but not-yet-acted-upon plan to rezone Leesburg students to shift some of the overcrowding away from County. "This is the most over-packed school in Leesburg. Yet, no one is redrawing the boundaries," Jenkins said.

Woshner noted that parents continue to request County for their children. "People want their kids to go here!" Woshner said. •

Hannah Winegar contributed to this story.

Above: Heritage High School's Danielle Murphy poses for the camera as they wait for class to begin. Below, left: Heritage High School's dark room has storage for photos and developing pictures. Below, right: Heritage High School's storage room for art is able to hold at least six shelves full of art projects and equipment. Photos by Devan Partangle.



Spirit week gets wacky: Student participation skyrockets for Adam Sandler Day and Anything But A Backpack Day

Michaela Scott | Editor-in-Chief

Over the years, high school spirit days have become predictable and more traditional, with days such as wacky hair or pajama day. Since the student body has returned from virtual learning, they have become more vocal than ever this year advocating for spirit weeks they've never experienced before.

SCA's new ideas for spirit days have been contributed to the social media app, TikTok. Students' posts have gone viral, showing the world their school spirit, which has sparked creativity across schools nationwide.

During the spirit week celebrating the upcoming student versus staff basketball game, our Student Council Association introduced two new days that Loudoun County has never encountered before: Adam Sandler Day and Anything But A Backpack Day.

Adam Sandler Day is a comedic spirit choice for students intending to embrace their favorite character or outfit that actor **Adam Sandler** has portrayed or worn.

Anything But A Backpack Day encourages students to bring an unordinary item to carry their book bag items in, which ultimately inconveniences their school day, but brings many laughs to the students.

Anyone at school during these spirit days could see that participation in the student body was higher than previous spirit week engagement. Students brought trash barrels, kayaks, tires, and food appliances for anything but a backpack day. Adam Sandler Day transformed the school into a bunch of middle aged men in dramatically baggy attire.

1 - Senior **Caleb Graham** carried a recycling barrel to school and dumped his school supplies inside of it. He transported this throughout the day, carrying it up and down the staircases, and wheeling it down the halls.

2 - Senior **Nina Segura** strikes a pose in her Adam Sandler attire. "Pretty much everything I wore was from my dad's closet," Segura said. "This is my dad's classic 'mowing the lawn' fit so I just went with it."



1

3 - Junior **Herbie Herman** brought a popcorn machine for anything but a backpack day, carrying his book bag items inside it throughout the day. During lunchtime Herman set aside schoolwork to pop popcorn with his peers. "My inspiration was that I really wanted to bring an item no one else would bring," Herman said. "I wanted my item to be different." Shortly after Herman began using his popcorn machine, half the cafeteria had created a line to have a cup.

4 - Junior **Tyler McCauley** brought to school a Big Lots shopping cart. He used the elevators to go through his day, and returned the shopping cart at the end of the school day.

5 - Senior **Jiya Manalel** and freshman **Taylor Fedor** pose by the staircase in their Adam Sandler outfit. Manalel explained that their inspiration for their outfits was Sandler's golfing fits.

6 - Algebra teacher **Abby Schutte** and calculus teacher **Melanie Hefty** pose in the math department wearing their Sandler outfits.

7 - Junior **Austin Trinh** brought a 3400 Watt microwave to school as his anything but a backpack item. He used this throughout the day, ordering school lunch in order to prevent having to heat up his food and take out his school supplies. •



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Pride Prom provides students a safe space



Left to right: Onyx Cummings, Phyllo Schaefer, B. Lee, Charlie Warnen, Elliot Nguyen, and Kade Vasquez pose for a group photo at the 2022 Pride Prom. Photo by Alexis Shugars.

Alexis Shugars | Staff Writer

On May 15, Loudoun County High School organized its very own Pride Prom, an event designed for LGBTQIA+ students, home to both our own school as well as other schools in the county, who may not feel comfortable being their true selves at their school's official prom.

English Teacher and GSRA club sponsor **Caitlin McAteer** was the main organizer for this year's Pride Prom alongside the help of Equality Loudoun. Equality Lou-

doun generously offered to fund the Pride Prom, as they have had involvement in the event in years past. "Part of what their mission is to support, and in this case financially," McAteer said.

Equality Loudoun provided the Loudoun County GSRA club with \$500 in order to fund Pride Prom, however, they had only spent around \$200 of that budget. With this money, they purchased an inflatable rainbow spiral arc which was placed at the entrance for the picture area of the event, as well as all of the other decorations planted within the

gymnasium.

Pride Prom has occurred previously in Loudoun County, but McAteer felt that the reason for this year's great anticipation was due to the lost connection over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Folks have been feeling the need for community and feeling the need for events," she said. "I thought one way to really regenerate that and to let people meet each other would be to have Pride Prom."

McAteer jumped at the opportunity to host Pride Prom when she had first heard about the event, and

proved to be beyond spectacular at the job. "I love throwing parties," she said. "It's something that I'm good at, and so I thought, let's do this!"

McAteer also expressed the continuous support she received from principal **Michelle Luttrell** when preparing for this year's Pride Prom. She describes Luttrell's support as a main contributor to her motivation throughout the task of setting up the event. "A party where everybody just feels like they're their best selves, is the best kind of party," McAteer said. •

Environmental Club celebrates our green society on Earth Day

Michaela Scott | Editor-in-Chief

Two years ago, the environmental club's leadership was demolished after the team graduated in 2020, although this year, the new administration worked with science teacher and club advisor **Tracy Webster** to regain the student body's involvement in the organization.

This year the leadership coordinated a special club meeting in honor of Earth Day on April 22. "We're hoping that our Earth Day meeting will draw more students into our club," junior **Liberty Harrison** said. "We want to encourage people who normally wouldn't take any actions toward helping the environment through this club. It is our goal to make joining as easy as possible for newcomers."

Unlike other extracurriculars, the environmental club incorporates a series of committees in an effort to focus on specific environmental

*continued on ENVIRONMENT,
Page 12*



Environmental members use augers in an effort to plant over 150 bluebells at Balls Bluff Regional Park. The environmental club celebrated Earth Day by restoring the battlefield and producing crafts like the flower bombs. Top: Elena Wigglesworth, Barek Harrison, Liberty Harrison, Caitlin Fikes, Daniellah Etisi. Photo by Jeff Webster.

Wacky mayhem, potions, fairies, and spells Audience treated to a reimagining of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

Hannah Winegar | Staff Writer

Dazzling outfits, glittery makeup, and colorful lighting brought a 1980's vibe to the drama department's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The whimsical storyline with a glam rock twist was performed March 24-26 as County's winter play.

The drama department, which had been rehearsing the play for two months, chose "A Midsummer Night's Dream" because they had done the play in 2019, before COVID, and wanted to do it again.

Many people were inspired to act in the play with hopes of getting more acquainted with Shakespeare's work or simply because they love to be involved with everything in the drama department.

"I did the show because I had never actually been able to do a Shakespeare show at County before," senior **Anna Diem**, who played Puck, said.

In 2019, **Emma Sleeman**, a senior who was close with Diem, had played the same role. "She was a role model to me, so that was also another inspiration," Diem said. "She was great, I loved her. I spent a whole lot of time with her and she was a really good friend of mine."

Many of the actors have had years of experience in the art of acting. Senior **Gracie Hawkins**, who played Peaseblossom, has been doing theater since elementary school.

"I just love theater as a whole," Hawkins said. "It's just a great environment to be in."

Earlier this year the theater department did an adaptation of "The Great Gatsby." Though challenging, it helped prepare them for the winter play.

"Even though we had a lot of troubles I think we came through just as better actors and better tech and just a better department in general," junior **Maxwell Mcknight** said. He played Demetrius in "Midsummer Night's Dream."

The play follows four human protagonists who get entangled in a love triangle with the help of forest sprites and fairies. Set in 1980's Greece, the play includes a group of actors called the Mechanicals as well as the Royals.

"My favorite scene is, we call it, the play within a play," senior **Jordan Pierson** said, who played Nick Bottom. "I really love it because it's just wacky, it's weird, it makes no sense but it does at the same time."

Pierson describes the play as "wacky mayhem, potions, fairies, and spells."

"I think my favorite is actually the fight scene," Mcknight said. "There's a lot of choreography that we've worked really hard to perfect and it looks really good."

While a forest world full of fairies might seem too fanciful, Pierson sees strong relevance of the play today.

"I feel like it's relevant because personally, I feel like with everything that's going on in the world, comedies are needed," Pierson said. "We need some laughs and there's a lot of negativity going around." •

Anna Diem poses as the character named Puck in the winter production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Diem's outfit is inspired by David Bowie and matches the 1980s vibe of the set and costumes. Photo courtesy of Anna Diem.



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Inhaler

The indie-rock band striving for success



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Charlotte Penberthy's start with Mary Kay makeup



In **OPINION**
Crawford Holmes

The Perfect Storm

Popping the everything bubble



In **NEWS**
Lorenzo Salas

Neglected

Overlooked issues in the county's oldest school



Interactive spring play, 'The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,' intrigues audience

Maggie Sheridan | Editor-in-Chief

As the play begins, the audience prepares to sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. Suddenly, the cast selects a lucky member from the audience to participate in the spelling bee along with them.

Every spring, the arts department puts on a different musical for our school. However, this year, the show is vastly different from the past because it is interactive with the audience.

"It's not as traditional of a musical as we've done in the past. It's very much improv-based and it's a serious comedy," said student assistant director **Brenna McManus**.

The play has many different components and it features a rather small cast in comparison to other productions.

"From the moment you step into the show, you're in the show. We have audience members being incorporated, we have actors in the audience, and we even have Jesus make an appearance for a bit," the senior said.

The show's premise is that you are at the spelling bee and everyone has the chance to participate in it.

"The more audience interaction you have, the more funny the show is going to be, which is kind of fun," McManus said.

McManus helps by directing the cast members and trying to steer them in the right direction in whichever way she can. Some of her jobs include putting up posters, doing one on one work with the actors, and making sure everything runs smoothly.

"I basically serve as an extra set of hands for our director **McGraw**," McManus said.

The cast practices every day after school including Saturdays. There are eight actors on stage at all times, ten behind the scenes or in the audience, and ten to fifteen tech people working on details such as lighting, sound, and construction of the set.

"The set is relatively simple compared to past sets and we were able to use props already found in school such as an American flag, risers, and desks," McManus said.

The cast prepared for the show for about ten weeks. This is considered one of the shortest times they've prepared, it usually takes two to three months to prepare.

"One of my favorite parts about County's productions is that we are very much student-driven. Although other schools may have nicer sets than us, that's because the parents or companies build the



The cast of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" poses after their performance to a cheering crowd. Photo by Cat Pizzarello.

sets for them," McManus said.

"At our school, it's more hands-on and whatever we build is what we make of it, which makes the production better because we are all invested in it and want to see things succeed."

McManus will be directing for the first time in this production and following the lead of fellow senior **Sophie Hylton**, who has directed past shows.

"I've worked with Sophie for so long that I've seen how she's done it and have been able to take that lead in my own unique aspect," McManus said.

McManus enjoys how different it is from being a part of the production's cast to now having more of a leadership role.

"I've been able to give my own feedback and thoughts, which is something I haven't previously been able to do in a physical role, which helps me make a difference and shift how things are done throughout the show," McManus said.

"The most difficult part of my role is that in this particular show, a lot of it is improv-based, so the cast will come up with things to do off of the top of their head or make a joke on the spot, and I can't really help them with that," McManus said.

Although it's sometimes hard for McManus, she admits that it's all worth it to her. "I wouldn't do it if I didn't love it," McManus said.

Senior **Anna Diem** plays one of the most crucial roles, one of the hosts of the spelling bee, Rona.

"So far, I've really been enjoying it and have fun being able to moderate the bee and I get to have a lot of interaction with the audience members, which is super cool," said Diem.

The show incorporates many different forms of representation within the characters.

"The show is a good feel-good piece, which I think is so important right now and it's messy and dysfunctional but in such a good way," said Diem.

From the very start up until the very end, the audience will have the opportunity to participate with the cast.

"In the first act, there are four people we select from the audience that actually come onto the stage and get to spell in the show," Diem said.

"Us members of the cast will sing with them and dance with them, they are just as much a part of the production as the actors are on stage, which is the most I've seen in audience interaction ever."

Diem also admits that the cast has to improv many of their lines during the show to fit the narrative.

"Because a lot of my role is not pre-written, my acting is more organic, which is my favorite part about the show," Diem said.

Although she greatly enjoys this aspect, she also finds it a bit challenging to adapt to on the spot.

"Because of the audience participation, it is truly up to chance what we do next, so if they get the word right, there's a set of instructions of what we do, same as if

they get the word wrong," Diem said.

Junior **Anna Takemoto**, who plays student Marcy Park, also finds this on the spot acting to be interesting. "It makes it really exciting as an actor, because I don't always know what is going to happen and I have to act accordingly," Takemoto said.

The most difficult part for Takemoto has been perfecting the dancing and choreography.

"The biggest challenge I faced in this process was learning how to do a cartwheel, which I unfortunately could not figure out and it had to get cut from my choreography hahaha," Takemoto said.

"My song has lots of movement and action in the choreography, and I am a really bad dancer, so that was hard for me as well hehe."

The overall message of the play is unique to each individual character and their path.

"Each different character goes on a different journey, so some people's messages are to be yourself and to accept that you can't always win or that losing isn't bad, really emphasizing the merit of winning and losing," Diem said.

Takemoto takes more of a different stance on the message of the show.

"I think the overall message of this show is trying to emphasize the pressure adults put on kids, especially at a young age, and how it can positively and negatively affect their lives and personalities," Takemoto said. •

“Earth’s Mightiest Heroes”

Marvel’s ‘The Avengers’ celebrates 10th anniversary

Evelyn Kuzminski | Layout Editor

May 4 will, once again, undoubtedly be filled with exclamations of “may the force be with you!” and other spirited Star Wars references. But this year, there’ll be another cinematic universe to share the spotlight: Marvel.

Ten years ago, on May 4, 2012, Marvel Studios released *The Avengers*, one of 27 released Marvel films [as of article publication], and the first to bring together its original six major superheroes. Captain America, Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, Black Widow, and Hawkeye come together to fight Loki in the critical Battle of New York, a landmark event that crops up again and again in later Marvel films.

Similar to Star Wars, the Marvel films were not released in chronological order. *The Avengers*, although the sixth to be released, is actually the seventh installment of the Marvel timeline. It falls into Phase One of Marvel’s currently planned four phases - the most recent of which began with the release of *Black Widow* in July of 2021. At a runtime of 2 hours and 23 minutes, “*The Avengers*” is the longest Phase One movie,

a little over Marvel’s average movie runtime.

“*The Avengers*” was directed by Joss Whedon, a screenwriter, director, and producer known for his work with franchises including *The Avengers*, *Toy Story*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe, the MCU, is the biggest movie franchise of all time, grossing over \$25 billion globally. Its highest-grossing film is essentially a no-brainer, given the PR surrounding its release: *Avengers: Endgame* has earned \$2.8 billion worldwide.

The Avengers rolls in at number 4 on the box office list, just ahead of *Avengers: Age of Ultron* and a bit farther behind *Spiderman: No Way Home*. Its total box office earned \$1.5 billion worldwide, \$623.4 million domestically, and \$207.4 million domestically on its opening weekend, with a \$220 million budget.

Since the release of “*The Avengers*,” the Marvel universe has expanded to give many characters beyond the six original Avengers their own detailed storylines, including *Spiderman*, *Black Panther*, *Doctor Strange*, *Ant-Man*, *Captain Marvel*, the *Scarlet*

Witch, *Vision*, *Falcon*, the *Winter Soldier*, the *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and more.

Marvel isn’t the only superhero franchise on the block, but it does tend to eclipse its competition, DC Comics. It’s an age-old debate, but for many LCHS students, Marvel wins out. “I just love how creative it is, and how there’s so many different varieties of characters,” senior **Charlotte Penberthy** said.

Freshman **Cameron Serafin** agreed that the characters give Marvel an edge over DC comics. “It’s unique,” Serafin said. “It’s different from DC comics. It has better characters. It has more interesting characters.”

Many students cite the action as why they love the MCU, whether they’ve seen all the films or only a few. “Constant action,” senior **Jonathan Haslet** said, the sentiment echoed by both senior **Morgan Appel** and freshman **Josh Cook**.

But for others, it’s the narratives and plots that create the appeal. Senior **Michael Kettish**’s favorite part of the MCU is “how it carries on from movie to movie, the storyline.”

Penberthy agrees. “I’m not as

much into the battles,” she said. “I don’t really like watching the battle scenes, I just like the character development.”

Although the general premise of *The Avengers* is bringing together the MCU’s superheroes, one notable favorite is left out: *Spider-Man*.

“My favorite Marvel character is probably *Spider-Man*,” Penberthy said. *Spider-Man* and the actor playing him, **Tom Holland**, got a lot of nods from the LCHS student body.

“I like Tom Holland as *Spider-Man*,” Serafin said.

“He’s a good actor,” Cook agreed.

Spider-Man first appears in the Marvel universe in *Captain America: Civil War*, released in 2016, the first Phase Three film, also chronologically happening after *The Avengers*. He got the first Marvel movie of his own two movies later with *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, in 2017, which many students named as their favorite MCU film.

The tenth anniversary of *The Avengers* comes just two days before Marvel’s next movie is set to release, *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, which will continue Phase Four of the franchise. •

Editor Spotlight

Senior editors leave their mark

Liberty Harrison | Managing Editor

Michaela Scott flips her long black hair over her shoulder as she types her latest feature and talks to **Maggie Sheridan**, her co-editor in chief about organizing the latest edition of the newspaper.

Scott joined journalism her sophomore year, on the recommendation of her older brothers.

After joining journalism Scott realized her love for bringing attention to parts of her community that require improvement.

“A big priority of mine is to get the message out about important issues,” said Scott.

One example of how Scott calls attention to hardships in her community is an article she collaborated on with Sheridan discussing the effects of virtual learning on ELL students.

Sheridan immediately made waves with her journalistic ambition, writing an article exposing the inequitable treatment towards Loudoun County High School Students, who at the time were not allowed to paint their parking spots, unlike other high school students

in the county.

“The way Maggie stuck to her topic and pushed for answers when the situation didn’t make sense is really what’s at the heart of journalism,” **Valerie Egger**, newspaper sponsor, said. Egger still regularly references it to her Intro to Journalism students as an example of investigative journalism, inspiring several to pursue the truth with the same passion Sheridan exhibited.

“When I started writing it I had no idea it would become such a big topic, we were just talking about different things that annoyed us about school,” Sheridan said. Upon discussing the topic she realized that although her siblings had been able to paint their spots current students could not, so, as she said, “I figured it out.” •

Learn more about Scott, Sheridan, and the other graduating members of “The County Chronicle” staff at:



Continued from ENVIRONMENT, page 7

tasks. The 2022 committees are the hiking committee, promotional committee, and community service committee.

“All of our leaders (juniors **Elena Wigglesworth** and Harrison and sophomore **Daniellah Etisi**) are super involved in being the backbone of our organization,” Harrison said. “They ensure we have all of the supplies for each task we accomplish, they make sure information is being easily distributed and they oversee the general operational aspects of the club.”

Typically, meetings begin with an introductory Powerpoint presentation aiming to establish the agenda and goals of the month. The month’s objective is to restore the courtyards, and distribute roles intending to support our school’s property.

“We usually close the meeting with a fun little craft, after working on the monthly projects, just to relax for the rest of the time,” Harrison said. “With the help from some faculty, we partnered up with the art department for Earth Day to create a special bulletin board displaying art celebrating what Earth Day meant to students.”

Etisi indicated that the Earth Day club meeting stood out among others because the leaders were able to get a higher number of participants com-

pared to any other meeting. “Last year, we conducted the club virtually so it was much harder to get students to engage,” Etisi said.

For Webster, the bluebell project was definitely the club’s primary project of Earth Day because of how successful it was.

“It was pouring down rain, everyone was getting messy, hands dirty, and we were right on the river. They did great things and put out at least 150 plants,” Webster said. “We got to use equipment and they all learned how to use an auger, so we were able to get the holes in the ground quickly. Getting that experience encourages students to engage more with their environment.”

Etisi concluded that the environmental club’s first concern is to sustain the leadership next year and expand the organization at County to the greatest extent.

“This planet is the only place we have and if we don’t want to take care of it, it won’t be here for other generations,” Etisi said. “If you look around just in our community, you might believe nothing is wrong, but we’re mainly trying to bring awareness to environments outside of our homes, and showing people it can happen to us. We want students to understand the effects of a negative environment and how it can have a poor impact on our planet as an entity.” •

Boys Track wins Regional and District championships

Ethan Weiss | Staff Writer

Boys track is nearing the end of a stunning season. They've already been crowned District and Regional Championships. The team will close out their season on June 3 and 4 at the state championship at Liberty University.

The team has shown many stunning performances this year. They have had great scores in many different events and meets. "We have talented athletes in all events: sprints, distance, jumps and throws, so we can score points in all areas," assistant coach **Amy Perkins** said.

The team has had success in all events at some point this year. The team is very close and leads to support from all the team members." It's really a great feeling especially when mixed with confidence and the feeling that my team has my back," senior **Levi Desser** said.

The Boys' Track and Field won the Region 4C Championship on May 25 with a team score of 105 points. At the meet, several students became individual champions. **Chase Kibble** broke his school record in the discus, **Ethan Stansbury** won in the 1600 meter, with the 4x400 meter relay of **Nic Macchiarolo**, Desser, **Jason Guevara**, and **Liam Pugh** also winning.

Region runner-ups included **Daniel Young** in the shot, **Jimmy Kibble** in the 100 meter, and the 4x100 meter relay of **Dean Morrad**, Jimmy Kibble, Pugh, and **James**



Boys track celebrate their District and Regional wins. Photos by Kate Cassidy

Dick.

Also, moving on to states are **Tripp Elmore** in the triple jump and high jump, **Wes Celentano** in the high jump, **Macchiarolo** in the 400 meter, **Stansbury** in the 800 meter, **Chase Kibble** in the shot put, and **Austin Goetsch** in the long jump.

Being a tightly knit team and community has been a large part of their success this year. The close bonds between the members of the team have led to a large feeling of

support for everyone. "The team is very close, everyone gets along well and the kids are all very supportive of one another," Perkins said. "It was a total team effort to win the district and region championships."

Support has inspired the team to be even more devoted to winning. "I also think that's exactly what sets our track team from any other track team," Desser said. "Our team's chemistry and connection beats any other school."

The feeling of winning the District and Regional Championships has only inspired them even more. "Winning the district and regional championship was a great feeling but only motivated me to work even harder," Desser said. The energy is higher than ever and they're ready to give all they have left in the final meet of the season. This meet is their biggest one of the season, the state championship at Liberty University. •

Boys soccer season begins with a stellar start

Ethan Weiss & Daniel Delargy | Staff Writers

Captains soccer battled into a new season with high hopes to be competitive at a state level.

Centerback **Noah Creighton** and striker **Wilson Kern** are senior captains of the soccer team.

"We had a lot of momentum from last season. We made it to the regional semi," Creighton said.

"We just learned a lot, even though it didn't turn out for us, we were playing the best and we learned from the loss," Kern said.

The team is excited to hit the pitch, with COVID restriction being lifted, and the optimism of a fresh start and new found knowledge from last year's season.

"We had so much chemistry last year, and going through COVID and all that, we just want to carry our success over," Kern said.

So far this season the Captains are playing well, with a 4-3-1 record with

tough losses to Riverside, Park View and Woodgrove.

"Our toughest game this year was probably against Riverside," junior defender **Landon Rahim** said.

Junior midfielder **Alex Ahedo** agrees that the Riverside game was the toughest. We had to stay focused and connected all game," Ahedo said.

County is getting a lot of shots on goal and has a solid defense to support them. County's roster is very flexible, with players playing offense and defense positions.

"With me being a senior, I'm really excited to get my last opportunity to play soccer at County," Kern said.

"For the team, just winning and building success is our biggest motivator," Creighton said.

County has started their season off strong. The team hopes to continue their good run and makes waves in the postseason.

"My goals for this season are winning districts and making a deep run in the state tournament," Rahim said. •



The team huddles before an exciting match up against Riverside. Photo courtesy of Olivia Powers.

Steel scores 100th goal, commits to York

Matt Starchville | Staff Writer

This year junior midfielder **Sofie Steel** accomplished a feat that few have accomplished. She scored her 100th goal of her high school career. "It was exciting, to lose a year of lacrosse and still meet a goal I've had since I was younger was a great feeling," Steel said.

Steel has played varsity lacrosse every year that she has been at County and has continued her dominance this year through hard work and dedication. The time and effort that she has put into lacrosse earned her a scholarship to York College, which is where she will continue her athletic and academic career.

Her high school success was helped by her teammates and coaches. From getting advice from upperclassmen and asking questions if necessary to learning from mistakes and talking about them with her coaches, these experiences helped shape her into the player and leader that she is today. "I think I learned a lot from the upperclassmen in my first few years, which had directly impacted my role as a leader and teammate my junior year," Steel said. "My coaches have all been very supportive of me through my years at County. They always gave me extra time to work on what I need, help me understand my mistakes and how to fix them, and they

have all trusted me to push myself."

Steel committed to York College earlier this spring and fell in love with the school, campus, and lacrosse program on the first visit. "The recruiting process was timely, starting in eighth grade it was going well," Steel said. "When COVID hit, the process went off course for me. York and a couple other schools stayed in touch, and after my first visit there. I loved it." Steel continued looking at schools, but "I didn't have the feelings toward them that I did with York," she said.

Steel also received an offer from UVA Wise, which forced her to make a decision. When weighing out the factors, York was a clear favorite in her eyes and many things were considered when making this decision. "York's record last season was undefeated in their conference and was ranked ninth out of 100-plus teams," Steel said. She praised the environment, and "being close to home and closer to my grandparents impacted my decision as well." Steel says the way they run their program is very similar to a Division 1 program "while still maintaining the Division 3 rules and regulations towards practice times."

Steel will look to continue her high school dominance in her senior season next year and begin to prepare for the next level. "I'm just



Junior Midfielder **Sofie Steel** keeps her eyes on the goal as she lines up her shot during a game against Woodgrove on April 1. Photo by of Jim Klimavicz.

looking forward to playing," Steel said. "There were some issues this year that affected how the team played together. But our last couple

of games really gave me a strong glimpse of what we can expect next year. I'm looking forward to seeing that in action." •

SCOREBOARD

BOYS VARSITY BASEBALL

- 3/05 vs. James Wood 1-7 L
- 3/11 vs. Briar Woods 13-13 T
- 3/18 vs. Sherando 1-2 L
- 3/25 vs. Stone Bridge 1-0 W
- 3/30 vs. Broad Run 7-11 L
- 3/31 vs. Potomac Falls 3-7 L
- 4/01 vs. Lightridge 10-9 W
- 4/04 vs. Tuscarora 2-9 L
- 4/19 vs. Rock Ridge 8-5 W
- 4/20 vs. Loudoun Valley 8-7 W
- 4/21 vs. Heritage 3-7 L
- 4/27 vs. Sherando 12-0 W
- 4/28 vs. Broad Run 1-5 L
- 5/02 vs. Lightridge 3-1 W
- 5/03 vs. Woodgrove 2-6 L
- 5/05 vs. Tuscarora 0-6 L
- 5/09 vs. Loudoun Valley 0-7 L
- 5/12 vs. Dominion 5-9 L
- 5/16 vs. Rock Ridge 9-16 L
- 5/17 vs. Dominion 5-11 L
- 5/18 vs. Multiple 1-7 L

GIRLS VARSITY SOFTBALL

- 3/18 vs. Sherando 12-9 W
- 3/22 vs. Woodgrove 3-7 L
- 3/25 vs. Stone Bridge 1-3 L
- 3/29 vs. Potomac Falls 14-1 W
- 3/30 vs. Broad Run 10-11 L
- 4/01 vs. Lightridge 27-8 W
- 4/04 vs. Tuscarora 0-6 L
- 4/06 vs. Loudoun Valley 9-14 L
- 4/19 vs. Rock Ridge 23-0 W
- 4/20 vs. Loudoun Valley 9-14 L

- 4/21 vs. Heritage 4-2 W
- 4/25 vs. Park View 25-1 W
- 4/27 vs. Sherando 12-13 L
- 5/02 vs. Lightridge 17-2 W
- 5/05 vs. Tuscarora 0-10 L
- 5/09 vs. Loudoun Valley 1-11 L
- 5/11 vs. Broad Run 24-3 W
- 5/12 vs. Dominion 15-5 W
- 5/16 vs. Rock Ridge 21-2 W
- 5/17 vs. Dominion 3-1 W
- 5/18 vs. Heritage 6-3 W
- 5/23 vs. Multiple 10-2 W
- 5/23 vs. Multiple 0-10 L

GIRLS VARSITY LACROSSE

- 3/18 vs. Riverside 2-19 L
- 3/22 vs. Briar Wood 14-19 L
- 4/01 vs. Woodgrove 11-14 L
- 4/05 vs. Park View 21-3 W
- 4/07 vs. Independence 5-16 L
- 4/19 vs. Broad Run 7-15 L
- 4/22 vs. Lightridge 7-14 L
- 4/26 vs. Tuscarora 11-16 L
- 4/29 vs. Loudoun Valley 7-18 L
- 5/03 vs. Dominion 1-19 L
- 5/10 vs. Rock Ridge 1-0 W
- 5/13 vs. Heritage 12-5 W
- 5/23 vs. Loudoun Valley 6-10 L

BOYS VARSITY LACROSSE

- 3/04 vs. Woodgrove 12-8 W
- 3/18 vs. Riverside 3-17 L
- 3/22 vs. Briar Woods 6-8 L
- 3/29 vs. Kettle Run 12-4 W
- 4/01 vs. Woodgrove 7-6 W
- 4/05 vs. Park View 17-3 W

- 4/07 vs. Independence 11-12 L
- 4/19 vs. Broad Run 7-11 L
- 4/22 vs. Lightridge 14-3 W
- 4/29 vs. Loudoun Valley 10-11 L
- 5/03 vs. Dominion 4-16 L
- 5/10 vs. Rock Ridge 19-0 W
- 5/13 vs. Heritage 7-5 W
- 5/23 vs. Broad Run 7-9 L

GIRLS VARSITY TENNIS

- 3/08 vs. Stone Bridge 7-2 W
- 3/10 vs. Riverside 0-9 L
- 3/14 vs. Briar Woods 5-4 W
- 3/16 vs. John Handley 3-6 L
- 3/18 vs. Potomac Falls 9-0 W
- 3/21 vs. Sherando 2-7 L
- 3/24 vs. Woodgrove 4-5 L
- 3/25 vs. John Handley 3-6 L
- 3/29 vs. Freedom 2-7 L
- 4/01 vs. Sherando 3-6 L
- 4/19 vs. Broad Run 6-3 W
- 4/21 vs. Lightridge 4-5 L
- 4/22 vs. Parkview 7-2 W
- 4/27 vs. Tuscarora 8-1 W
- 4/28 vs. Loudoun Valley 3-8 L
- 5/02 vs. Dominion 7-2 W
- 5/05 vs. Rock Ridge 6-3 W
- 5/12 vs. Multiple 1-5 L

BOYS VARSITY TENNIS

- 3/10 vs. Riverside 0-9 L
- 3/14 vs. Briar Woods 1-8 L
- 3/16 vs. John Handley 1-8 L
- 3/18 vs. Potomac Falls 6-3 W
- 3/21 vs. Sherando 8-1 W
- 3/24 vs. Woodgrove 6-3 W

- 3/25 vs. John Handley 1-8 L
- 3/29 vs. Freedom 0-9 L
- 4/01 vs. Sherando 8-1 W
- 4/19 vs. Broad Run 1-8 L
- 4/21 vs. Lightridge 0-9 L
- 4/22 vs. Park View 8-1 W
- 4/27 vs. Tuscarora 8-1 W
- 4/28 vs. Loudoun Valley 2-7 L
- 5/02 vs. Dominion 4-5 L
- 5/05 vs. Rock Ridge 1-8 L
- 5/10 vs. Heritage 2-7 L
- 5/17 vs. Multiple 0-5 L

VARSITY/JV TRACK & FIELD

- 3/19 Dominion Shamrock Inv. Boys - 17 Girls - 0
- 3/26 Ram Country Strasburg Inv. Boys - 165 1st W Girls - 29
- 4/02 Handley Inv. Boys - 69 2nd W Girls - 0
- 4/06 Loudoun Valley Tri LV, LC, LHS Boys - 104.50 1st W Girls - 51
- 4/21 Loudoun County Tri LC, BHS, PV Boys - 117 1st W Girls - 64 1st W
- 4/27 Heritage Tri HHS, RR, LC Boys - 86 1st W Girls - 57
- 5/04 Dominion Tri DHS, LC, THS Boys - 36 Girls - 60
- 5/18-19 Dulles District Championships Boys - 179 1st W Girls - 40
- 5/25 Region 4C Championships Boys - 105.50 1st W Girls - 23
- 6/03-04 VHSL Class 4 State Championships [No Results at time of publication]

Varsity girls and boys tennis closes out the season with optimism for the future



The varsity girls tennis team poses after the Rock Ridge district game. While they didn't come home with a win, they still took pride in their efforts. Photo from Instagram: Countygirlstennis

Olivia DeWan & Crawford Holmes

Every season includes ups and downs, twists and turns, and unexpected losses and wins. For County's varsity girls and varsity boys tennis teams, the 2021-2022 season was a wild ride.

"Most of our team is mostly freshmen and sophomores who started playing in high school," sophomore **Fabrizio Flores** said. "That typically means they are not that good, but they train harder than us outside the court."

Similarly, the majority of the girls team was made up of underclassmen.

"Our underclassmen really stepped up," junior **Laysha Ricci** said. "They showed a lot of improvement over time."

With such a young group of players, both teams had to work hard to be ready to play.

"A football player would go to the weight room for like three hours, and no tennis player is doing that," sophomore **Peter Divon** said. "We need different skills."

The varsity tennis teams had a focus on cardio training, they would run inside the school if it was raining and spent a lot of time on the W&OD Trail running. In addition, practice was every day after school for two hours.

"At the beginning the running was difficult," Ricci said. "As we got further into the season it became easier and my endurance improved."

A typical tennis team carries fourteen players and only the top six play. Flores was ranked first, meaning he sees a ton of court time. Ricci knocked in at seventh, but the girls' ranks fluctuated constantly, moving different players up for a chance to improve.

"My favorite game was the one against Rock Ridge," said freshman **Mary Anderson**. "It was very back and forth and intense."

County played Rock Ridge on May 5 in a district tournament,

hoping for the win.

"We all had really good matches," Ricci agreed. "We were neck-and-neck the entire time, and we almost had it."

While they came close, Rock Ridge took home the trophy, and regardless of the loss, they were still proud of their efforts.

On the other side, the guys had a different set of favorite games.

"We went up against Lightridge, and that was fun to watch," said Flores. "But we got absolutely destroyed."

Over the course of the season, the guys seemed to struggle getting wins.

"We have a big issue with the mental game," said Divon. "As a whole team we are good with morale, but some people, like myself, just get in your head really. It's a solo sport, and the idea of 'how do you get out of your head' was kind of a struggle."

Ricci also noted the challenges of "getting in your head."

"You can get really stressed and feel stuck," said Ricci. "It can be hard to pull yourself out of that."

While both teams faced losses, they had a great time overall.

"My favorite part was the away games," Ricci said. "On the bus after we came back from a match, whether we lost or won, we would be singing and doing karaoke."

Flores said that he saw the girls having "a lot of fun" with their season, and while the guys' team lost more than they won, they had five more victories this season than last.

"They grew up and became a solid team at the end of the year," coach **Jermaine Brooks** said.

With the closing of tennis for the spring, the Varsity teams are turning to next year with hopes of improvement.

"If you're starting tennis in high school or middle school you have to put in constant hours to get better," Divon said. "Anyone can do it if you put in the work." •

Varsity letters

What to do with them?

Cat Pizzarello | Staff Writer

You see them in movies of many flaunting their earned varsity jackets. Since 1865, originally earned by Harvard University baseball team, varsity letters have been a venerable symbol presented to exceptional students.

Since then, varsity letters seem to have become less valued by high school students. "Years ago it seemed like a bigger thing, like students wanted to get their letter," **Daniel Croyle**, director of school counseling said.

Varsity letters have come a long way since 1865. Now, they can be earned in many ways in different activities like sports, academics and arts. Each letter has different requirements to be earned, though sports letters still seem to be the most popular.

Athletic director **Kate Cassidy** noted that the baseline to earn a letter varies from sport to sport, "Generally it's to have played in half the varsity games," Cassidy said. According to Cassidy, sport varsity letters can be earned if an athlete has played a varsity sport for two years, but that it is up to the coach to decide.

Students at County can also earn an academic varsity letter. "An academic letter is given when a student is on honor roll for three consecutive quarters," said Croyle. According to Croyle, last year around 70% of the school earned an academic letter and only around 40% actually picked them up.

Arts varsity letters can also be earned, with students earning points when they participate in activities within their class.

"It used to be that having a letterman jacket was a much bigger thing," Cassidy said. "I'm not sure if that has just run its course or if it's going to come back in style."

"When I first started years ago, students used to get those letterman jackets that you would see in the movies from 1950," Croyle said. "Some people get them framed. I re-

ally haven't seen much lately."

Croyle mentioned that while student interest in the letters seemed to have been decreasing, "COVID definitely accelerated it."

"What am I going to do with it?" junior **Emma Fadely** asked.

"I don't know where my letter went," **Brian Sar**, junior, said.

None of the students interviewed for this story mentioned the once famous varsity letterman jackets. The majority of students also said that they didn't know what to do with their varsity letter once they earned it.

A classic option would be the varsity letterman jacket. Although it is a pricier choice, running at \$219 at the time of printing, it is a way for students to show off their well-earned letter. Captain varsity letterman jackets can be purchased through Cheer Sports: <https://loudouncountycaptains.itemorder.com/shop/product/4888511/>

Cassidy mentioned that varsity letters can be put onto a backpack and customized to the athlete's style. One online store that makes these is <https://www.lettermanbags.com/>, though they run almost the cost of a jacket.

"Some people get them framed," Croyle said. Framing a letter is something you can do yourself or order through an online store <https://www.varsityletterawards.com/varsity-framed-letters.html>.

Shadow boxes are also another option to display letters and awards and people on websites like etsy <https://www.etsy.com/> will put your letter on a pillow.

Varsity letters can be displayed on a medal stand, easy to purchase at many stores and online websites such as <https://www.amazon.com/>. You can also display medals and other awards, along with keepsakes from memorable competitions.

Varsity letters have seem to have faded away recently, but there are many ways that can honor the hard work put into earning them. •



Journalist Cat Pizzarello displays her cross country and track varsity letter and awards, along with her academic varsity letter on a medal stand. Photo by Cat Pizzarello.

Pop up shop offers student development and teachers relaxation



Hannah Winegar | Staff Writer

Taking a break from grading papers, teachers are met with the smiling faces of students in the workplace skills class. Classy music relaxes the atmosphere while students lead teachers to their seats with menus that have options of ice cream and shakes. Tables with student-made decorations, ice cream cups and spoons, the Captains Creamery pop-up ice cream shop was an uplifting event that left everyone involved feeling cheerful.

“This is just so wonderful,” special education teacher **Cindy Protopiannis** said while drinking a milkshake. “It is way more than I expected it to be.”

This event took a month in preparation while the students learned different skills needed for working at a restaurant. All teachers with eighth block planning were invited to attend. This is the first event that has

been put together that included any teachers.

As part of the special education department, the workspace skills class teaches students the important skills needed for life in the workforce after graduation.

Megan Mcknight, a student who helped prepare the ice cream and milkshakes, had said her favorite part about the event was “helping people get their ice cream.”

“I really love the idea of the kids setting this up and getting real world experience to prepare for a potential job,” family and consumer science teacher **Dorene Kuebler** said.

Special education teacher **Alyssa Casanova** hopes that the students will get out of this experience “the inside as to what it’s actually like to work specific jobs of being a waiter, being a host, being a dishwasher,” Casanova said. “Having that extra layer of real life is what we are hoping for and to experience.” •

Suraphel Getahun serves math teacher Todd Risser at the pop up shop during eighth block on March 31. Zevonn Sledd serves in the background. Photo by Hannah Winegar.

NOTES *by the* NUMBER

Evelyn Kuzminski | Layout Editor

Taking notes: Some of us love it. Some of us hate it. It’s often crucial to learning & memorizing material. We all do it, but we don’t all do it the same way. Based on 51 responses to a student survey, here’s a look at how LCHS students take, organize, use, and feel about their notes.

