

# 70TH ANNIVERSARY



*Staff Infection performs classics from “Livin’ on a Prayer” to “Summer of ‘69.” “Sweet Child of Mine,” however, was D’Arcangelis and Ricci’s favorite to perform. Photo by Valerie Egger.*

## Concert kicks off 70th anniversary celebrations

Cat Pizzarello / Editor-in-Chief

To celebrate the school’s 70th anniversary, County offered a free concert on the lawn (later moved indoors due to weather) on the evening of April 12, featuring Staff

Infection, senior **Sela Campbell**, and graduate **Emma Rowley**, with food trucks available. Starting the show was the band Staff Infection, consisting of faculty members **Matthew Armes** (drums), **William Rosenfeld** (keyboard,

acoustic guitar, and vocals), **Phil-lip D’Arcangelis** (bass), **Matthew Trkula** (lead guitar), **Camilla Bales** and **Elizabeth Javidian** (vocals), and **Richard Ricci** (rhythm guitar), playing recognizable classics. Next up was Campbell, singing

classics such as “Wagon Wheel” and her original song, “One Track Mind.” Concluding was Rowley, traveling from Nashville, with a setlist of her original songs. • **READ MORE ON PAGE 14**

## The forgotten story of LCHS trailer classrooms



*A 2006 aerial shot containing the now lost trailers, which were used as math, Latin, and science classrooms from their construction in the mid-1990s to their removal during renovations from 2005-2006. Photo courtesy of The County Chronicle. **READ MORE ON PAGE II***

## Librarian preserves school history and documents



*Sophomore **Karan Singh**, senior **Brianna Martinez**, and Curator of Manuscripts and Archives **Laura Christiansen** look over a collection of 19th century newspapers. Martinez gasps at the sight of an ad for a person for sale. Photo by Valerie Egger. **READ MORE ON PAGE IV***



BY WILLIAM KLUTTZ, STAFF WRITER

A history of major LCHS additions and renovations

1966

The first of many LCHS renovations began with an expansion wing used for vocational classes, which were later relocated to C.S. Monroe Technology Center 1976. It is now the language hallway. Trailer classrooms were also added.

1976

An auxiliary gym was added to the school, which now serves as the wrestling room. Also, in honor of the United States bicentennial, a time capsule was planted by the flagpole on the front lawn, where it will be opened in 2076.

1985

Enter the LCHS expansion era, with three additions in eleven years. In the smallest of the three, the cafeteria kitchens were expanded. They weren't around for too long, however, because six years later LCHS got a whole new cafeteria.

1991

The brand new cafeteria was added to the school, as well as the science classrooms. The old cafeteria became the band and chorus rooms. This was also the year the school got its first two elevators, and for the first time, air conditioning.

1996

Five years later, a new main gym was added to the school. The old gym became an auxiliary gym. Around this time, more trailer classrooms were added.

2005

LCHS underwent one of its largest renovations, a \$19.3 million, two-year renovation. The modern auxiliary gym was built, and the library was moved. The sky bridge was added, which linked the upper floor classrooms. Trailer classrooms were also demolished.

2009

With the arrival of the NJROTC program, an old bus garage was renovated to become the building that is now the Annex.

What was happening in the world in

Lc

1954

Lc

Cost of a gallon of gas: \$0.29

President: Dwight D. Eisenhower

Average cost of a new house: \$18,200

#1 song: "Little Things Mean a Lot" by Kitty Kallen

#1 TV show: "I Love Lucy"

Average cost of a new car: \$1,950

By William Kluttz, Staff writer

Sports

- In baseball, the then New York Giants swept the then Cleveland Indians to win the world series.
- In the NHL, the Detroit Red Wings won game seven against the Montreal Canadiens. Montreal would later get their revenge, however, as they went on to win five in a row later in the decade.
- The then Minneapolis Lakers defeated the Syracuse Nationals in game seven. The Nationals would go on to be the Philadelphia 76ers.
- In football, the Cleveland Browns destroyed the Detroit Lions 56-10 for the NFL Championship.
- West Germany defeated Hungary in the World Cup, held in Switzerland. It was the first of four titles for Germany.

Famous Birthdays

Jerry Seinfeld, April 29

Oprah Winfrey, January 29

Denzel Washington, December 28

# The forgotten story of Loudoun County's trailer classrooms

William Kluttz | Staff Writer

With the 70th anniversary upon us, it's the perfect time to look back at one of the school's forgotten architectural oddities, six small trailers, used as math, science, and Latin classrooms from the early 1990s to their demolition from 2005-2006. "That was short lived, thankfully... but it was a different thing," Latin teacher **Lynn Krepich** said, remembering that when classes changed, "you're not in a hallway, and people are just kind of coming in and out." The construction of the trailers

was the result of immense population growth in northern Virginia in the 1990s. This growth was seen as nonpermanent, and that school populations would peak within the decade, then decline. As a result, counties were reluctant to spend big money on large additions or new schools, so trailers began to sprout up across northern Virginia. In 1999, LCPS had 22 total trailers. However, that number is tiny compared to Prince William's 428 trailers and Fairfax's 662 the same year. Fairfax would continue to lead the pack in terms of trailer class-

rooms, peaking at over 1,100 trailers in 2013. However, schools' predictions were wrong, and northern Virginia continued to grow. As a result, school trailers were replaced with permanent schools or additions. In 2018, Prince William County had around 200 trailers, and was working to eliminate them fully. The trailers at County were removed during summer renovations to the school from 2005-2006. After demolition, the site of the trailers became the location of new parking spaces. The trailers are unlikely to

reappear, as population growth nowadays generally results in a new school being built somewhere else in the county. Krepich, who has been teaching in the same classroom for nearly all of her four decades of teaching, is grateful for that. "[I] felt isolated... [there was] no sense of community," she said of her time in a trailer. Not all memories reflect isolation, though. Krepich recalls one year when the trailers resulted in an extra classmate. "A squirrel did wander into the trailer one time," Krepich said. "We had to chase the squirrel out the door. Quite a memory." •





## Beloved Latin teacher announces retirement after 43 years

*Sophia Casciano | Staff Writer*

Latin teacher **Lynn Krepich** has been a teacher at County for 43 years, but even though Krepich has been teaching since 1981, it almost feels like she has been teaching her whole life.

When Krepich was only six years old, she was on a sabbatical trip to Pompeii with her family, as her father was a college professor. While exploring the country, Krepich found herself looking at a hypocaust stone and decided then that she was going to teach about the Romans someday.

“At that moment, when I saw it, I thought these people were so interesting, and I wanted to know more about them,” Krepich said. “I’d like to be a teacher, and I think I’m going to do something with this. That’s where it started.”

For those who have not taken one of Krepich’s Latin classes, a hypocaust stone is the heating system for a Roman bath.

“When I saw that, I thought about the engineering of the Romans because they created something so masterful, and it really intrigued me,” Krepich said. “That was what really sparked my interest. I thought that they were very fascinating people.”

After fulfilling her childhood ambitions and spending almost all of her years exclusively at

County, she has recently announced her retirement. Krepich says that what she will remember most is teaching many generations of students and experiencing the changes that each decade has brought. Through the years, Krepich has created a tight-knit community of people.

“The Latina Familia is what we call ourselves, and there is just a network that we have with students,” Krepich said. Krepich says that the families are what have stayed the same the most over the years.

Krepich’s inspiration can be seen in the students she has taught over the years.

“While I didn’t have a significant interest in the language at first, Ms. Krepich made the class feel like a community rather than just a language class,” senior **Ben Hataway** said. “Ms. Krepich has a lot of Latin quotes she likes to say, the most notable of which for me was Latina Familia Fortis, meaning ‘a strong Latin family.’ Ms. Krepich really did make Latin feel like family.”

Krepich recalls many memories within the Latina Familia she has created that have lived with her (and her classroom) throughout the years.

“The mural painted by a previous student and her mother created a spark for inspiration around the room,” Krepich said.

**KREPICH continued on page 4**



*Lynn Krepich stands in front of the first mural painted in her classroom by a previous student in 1995. The mural depicts Sandro Botticelli “The Birth of Venus.” Photo courtesy of Lynn Krepich.*

## Cyre Davis chosen as graduation speaker

*Dylan Keyes | Staff Writer*

On June 18, during senior graduation, one lucky student has the chance to speak in front of her graduating class after being selected by senior sponsors **Mel Hefty** and **Abby Schutte**. Any graduating student was eligible to submit a speech, first submitting a draft, then given a month to edit it with a faculty member. After that, they present their speech to a committee that includes the senior sponsors, a student repre-

sentative and administrators, and this year, senior **Cyre Davis** was selected through this process, which lasts from the beginning of March to the end of April.

“We look for a message that we think will resonate with the current year’s graduating class,” Hefty said. “So each year’s theme gets to be a little bit different.”

After being reached out to by a former teacher who told her she would be good at speaking, Davis wrote a speech, turned it in and then went to work to make it as

perfect as possible during editing.

“It felt great, I had put myself into this speech and believe that it is great,” Davis said. “It feels great to be chosen to be a voice for the senior class.”

Davis believes she is a powerful speaker, no matter the speech, believing that her delivery will be great. She also congratulated the other speakers as she knows it takes a lot to stand up there and speak for an audition.

Reading specialist **Valerie**

**Rife** was the faculty member who worked with Davis on her speech. “Cyre was extremely passionate about her message,” Rife said. “Her determination and emotion inspired me to assist her in any way I could.”

“This speech is important to me because I think it is a part of me,” said Davis, who plans to speak about leaving small parts of ourselves on the world around us. “I put a lot of myself in this speech and I hope that everyone

**DAVIS continued on page 5**



# 2024 editors signing off

*Evelyn Kuzminski & Cat Pizzarello | Editors-in-Chief*

Some people have matching bracelets. We have five wooden boxes.

Our past year as editors-in-chief has been our third year together on the newspaper staff and our eighth year of friendship. Our story started in fifth grade at Catoctin Elementary. Cat was crying in the bathroom and Evelyn was sent to her aid, the start of an everlasting friendship.

Following the isolation of 2020, we were reunited by The County Chronicle, sharing our journalistic interest. We wrote our first article together in 2021, a feature on students' Thanksgiving Day celebrations.

In 2022, our collaborative repertoire expanded to include a piece on the new bell schedule and a continuation of our Thanksgiving writing by highlighting students' holiday traditions.

Together, we reinstated the infamous crossword, something we believe has brought color to the paper. Our favorite tradition that we've established, however, takes place on distribution day. Every quarter, we guard the athletic entrance, eager to show off our hard work to often unenthusiased students. Passing out newspapers is a strategic endeavor; you have to both time and phrase your greeting precisely to maximize circulation.

Distribution day is by far our favorite day of the year. We begin with a breakfast and caffeine stop, usually in the form of iced chai lattes, and carpool to school with other members of the newspaper staff. After handing out papers in the morning, we spend our first block filling the newspaper boxes around the school.

Prior to our time serving as editors-in-chief, we had seen that the newspaper boxes were outdated and still bore the name of County's old mascot. Furthermore, many of the boxes didn't fit the newspapers well, limiting the amount we could offer at a time and diminishing their visual appeal. So we took it upon ourselves to take charge and remedy the issue. We were determined to leave having made a tangible difference to The County Chronicle.

After conferring with principal **Michelle Luttrell**, we picked out new boxes, put on our tool belts, and took to our renovation. Several of the old boxes proved



*Editors-in-chief Cat Pizzarello and Evelyn Kuzminski paint their thumbprints on a newspaper box in the hallway. The two graduating seniors serve together on the staff for three years, and are leaving their mark with this new tradition. Photo by Valerie Egger.*

difficult to unscrew, but after a little creative engineering and girl math, we were successful. Never had two teenagers been so excited to wield a screwdriver, or to see a piece of wood attached to a wall.

As we conclude our final year on the paper, we want to start one last tradition. Similar to the entire senior class leaving their mark with handprints on a wall, we decided to leave our fingerprints on a newspaper box in the main hallway. It felt like the most full-circle way we could end our time with The County Chronicle. As editors come and go, we hope they too will continue our little tradition and leave their mark.

During the course of our time on the paper, we have grown to love every aspect of news journalism. However, we wish others would feel the same about our craft. There is so much more to newspaper than meets the eye. It's not just interviewing and writing. It's brainstorming, researching, networking, editing, designing, problem solving, and marketing.

Reading your school newspaper is not just a way to support the journalists of The County Chronicle. It's a way to support the artists, athletes, activists, and all the other students and faculty whose achievements we showcase. Sharing others' stories has taught us that with our words we can bring our school community together. Help us by taking interest in what we have worked so hard on.

In our years on the newspaper staff, we have stepped out of our comfort zones. We have met new people, learned new things, and

built relationships that will last a lifetime. Newspaper has brought us closer to our peers by allowing us to see more clearly into their lives. Whether through peer editing, moral support for interviews, or facing ad sale rejection together, we have had each other's backs in so many ways.

And of course, we have to thank **Valerie Egger**, our amazing advisor without whom the newspaper couldn't publish each quarter. She has provided us with endless support and mentorship over the past three years. She's seen the best and worst of our writing (and our attention levels), and she has guided us to become the students, journalists, and people we are today.

The next chapter of our lives comes with many uncertainties, but we are sure of one thing. Our time on the newspaper will not be forgotten. The people we have met and lessons we have learned will stay with us as our stories continue.

Since the fifth grade, we have had periods of closeness and distance within our friendship. As our senior year comes to an end, however, we realize there is nothing that can come between us (not even a couple hundred miles and a Cavaliers vs Hokies rivalry), and The County Chronicle will always be a part of our lives.

Newspapers are about impact. They strive to make a difference in their communities, but it goes both ways. The County Chronicle has made an impact on us, but we also hope we have made an impact on it, and we hope it continues to make an impact on you, the reader, that's authentic and relevant. •

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**EDITORIAL POLICY**  
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**  
The staff of The County Chronicle welcomes guest opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Pieces should be less than 400 words and must be founded on researched fact. Any student, faculty, staff, or alumni interested in contributing to the newspaper should contact the adviser, Valerie Egger, at [valerie.egger@lcps.org](mailto:valerie.egger@lcps.org).

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# Where did all the spirit go?

Cat Pizzarello | Editor-in-Chief

Football games, pep rallies, and school dances seem to be a thing of the past. Once religiously followed spirit weeks are now mundane and overlooked. When did our generation lose the pride in the place we call home for four years of our life?

As my senior year comes to an end, I realize my expectations going into high school have been violently struck down by reality. Perusing other school-run papers, it became apparent to me that many other young journalists are seeing the same lack of spirit.

Where did this decline in spirit come from? Do I dare mention the possibility of the pandemic limiting the spirit? Is it simply the decline in adolescent mental health? Or is it as our parents so cautiously warned and those “damn phones” are the cause?

Prom is typically the height of the year for many upperclassmen. It signifies the end of school and gives students a chance to let go of stress that had accumulated over the year. This year, that high school milestone was nearly canceled.

Ticket sales for the prom were lower than any year prior. As it became apparent that ticket sales were not going to be met, alterations were made to the venue and photo booth contract in order to keep the dance alive.

Regardless of the fact prom was still held, the majority of the students still did not attend the dance put on by the school. Many chip in to travel to DC, hire a party bus or limo for the night, or attend their own gatherings outside of the school.

Traditionally, prom is a time for all students to see each other after a long year’s work. Now without the attendance at these planned events, there is even more disconnection among the upperclassmen, further lessening the spirit of the student body.

Prior to the dance, a spirit week is typically held and in years past hallways are decorated to a specific theme. Now spirit weeks have very little participation and decorating hallways is a long gone tradition.

I can recall my sophomore year at County, following the pandemic, the hallways were decorated head to toe to fit the theme of the Grammys. There was loud music, endless balloons and streamers, and a red carpet outside of the cafeteria. The festivities excited me for my senior year, when I would get to decorate the hallways; but that tradition was struck down the following year.

It partially appears that just not enough students care or have the time to participate in school sanctioned activities and events. Looking at the environment around me, I see this constant

competition that every student seems to have to be the best. Although working hard and focusing on the future is important to keep in mind, it feels as if it has gotten to a toxic level. And with students’ mental health constantly declining, everyone could afford to take a break and actually experience high school. With the disconnection among the student body, school events could be what the population needs to reconnect.

When planning spirit weeks, instead of trying to gain interest with over the top themes, possibly going back to the basics: pajama day, crazy hat and hair day, and class color day. It may seem unoriginal, but it helps allow every student to get involved with items they already own.

Receiving help from other clubs could help to hype up the levels of spirit. With the endless clubs at our school, collaboration between them on events could promote club participation, as well as school spirit.

As for prom and other gatherings, students seem to want something a little more. Holding the prom half an hour away and in a hotel seems to be unappealing to most students. Several other schools hold the prom outdoors or in local barns/wedding venues. These venues shouldn’t cost too much more than the hotel and could spark the interest of students.

As a graduating senior, I always tried my best to get involved in events. I always attend a few football games, go to school dances, and try my best to participate in spirit weeks. There is always more that I could be doing, but already I feel I do more than the majority of my peers. Regarding underclassmen, it’s time to get out of your comfort zone. I challenge you to attend at least two sporting events each quarter, attend your school dances, and dress up for at least a couple spirit days.

I understand the drive for your future. But for the majority of students, I know you spend endless hours doom scrolling on social media. Instead of that, get out of the comfort of your house. This isn’t just about spirit. This is about your life.

Go get ice cream with your friends. Play outside. Go to the movies. As much as this is an issue about the pride you have in your school, the real problem is that our generation doesn’t know how to live their life.

Looking back on your life, you wouldn’t want to remember each Instagram post you liked or the streak you kept on Snapchat. Have pride in the school that is your home for so long and get involved in the community. But most importantly, make memories while you are in high school and have the privilege of doing so. •

## Our school community looking down on custodians must be addressed

Brianna Martinez | Staff Writer

Our janitorial staff this year and on average in years prior consists of about 13 employees working some of the most tedious jobs in the school, such as cleaning between classes, cleaning up various messes left behind in lunch shifts, and even gardening outside when asked to. At first glance, these seem like some of our school community’s most respectable people, right? Doing the hard and messy jobs that none of us would voluntarily do, but somehow, it is becoming so unbelievably apparent that they are undervalued in this school. We can see it every day when only a handful of people, students and staff included, say just a blanket thank you to them when they are cleaning up these people’s messes. People perfectly capable of taking responsibility for the things they leave behind seem to have no understanding of why they

should be responsible for themselves and not treat custodians like their personal servants during school hours. These employees deserve more than just being thought of as the people who clean and a second thought throughout the day. They are people. Human beings who have lives and families are equal to teachers, administrators, and students. There is no hierarchy in our school. It is not a question of the value of their job: custodians are vital parts of keeping our school community up and running. There is no reason that they are being treated and have been treated as second-class citizens.

The main issue recently that is making this so clear in our school is the way our students are treating custodians. We can see at lunch shifts the unacceptable messes that these kids leave behind and they just expect it to vanish into thin air. They stand up from their tables, leave what is

there, and walk away to go about their day. What they never do is just turn around. They don’t look behind them to see who is going to clean that mess up and they don’t look behind themselves ever. In the eyes of some of the students who do this, custodians aren’t even worth a second glance. They clean up messes and that’s it. Is this the school community we are so proud of? Yes, we have amazing athletes and academically advanced students, but what does it matter if they are not grateful people? However, we cannot solely blame the students. As we know, young people learn from what they are shown. So, we can piece it back to the way custodians have always been treated and how younger students are being shown to treat these staff. I know that I am not the first one to bring up this issue and want to see a change in the school community, so how long has this really been happening?

The main solution I can think of is to spend real time informing students of the need to respect custodians and be more aware of how much we truly need to treat them fairly. Parents, administrators, and teachers can help this education spread as well as those students such as myself who are aware of this issue and want to see change for the better in our school. Seeing these hardworking employees treated with such high and widespread disrespect is truly disturbing and disheartening. It makes me wary to leave this school being in my senior year and still have only a handful of students simply just saying thank you to them daily. I wish that this issue could have been addressed long ago so that I could be a bit more proud of our school, but the inequality and disrespect I see every day makes me wish we could have done better. Current students, current staff, and future generations, please do better. •

**CORRECTION:** In the article “Fallon Fetterolf excels on the track,” published in our April issue, we incorrectly identified the names of Fetterolf’s siblings, who ran at Loudoun Valley High School, not County. The correct names are Heath, Cece, Ricky, and Scarlet.



**KREPICH continued from page 1**  
The life-size mural of “The Birth of Venus” still covers the wall of Krepich’s classroom.

Krepich has been in the same room for more than 35 years, managing to avoid the many construction projects in the school as much as possible, but during the early 1990s, the school used trailer classrooms.

“We were moved around because of renovations,” Krepich said. “Thankfully, my time teaching in the trailers was short-lived.”

In her room for over 35 years, Krepich has added many murals on the walls and her own Roman twist to the room. Krepich has other important murals displayed around her room. A painting of the Lions Gate of Mycenae can be seen on a ceiling tile in Krepich’s room for students to see. She likes to highlight this piece because it was another one of the first murals in her room.

During Krepich’s first years teaching at County, there was not yet a full-time Latin program developed, requiring her to commute between County and neighboring high school Broad Run during her first two years.

“After the enrollment built up here, I worked full time at one

school,” Krepich said.  
The low enrollment levels recently crept back up on Krepich due to the elimination of the Latin course at the middle school that feeds into County, in part due to extensive rezoning of JL Simpson Middle School. Krepich explained the impact that it has had on high school enrollment and the actions she has taken to bring back the course at JLSMS.

“It has a real impact on high school enrollment,” Krepich said. “I wanted to make sure that we did something about the recruitment to get Latin back, so some of my upper-level high school students have been promoting Latin through advisory time at Simpson.”

Krepich has been working with the higher levels at LCHS and JLSMS to bring the course back to the local middle school in hopes of raising the enrollment levels.

Despite the typical challenges of any teaching career and any enrollment challenges, Krepich has thoroughly enjoyed her time as a teacher at County.

“When you teach a subject that you really love, you can create a passion for your craft,” Krepich said.

Krepich formed groups to

broaden the Latin experience for students and take on the world outside of the classroom. She took a total of 11 trips, traveling to the “classical lands” of Italy, Greece, the Mediterranean islands via boat, Rhodes, Patmos, Crete, Santorini, and Capri.

“We found it exciting to explore the mysteries of antiquity beside the Delphic Oracle, through a cistern under the palace grounds, climb the hills following goat paths to the ancient palace grounds of the Roman emperor Tiberius, and witness a glorious sunrise and/or sunset that bathes these ancient ruins in splendid detail,” Krepich said. “Such radiance allows these mute stones to once again speak of their past.”

Krepich says she and her students have embraced a philosophy that helps them fuel their “passions to embrace the culture, history, and literature of the classical world.” This outlook inspired her and her students as they traveled to many original locations of important historical Greek and Roman moments, from walking “the paths tread by the ancient Romans and Greeks” to watching ballet at the Herodes Atticus theater. That phrase is “Non scholae sed vitae discimus,” Krepich says, “meaning we learn not for

school but for life.”  
From all of her experiences, Krepich has not held back from sharing stories, as her voyages help to inspire and spark interest in her students.

“Ms. Krepich is one of the nicest teachers I’ve had and a really fascinating person once you start to hear all of her stories,” Hataway said. “From almost getting robbed in Italy to getting a chainsaw carving of a Roman owl last year, Ms. Krepich always had a story to tell. Ms. Krepich has been a gift to our school for the past 43 years, and I hope she has a great retirement.”

Writing an email to the entire staff announcing Krepich’s retirement, Principal **Michelle Luttrell** wrote, “Lynn has not only imparted knowledge but has also inspired countless students, colleagues, families, and members of our community. She has been a cornerstone of our institution, embodying the values of dedication, passion, and excellence in education. Lynn has touched the lives of generations of students, leaving an indelible mark on our school and the futures of so many.”

It’s clear that over the years, Krepich has embraced the phrase “non scholae sed vitae discimus.” •

# Community listening sessions: Spence receives feedback and addresses concerns

*Dylan Johnson | Staff Writer*

Superintendent Dr. **Aaron Spence** has held listening sessions at different LCPS schools starting in September. According to the LCPS website, “These took place at every high school with the goal of developing a relationship with the community, accelerating the superintendents’ learning about LCPS, and building on success while making meaningful changes.”

Out of those listening sessions, the one held at LCHS took place on April 19 after a snow cancellation earlier this year. This public session for parents and students followed a listening session just for staff.

A variety of topics were discussed within the hour-long session, during which Spence responded and provided feedback.

After Spence’s introduction, a member of his team introduced the format of the meeting, breaking the audience into tables to discuss and answer three questions: “What are your hopes and dreams for our students?,” “What is LCPS doing well?,” and “What can LCPS improve upon?” Table groups compiled them into a summary to share with the group.

After all the groups shared their points, Spence addressed some of

the points made and then had a team member inform participants about the Office of the Ombuds to help address concerns and navigate the school system.

Spence then opened up time to talk one on one with members of the audience and address further questions and concerns. Some of the things covered in this conversation included claims of little or no checks and balances with the staff in school, parents wanting to know what is happening when they file complaints, assault not being prevented or dealt with in the correct way, faculty “beating around the bush,” and behavioral accountability of students.

Spence assured the audience of the steps he and his team are taking to act upon the feedback and concerns of the community. He explained that the notes from all the discussions from the listening sessions, anything going through the office of the Ombuds, and any other feedback is being taken into account and action is being taken.

To provide feedback to Dr. Spence, visit the form at <https://www.lcps.org/Page/251934> and the office of the Ombuds for processing confidential complaints and concerns: <https://www.lcps.org/Page/248935>, [ombuds@lcps.org](mailto:ombuds@lcps.org), or call: 571-252-2447. •

THINGS LCPS IS DOING WELL:

Providing the JROTC program

NOTE:

This is a summary of participant feedback from the April 19 listening session with Dr. Spence. During the session, parents, students, and members of the community were invited to provide feedback by giving thoughts on three different categories.

HOPES AND DREAMS FOR LCPS STUDENTS:

Varied opportunities to explore passions, being confident postsecondary, feelings valued, equitable opportunities, becoming well rounded adults, feeling safe physically and emotionally.

THINGS LCPS CAN DO BETTER:

Better school lunches and communication between staff and parents, more student resources and JROTC programs, higher accountability for staff and student behaviors, meritocracy, less technology.

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# Longtime assistant principal Mark Patterson reflects on retirement and his time at LCHS

William Kluttz | Staff Writer

A pillar of LCHS for nearly thirty years, assistant principal **Mark Patterson** is stepping down after this school year. During his career, Patterson has assisted in the opening of Briar Woods High School, he has been a history teacher, SCA administrative sponsor, senior class sponsor, activity coordinator, and his current position, assistant principal.

For Patterson, teaching was the ultimate goal in his working life. After working a government job for eight years, Patterson went back to school to get his masters in education that would allow him to teach. “I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, which is why when I went off and started a first career that wasn’t teaching I always somehow knew that I wasn’t sure why I was doing that,” Patterson said.

Over his thirty year career, Patterson has seen a huge amount of change in the county and in education as a whole, especially in his position as assistant principal. “We increasingly have more and more administrative demands that to be quite honest, sometimes feel like it’s robbing me of the time that I’d rather spend with students and teachers and in classrooms. I get bogged down in my office

with so much stuff that has to be done, that’s sometimes a little frustrating,” Patterson said.

Patterson started out when there were four high schools in the county; that number has jumped to 20 since, but these are really just physical changes, as he notes. “Despite all the changes, kids are still kids. I say kids, but high school is where we get to see them grow into young men and women. They’re funny, full of energy, and loaded with ideas. That hasn’t changed over the last 30 years,” Patterson said.

Some of Patterson’s favorite memories from his time here include lunch duty, a typically unpopular thing for teachers. “I’m one of those weird people, I actually like lunch duty...I just really love being able to watch. This is time when the kids are there. They’re usually...talking, they’re laughing, they’re at their most relaxed,” Patterson said.

Another memory is Patterson showing up many times dressed up as Santa for the winter sports pep rally.

During his retirement, Patterson plans to travel, read, spend time with family, and garden. “I’m an avid gardener,” Patterson said, gesturing to the number of plants sitting in his office.

Patterson has undoubtedly



**Mark Patterson with “helper” Nancy Thomas during a winter sports pep rally. Patterson has dressed up as Santa multiple times for this event over the years. Photo courtesy of Mark Patterson.**

enjoyed his time at LCHS. “That’s the thing that I just love about this job. I get very, very angry with people who talk about...how bad teenagers are...that is not the case. I think teenagers are funny. They’re full of energy,” Patterson said.

The most important activity for Patterson during his retirement is to volunteer. Through programs

run by his church, Patterson will assist many immigrant students by helping them with their homework. Another program involves preparing and giving out meals for the poor. “It’s important to me to be part of that, reaching out to folks like that, to let them know that they’re not forgotten and that whatever we can do, we’re going to try to help,” Patterson said. •



**Cyre Davis poses for the official announcement, shared by @LCHS1954 on X, which reads, “We are excited to announce that Cyre Davis, LCHS Class of 2024, will serve as our graduation speaker this year. We are so proud of her! We will celebrate the Class of 2024 on June 18th.”**

**DAVIS continued from page 1** will find something to connect with in the speech.”

Rife believes that the speech will resonate with students. “I think the concept of leaving a “legacy” is so powerful for our young people to grasp and her message will resonate with the graduates as they have all left their own imprint at our school,” Rife said.

Davis wants everyone to gain something from hearing this speech of hers.

“I want people to understand the importance of impacts and how you leave your mark on the world,” Davis said. “I think that everyone can take a piece of the speech and apply it to their everyday lives.”

Rife was inspired by Davis’ passion for her speech and her willingness to overcome her obstacles.

“By overcoming her challenges and obstacles, she is able to pass on her knowledge to her fellow graduates,” Rife said. “The only impossible journey is the one you never begin.” •



# Senior Jack Beard commits to play Division III baseball

*Taylor Helfer | Managing Editor*

Warming up for a game for his final season, senior **Jack Beard** hears his fans and teammates showing their excitement for the game by chanting “fear the beard.” Beard has been a contributing factor to the varsity team for three years, notably as a left-handed pitcher.

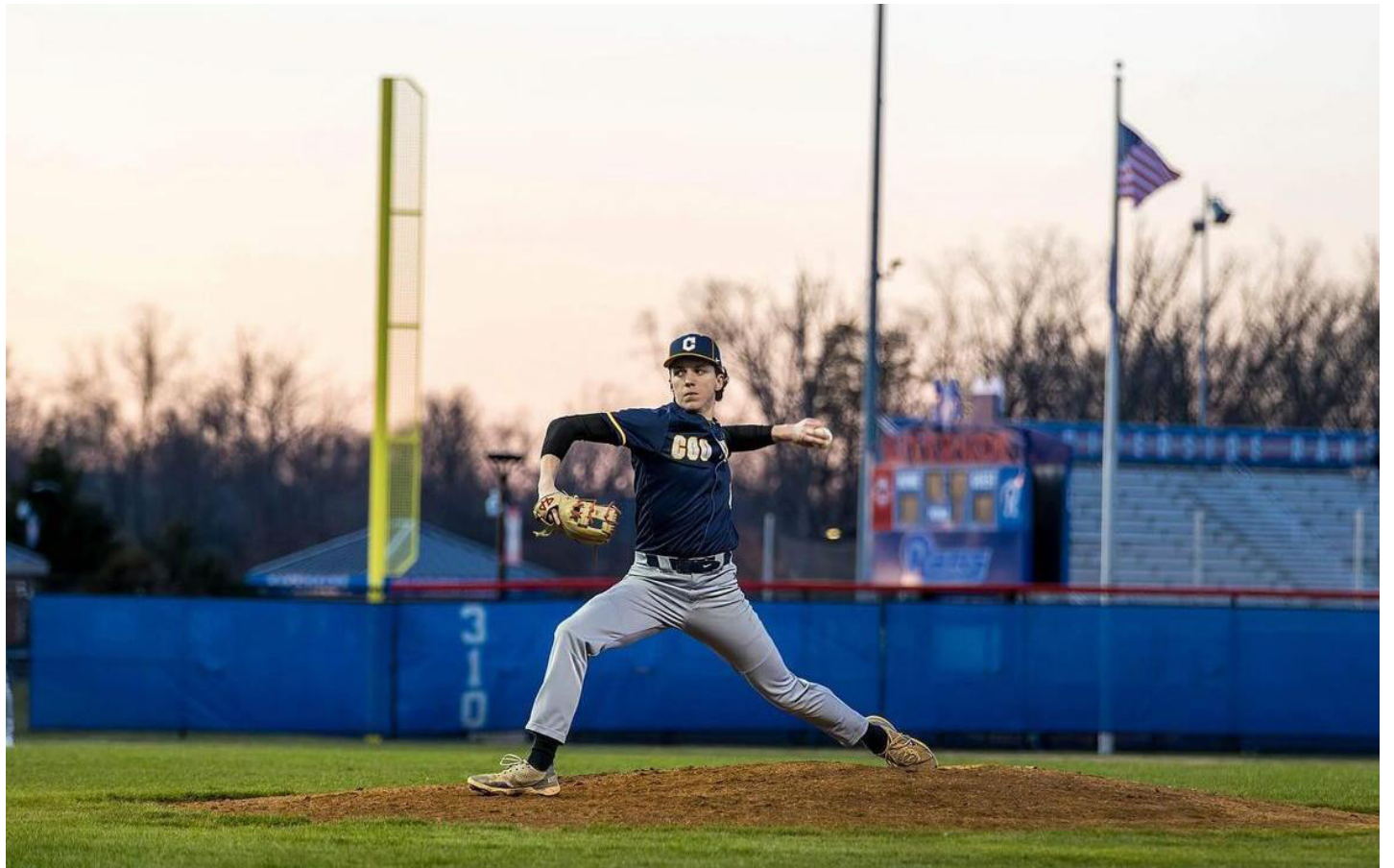
At four, Beard was influenced to join baseball by his grandpa, who is also his role model. “He definitely sparked my interest because he was the one to play with me in the backyard,” Beard said. “He took me to my first professional baseball game and had a big part in my interest in baseball.”

Throughout the past four years, Beard has played travel baseball at Nova Premier Baseball during the fall and summer seasons.

“Travel baseball has helped me perfect my skills a lot because I’ve been able to meet a lot of influential people and coaches, and a lot of important people,” Beard said. Beard has been a standout player for his senior year, especially April 8, in which he had five innings pitched and five strikeouts for a 14-1 win over Broad Run.

Through travel baseball, Beard has attended many showcases and tournaments that allowed several college scouts to see him play and has been able to achieve many accolades such as an 81 mph fastball in 2023.

“The recruiting process for me was a little bit stressful, especially with the amount of uncertainty and



*Senior Jack Beard pitches in a game at Riverside on March 11. Beard has recently committed to Marymount University to play Division III baseball. Photo courtesy of @kikocamera via Instagram.*

the level of competition I was surrounded by,” Beard said. Luckily, his travel coaches helped him navigate the process.

Eventually, Marymount University extended him an offer to play Division III baseball.

“I had originally been back and forth with the head coach of Marymount,” Beard said. “But, I am very grateful I have found a home and roster spot for the upcoming years.”

Beard noted the importance of balancing his academic and athletic lives, something he hopes to maintain in college while studying

nursing.

“I do have issues with balancing everything from time to time but I have gotten better at it the more I have worked on it,” Beard said. He mentioned his method, shutting off his phone to prevent distractions.

Staying in the right mindset for a game is important to Beard, doing breathwork and meditation before each game.

“A good mindset is honestly the key to a good game,” Beard said. “If you know your mindset is bad, it’s going to affect everything else that you do.”

Improving each day is something that is important to Beard, even if it means he has to lose to learn.

“I am very competitive, so I am not too happy about a loss,” Beard said. “I will spend a little time thinking about what went wrong and if there was something I had trouble with or failed at. I will make sure to work on whatever that might be to get better.”

Beard knows that when it comes to sports, you win some and you lose some. “One bad game doesn’t define you as a player, just keep moving forward.” •

## Boys’ tennis causes a racket in the seasonal bracket

*Vivian Lun | Staff Writer*

The boys’ tennis team has been cruising through the season with an overall season score of 11-5. Similarly, they boast a 5-2 record within our district, which includes John Champe, Woodgrove, Park View, and Broad Run, all of which are strong contenders. Our boys’ tennis team will be hosting the Woodgrove District Semi-finals home match thanks to their strong record against them.

It wasn’t just physical skill that got the team to where they are now, however; the team had to have immense mental strength as well. When the team was down 1-4 against Woodgrove, freshman **Tyler Partlow** pushed through the pressure as the last singles’ match on the court and won back his match when he was down 1-5. “I was just thinking, this is a big match, I got to win this,” said Partlow. Partlow went

on to win his match 9-7, contributing immensely to the team’s overall win against Woodgrove that day.

The wins don’t stop there. Freshman **Tyler Colavita**, ranked number 8 on the team, showed that despite being new to the team, he certainly wasn’t new to tennis. In his match against John Champe, Colavita fought to bring home an 8-5 win for the team. “I had pretty long rallies with kids that were pretty good,” Colavita said. Yet despite the team’s wins, they definitely aren’t getting complacent. They practice every day, even when the coach can’t make it. Colavita has an improvement plan for future matches: “Groundstrokes. Serves. Power. Topspin,” Colavita said.

Yet the strength the team possesses comes from their close bonds and ability to keep the sport lighthearted. “We always have a good time, always joking



*Team captain Jinu Manalel prepares to serve at a home match. Manalel is on the tennis team alongside Tyler Partlow, Tyler Colavita and Aidan Armistead, who have all contributed to the team’s strong record. Photo courtesy of @kikocamera on Instagram.*

while we’re playing,” Partlow said. The fun they had during games and practice also translated into mutual hard work. “I love having a place to practice, and the people,” Colavita said.

Colavita recognized two teammates for their efforts this season: sophomore and number 1 on the team **Aiden Armistead**, as well as senior and team captain **Jinu Manalel**. •



# Crew coaches foster mental strength and teamwork despite “challenging” season

Evelyn Kuzminski | Editor-in-Chief

“There is no easy way to describe rowing,” crew coach **Alex Miller** said. “It just isn’t normal, but for those who do it, there is nothing better.”

The crew team has faced a unique and challenging season this year. Winds, rains, storms, floods, and freezing temperatures have kept the rowers off the water for longer than they would have liked, getting in the way of both practices and races, “but this team is persevering through them,” head coach **Eric Simmons** said.

“We are further ahead than I thought we would be despite all of the environmental hazards,” Miller said.

In spite of adverse conditions, the team is making strides of progress. They give a lot of attention to the basics, then use those fundamentals as a jumping off point to refine their stroke technique, boat speed, physical fitness, and racing strategy.

“Rowing is a sport that is very easy to learn but incredibly difficult to master,” Miller said, comparing the team’s progress to riding a bike without the training wheels.

“Every practice we are aiming to get at least 1% better,” Simmons said. The team had a goal this season of practicing more frequently and racing earlier in the season. Although the weather has made that difficult at times, both coaches described improvement in the team.

“This season, we’re keeping things simple: train hard, race smart, and have fun doing it,” Simmons said. “It’s all about enjoying the journey while striving for our best performance when it counts.”

In addition to technical, physical, and organizational goals this summer, Simmons also mentioned his hopes for the program in the future. He aims to “cultivate a culture of excellence and inclusivity,” while also “making LCHS Crew a name that can shake things up on the race-course.”

Miller added hopes of growing the program in future years, add-

ing that the team already has such a small roster that if a single rower is absent, the women’s team can’t race at all. But growing the program goes beyond the small school team. The coaches hope to draw more rowers in and be a part of developing more competition in the sport across northern Virginia. Miller also emphasized a value of sportsmanship that he wants the team to continue to embody.

“We are all striving for greatness, and that greatness doesn’t come from tearing down others, but from building each other up so that we are all better for it,” Miller said. “I want the team to be a shining example of what it means to be a student-athlete.”

Crew is a vehicle for some of that greatness for the rowers, a way for them to excel in both performance and sportsmanship. “This team is on a mission to elevate the status of rowing at LCHS and to represent our community well,” Simmons said.

The team receives tremendous support in this mission from both Simmons and Miller. Simmons has been with the team for two seasons now, serving as an assistant coach last year and taking on the role of head coach this year. This is Miller’s first year with the team. Both emphasized the “multifaceted” nature of their jobs as coaches.

“The role of ‘coach’ isn’t just something one can shove into a box,” Miller said. “Some coaches can even rise to the level of a life-long mentor, long after the athlete has moved away. Those are some pretty large shoes to fill.”

Beyond teaching technique and strategy specific to rowing, the coaches support and motivate the athletes in a number of ways, “helping them navigate not just the waters of the sport but also life as a student,” as Simmons put it.

A sport dating centuries back, crew is physically taxing, demanding both muscular strength and endurance. Rowing is a full body workout, engaging muscle groups throughout your body and requiring a wide range of motion yet precise move-



*Junior Natalie Schoch, senior Emma Pearson, sophomore Rebeca Manson, and sophomore Kate dePrado row during a crew practice as sophomore Abrielle Giamporcaro serves as coxswain. The crew team has been kept off the water for much of the season due to weather, but has still become a very cohesive group and made much progress. Photo courtesy of Emma Pearson.*

ment.

“I once had a coach who said that a rower needs the brute strength and athleticism of a football player and the fine motor skills and timing of a ballerina,” Miller said. “A single race takes the physical toll of a 90 minute basketball game, but does it in eight minutes.”

The most important characteristic of a rower, however, is not their athletic ability, Miller said. It’s their mental toughness. “There are no breaks, no time outs, no room for slack in the boat,” he said. “Your body will scream at you to quit, but through the sheer force of will you will continue on, because your teammates are counting on you and the thought of letting them down is unthinkable.”

Teamwork is the heart of crew, the coaches say. It’s unavoidable, with rowers sitting inches in front of and behind one another, but it’s also essential. It takes a team to row a boat and win a race, not a single athlete.

“Crew is the ultimate team sport,” Simmons said. “Every single little thing you do in a boat can directly impact all the other rowers in the same boat.”

The magnitude of one rower’s impact fosters discipline and resilience that the athletes can apply to other areas of their lives, from academics to personal growth to future opportunities. The coaches’ emphasis on teamwork is complemented by their shared experience on a crew team, rowing multiple seasons with each other in high school. Miller continued to row throughout college, while Simmons returned to the sport later as a coach.

Despite being a small team, the athletes are a tight-knit group that their coaches described as “cohesive” and “dedicated.” They are in relentless pursuit of the same goal, cooperating and coordinating their way to success on the water. Regardless of their different experience levels or backgrounds, they are “united by their passion for rowing,” Simmons said, and continuously push each other to improve.

Rowers face challenge after challenge, ranging from physical to mental and from technical to environmental. But by nature of the sport, they always face them as a team, win or lose.

“The best part is that you’re never doing it alone,” Miller said. “No one struggles alone, no one succeeds alone.” •

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# STUDENT LIFE

## A night in downtown: Showcasing Leesburg's top spots for books, sandwiches, and plants

*Sophia Casciano | Staff Writer*  
*Taylor Helfer | Managing Editor*

Downtown Leesburg is known for its picturesque old town feel, offering restaurants, cafés, bars, breweries, and entertainment. As the weather gets warmer, the tight streets flood with people searching for activities on their night out. Here are three options we recently visited.

### ***SOUTH STREET UNDER-9.5/10***

**Overview:** Located right under the Tuscarora (Tuskie's) Mill Restaurant, and owned by Tuskie's, South Street Under serves deli items as well as breakfast sandwiches and baked goods. With plentiful outdoor seating and a homey feel, South Street Under is the perfect spot to grab a small bite to eat. Open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Atmosphere:** The decoration of South Street Under created a homey atmosphere to enjoy with a small group of people. The interior of the place is small, so we'd suggest sitting outdoors if possible. We sat indoors. While ordering, the workers were friendly and well-mannered, creating a judgment-free atmosphere.

**Order:** After looking at the extensive menu, we decided on a BBBLT (\$10) and a ham and swiss sandwich on ciabatta (\$9.25). The BBBLT is marketed as a normal BLT sandwich with three times as much bacon while the ham and swiss is a traditional sandwich which can be served hot or cold. For the amount we had gotten for both sandwiches, we agreed the prices were reasonable.

#### **Taste: BBLT**

With the amount of bacon added on to my go-to sandwich, I was immediately interested in the BBLT. The bacon was especially crunchy and greasy, too much grease that it was constantly dripping all over my paper, causing a mess. The tomato and lettuce were both crisp and fresh, but further allowed the bacon to stand out. If you are an avid BLT lover, this dish will change your life. Overall, I think that this was enough food for a small after school snack, but I would recommend grabbing a bag of chips or another item if needed.

#### **Taste: Ham and Swiss**

South Street Under turns this classic into a staple. The first bite of this steaming sandwich you are immediately greeted with the flavorful juicy ham accompanied by the creamy melted swiss cheese, pulled together by the locally famous ciabatta bread which is the true MVP of this sandwich. The crisp edges of this bread and salted finish enhances this sandwich's texture and flavor significantly. This sandwich's many layers

of thin ham slices and creamy cheese is very filling and will hold you over for some time, possibly even leaving you with leftovers for later. I would definitely recommend this if you are in the mood for something savory.

### ***BIRCH TREE BOOK STORE/FOLIAGE PLANT SHOP - 9/10***

**Overview:** Located right next to the parking garage with signage to point you towards the door, Birch Tree Bookstore is a unique bookstore with both a variety of selections and garden items including pots, plants, totes, and knickknacks. Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day except Sunday.

**Vibe:** Walking into the bookstore, you are immediately surrounded by shelves home to books ranging every genre you could imagine. The almost intimidating walk-in area is quickly settled by comfy chairs and subtle lighting. Plants surround the books, giving you a sneak peek at what the back of the store has to offer: plants hanging from the ceiling and shelves of fun potted plants, just like the books. In the back of the store, next to the plant area, is an area dedicated to local artists and small businesses displaying their products throughout the room. Overall, the vibe of this store is superior, with a perfect mix of books and other inventory while maintaining a calm vibe.

**Inventory:** From murder mystery books to succulents galore, the independent bookstore supports nonprofits and local artists. Many of the knickknacks were handmade and the prints were made by artists from Leesburg, which is a standout quality to us both. In addition, there is a large variety of books from young adults to childrens, as well as a large variety of real plants, pots, and garden-related items for purchase. The only negative factor would be the price of all items.

**Service:** When walking into the store, we were greeted by a friendly hello by the store employees. Those working were very friendly and happy to help with any questions we could've had and made sure to check up on us regularly.

### ***GRUTOS- 9/10***

**Overview:** Gruto's is a small ice cream shop located in the heart of downtown Leesburg next to the corner of South King Street. The shop is known for its iconic phrase "see you tomorrow" and the vast selection of soft serve flavors, toppings, and even a treat for your furry friends. Open Monday to Thursday from noon until 9 p.m., closing at 10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and open Sunday from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m. This is a great spot to grab soft serve before you walk the



*Several books fill the shelves and tables at the front of the Birch Bookstore. Further back into the building, more book genres are available as well as several plants or knickknacks for purchase. Photo by Sophia Casciano.*

streets.

**Atmosphere:** Gruto's fits the aesthetic of a family-owned ice cream shop with pictures of the owner's family and employees posted for customers to see. With colorful walls and select seats inside, space inside is tight so luckily orders come out quick and there is outdoor seating behind the building. The staff is very kind and quick to say "see you tomorrow" before you leave, creating a friendly environment.

**Order:** After taking a look over all of the different combinations, we landed on a small Black Raspberry/Vanilla Twist in a cone with rainbow sprinkles (\$5.96) and a small banana/chocolate twist in a cup (\$5.19). The only other available twist option was a classic vanilla/chocolate twist.

#### **Taste: Black Raspberry/ Vanilla Twist Cone with Sprinkles**

My go-to ice cream order always has to include a cone and rainbow sprinkles. I was intrigued by the flavor twist of vanilla and black raspberry. My doubts sure set in thinking that this order would be very chaotic, but it quickly proved me

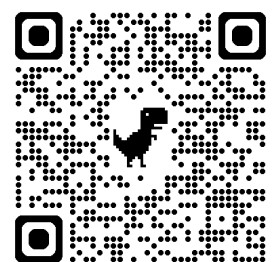
wrong. The sweet creamy vanilla melted perfectly together with the raspberry. The rainbow sprinkles are always a great touch to an ice cream in a classic cake cone. The small size was fairly larger than expected; the ratio between ice cream to cone most definitely leaned towards ice cream, which definitely tests your commitment to a drip free cone. Overall, I think that this order was a perfect combination to experience what Gruto's has to offer and is a very reasonable price.

#### **Taste: Banana/ Chocolate Twist In a Cup**

For the past few years, my go-to Gruto's order has always been banana and chocolate. Like usual, I got a small in a cup, and in my opinion, it is the perfect size. The taste was sweet, full of flavor, and the banana tasted exactly like the fruit itself. With the mix of chocolate, this ice cream was a perfect way to finish off my night in downtown. My only suggestion for those who like to spice things up would be to add your favorite topping. But for me, this iconic duo will never fail. •

## Food trends over the decades

What's your favorite food?  
**Vivian Lun** examines food trends over the decades, from the rise of fast food to TV dinners, to space food, chips, and health trends.





# Senior handprints and mural commemorate 70th graduating class

Evelyn Kuzminski | Editor-in-Chief

The class of 2024 has left their mark on Loudoun County High School—literally. Over the last few weeks, drop cloths, ladders, and paint buckets have been stationed in the cafeteria hallway, and seniors have stamped their handprints onto an interior wall. The colorful prints are swirled into a pattern designed by SCA communications director **Lindsey Johansen**, and mark one of the last acts of the graduating seniors.

“I really liked the spiral idea,” Johansen said. “I just looked up ‘70s themed things and slowly added pieces to it.”

As both an art student and SCA member, Johansen is in charge of the senior mural and handprints this year, and worked on the project during Captains Outreach. She expects to work on the project for five or six hours a day and finish in eight or nine days, well in time for graduation.

In past years, these two traditional senior artworks have been separate, but this year they will be combined. The handprints will be embellished with more ‘70s disco themed elements to make the whole mural, SCA president **Madison Ruff** said. The class of 2024 is the school’s 70th graduating class, and many celebrations are centered around the milestone.

The handprint mural is located on the wall facing the cafeteria, which previously was covered with the Visions of Leesburg mural, painted in 2016. The decision to cover the old artwork came with permission from principal **Michelle Luttrell**, Ruff said.

“We wanted it to be somewhere visible and a bunch of the empty walls were in more secluded areas,” Ruff said. “Or in inconvenient places painting wise.”

Some students this year, however, are disappointed by the decision to paint over the Visions mural. “That’s the saddest thing,” senior **Isabella Villanueva** said. “I just don’t really see the point in covering up something from past students. That was



*Lindsey Johansen, Maddy Durot, and Anee Cassidy (left to right) work on the senior mural. Along with Camila Rios, these seniors completed the 70s-themed mural for their Outreach project. Photo by Taylor Helfer.*

their work, that’s not fair to them.” Other seniors have felt let down by the lack of individuality permitted in the mural. Senior **Katherine Garvey** sees senior handprints as “a representation of the individuals,” and says she has been planning hers for years.

“You can even look at it as the idea of a fingerprint of something like that. It’s an individual person,” Garvey said. But with the cohesive design of the handprint mural this year, Garvey says, it feels “completely depersonalized.”

In the past, students have sometimes been able to use multiple colors for their handprint, paint a simple design on their hand before leaving the print, or put their print next to people special to them. All handprints this year are one of six solid colors (red, orange, yellow, and three shades of turquoise blue). Handprints are put in a certain section of the mural depending on their color, so while students may have some choice, they

don’t have total freedom in designing or placing their print.

“There is nothing about it that is mine,” Garvey said. “It’s very frustrating to be thinking, ‘how am I going to show my mark left on the school when now my mark looks like every single other person’s in my grade?’ It doesn’t mean the same thing anymore.”

SCA members have received a variety of feedback on the handprints this year, and while they acknowledge and are empathetic to the differing opinions, they stand by their decisions and vision for the mural.

“I have definitely heard different things from seniors,” Johansen said. “Some really like the idea of the theme and outcome. Others didn’t agree with our choice. I have heard some negative comments, but in the end I’m hopeful that everyone will enjoy the mural and like how we are using the handprints as a part of the design.”

Ruff also explained that since the

handprints and mural are integrated this year, the SCA had to be more stringent about how seniors participated and couldn’t give students as much freedom as some perhaps would have liked. She also described the tradition as collective, saying it’s about the class of 2024’s shared mark rather than the mark of each individual.

“I definitely view it as a class, as a whole thing,” Ruff said. “I get where the individual perspective comes from, but at least for this year the handprints are a part of the senior mural, which is why we were stricter, since it had to fit with an overall theme.”

Contentions and disappointments aside, students still find meaning in the tradition and were excited to take part in one of their final milestones before graduation.

“You can see all of the students that went here,” Villanueva said. “It’s really cool to see everybody that’s been here has a place. It’s not like you’re going to be totally forgotten.” •

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# Upperclassmen skip the dance, head elsewhere for pictures

Taylor Helfer | Managing Editor



Seniors Sofia Alzate and Pia Patel hold their bouquets at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. Alzate and Patel did not attend the actual dance at the Dulles Marriott but instead opted to get together with friends in Washington D.C. “Having a night out in D.C. with my friends was much easier to do,” Alzate said. “The cost of a prom ticket was pricey, and going to DC with friends was a much more flexible option.” Photo courtesy of Sophia Casciano.



Sophomore Eli Eastlake and Junior Max Clegg, accompanied by junior Grace Galos and friends, point to each other outside of the Lincoln Memorial. Eastlake originally was not supposed to go to prom festivities due to his age, but later his older friends, like Clegg, invited him to take pictures so he could still be included in the fun. Photo courtesy of Eli Eastlake.



Seniors Zoe Wotherspoon and Antonio Delorie stand together in front of El Centro in Georgetown. Wotherspoon and Delorie opted out of the dance, but instead prioritized spending time together. Photo courtesy of Zoe Wotherspoon.



Senior Brianna Martinez and junior Landon Breedlove pose together at Mele Bistro in Arlington. Martinez could not afford the \$50 prom ticket in addition to dinner and opted for a cost-friendly route: dinner and pictures. Photo courtesy of Brianna Martinez.



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# “Be Kind to Your Mind”

## SOS club hosts event to promote relaxation

Sophia Casciano | Staff Writer



Senior member Madison Ruff relaxes with one of the four service dogs provided by the Heeling House Therapy Dogs. “The event featured community resources, therapy dogs, yard games, chair yoga sessions, and a raffle showcasing locally-owned businesses in Leesburg,” sponsor Heather Rainey said. Photo by Joscelyn Hatem.



Club leaders Pia Patel (left) and Madison Rice (right) welcome guests into the event. School counselor Heather Rainey said that the club is already brainstorming for next year and is excited to make Be Kind to Your Mind an annual event. The SOS (Sources of Strength) club is a national organization that was brought to County by two students: Pia Patel & Madison Rice with the help of Rainey. The two wanted to start a club that could bring awareness to mental health and suicide prevention. “Madison Rice and Pia Patel came to me last year with the goal of starting a club that brought awareness to mental health and suicide prevention,” Rainey said. “We decided to start the Sources of Strength club, a national organization.” Photo by Joscelyn Hatem.



SOS members Diana Schrager (left) and Maura Santelli (right) hang out with guests during the event. The SOS club has had a part in many campaigns and events on top of the Be Kind to Your Mind event. They have run a holiday drive for the Leesburg Shelter House, identified trusted adults within our LCH community, and created the Spread Kindness Like Confetti bulletin board. “We are lucky to have an enthusiastic and committed group of students across all grades who have participated in a variety of campaigns. The students ran two bake sales to prepare for our culminating final event of the year, Be Kind to Your Mind,” Rainey said. Photo by Joscelyn Hatem.



Guests participate in group chair yoga led by Heather Hagaman to help get some relaxation in for the day. Photo by Joscelyn Hatem.



Slater Baggett (left) and Chayton Rhodes (right) play corn toss among all the other yard games that were set up for the event. Photo by Joscelyn Hatem.



# Pride prom unites members of the LGBTQ+ community

Dylan Johnson | Staff Writer

LCPS’s third annual pride prom took place on May 4 in the LCHS gym and included music, dancing, food, creative spaces and more. The event was hosted by the Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) and was a fundraiser for the True Colors United nonprofit organization.

“There was a need to have an event where students can be safe and comfortable presenting themselves and their interest in who they truly are and sharing who they truly are as people,” GSA Faculty Sponsor, **Caitlin McAteer** said. “I think what we are losing is opportunities to celebrate together as a community. There is a lot more just living online instead of in groups. Our students are doubly cloistered in that way, so they are closed off from the world because they feel like they can’t be themselves here at school. Then they are online where their community is but they don’t get to see each other in person all that often, most of the time they are just online through Discord.”

Though sponsored by our school, the event was open to students across the county. “We learned through COVID-19 that humans need to be with each other in person,” McAteer said, noting that this event “gives people a chance to see people going through the same experiences that if I am as a student who is queer or trans,



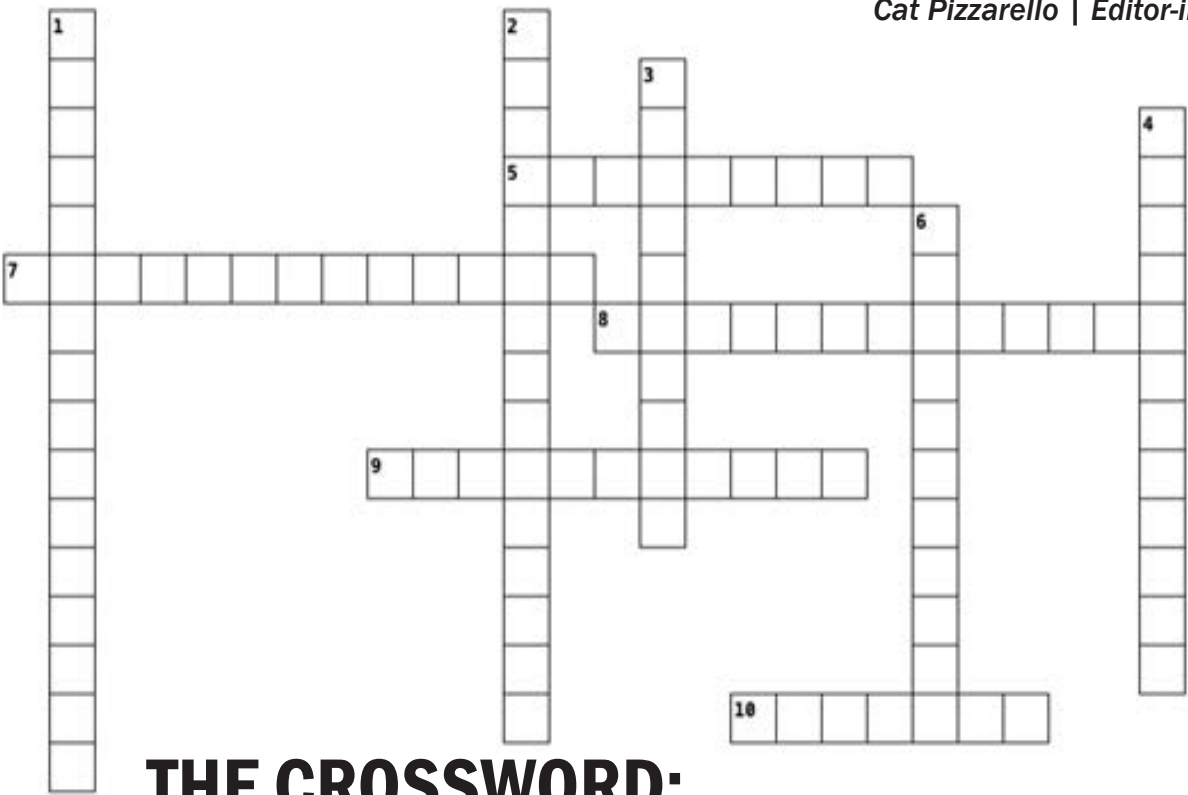
Senior and GSA member Sydney Bourgeois stands next to the Pride Progress Flag. The Pride Prom took place on May 4 and was a place for those attending to be themselves around those in similar circumstances. Photo courtesy of Caitlin McAteer.

I don’t feel quite so alone. It can get very lonely.” According to McAteer, there is a need for events like this, as LCHS’s pride prom is the only one within LCPS at the moment. “At this time I don’t think there are any other pride proms at any other high schools. I’ve gotten a heads up from administration that they would like to be consistently the home of the official LCPS pride

prom. If anyone else wants to start one, have at it, I think there should be one at every school if they want to do that.” Numbers have gone down since the past pride proms, but this year’s event went well nonetheless. “Dances are a big thing to take on and we didn’t prepare quite as well as we could have,” junior and GSA co-president **Caroline Miley** said. “All things considered, everything turned

out wonderfully. I would have liked to have more attendees and get the word out more next time, but I’m happy with how it turned out. I think that everyone who did attend had a great time.” “I had a great time dancing, there were refreshments and all that, people were great,” Miley said. “It was great to meet new people and socialize a little. I’d say it was a safe environment but also fun.” •

Cat Pizzarello | Editor-in-Chief



## THE CROSSWORD: 70th anniversary edition

Down

- 1. What year did the tradition of senior handprints start?
- 2. In what year was the ROTC program added to Loudoun County?
- 3. In 2006, a car was parked inside the school by Ms. Toni Rader. What type of car was it?
- 4. Who was the first principal of Loudoun County?
- 6. What president visited the school in 2012?

Across

- 5. How many state titles has Loudoun County had? (also the name of a Taylor Swift song!)
- 7. What is the name of the all-black school neighboring Loudoun County from 1941 -1968?
- 8. Who was the first person to be nominated into the sports hall of fame?
- 9. What teacher has been here for 43 years?
- 10. Before renovations, where was the gymnasium originally?

The first five people to solve the crossword and bring it to room 203 will earn a prize!



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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## The 2024 Principal's Art Gallery winner: Isabella Villanueva



*Sofia Hernandez | Staff Writer*

From her humble beginnings of a childhood hobby to being art gallery winner, **Isabella Villanueva's** brushwork has shown that any accomplishment comes from simply doing what one loves.

"I've loved art for as long as I can remember," Villanueva said. "It's been a hobby of mine since preschool. Ever since I was a really young kid I would get art supplies for birthdays and Christmas."

The Principal's Art Gallery is a permanent art display where one student's artwork is chosen by the principal to be showcased for future generations to enjoy. Villanueva's piece, "Trevi Fountain," was recently chosen as this year's selection. Vil-

lanueva said she chose the piece to showcase her technical skills but chose the subject because her mother likes the fountain.

"It's an honor to be chosen for this gallery," Villanueva said. "I hope that future students enjoy my work as much as I do." Villanueva fell in love with art from an early age, her love for art was encouraged by her loved ones, and her journey was paved by pure content. This win is an honor to Villanueva and a celebration of what started off as something simple turning into something meaningful and special. "It felt surreal because honestly I've never thought of my art as something that could really win anything. I am super thankful for the opportunity to showcase my artwork for future generations." •

*Isabella Villanueva poses with her artwork for the official announcement via X, which reads, "Isabella's piece "Trevi Fountain" was selected as the 2024 Principal's Art Gallery winner. The artwork will be framed and displayed for future generations to enjoy in the main hallway." Photo courtesy of @LCHS1954 via X.*

## Senior art show displays the creativity of the 2024 class

*Brianna Martinez | Staff Writer*

Curated by art teachers **Kyla Jenkins** and **Stephanie Woshner**, the annual senior art show displayed pieces from every senior in the art program who is seasoned with at least three years of art experience. "This was a unique group as their first year with me was all virtual, then their second year was our hybrid year," Jenkins said. "So the first time they had a "regular" art class was as juniors. The amount of talent and dedication they displayed was really inspiring." In addition to those pictured, the show included work from **Shelby Aquilina, Kai Arcano, Chloe Beal, Ava Bendekovic, Kaya Bliss, Amanda Bush, Aya Hamandi, Caydn Harris, Iggy Kandill, Maya Kunzelman, Erin Lavery, Bean Montgomery, Maritza Rodriguez, Avila Finn Roscoe, Aliza Salgado Vaquedano, Olly Serway, Alexa Soto, and Isabella Villanueva.** All photos by Brianna Martinez. •



*Emma Janusko: "It made me feel so accomplished to be able to see how much I've improved and all the progress I've made over the past four years." Janusko plans to continue her education at Virginia Tech as a biomedical engineering major.*



*Katherine Garvey: "I've always been doing art, my mom is an art teacher, so what else would I be doing?" Garvey said with a laugh. "It feels really good to be here, my art looks much better hung up than in a bag sitting on my floor!" The AP Art student plans to get her BFA and teaching license at JMU.*



*Jo Paz: "I grew up drawing with my older sister having a big influence on me, so I followed in her footsteps a bit and I'm really into it now." Paz is in Art III this year and plans to major in Graphic Design at VCU.*



*Lindsey Johansen: "I liked having my art for display because I want people to be able to enjoy art." Johansen plans to become a doctor at St. Lawrence University and shares advice for future LCHS art students: "Just have fun and keep doing art because it helps to round yourself and stay less stressed."*



# Shining a light on senior Sela Campbell’s music career



Karan Singh | Business Manager

As senior **Sela Campbell** enters the American Idol audition room, judges **Katy Perry**, **Lionel Richie**, and **Luke Bryan** are seated in front of her, waiting to hear her sing. Sela begins strumming her guitar for her performance of “Tin Man” by **Miranda Lambert**. By the end of her audition, the judges are impressed.

“I got a yes from all three of them,” Sela said. “Luke Bryan said he liked my Appalachian-like soul, and Katy Perry said she was really impressed by how I carried myself.”

Sela even received a hug from Richie. Her audition in Leesburg, Georgia was a success, and Perry handed her a Golden Ticket that sent her straight to Hollywood.

With **Dolly Parton** as her lifelong inspiration, Sela has been singing all her life. In fact, the first song she learned to play on her guitar was “Jolene.”

Sela started performing at the age

of eight, and has been doing gigs at venues and bars in Loudoun County since eleven.

When one day, a musician by the name of **Todd Brooks** came across a video of Sela singing on Instagram, he invited her to open for his band at one of their gigs.

“I was given the title ‘LOCO Rising Star’ at the concert,” Sela said. The money raised at the gig also went to Sela, which allowed her to buy her first sound system.

With the right materials and supplies, Sela began performing at three hour paid shows at local venues.

“My career shot off,” Sela said. “I was afraid that people would judge me or make fun of me for my passion. It took me a couple of gigs to come out of my shell, but eventually, I gained confidence.”

Senior **Helena Campbell**, Sela’s twin sister, says that Sela has been singing since she can remember.

“She was always singing songs as a kid around the house,” Helena said.



(Left) Senior Sela Campbell sings for the Concert on the Lawn (moved indoors, to the auditorium, due to the weather) on April 12. Photo by Valerie Egger. (Right) Campbell with her Golden Ticket during her appearance on American Idol. Campbell auditioned for American Idol in February. Photo courtesy of Sela Campbell.

“It’s been really fun and interesting to watch as she progresses through her music career, and she starts to accomplish more.”

As she’s flourished into the singer she is today, Sela has further moved along her artistic journey by releasing an original single, titled “One Track Mind,” which came out in February.

“It’s done really well,” Sela said. “It’s gotten thousands of streams.”

Sela also claimed that she is working on more songs and says that “there will be other ones coming, hopefully.”

Earlier this spring, County organized a “Concert on the Lawn,” an event created for students and staff to enjoy and celebrate seventy years since the opening of the school. Sela was asked to perform.

“It was such a cool thing to be a part of such a historic celebration for the school,” Sela said. During her hour-long act, she sang songs like

“Country Roads,” “Wagon Wheel,” and even branched out from her genre to sing “Rolling in the Deep” by **Adele**.

“Just being friends with her, I’ve seen the venues that she goes to are growing. She has more followers and more fans. She’s been playing for bigger crowds,” senior **Charlotte Edmonds** said. Edmonds has been friends with Sela since 2021. “That’s been cool to witness.”

In 2022, Sela won “Best Soloist” in the Loudoun County Battle of the Bands. She was featured on the cover of an issue of the “Get Out Loudoun” magazine, and has also won Best of Loudoun’s “Best Musician” award.

As she continues to grow, Sela plans for the future. She hopes to continue playing music, along with writing and recording songs.

“I hope to do what I love: share my stories with the world through performing my music,” Sela said. •



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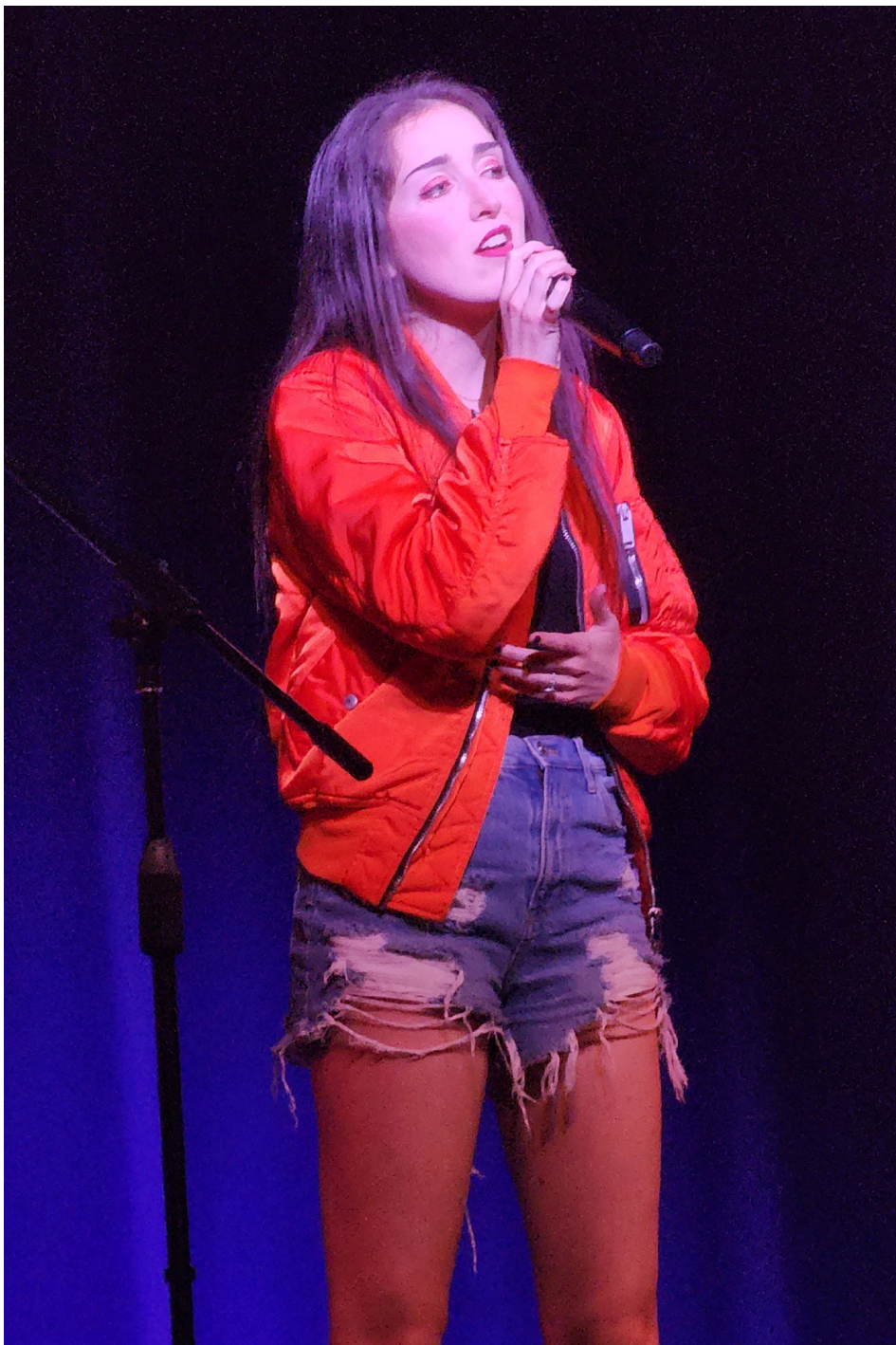


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# Alumna Emma Rowley returns to perform in 70th anniversary celebration concert



*(Above) Emma Rowley performs at the Concert on the Lawn, which was moved indoors due to high winds and low temperatures. As a singer, Rowley usually performs for full crowds in Nashville, but she volunteered to come back to her old high school to perform for the community free of charge. (Below) Counselor Kathie Rowley introduces daughter Emma before her performance. Photos by Valerie Egger.*

Sofia Hernandez | Staff Writer

You’ve probably heard her songs without even realizing it. Her music has been used in a number of advertisements, including MTV and Discovery+. Her voice has also been used for SOLARIA, an English AI singer. Born and raised in Loudoun County, daughter of counselor **Kath-**

**ie Rowley**, Emma Rowley has never given up on her journey of being a singer-songwriter. Her spark started at a young age, and now her dream of being a pop-singer has become a reality. Emma knew from the moment she started talking that she was destined to perform in front of thousands of people. “From a very early age, Emma was singing, dancing, and performing

for family and sometimes she would even charge them so that she could sing for them,” Kathie said. “She’d charge them like 50 cents. She had always loved it. When she was in first grade, she’d perform in talent shows in school, and that’s when we knew she was comfortable on stage and loved an audience.”

Through her dedication and hard work, she has lengthened her skills, working day and night to commit to her craft. Emma’s journey is a true example of hard work pays off, inspiring others to follow their dreams.

“It’s been a rollercoaster ride full of highs and lows, but every knock-down has thickened my skin,” Emma said. “I’ve found that if you aren’t challenging yourself then you aren’t growing. And if you really want something badly enough, there is nothing in this world that could stop you from getting it.”

Emma has been deeply involved in performing arts, from community plays, to singing with the LCHS jazz band, and taking guitar, her biggest achievement being performing in Broadway.

“Performing feels like my superpower and I’ve always felt at home singing in front of an audience,” Emma said. “It’s a very powerful thing to be able to take people on an emotional journey through the course of a performance. I was totally hooked long before I ever set foot on a proper stage because of how hearing music affected me. I wanted to do the same. When watching others, I’d always be thinking to myself, ‘Someday, that’s going to be me.’”

From age 12, Emma and her family would travel back and forth from Virginia to New York. They’d get multiple calls from plays and musicals to go perform and practice in New York. She has performed in “Bye Bye Birdie” and “Gypsy” and sang solo twice in Carnegie Hall.

“I am so fortunate to have gotten to meet and work with so many iconic people during my time in New York,”

Emma said. “I learned an incredible amount from simply observing the talent around me each day. I carry a lot of those experiences with me in my career today. They taught me how to conduct myself professionally on and off stage, how to push myself, believe in myself, and so much more.”

Besides traveling the East Coast, Emma has started traveling the internet, or at least her voice has. SOLARIA is an English AI singer, used for voice databases. Voice databases are used for computers to learn and talk as humans. For example, it can help AI’s like Siri or Alexa to detect when we speak and what we say, so they know what to say back and say it naturally. When people use SOLARIA and they put their lyrics into it, Emma’s voice sings it.

Emma currently resides in Nashville; the heart of country music, where she attended Belmont University, and where she also works as an IT specialist and member of the folk band Every Echo.

In June 2023, Emma released her debut album, titled “Orange,” which is a mix of indie rock and ballads. During the concert, Emma performed a sneak preview of her song “Reunion,” which would be released the following month.

In Emma’s words, the song “Reunion” paints a vivid picture of growing up and growing apart, and Emma empowers listeners to raise their voices with her mantra, “Some people never change. Closure is a losing game. Some bridges are best left in the ash of the past.” Through “Reunion,” bullies and heartbreak’s of years past have officially been cast out.

Reflecting on the meaning behind “Reunion,” Emma said she reflected on her upcoming ten-year high school reunion. “I found myself swapping stories with friends and family. I realized how similar our stories were and it inspired me to start writing. ‘Reunion’ quickly came pouring out. It was a very healing and empowering process.” •



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# Senior staff reflect on their time working for the newspaper

*Karan Singh | Business Manager*

**EVELYN KUZMINSKI**

**Time on staff:** Three years on layout, one year as editor-in-chief.  
**Favorite memory:** The first distribution day this year. We worked so hard to get that paper out. Mrs. Egger was out, and it was Cat and I's first quarter as editors. It kind of felt like we hadn't started senior year until we got an issue out.  
**Favorite aspect:** The opportunity to tell other people's stories in the school community. When we're writing stories, we feature the sports teams and the teachers, and we get to tell a lot of people's stories. What I love about doing layout is that I get to feature our newspaper staff's work.  
**What you learned:** There's a lot more to newspaper than interviewing. Interviewing is not as scary as you think it is. There's just so much more that goes on.  
**Next step:** University of Virginia with a major in cognitive science.

**CAT PIZZARELLO**

**Time on staff:** Three years.  
**Favorite memory:** There are many, many memories, like every single distribution day, although there is a very specific one from last year. I think it was our distribution for the April Fool's Edition. Everyone was down at the athletic entrance and we

were passing out papers and jamming out to the music. It was one of those moments where I was like "I have a little community."  
**What you learned:** Words are powerful. That's something that everyone should know: whether you like writing or not, you can use your voice and your words have meaning.  
**Next step:** Virginia Tech with a major in multimedia journalism.  
**Advice for freshmen:** Don't be scared. There is nothing in this world that should scare you. Everything that you believe scares you is actually just something that's going to make you stronger.

**BRIANNA MARTINEZ**

**Time on staff:** Two years.  
**Favorite memory:** Meeting Taylor and Karan this year. Last year, I didn't have that many friends in the class, and I kept to myself. When I met the people this year, that was a defining moment, and I felt so empowered and happy to be on the staff.  
**Favorite aspect:** Generating ideas off of people and working with the staff as a team, trying to cover topics that are important and that need to be covered, writing articles that answer the questions that people are asking.  
**What you learned:** I'm now a lot more open to making mistakes. If I make a mistake or have to make a bunch of edits, I now know that it's just part of the process. I have grown

to go with it and to learn from it. Learning how to be more patient has been the best part for me.  
**Next step:** Roanoke College with a major in journalism.

**SOPHIA CASCIANO**

**Time on staff:** One year.  
**Favorite aspect:** I like that it's chill and you can choose whatever you like to do. Mrs. Egger is super helpful, and I like that we are a little community.  
**What you learned:** Not everyone is going to want to give you an amazing quote, but you've got to persevere and keep going. I've also learned that I can do a lot more than I think. Switching from creative writing to writing for a newspaper made me feel really confident in my writing.  
**Next step:** Virginia Tech with a major in English.  
**Advice for freshmen:** Give yourself time and grace when joining the newspaper. It's definitely a transition and you're going to get the hang of it, and it's so much fun once you do.

**KAREN MARTINEZ**

**Time on staff:** Two years.  
**Favorite memory:** Probably receiving rewards like donuts and pizza when we print, but also working with the people.  
**What you learned:** It's not the same as writing for English.

**Next step:** I want to join the Army.  
**Advice for freshmen:** High school is way better than middle school. You get more opportunities in high school than you would in middle school, and it's not as bad as people make it.

**VIVIAN LUN**

**Time on staff:** Two semesters.  
**Favorite memory:** Learning how newspapers were preserved from our guest from the library downtown. It was so cool to read newspapers from the Loudoun area that dated as far back as the 1800s.  
**Favorite aspect:** The people! Everybody was so fun and welcoming.  
**What you learned:** I learned that even though it may seem trivial, every event we write about is extremely important as a window for future generations to have a glimpse of what life was like for us. Just like how I learned so much about our past from the old newspapers brought in from the library, the newspapers we write today are equally as important for posterity.  
**Next step:** Carnegie Mellon University with a major in architecture and likely minor in computer science.  
**Advice for freshmen:** Plan out what you'd like to write about before conducting interviews! Use your angle to form your questions, as this will make it a lot easier to get good quotes from someone. •



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# Fashion through the decades at LCHS

Cat Pizzarello & Evelyn Kuzminski | Editors-in-Chief



The ‘50s were full of poodle and pencil skirts, sheath dresses, blouses, kitten heels, and cardigans for the ladies, as well as pearls and short hair for senior portraits. Men’s fashion consisted of collared shirts, sweaters, slacks, and the Rockabilly look, a trending style consisting loosely fit black slacks with white button downs and colored blazers. *Photo courtesy of the 1956 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



The ‘60s transitioned from the modesty of the ‘50s to the flare of the ‘70s. The early part of the decade saw more knee-length skirts, button-downs, crew cuts, and bouffants. In the mid-60s, many artists and bands such as the Beatles and **Bob Dylan** became major style icons, popularizing a more hippie style. *Photo courtesy of the 1964 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



By the ‘70s, hippie fashion was in full swing with tie-dyed fabrics, bell bottom jeans, and long hair. Textured shirts were popular in men’s fashion, while peasant blouses were popular with women. Towards the middle of the decade, more tailored clothes and fitted shirts began replacing the loose, flowy style of the early ‘70s. *Photo courtesy of the 1974 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



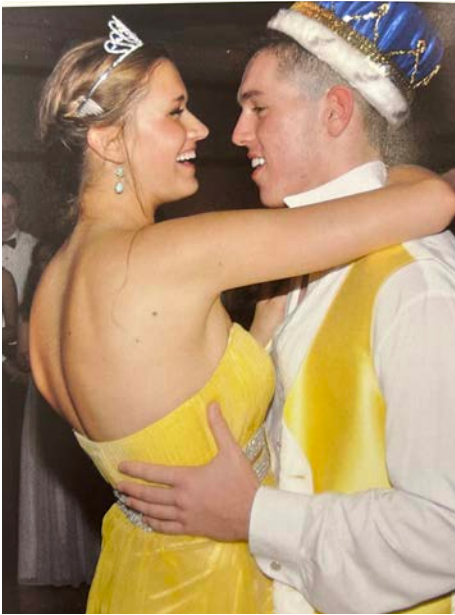
Fitness fashion grew in popularity introducing neon spandex, bodysuits, and fanny packs. The ‘80s also introduced trends of shoulder pads, big hair, polka dot and hawaiian prints, sequins, and high waisted pants. Oversized and eclectic patterns were very popular, as well as clothing trends of leg warmers, fishnets, and corset belts. *Photo courtesy of the 1989 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



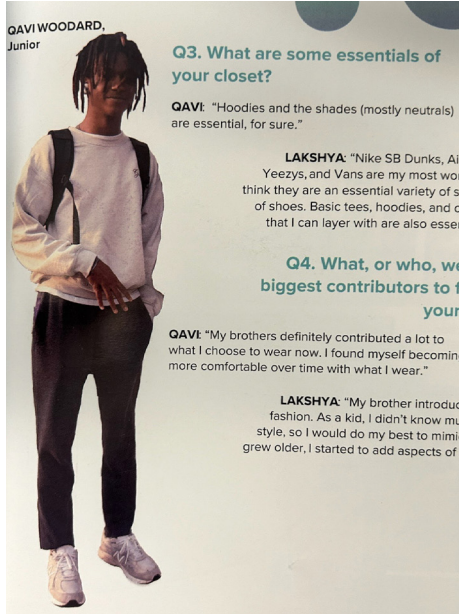
Flannels, horizontal stripes, and lots of denim were the trademarks of ‘90s fashion. The decade also brought a wave of sportswear, including tracksuits, graphic t-shirts, sneakers, and crew socks. Many ‘90s fashion trends are making their comebacks in recent years, perhaps most notably the iconic loose, straight, and baggy styles of jeans, which many teenagers are taking straight out of their parents’ closets. *Photo courtesy of the 1995 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



Y2K and technology had huge effects on 2000s fashion. A variety of looks were in, such as hip hop, street style, emo, scene, and athleisure wear. Generally, bright colors, low-rise jeans, velvet sweat suits, metallic and sparkly articles, leather jackets, graphic t-shirts, micro skirts, and denim everything. The 2000s brought forth the infamous jeans under a dress trend, introduced by young female actors walking the runway. *Photo courtesy of the 2006 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



Jeans had the most developments from the 2000s to the 2010s, such as deconstructed jeans, skinny jeans, and the mom jean. Millennial pink was the color of the decade and jewelry such as chokers, chunky necklaces, and big earrings were in. Uggs and studded heels were worn by many, and ombre hair took over. Skater and grunge fashions were also in as social media started to influence fashion exponentially. *Photo courtesy of the 2015 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*



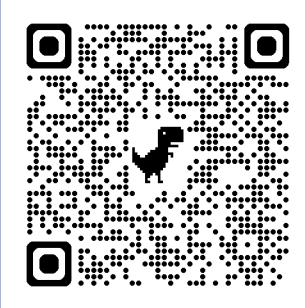
The 2020s have seen an abundance of athleisure, stemming from months of lockdown spent at home in sweatpants rather than in professional dress at work environments. Teenage wardrobes are filled with hoodies, flare leggings, and crop tops. Shoe styles include resurgent trends such as Crocs, Converse, and Uggs, plus plenty of Nikes. Masks were a prevalent wardrobe staple in the early years of the decade as a pandemic necessity, ranging from surgical masks to more fashionable designs. *Photo courtesy of the 2022 Lord Loudoun Yearbook.*

## Listen to a Q&A with LCHS alumni

**Bonnie White Keyes** was a student at Loudoun County from 1958 through 1960 but later transferred to and graduated from Loudoun Valley High School after it was built due to Loudon County being overcrowded at the time.



**Andrea Rakwoski**, student at Loudoun County from 1992 through 1996, takes a look down memory lane to answer some questions and leading to her comparing major aspects of her high school experience to what her children now are experiencing as high schoolers.





# Head librarian preserves school history

Scarlett Ashford | Staff Writer

Flecks of yellowed and withered paper fall onto my hand as I turn the page. Inside *The Loudoun Raider* lies an entirely new world of distinct culture, tradition, and society. I have discovered a true time machine that travels into our school’s history, and I immediately go to head librarian **Patricia Bagdasarian** to share my experience.

Over the course of our school’s 70 years, an accumulation of documents, running from yearbooks to school newspapers, have been stored in order to preserve our school history and heritage. However, as time passes these documents wear with age, and our history becomes seemingly lost.

“I’ve had kids come in and look at them [library documents] over the past couple of years,” Bag-

dasarian said. “Though it didn’t occur to me until you came in that day to have them archived.”

Issues of *The Loudoun Raider*, the former name of our student newspaper, are preserved two bound books made up of school newspapers that were written within the first two decades of the school’s opening, though a third volume, with the years 1960 to 1968 missing. The surviving books give us major insight into how the school culture has changed over the years in matters such as segregation, women’s rights, and school traditions. That first conversation we had shared about *The Loudoun Raiders* inspired Bagdasarian to get them archived. Now it was only a matter of setting the plan into motion.

“I immediately knew that I needed help with figuring out how

to preserve them,” Bagdasarian said.

Bagdasarian decided to call upon the help of the Thomas Balch Library in downtown Leesburg. The Thomas Balch Library is not a typical library filled with books to check out. It is a genealogy library, which focuses on researching and uncovering all aspects of Northern Virginia history.

With the help of Curator of Manuscripts and Archives **Laura Christiansen**, Bagdasarian, along with the newspaper journalism class, was able to learn how to scan the documents in order to archive them digitally.

Along with bringing technology to scan a few pages of our old newspapers, Christiansen brought old photographs from when the school first opened and newspapers from the 19th century, show-

ing the students the sometimes shocking history of our county.

“I was just looking through a newspaper from the 1860s, and I was extremely shocked at seeing a slave ad in print,” senior **Brianna Martinez** said.

“Our instructional facilitator of technology, **[Kayla] Urban**, just bought us the same scanner that Balch has,” Bagdasarian said.

This scanner can now help us continue archiving our school documents, and can be used by departments across the school.

“You might think that we don’t need a copy of this oral program for the Winter 2023 concert, but it may be an important link somewhere down the road,” Bagdasarian said. “I think what I’m realizing and what I want others to know is that there are reasons to keep stuff like that.” •

## ORAL HISTORIES: Listen to real stories of LCHS’s past

For our 70th anniversary, the newspaper staff, under the direction of librarian **Patricia Bagdasarian**, have begun recording interviews with alumni and former employees in order to preserve stories of our school’s history. You can listen to the most recent interviews at the link below.

Former staff member **Barbara Sieren** lets us in on her time as a County teacher from 1986 to 1989. Tune into this episode and learn a bit about our school’s history, funny stories, and great memories from the 80’s!

From student to teacher: how LCHS alumni **Karolyn Whiteley** inspired a whole generation of students, including her own two sons.

Former LCHS theater teacher **John Wells** shares his incredible stories and experiences from decades of teaching. You don’t want to miss what he has to say!

**Elizabeth Scheib**, daughter of renowned superintendent **Edgar Hatrick**, shares her stories from her high school experience at County from 1984 to 1988. Now she has followed in both her parents footsteps and taken a step into the education field, working for LCPS.



# Curtain call: County theater throughout the ages

Scarlett Ashford | Staff Writer

The earliest school records lead us to suppose that our school’s first play was the comedy *The Bishop Misbehaves* with **Billy Kimes** as the lead. The play premiered in 1934 and follows a bishop as he tries to solve a crime that happened near his cathedral. The play was performed not through an elective class, but rather as a senior play, so how has the theater program and the meaning behind theater evolved since then?

Since the times of Ancient Greece, theater has been used as a medium for storytelling and human expression. Over the course of our school’s history, looking back on our theatrical performances can depict cultural changes while also giving us a chance to experience human expression of the time.

“What brought me to pursue

theater was that I really love telling stories,” theater teacher **McGraw** said. “I love being able to connect with people through storytelling.”

The most rudimentary form of history is storytelling, and that’s exactly what theater is. Therefore, theater is a perfect way to analyze past history.

“Theater has a lot of power to influence everybody, and it’s a great teaching tool for the masses,” retired theater teacher **John Wells** said.

Before retiring, Wells worked as a theater teacher for 38 years, and also wrote a play, “Love Lessons,” that was successful in 47 states and that was also done overseas. Looking back at Wells’ experiences as a theater teacher gives us some great insight into how the theater program has developed.

“It started as just an afterschool thing, a place to go,” Wells said. “Early ‘90s, all of a sudden, a lot of kids

who were doing theater took it very seriously. It was more than something to do after school.”

The ‘90s appeared to be the kickoff decade for learning to accept people for who they were, and for many people who didn’t fit into social norms or wanted a way to express themselves, theater presented itself to be a safe haven. To some extent, this is also true for current high school theater students.

“I really enjoy the community,” senior **Cy Starr** said. “It’s a place where you know you can be yourself and everyone else around has the same interests as you, and you could just express all that and have connections in that way that you don’t really get anywhere else.”

Moreover, the theater program can impact the community and the people within it.

“I’ve gotten more confidence that

socially I feel like I’m much more able to talk to people and not feel like I’m doing everything wrong,” Starr said.

Despite the changes, whether it be the plot or props, the original meaning for its existence has still been retained.

“I feel like we’ve become a lot more inclusive and a lot more welcoming and just creating a really positive, fun environment that people can feel like they can hopefully be themselves,” McGraw said. •



Scan here to view a history of school plays at County.