

the loudoun raider

Loudoun County High School's
Quarterly Newspaper

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Leesburg residents Donna Plasmier, Pete Plasmier, and Alaina Plasmier dress up as iconic characters to cheer up neighbors. Photo courtesy of Carrington Summa.



“Heroes ... in all shapes and sizes”

COMMUNITIES AND COVID loudoun comes together

Byron VanEpps | Staff Writer

To put it simply, times are tough right now. Most of us can't go outside, many have lost their jobs, and every high schooler is trying to find a way to spend their time. With everyone stuck inside, many of Loudoun's residents have been feeling down or depressed, but some have been finding ways to help others, or maybe make their day just a little bit brighter.

“I have been amazed and impressed by all the things Leesburg residents have been doing to help our neighbors' who are suffering from the impacts of COVID-19,” said Leesburg Mayor **Kelly Burk**.

“Leesburg is a great town with people who care about others.”

On the town level, over 100 “kindness rocks” were placed around Old Town Leesburg, appearing on monuments such as the statue of **Stanley Caulkins**, a renowned jeweler who passed away in 2018. No one knows who the rocks were created by, only that they were put there to spread cheer during this time of crisis. This small but kind gesture given to the people of Leesburg is one of many ways people have come together to spread joy and positivity to others.

“Examples go from the brightly colored rocks placed around town

with positive messages on them,” said Burk, “to the neighborhood phone call trees, to single neighbors checking on how their neighbors are doing, to the kids that walk around the senior homes knocking on windows with posters with messages of love for the residents, to the government bodies that are working every day to find funds to help businesses survive, to all the residents that are ordering meals online or curbside to help the save the restaurants, to everyone that wears a mask and observes the six-foot rule to protect others and to all the first

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THE LOUDOUN RAIDER

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The Loudoun Raider 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 Loudoun Raider welcomes guest opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Pieces should be no more 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.

FROM THE STAFF

March 12 through the present has been a time of great change. When we got the call early that morning, we didn't realize how much our lives would change in the coming months. At first there was great uncertainty. Learning was put on hold as schools around the world figured out how to teach remotely. Spring break came and went with us sheltering at home.

Our graduates were immediately plagued with thoughts of missing out on their hard earned graduation. For weeks there was no information, no plan, leaving graduates with nothing but worry about the future, so we knew we needed to include some senior perspective. We knew we needed to include the ways COVID-19 was impacting our community and our first responders.

So it is only fitting that our publication changed to fit the global situation. Back in September, we had spoken as a staff about focusing our efforts for the fourth quarter this year into a news magazine in addition to our traditional news issue. We envisioned the news magazine would be something a bit more relevant in the long-term than a traditional black-and-white tabloid-sized paper.

We did end up creating that news magazine, though we could never have imagined the circumstances that would lead us here.

With all the closures, our typical sports and arts/entertainment articles became non-existent. The uncertainty of the phone call on March 12 never left us. As the globe works to reconcile an unprecedented situation, news changes by the day, sometimes by the hour. At time of printing, we are still unsure of what next year will look like. So, when we thought about news, we realized we could not compete in magazine form with ever-updating social media.

Instead, the focus would be on how athletes and artists were spending their time keeping sharp while waiting for society to open. We decided to document the impact the closures, and the coronavirus itself, was having on our community. We imagined students at LCHS decades in the future, wondering what life was like in the "pandemic of 2020," and we imagined our fourth quarter edition, available on the Internet, might help them imagine the historic times we are living in.

As we worked on the issue, the

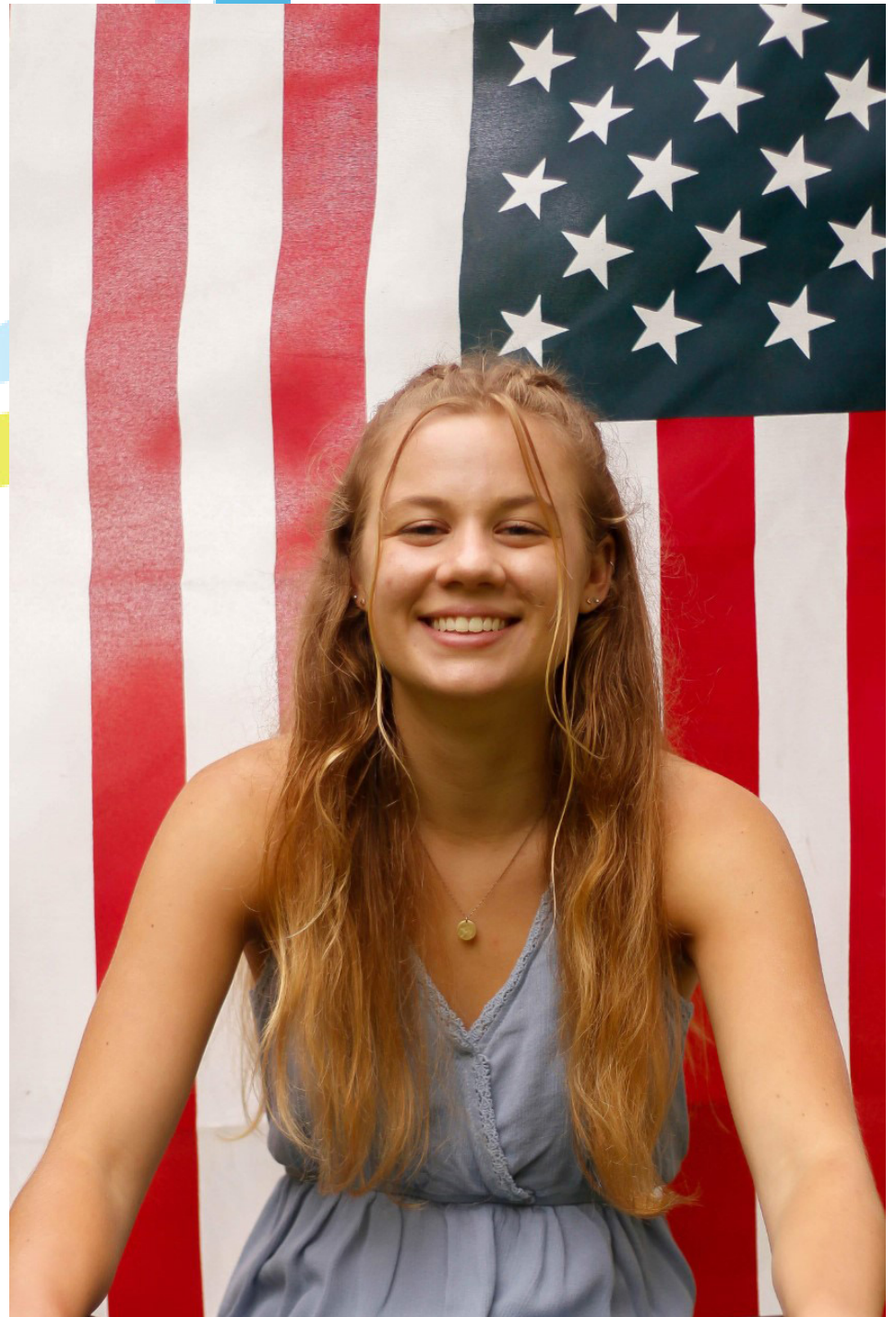
grim world began to look a bit more positive. Seniors in recent weeks have been informed that they will indeed receive a graduation. It will not be orthodox—it is appointment-only, and a small gathering rather than a cheering crowd—but there is no doubt that it will be memorable, something that we are sure can be said of many memories made during these times.

Despite all the uncertainty, there is one thing that doesn't change, and that is the people at the heart of our school and community keeping us together, even when we're apart. And so that has become the focus of the issue. Most of the stories contained in this magazine feature a small sampling of the people in our community and how they have been impacted by the pandemic, how they are working to help us connect, and how they are working to find their own "best" given the current situation.

Even now, as we write this, we don't know what next year's school situation will look like. But we know that behind the uncertainty will always be strong members of our community reaching out to do their best so that we can do ours. •

SENIOR PERSPECTIVE

the generation dedicated to making a difference



Cara Hodge is Editor-in-Chief of The Loudoun Raider. She is a leader in The Fellowship of Christian Athletes club at County and enjoys writing and photography. She plans to attend Northern Virginia Community College in the fall.

Cara Hodge | Editor-in-Chief

Can I be honest with you?

When this whole pandemic started I was excited about it. All I was thinking was that a nice two weeks off school before spring break didn't sound too bad. I was thinking two weeks at the most and the whole thing would blow over and we would all be back to normal life.

Six weeks later I'm sitting in my quiet house, in the middle of what should be a school day, trying to write about the tragedy that my senior year has become.

Tragedy may sound a little dramatic, but for a lot of people that's what it is. Though personally, I wasn't too worried about all the little staples I would miss like prom, a senior prank, my official last day of high school. Those seemed rather miniscule in the light of current circumstances.

Missing the chance to finally walk across that stage, that did bother me. Losing the chance to celebrate with the group of people that I've grown with, suffered with, learned with, and been with the past four years of life has become a silent ringing in the back of my mind.

I try not to think about it too much, about how my class will

never walk through the doors of Loudoun County as students again, about how we'll never shout from the stands and cheer on the County Raiders, we'll never follow the drumline to a pep rally, never eat lunch on the front lawn, never run towards the school at 9:13 trying not to be tardy, but I mostly try not to think about how that season of my life is behind me and there's no getting it back.

It seems ridiculous, almost fanciful, to try and think of the positives that will come out of this pandemic. Though when I sit back and think about all the events that my generation has endured in our lifetimes I can't help but think that we won't just make it through this, but we'll come through it stronger.

We are a generation highly motivated and filled with compassion if only because of the things we have seen and lived through. 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, school shootings—these are all moments that have drastically altered the way society functions whether purposely or subconsciously. We are a generation branded by the world and, in spite of ourselves, it has changed the way we think.

So although we are current-

ly living in a state of tragedy I can't help but think of all the good that could come out of it. We have now become a generation dedicated to the cause of never letting another pandemic consume the world, a generation committed to protecting the country we love, a generation dedicated to helping those caught in a storm, a generation with momentum and motivation dead set on making lasting change.

After the merited mourning period for our senior year and after the debris of this virus is brushed off the world's shoulders, there will be lingering struggle, but there will also be an undeniable foundation for opportunity.

The world may be feeling sorry for us, the seniors that never graduated, but we've made it this far and I like to think we will make it a little farther.

So as a senior, I implore my fellow seniors to not forget the experiences that have shaped our lives but to look at the scars they've left behind and let them serve as reminders of the strength we have and the ability we have been given to move forward with our knowledge and make a difference. •

SENIOR PERSPECTIVE

an unexpected gift

Mackenzie Munn | Managing Editor

A simple trip to Target with my sister to pick up a few items turned into a moment I will never forget. Just as we were about to check out, my phone started going off, around five text messages from friends all came in at once, telling me that the rest of the school year was going to be online.

My mouth dropped and my heart sank into my stomach. It was the last thing I had expected. A sudden and untimely shock is the best way to describe the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

I was one of the ones who believed that there was no way that schools would close down and that my senior year would be over and cut short. Sadly I was wrong and the rest of my senior year was taken away from me in the blink of an eye.

I have always considered myself to be a busy body. I always need to have something to keep me occupied. From school, to work, to extracurriculars, and spending time with friends and family, and that was the way I liked it.

I was at school everyday at 7:00 for NJROTC and stayed at school everyday until 4:00, I didn't get an early release to leave school early like so many seniors, I went to the gym right after school everyday and then

went home to do homework.

On the weekends I worked as a waitress from 7:00 until 3:00 on both Saturdays and Sundays, and my evenings were spent either spending time with my family or doing homework. I never really put time aside for myself.

What I didn't realize, was why I liked living my life that way, constantly having something to do and being constantly on the go. Being in quarantine these past few months has helped me realize everything I was avoiding.

Mental health is a topic that I believe strongly about, but it wasn't something that I often took care of myself. I came to realize that the reason I liked staying so busy was because it prevented me from having to sit down and be alone with my thoughts and confront all of the different feelings and emotions that I had pushed to the side for so long.

This time in quarantine has granted a lot of people with a gift, and that is the gift of self reflection. Many people spend their days going from one thing to the next and never truly giving themselves time to slow down and reflect.

Personally, I struggled with this concept at first. I didn't like the idea of being alone with my thoughts and confronting all of the negative things I was avoiding about my life and about

myself.

However, after going through this reflection little by little, I've rediscovered a lot about myself and have really been trying to focus more on my mental health.

Knowing I'm not alone on this journey has also really helped me realize how important it is to take care of yourself sometimes. Over these past few months I have seen all over social media, whether it be Instagram, Twitter, or Youtube, a lot of other people are taking the time to reflect on themselves just as I am. I've seen many people questioning their career choices, their sexuality, and just their life decisions that got them to where they are today.

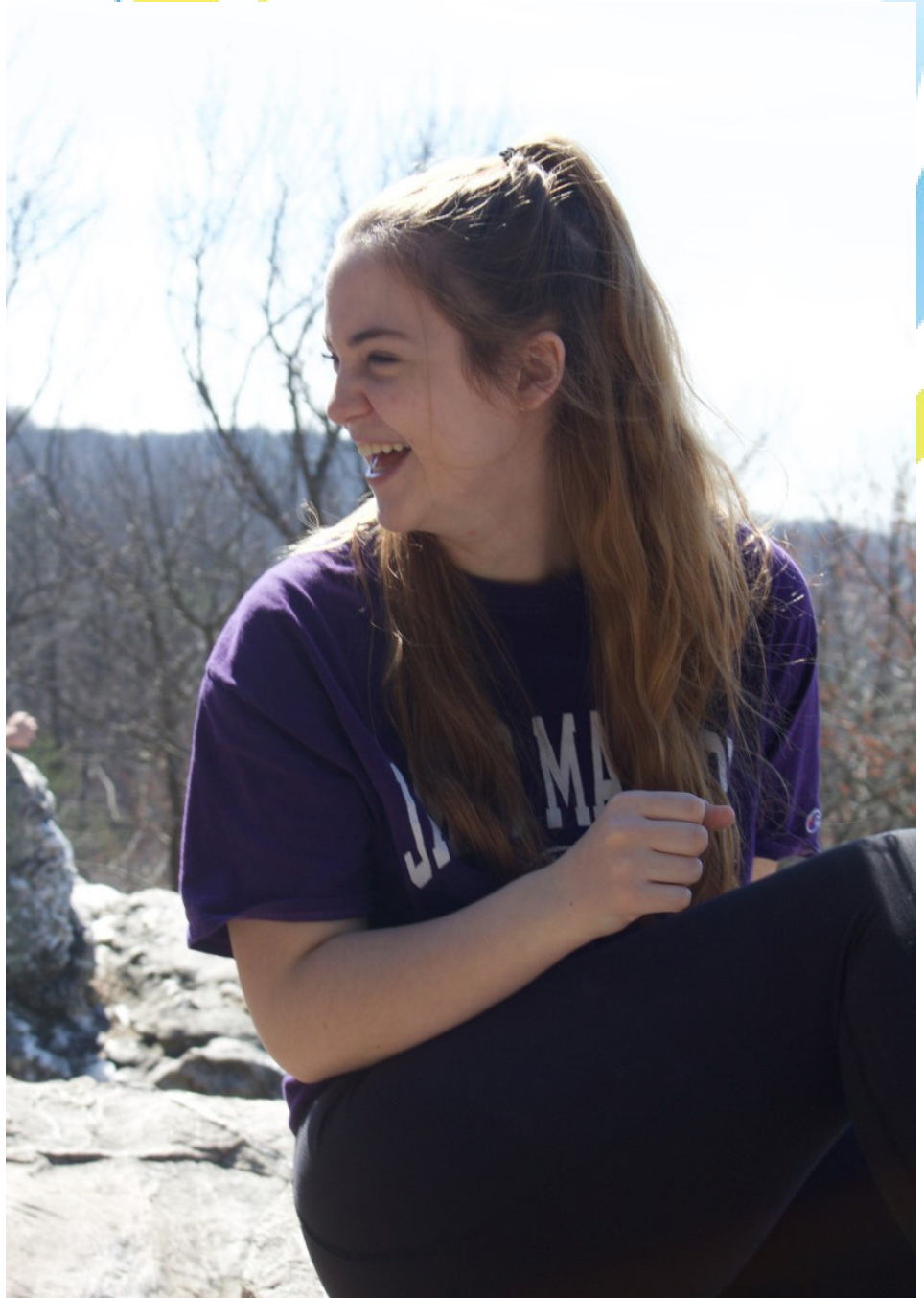
I watched a video recently on Youtube of someone discussing how this situation has really been a positive for a lot of people who are unsure of who they truly are and are now on a healthy path of self discovery. This pandemic has really inspired people to start enjoying the things they forgot they loved again, or discovering new hobbies they had never thought of before.

The COVID-19 breakout gave the people of the country, and many other parts of the world, a chance to slow down and really think about who they truly are, and if they don't like something about themselves or their lives, how they are going to change that.

Everyone keeps mentioning that the class of 2020 will grow from this experience and no one will share the same experience as us. I believe that everyone in quarantine will grow from this experience.

It takes a lot to step back and look at yourself, and analyze the things that you don't like about your life. I believe that people will come out of this experience knowing what they want out of life, what their goals are, whether it be career based, social based, or even health based. I've seen students in the 2020 class post on social media about clothing they've made, or art they've painted, even things students have cooked and baked. I think getting in touch with your inner creativity, whatever outlet it may be, is extremely beneficial to mental health and will hopefully carry on when all of this is over.

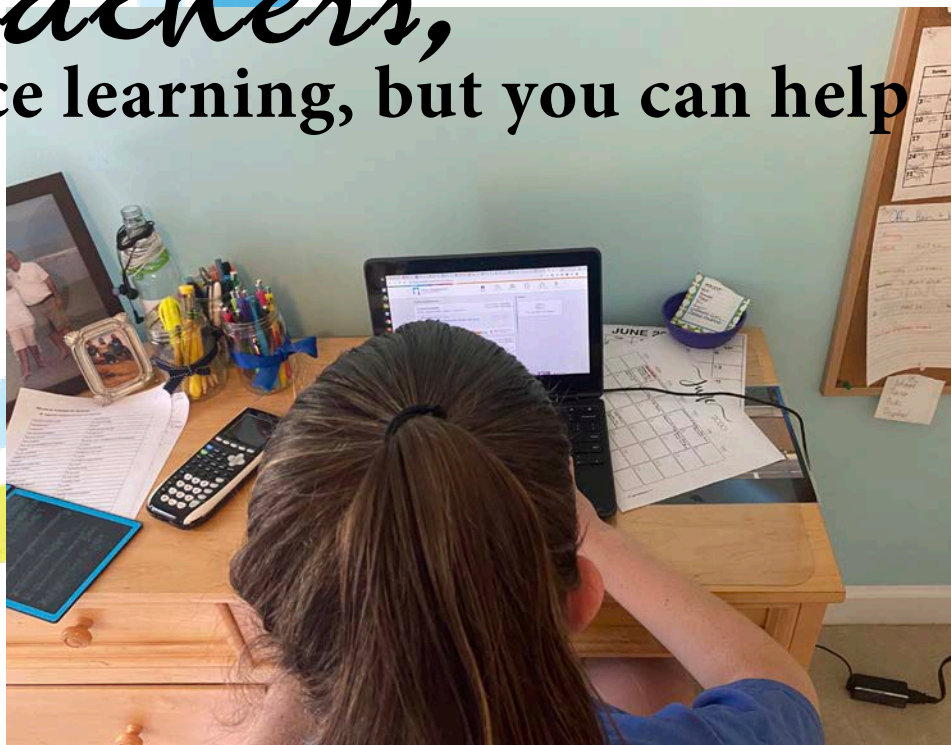
Although we all have been a little bored during this time period, the boredom for many people sparked creativity that they forgot they had. The class of 2020 is unique in the sense that this hasn't happened before, and this experience will stay with us for the rest of our lives. Even though there are definitely downsides to this situation, I think everyone is lucky to have this time to figure out who they are, or figure out the person they want to be.



Mackenzie Munn is the managing editor for The Loudoun Raider. She is also involved in the NJROTC program as a member of their drill team and a member of the English Honor Society. She plans to attend James Madison University in the fall with a major in Media Arts and Design to continue her passion for journalism.

OPINION

Dear Teachers, we hate distance learning, but you can help



Elena Wigglesworth balances online courses, teacher office hours, and personal life during the school closures. Photo courtesy of Elena Wigglesworth.

Elena Wigglesworth | Guest Writer

I like to consider myself a motivated person. I've trained myself to age group triathlon victories, kept straight A's in school, and I've even run my own summer swim lesson business since I was 11. Somehow, that motivation isn't transferring over to my distance learning. I find it exceedingly hard to sit in the silence of my room and force myself to work on assignment after assignment.

I've always liked school, but distance learning, let's just say it's not something I enjoy. I was sure that other students felt the same way, so I decided to reach out. In the absence of being able to interview students face-to-face, I talked to 18 students via iMessage and a post on my Instagram story. In addition, some

of those students, and others, participated in a few polls. While a variety of complaints were divulged, many students shared similar concerns. Below, I have synthesized their opinions.

Months ago, before the threat of Covid-19 was looming, if you had asked a student at LCHS if they wanted to miss three months of school, the chance that they would have said yes, is pretty high. But as we sit at home, wrestling with distractions, and staring silently at our computer screens, we long for the smiling faces and energetic buzz found in the air at school.

Everyday, LCHS students sit down and get to work on their distance learning. Those same students

quickly find themselves frustrated, and confused. As we struggle through our lessons, we juggle feelings of anxiety and we can't help but feel like our anxieties are being ignored by you, our teachers.

Our anxiety is on the rise

As we hear about family and friends contracting the infamous COVID-19, our anxiety levels rise. As you assign us lesson, after project, after reading, our anxiety spikes even higher. While some teachers are assigning manageable amounts of work, others seem to be assigning more work than when we were in school.

An informal poll of 34 students shows that 88% of students feel like

we are being assigned too much work. We are the upstanding and opinionated future of our country, and we would like our opinions on our workload to be considered. At present, there are many things to keep in mind when assigning work, such as the fact that out of a poll of 33 students, 82% said that their distance learning work takes longer than it would if they were in school. We want to learn all of the things that we should be learning in this unexpected time away from school, but we don't want to be overwhelmed, as many of us currently are. It's also important that we feel the work we are being given is meaningful. Currently, 89% of the 36 students who participated in a poll say that they feel like the majority of what we're being assigned is busy work. The best way for teachers to combat all of these issues is by simply talking to their students and modifying projects and assignments accordingly.

We used to love your teaching methods

All year we have been learning from you, our teacher. You have been teaching us the curriculum in your intricately curated way. We're used to it, that's what works for us. Even your "unconventional" methods, we have come to understand and appreciate. We acknowledge that things are different now, but we don't want the methods that you are using to teach us, to be different now too.

Sophomore **Mariam Khan** said over Instagram direct message, "In history, my teacher liked to do activities with us, and now that we have online school, we have no way of doing those because the site we use just requires us to read and answer questions. I find it very bor-

ing and [I] feel like the knowledge won't stick because the teachers aren't there to engage with us."

If you taught us with demonstrations and lectures, then readings and pre-made videos found online are not teaching us in the same way. We are acclimated to your teaching methods and we want to continue using them to learn and excel, even if you have to share them with us over video.

Freshman **Bella Whelchel** remembers a time when math teacher **Matthew Prince** used a dice rolling activity to teach exponential growth. "This really helped show me that it didn't take much at all for a small number to become really big (with exponents), but there is absolutely no way that would have worked as seamlessly over the computer," Whelchel said over text. "If any of my teachers were to have something similar planned for the rest of the year to teach the remaining curriculum, we won't get to experience it."

This is just one example of a teaching method that can't easily be shared, but Whelchel, like many students, hopes that we will still get to partake in intriguing learning opportunities such as the one she talked of above.

Our assignments could be anywhere

As you test out new ways to get content to us, you're both confusing and overwhelming us. We have to search for our assignments on Google Classroom, Edmentum, Nearpod, Flip Grid, in our email, and in our Studentvue messages, among other places. We don't even know when you'll be posting a new assignment. Some teachers post daily, others biweekly, others weekly, and others randomly. If all teachers consistently choose one

platform to post our work on, we will know where to look, and things will be much easier. Additionally, if all teachers post once a week, we will know how many assignments we have to complete that week and we will be able to plan our time more efficiently. This will help us to feel less distressed by our work.

Active communication is the key

Many students, especially hands-on learners, are having trouble adjusting to our new way of learning. The common question between students seems to be, "How do I ask a question?" We're restrained to certain times every week, when we are supposed to be able to expect a quick answer from you via email, that is, if you aren't already busy helping another student.

"The time delay for a teacher to respond to emails when you have a question forces you to switch between classes to stay efficient, making it harder to focus on one topic," freshman **William Long** said over Instagram direct message.

Frequently it seems, our teachers' answers fall short. Corresponding by email simply does not provide the level of clarification we crave as an answer to our questions. The fix to this problem is not uncomplicated, but one solution could be optional meetings on Zoom or Google Meet. These meetings could take the place of "office hours," as they would be a time for teachers to answer student questions. These "face-to-face" meetings could really help students to understand content.

Distance learning certainly poses a wide array of challenges. Yet, distance learning is far from the greatest challenge of the present, and it is certainly something that Raiders can overcome. •

COVID-19

a teacher's perspective



Jamee Robinson | Guest Writer

7:15 a.m. is when I hear the whistle of the kettle on the stove. This signals to me that coffee will occur within five minutes and it is safe to go downstairs. This is definitely one of the few bright spots of quarantine, as a typical school day would start around 5:55 a.m.

I plod downstairs where my husband awaits with my coffee and my newspaper. Yes. A REAL newspaper. Made of dead trees. Prior to school closure, I decided to subscribe to my local paper, both to be supportive of this dying industry and because newspapers make for great garden mulch. I'm glad I did as gardening is one of the view activities I can still participate in. I skim the headlines - as of Saturday, my state of Maryland will be requiring us to wear face masks when patronizing essential businesses. The stock market tanked. Again. I linger over the obituaries, wondering how many may have been affected by COVID-19. Most of them note that services will be held virtually, or at a later date, and I ache for those families.

As I scan the headlines, I think about all of the lost teaching opportunities. As a Government teacher, COVID-19 is bringing together so many teachable themes: the power play between state and local governments; the balance between liberty and order as governors order distancing measures; checks and balances as the various branches of government coordinate a response. As I sip my coffee, I wonder how much of this should I bring into my distance learning lesson plans. These are amazing

opportunities to really show students how government interacts with their lives, but do I really want kids to log into Google Classroom and see assignments surrounding Coronavirus when they may have sick family members at home? When they are maybe sick themselves? When they or their parents may have lost their jobs due to COVID-19? As the teacher of seniors, do I really want to remind them of the reason they have been robbed of their senior year? The caffeine hasn't kicked in yet, and it's too much for me to handle. I decide to attack the crossword puzzle instead.

8:30 means I have to take my dog Jack on the first of his many walks. He is going to be so disappointed come August when the number of his walks decrease. Back for a 9:00 Google Meet. Mass confusion. How will final grades be calculated? How will we celebrate our seniors? What about the kids who are not logging on? I think back to an article I saw in the newspaper this morning that participation in distance learning is disproportionately affecting low-income students. My mind wanders to another article I saw about how California is preparing for the fall. They are considering requiring students to wear masks, having staggered arrival times, a hybrid of distance and conventional learning...Again, too much, but now I'm out of coffee. Fortunately, my Internet goes out and I decide it is a signal that the meeting is over. Living out in the country has its benefits.

My 9th grader plods downstairs, snags a muffin, and heads to go back

upstairs to do her own distance learning. She has been assigned to do An Hour of Code and mumbles that this is evidently elementary material. It is obvious this teacher is filling a void, because this is not even related to the class she is taking. She complains her English teacher is assigning way too much work, most related to current events, which she really doesn't want to think about right now. I hear her. But I will still make her do it. Her real focus is on her AP US History class. Yesterday morning, she spent 3 hours collaborating with her classmates on history notes and has been able to keep up with her grades successfully. And why not? She has supportive parents with stable jobs and plenty of food in the house. I hope she knows how fortunate she is. Again, my mind wanders to the kids I haven't heard from.

10:00 AM. The 4th grader, the true teenager of the household, is still asleep. I think she may be having the worst experience of us all. We live in a small town, a village really, and she doesn't have anyone to play with. There is a playground that we can see from our house, but it is currently cordoned off with caution tape. In between her own distance learning, she has been playing Roblox with her friends constantly. I feel guilty about letting her play so many video games, but it is one of the few ways she can connect with her friends nowadays. And besides, as I type, it is currently snowing. SNOWING. In April. Gah!

I check emails. I sent out emails to approximately 300 parents and

students yesterday, laying out how I am going to proceed with learning for the rest of the year. I have gotten approximately two responses. As I parent myself, I get emails from my daughter's 4th grade teachers that I find wholly confusing. Some are using Google Classroom, while some are just sending random links embedded in emails. I am not sure what is due when. I use her gradebook to keep track of essential assignments, and think about the few emails I have received from students and parents since shutdown. They are mostly about grades. And here, COVID-19 has unveiled yet another systemic problem with our society.

School is not about grades. It's not about whether you got an 88% or a 94%. I'm sorry that we as a society have fed you this lie and perpetuated it. School is one of many gateways towards understanding the world around you. You don't learn Algebra because you might be assaulted by slope-intercept form on the way to work - you learn math to teach you logic and reasoning. You learn English to know how to read various sources to keep yourself intelligently informed and to write to know how to intelligently respond. You learn history to examine and compare current events to historical ones and you learn government to evaluate how well your elected officials can respond to a crisis. You learn science to be able to peer past misinformation and to create solutions. You learn the arts to create ways to communicate your experiences with others and, frankly, to entertain yourself. You learn languages to expand your world beyond your country's borders and you engage in technical education to learn how to build things. You learn physical education to keep yourself healthy and finance and economics to keep yourself fiscally healthy. If there is one



Jamee Robinson finds the “new norm” with a conglomeration of schoolwork, coffee, homeschooling, and puzzles. Photo courtesy of Jamee Robinson

thing I wish we as a society will change when we go “back to normal” it is to deemphasize or even eliminate this emphasis on grades. Teachers should be like coaches - guiding you, watching you perform, giving you feedback; repeat. Because in 20 years, no one is going to remember or care what score you got on your Unit 3 test. What we will care about is whether you have the information you need to navigate your life with the goal of living the best life possible.

I know you are stressed. I'm stressed. Things are fluid. We have to constantly adapt. My work space right now is a dining room table I share with my husband and a partially completed 1000 piece puzzle (which possesses most of this prized real estate). I am distracted by his many conference calls, but this is the best place in the house to get a WiFi signal. Kids stream in and out, asking for food, help with homework, bickering over whose turn it is to feed the chickens. The dog suddenly barks at a neighbor

walking their own pooch. It's hard to concentrate. I may have forgotten to take a shower. The floors are perpetually dirty. The husband quietly mutters something about our toilet paper inventory and suspiciously looks at the children. This is why planning a lesson has gone from taking 2 hours to taking 4 hours. And despite the effort I am putting into paring down my lessons to give students the essential information they need to function in this society, many of my students can't or won't log in to complete them. And frankly...that is just fine by me. If there is anything history teaches us, it's that we will get through this. As a nation and a world, we have survived pandemics and economic downturns before. We will do it again. So do your best with your learning and I will try to do my best with my teaching. But both you and I need to put our mental and physical health first and remember the goal of learning is not that grade, but understanding this world we live in. And we will get there. •

COVID-19

a view from abroad



Nathalia Hardy and dog Finnegan hold an illustration sent by Joseph Witchall and Viva Bahriya, tenth grade students in Doha, Qatar. Like most locations, Qatar is practicing social distancing, with students learning from the safety of home. Photo courtesy of Nathalia Hardy.

Nathalia Hardy | Guest Writer

Almost two years ago, I moved from Leesburg to Doha, Qatar to take a position as a Librarian at a private International Baccalaureate School. Last year, I moved onto The Pearl, a man-made

island in Doha with extensive parks and beautiful ocean views. The Pearl is home to a large expatriate community with many different nationalities, as well as Qatari. Qatar, a peninsula state on the Persian Gulf, has a population of 2.8 million people, 88% of them are foreign nationals. Only 40,000 of those are from the United States.

Early this year, I had watched the situation in Wuhan unfold and began to prepare for restrictions here. I watched the US news as COVID spread there. The images of food shortages and empty shelves, as well as crowds on the beaches, were scary. Here in Qatar, the situation is different, although there are some similarities.

As the virus spread, Qatar's first case was confirmed in late February. The virus gained a foothold through citizens and residents returning to Qatar from other countries. Through extensive testing and quarantines the spread has been limited. As of March 18, the Ministry of Public Health has reported 4,663 positive COVID cases and 7 deaths; over 58,000 people have been tested.

As positive COVID cases were identified, measures were put in place across the country, including the transition to online learning. On Tuesday, March 10, we began online learning. Two days later, the teachers were also requested to prepare to teach from home after spring break. The Senior school where I teach is a one-to-one school. It also serves primarily Qatari students. Families are very supportive of

education, although, like parents in the US, they were not necessarily prepared to take over the job of teaching their own children. Like others elsewhere, we have worked together to create solutions to benefit the students.

For the past three years, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have led a blockade against Qatar. While initially there were food shortages, the government put measures into place to ensure future food security. The blockade did much to strengthen Qatar and its food security. Qatar has a two-year supply of non-perishables, a farm that assures dairy products and a supply of chicken. I have not experienced food shortages or empty shelves.

As time has passed, the Ministry of Public Health has instituted a variety of measures to prevent the spread of the virus. While restaurants here are closed, most are offering delivery. Grocery stores and pharmacies, as well as hospitals, are open. Delivery services and some shops offer delivery as well. Churches and Mosques are closed, as are local parks, beaches and campgrounds. Gatherings are prohibited and reinforced through the use of drones and robots. The robots have an automated message to remind those walking around the marina and beachfronts about the social distancing requirements. The airport still operates for transit through to other places, and there are limited flights out. This is one difference. Not only is the Emir willing to institute measures for public protection, but the public is largely willing to accept them.

As around the world, business here has suffered. People have been laid off or asked to take their annual leave. After maid and cleaning services were discontinued, some unscrupulous business owners stopped paying their salaries and providing food, even though they are under contract to do so. The process through the government and the courts will address these issues. In the meanwhile, the community here is stepping up to provide food. The Pearl Community group is now making food deliveries to support almost 350 individuals affected by business closures. Local restaurants and charities are also providing food. I believe this is happening around the world. Neighbors helping neighbors. Communities coming together.

Personally, I spend a lot of time walking my dog, Finnegan. The weather here is still beautiful, so it is nice to be outside. I purchased an indoor bicycle before the stores closed, to prepare for the summer heat. I help delivering food to those in need. I am also studying Arabic online. Once school ends, I will be creating the school yearbook for distribution in the Fall, inshallah. I also hope to pick up my writing this summer. And of course, there is Netflix and Hulu. I miss my family and friends. I have very fond memories of my time at County, especially this year's seniors, some of whom were my last class there. As we look forward, I know that there will be ongoing changes for our community until a vaccine has been developed. Yet, I remain hopeful that the new normal will come soon. •

AN OPEN LETTER TO STUDENTS

from a high school english teacher



Kathryn Ives | Guest writer

I have been teaching at County for twenty years, and I'm pretty good at it. I don't profess to be amazing, but I think I hold my own at making a class relatively interesting and engaging. I think most of my students leave me having learned; their horizons are broadened and they see my passion for books and the written

word (and cats.)

A few years ago, I had an AP class where one of the boys started keeping track of the strange, funny, and crazy things I would utter. That same boy said I should get a Twitter account because I was so funny. He said many people would follow me. I replied, "No, I would not be funny in print."

Why is this relevant to teaching online during the Covid pandemic, you ask? Here's the thing—I am engaging, in person, in the moment. I am at my best responding to the action in the room. My funny, my "living out loud" personality is all because I have these students (all of you): live, breathing, smiling, pouting, happy, exhausted, sad, excited, nervous, brave, enthusiastic, resistant, churlish or avid, but breathing and responding to me. Without you, teaching is not the same.

Now, my days are spent sending emails, creating hyperdocs (that have suddenly become the panacea of online education), posting said hyperdocs to Google Classroom, praying that the links work (they never do the first time, and luckily, at least one of my students is always kind enough to contact me and tell me that my links don't link), and trying not to lose my mind when I get a new, and frequently contradictory, declaration from my higher ups. More and more directives keep coming. Each time, my colleagues and I roll with it and adjust.

Despite all of the adjusting, the reality for most teachers is that the only email that matters is the one to all of our students/parents asking them to let us know if there are any issues, especially if students have not completed any of the tasks we have posted. Honestly, we just want to know you are okay.

Coming from my deep teacher heart, I don't care if you do my work as long as I know why you aren't doing it. Respond to my email that asked if you are okay and write, "Yes, Ms. Ives, I am good, but I'd rather focus on math." Or "Ms. Ives, I'm just trying to adjust to this new normal where everything that made life fun is suddenly unavailable, so school seems unimportant." Or "Ms. Ives, my family's world has fallen apart, no jobs, no income, worrying about food."

No matter what you tell me, I will understand, and if I can help, I will. I, we, just want you to be

safe. School is a bonus. I check off who has completed work to know they are alive and functioning. I figure if you are doing anything I post, from a survey to a journal, I know you can access the work and your life is functioning enough that you tried.

This was supposed to tell you what it is like from the teacher side. We make work for you because we want you to have it if you want it. We may make too much because we honestly don't have a clue how long it takes to complete an assignment in this new online school world. Tell us!

If we assigned something and it took much longer than the 30 minutes a day, 150 minutes over the course of the week, tell us. We will change it, we will adjust.

We are flying blind and you are our eyes. However, if you do not talk to us (via Google classroom, email, or any other way we have set up to communicate with you), we cannot change course.

Starting in the next few days, many of us will be using Edmentum. It is brand new to us. It is County mandated. It will not feel like us. In its defense it covers the required standards. If you take it seriously, you will learn more. And once again, if it takes longer than we think, tell us.

Finally, I know I speak for many of the teachers when I say this. Teaching online sucks! But it is all we have right now, and we are just trying to follow the directions as we are being given them. You know how you sometimes sit in a class and think, this is such a drag, maybe I can go to the "bathroom" and walk around school for a little while. That's how it is for us these days. But if you check into our online school on a regular basis, even if it is just to do one thing, we will be happier. And if you want to chat with us, we will be ecstatic. We miss you. I miss you.

Ms. Ives •

continued from page 1

responders, the grocery workers, the delivery people, the teachers, and all the people that are doing their jobs to make our lives easier during this very difficult time."

Along with the town of Leesburg, many local neighborhoods have been hosting events that allow members of the community to come together while under quarantine, albeit not in person. Foxridge, a neighborhood located near LCHS, had one family dress up as Santa, the Easter Bunny, and Spongebob and ride around the neighborhood in the back of a truck, honking their horn and waving to all the kids who had been stuck inside since quarantine started. "The

response was amazing," wrote **Donna Plasmier**, who dressed up as the Easter Bunny. "The smiles on the kids' faces, the joy of laughter and excitement, it was much needed, not just by our neighborhood, but our families as well. We had to do something to spread happiness in such a terrible time."

Another resident of Foxridge, **Corrine Harvey**, offered hand-made face masks to anyone in need, as they've now become a precious commodity. "People have been very grateful and friendly—we had fun handing them out and it's been a great way to get to know our neighbors! We just recently moved in," said

Harvey, whose mother created the masks for her to hand out.

"... Heroes come in all shapes and sizes and as Mayor and Leesburg resident, I see the acts of kindness everyday," said Burk. "I know I am lucky to represent this wonderful place called Leesburg."

Loudoun County government has a list of relief funds, human service providers, and food pantries at <https://www.loudoun.gov/5322/COVID-19-Loudoun-Countys-Response>, as well as ways to help others. As Mayor Burk said, heroes come in all shapes and sizes, and you can be a hero to someone in need. Remember, we can do this. Stay safe and stay healthy. •

OPINION

gender and leadership

what we should learn from leadership during covid-19



Moon Jae-in (pictured left), president of South Korea, and Tsai Ing-wen (pictured right), president of Taiwan, have received much praise for their success against the coronavirus. Photo credit: <https://time.com/4749915/south-korea-moon-jae-in-polls-election/> and <https://www.ft.com/content/e69e642a-eb15-11e9-85f4-d00e5018f061>

Paulette Frexias | Guest Writer

Several news outlets, such as Forbes, have called into question the leadership capabilities of men around the world amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Originating in China, the novel coronavirus has spread around the globe, affecting millions and instigating a global recession. Female leaders have been able to tackle both the health and the economic risks the coronavirus poses through their prompt responses to the virus. Female-led countries, despite forming a scant percentage

of the world, have proven to be the most successful in their battle against the virus.

This begs the question: are women better equipped to lead than men?

Forbes argues that female leaders possess many skills that are important to effective leadership that aren't often found in men. While individual personalities and skills vary in specific instances, neuroscientists have found through studies that men and women generally have different skill sets, both of which can be beneficial

or detrimental when it comes to leadership.

For example, cognitive neuroscientists have concluded through studies that when men and women are placed in stress-inducing scenarios women tend to take less risks than men do. Although studies of this nature have been used by news outlets such as The Hill and Forbes among others to explain the success of women's leadership decisions during the pandemic, risk-taking isn't inherently careless or a sign of poor leadership; it all depends on the situation, if the potential risk is worth more or less than the potential benefit in the eyes of a leader, and the overall character of said leader.

Countless other studies have been published highlighting the female collective's repertoire of leadership skills, but in essence, a person's ability to lead can only be attributed to one thing: individuality, not gender or statistics.

Neuroscientist **Shane O'Mara** puts it best saying, "To assume coding by gender reflects some unchanging and immutable underlying biological reality that describes all we need to know about an individual. That such an assumption is a basis for action is simply wrong – and self-evidently so, when you consider the complexity and variation found within, and between, human beings."

Moon Jae-in, president of South Korea, is a prime example of a male leader that has defied negative opinions about male leadership by reacting early and valuing public health above the economy,

unlike his male counterparts.

According to "Foreign Policy," a global magazine, South Korea, once on the path to becoming an epicenter for the coronavirus, was able to diverge from that route by implementing mass diagnostic testing and a contact tracing system to slowly bring the virus to a halt. With a population of 51.64 million as of 2018, has had 10,806 cases with only 255 deaths as of May 6, one of the lowest death rates in the world.

All of this progress was made without instituting a single lockdown order. Through his actions Moon Jae-in successfully accomplished the principal task which behooves any world leader: to protect his people.

Taiwan had been hailed worldwide for its outstanding response. This is thanks to **Tsai Ing-wen**, the first female president of her country. "Foreign Policy" explains that at first news of the arcane Wuhan virus on December 31, Taiwan's government began to take precautions by screening its incoming travelers. This was only the first of its myriad measures it put in place that earned it its status as the country that responded the best.

Tsai Ing-wen was astute in her orders regarding the virus as the country had experience facing the fallacies planted by China's corrupt government during the SARS outbreak in 2003. By virtue of the expeditious measures put in place by Taiwan—including a tracking system for self-quarantined individuals and acceleration of production of medical equipment—it has been able to keep its cases at a

low 439 with only six deaths as of May 6 out of a population of 23.78 million as of 2018.

The responses to the coronavirus by these male and female leaders prove that both male and female leaders are capable of reaching the same level of success, despite their gender. Both countries were able to keep their number of cases low thanks to their prompt responses. Additionally, South Korea and Taiwan's economies are not expected to avoid the "catastrophic slump" most countries will experience, according to The Economist.

Women deserve to be celebrated for their victory against the coronavirus because they have refuted the sexist stereotype that women have no place in positions of power. That doesn't mean we should encourage a new one against men.

The following sources were used in researching this piece:

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FORBIDDEN GHOSTLAND

closures of public spaces create eerie silence during the state lockdown

Elena Wigglesworth | Guest Writer and Photographer



As guidelines rolled out following the governor's executive order, effective March 24, 2020, the signs went up. Closed. Keep Out. Caution. As people stayed home, places once heavily populated became—well, a ghostland. "I was super upset about the pool being closed," said freshman Olivia DeWan. "I love spending time there with my friends and now I won't be able to."

Above: caution tape criss-crosses the gate door of a local tennis court, warning residents to keep out. **Right:** The We&OD Trail has signs with pandemic specific safety guidelines posted along it. On this particular day (April 6, 2020) no one seemed to be on the trail, a rarity.





Above, Left: A sign posted on the pillar of a neighborhood gazebo reads, “Keep Out.” This is just one of many amenities that has been closed due to the pandemic. Signs such as this one are in frequent use, as people try to help convince others to stay home. *Above, Center:* Tables are stacked and a sign is posted at the Tuscarora Creek Park Pavilion. Pavilions and picnic areas have also been shut down. *Above, Right:* This pool sits full of water and ready for summer, despite the nonexistent opening date.



Left top: Mushrooms and another small plants have begun growing in the mulch at a currently unused playground. With far fewer people venturing outdoors, nature has begun to creep back into some places.

Left bottom: An after school and summer time respite for kids, this neighborhood basketball court sits empty, with only worn-out caution tape bouncing off of its surface. *Right:* This local playground has only caution tape playing on it. Around the area, playgrounds have remained closed for weeks. The bright sky hiding behind the trees, makes it look like a great day to play, if only the playground were open. The playground at Tuscarora Creek Park is one of the many closed in the area. •

TAKING ACTION

sisters make masks for community

Olivia Zavadil | Business Manager

Long lines at the grocery store. A limited number of customers allowed in stores. Major shortages of everyday items such as toilet paper and hand soap. The COVID-19 outbreak has made it increasingly difficult to access the basic items needed for everyday life.

With the sudden demand for essential items such as facemasks, they have become hard to come across. This is where freshman **Elena Wigglesworth** and her sister senior **Claire Wigglesworth** come into play.

Elena and Claire began sewing facemasks for their family and neighbors shortly after the CDC began advocating for their use. As of April 27, the girls have made upwards of 316 masks, and have dedicated about 200 hours of their time to making them.

“Our mom asked us to make masks for our family and as we were thinking about how to do that, we heard that other people in our neighborhood were looking for masks too,” said Claire. “We knew that we would be able to make them, so we put a post on our neighborhood Facebook page to see who else was in need of them.”

The girls picked up sewing techniques from classes and their mother, but never really got into sewing until they began making the masks.

“Our first week of making them, that was pretty much all we did everyday,” said Claire. “We just went down to our basement,



*Sisters **Claire Wigglesworth** and **Elena Wigglesworth** have made upwards of 300 masks for their local community since the pandemic started.*

where we have all of the sewing equipment set up, and we would just sew for the whole day.”

The actual making of the masks can be very time consuming, with each mask taking around twelve steps to complete. The masks themselves are made out of one hundred percent cotton t-shirts, a wire piece to help with fit, and adjustable straps. The girls also recommend buying a filter to put in the masks as well.

“To save time we started making them in batches of about 30,” said Claire. “After they were made, we then had to pack them

and deliver them to each of our neighbor’s doorsteps.”

The girls are currently using Facebook to sell the masks, and they sell for about five dollars each. Residents of their neighborhood have also helped by donating shirts for the girls to use.

“It’s definitely important for other people in the community to do things like this,” Claire said. “I am happy that we were able to help so many people in our community in our own small way. We put in a lot of hard work to do it, which makes me really grateful for everyone else who is doing their part to help out right now.” •

CORONAVIRUS SURVIVOR

county graduate reveals her story

Michaela Scott | Editor-in-chief

COVID-19 has impacted each and every single one of people's lives drastically, and has created a "new normal" for the next months going forward. Although the virus is frightening in theory, with its unprecedented symptoms, it means so much more when it becomes personal. LCHS graduate and JMU senior **Victoria Brown** was within the first ten cases in Loudoun County to test positive.

"As a young person it's easy to have this perspective of 'nothing bad will happen,'" said Brown. "I cannot relate the feeling of Corona to anything. I was someone who thought this was 'just a cold' for young, healthy people, but it was without a doubt the most pain I have ever experienced."

Brown's initial symptoms began after her return from a cruise to the Bahamas, despite the fact she was certain to have followed the ship's various safety precautions like pre and post health screenings. The cruise line also had increased food safety and ensured to include hand sanitizing stations everywhere.

Just days after arriving home, Brown began experiencing intense symptoms. "I had extreme tightness of chest, constantly feeling out of breath, a deep, dry cough that made me feel like someone stuck a match in them, a stuffy nose, the worst headache I had ever experienced, eye pain and horrible body aches," Brown said.

After roughly four weeks of complete isolation and reliance on two prescribed inhalers to reduce chest tightness and her cough, Brown

began her road to recovery, although lung pain still lingered. She has now been working to get her lungs up to full capacity again and easing into normal activities, although Brown still has been unable to take full breaths.

"Please follow the recommended guidelines by the true doctors and

"We need to put aside this individualist culture and protect the greater good of our community."

experts and please take this seriously," mother **Connie Brown** shared. "Myself and Victoria's father were potentially exposed, but neither one of us experienced any symptoms. Parents, protect your babies as best as you can. Although we were fortunate nothing bad happened, it is unimaginable the feelings of what could follow."

The US has now surpassed over one million cases with the death toll exceeding nearly sixty-thousand, at the time of this writing publication, yet states like South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee are days away from reopening, which has sparked a political debate on whether it is necessary to reopen so soon. Hospitals across the country are low in every needed supply, nursing homes have been entirely infected, and germs are being heavily spread by panicked shoppers in grocery stores with scarce supply which has resulted in exponential growth from the virus. Experts have continuously warned that the spike

in cases America will witness if the country does undergo reopening too quickly, will be devastating.

"I think it's a slap in the face to all health care workers who are working tirelessly to save lives and prevent the spreading of the virus," said Brown.

"Even though the 'average person' may not be most at risk to die, we have got to put aside this individualist culture and protect the greater good of our community. Testing is imperative and reopening should not be an option until we have adequate equipment."

This experience has substantially altered Brown on her perspective both from being sick and being a member of the community. She also emphasized the great importance in mental health during this dark time along with staying fit. Keeping your brain acclimated to its routine is key while we are in isolation from the world, although it is vital to remember one exposure is all it takes to put yourself or someone you love at risk.

"I had my senior year abruptly ended too, which has made me realize how quickly things you love can be ripped away without warning," said Brown. "That applies to loved ones as well. It has also made me appreciate my friends, family, and community to a greater degree than before, as I do not think I would have survived three weeks of complete isolation without everyone's love and support."

"Overall, I have grown a greater sense of gratitude and appreciation for the life I have and the people in it," said Brown. •

EXTRA PRECAUTIONS

keep family of essential employees safe



*CT technologist **Sonya Hodge** scans a potential COVID-19 patient. This “space suit” is a typical example of all the protective gear medical personnel are required to wear whenever scanning a possibly infected patient. Photo courtesy of Sonya Hodge.*

Cara Hodge | Editor-in-Chief

Constantly changing procedures, endless new regulations to follow, uncharted territory with no precedents, all of these challenges topped with a constant worry for their loved ones. This is the reality of healthcare workers on the frontlines of the current worldwide pandemic. They

are some of the few people whose work was deemed ‘essential’ from the beginning and this fact has become even more apparent in recent months.

“Now in the hospital setting there is, of course, much more required to stay safe,” said **Stephen McNeal** a CT (computed tomography) technologist in

Prince William County. With the aim of treating patients as safely as possible, healthcare workers' procedures have increased dramatically, making their jobs more intensive than before.

"Masks all the time, screenings upon entering the hospital and a whole protocol for Covid patients including the 'space suit' are now just part of another day at the office," said McNeal.

"Having three children of my own and a husband with MS, I am very careful when I come home from work," said **Shelby Hensley**, a Nursing Supervisor in Loudoun County.

Healthcare workers are now not only worried about the health of their patients but of their families as well, forced to take extra precautions not only at work but also at home.

"At home I wipe down my cell phone, remove my clothes in my garage and take a shower before seeing my family," said **Renee Silverstain**, a radiology technologist in Prince William County. "I do this to prevent my family and my immunocompromised mother in law from getting sick."

"People are scared to come to the hospital so we are less busy with outpatients and ER patients. But the patients we do see take longer because of all the precautions that are taken with each patient," said **Sonya Hodge**, a CT Technologist in Prince William County.

It has been hard work for healthcare workers to adapt and become efficient despite the ever growing list of regulations. "Wearing all the protective gear makes it harder to actually do our job as fast as we used to," said Hodge.

"The patients also seem anxious and stressed as well due to the pandemic," said **Terri Domingo**, a CT technologist in Prince William County. The paranoia and stress is being shared by everyone and because of this people are realizing the sacrifices healthcare workers are having to make and the importance of their work.

"Our patients have been extremely thankful for the measures we have taken to be able to still help them during this time," said Hensley.

"There will be many 'new normals' I think, with increased attention to the safety of patients and staff," said McNeal. There is no way to know for sure how society will be affected after this but it seems that the world of health and medicine will never quite be the same.

Hodge thinks, "we will continue to wear our protective gear more than we ever have before COVID."

"I believe the COVID outbreak has changed society for the long term," said Silverstain. These changes, though they came

about in dire circumstances, may begin to open up new ways to treat patients.

An option like "telemedicine has had to come through during this pandemic, it has opened up new ways for certain types of appointments," said Hensley.

"I have heard many colleagues say how beat up they are, or they have had to hold an iPad for one to many patients to say their goodbyes to a loved one that has suffered from this virus," said Hensley.

Healthcare workers are doing their part to keep us safe but are also imploring us to realize the risk and do our part as well.

"Take your health seriously and you can't be too careful or safe because it is better to be safe than sorry," said Domingo.

"Take common sense precautions but don't live in fear," said **Lori Radford**, a RN staff Nurse in Wake County. Healthcare workers have played an integral role in helping our world recover from this tragedy and their sacrifices will not be forgotten when the world looks back on this as history.

So as a final reminder from our healthcare workers, "wear your mask, social distancing is important, wash your hands, thank a front line worker and love your family members like you have never loved before," said Hensley. •

DESPITE ANXIETY AND SHORTAGES, healthcare workers fight coronavirus



Liberty Harrison | Guest Writer

It is well known that hundreds of thousands of medical workers across the US are fighting on the front lines of the pandemic, putting themselves at risk to care for their fellow Americans. But what are the medical workers in Loudoun County experiencing? How has the pandemic affected them?

“Morale is low, we are stretched thin, we are working harder than ever.” These are the words of a local

hospital nurse on the atmosphere in her hospital. She does her best to supervise her unit, to help her colleagues struggling under the weighty pressure of her hospital filling with more Coronavirus patients everyday. She tries to keep spirits up, even though the strict no visitor policy discourages the nurses on her shift, watching over patients separated from their loved ones. She thinks about the N95 mask she wears throughout the day, how

she’s now unsure of its effectiveness, and the danger she fears she brings home to her family each time she leaves work.

The nurse asked to remain anonymous, because she wants to be truthful, though she admits that “based on my answers, someone reading may guess who it came from.”

“Before the Coronavirus, our unit was always full with patients, mostly related to heart failure,

stroke, heart attacks, kidney failure, alcohol withdrawal,” wrote the nurse. “After the start of the pandemic, we noticed a significant decline in our normal patient population, and still do. I think people are too afraid to come to the hospital.”

According to CNBC.com many doctors are worried about the same thing. With Coronavirus patients going to hospitals to receive the treatment they need, some members of the public have begun to see visiting the hospital as dangerous, because of the increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

Medical facilities like hospitals and urgent care centers are well aware of these concerns, but medical providers along the spectrum of care are modifying multiple protocols.

Earl Hall, a firefighter and paramedic with Loudoun County’s Fire and Rescue system, described the extra steps that first responders now employ to protect themselves and the people they help against the spread of Coronavirus.

“Whenever we encounter a possible COVID-19 infected person, we perform additional decontamination to ourselves, apparatus and equipment,” wrote Hall.

Precautions such as increased decontamination are made more difficult with the various supply problems faced by Loudoun County’s medical facilities and government services, mirroring the problems throughout the country.

“We have had shortages of medical-grade disinfecting wipes so we have had to implement effective alternatives to reduce use of the wipes,” wrote Hall. “The county is actively seeking donations from the public for personal protective equipment, but, so far, we have not experienced shortages at my station yet.”

Hall’s experience stands in stark contrast to the hospital’s.

On whether her hospital is dealing with shortages, the nurse answered, “Every day.” She explained, “Some days, we are low on gowns, and using different kinds of gowns than we’re used to. We do still have enough surgical masks, but we are told not to use N95 unless under certain conditions, and if we do, we have to hold onto it for the day.”

Out of their workplaces, medical workers are adjusting to the same changes as the public, such as working to follow the various regulations set by the CDC.

“During the pandemic, we are under the same restrictions as the public,” wrote Hall. “Social distancing. Stay-at-home. Touch surface disinfection. Personal hygiene. Facemask use while out in public.”

Medical workers are particularly alert to their actions to hinder the spread of Coronavirus in and out of the workplace. Like the rest of us, our healthcare workers are experiencing the anxiety that living through a pandemic causes, amplified by their medical knowledge and the direct danger the pandemic poses to them.

As we move out of the most stringent restrictions, the nurse has a new concern, worrying, “That it will resurge as more and more people relax restrictions, and we’ll be right back to where we started.”

Fears like hers, versus fears of the lasting damages restrictions could have on the economy, have sparked much public debate on when the quarantine should be lifted. However what happened in South Korea confirms her fears. According to a report by the Japan Times, there, when restrictions were lifted there was an immediate uptick in cases of Coronavirus. Still medical workers have differing views on how effective the various precautions are against Coronavi-

rus.

“I think as the media is saying they are noticing a difference that social distancing is working, I’m not seeing that at all in the hospital. We have never been fuller with COVID patients at this time,” wrote the nurse.

But others have more positive views of the public’s efforts. “Most people with whom I have engaged seem to be taking the matter appropriately,” wrote Hall.

It’s hard to measure the actual effect of actions like social distancing. However, statistics from the CDC suggest that social distancing is working to slow the spread of Coronavirus, and to flatten the curve. However, according to a statement put out by Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Phyllis Randall, here in Loudoun County incidents of Coronavirus infections are still on the rise. In fact, all five state health directors from Northern Virginia determined we are now in our peak period for Covid-19. In the end, many people have taken the pandemic as an opportunity to support each other, even if from a distance.

“We have received many caps and headbands that we all are wearing that help hold the mask in place, without hurting our ears,” wrote the nurse. “Yesterday, we even had all the county police, EMTs, fire fighters, sheriffs, etc, come to the hospital and gave us all a round of applause while we were leaving our shift.”

She described the effect of the outpouring of support they have received: “It was humbling, and very gracious and enlightened our spirits,” she said. “The public has been amazing with all the support. We are grateful for every single gesture, words of thanks, and free meals delivered. The community has really helped.” •

COVID can't stop us



*Teacher **Richard Ricci** takes a break from online teaching to play disc golf. Photo courtesy of Richard Ricci.*

Maggie Sheridan | Managing Editor

As COVID-19 becomes a major issue in the United States, day after day is full of more news reports which many may find depressing. It is hard to stay optimistic during a time like this, but people of all ages have still been finding ways to look on the positive side. Students and

teachers are also finding different ways to adapt to online classes.

The pandemic has caused schools to close all across the country. With that, online school has begun. "I try to keep the activities for the students to one per week and make each one pertinent to every student," said math teacher

Richard Ricci.

He is trying to do what is best for the students through his lessons. “I don’t know what each of them is going through, and who is dealing with AP and DE classes,” said Ricci. “So, it has been important to give them something that doesn’t add to the stress they already feel.”

Along with K-12 schools, colleges have also closed their campuses and moved to online classes. Students were forced to move back home. “It wasn’t expected at all. I came home for spring break on March 5, and by March 10 got an email from James Madison University saying we are moving to online classes,” said college junior and LCHS graduate **Annie Norris.**

Students are heartbroken to have the semester end early and their college experiences cut short. “It was so sad leaving so unexpectedly. I miss my roommates, friends, and being on campus. Spring is probably my favorite time at JMU because it’s nice to sit on the quad with friends,” said Norris.

Norris was a member of the ski and snowboard team at the University. “The racing team formal got cancelled too, so I never had the chance to say goodbye to my teammates who are seniors,” she said.

With all of this sad news occurring, people are still finding positives to focus on. “I’m getting to spend more time with my family than I used to because I was always so busy with school and sports before,” said Loudoun County sophomore **Amanda Carkin.** “It is also kind of nice being able to do school in the

comfort of your own home.”

“In most families, I imagine that people get on each other’s nerves from time to time when you must stay in close quarters,” said Ricci. “What I’ve noticed is that, as time has passed, it seems like annoyances have decreased! Perhaps, people learn how to deal with each other better. Maybe it will make for more harmony in the future when things get back to normal.”

Many have found a variety of new ways to keep themselves busy during these long days. “I’ve been bingeing new shows, baking more, and taking my dog on long walks around the neighborhood,” said Norris. “I also try to talk to friends and family often.”

Some have even found new hobbies. “My family started playing disc golf,” said Ricci. “We ordered discs online, and now we each have a different color when we go out to play.”

Ricci is relieved to have a fun game to play in order to pass the time. It has been hard for him as a teacher not being able to communicate with his students in the classroom, and he has had to adjust.

Since people aren’t allowed to see each other, they have found new ways to communicate with friends and family. “I facetime my friends often and talk to most of them through text or Snapchat on a daily basis,” said Carkin.

Norris has been using similar means of communication. “I’ve been keeping in contact with others by texting and facetime. My

immediate family has used Zoom with my extended family to see how everyone is doing and that has been fun and entertaining,” said Norris.

Teachers are also finding ways to stay connected to family and students. “I keep in touch with parents, brothers and friends by phone. I have emailed with many of my former students. And, the teachers have meetings on Google Meet every week,” said Ricci.

Quarantine has been tough for many such as Norris. “My mom and I are in high risk groups so we don’t leave the house unless it’s to walk our dog. It’s weird not being able to meet with friends, and I am appreciative of technology to connect us during this time,” said Norris.

At a time like this, no one is sure what the future will bring, they are just hopeful that COVID-19 will end sooner rather than later. “The biggest benefit of quarantining is that I am contributing to flattening the curve and saving people’s lives,” said Norris. “Also, I get to enjoy my mom’s cooking.”

Ricci believes that looking on the bright side will help everyone during this hard time. “Another benefit is that many people are task masters and are always on fast forward,” said Ricci. “Taking away a lot of what must be done can be unsettling, but perhaps it causes people to see how so many of those tasks might not be life or death after all! So, maybe people’s perceptions will change.” •

“Most Promising” seniors ready to excel

Casey Hughes | Guest Writer

Three seniors were voted most promising by the faculty of Loudoun County High School during their freshman, sophomore, or junior years. This is a prestigious recognition, and according to tradition, they would have been invited to preside over the underclassmen academic award ceremony, helping to hand out medals and also giving speeches.

Grace Curtin was voted most promising as a freshman, Sirra Faal earned the honor as a sophomore, and Daniel Gribbin was recognized as a junior.

Grace Curtin

Grace is a kind, hardworking senior primed to excel at the next level.

“I’m heading to Bryn Mawr College,” Curtin said. “I am excited to join the Bryn Mawr community and feel fortunate that I will be a Mawr-tyr for life.”

While excited, Curtin like most people hopes that the school will open on time and the campus will be safe.

“With the uncertainty presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, my hope right now is simply that I will be on campus in the Fall so that I can participate in the first year traditions of my college,” she said. “However, and regardless of whether I am on campus or not, I look forward to the opportunity to learn from a group of instructors whom I am growing to admire more and more as I learn about the college’s academics. Lastly, I can’t wait to hang out with my awesome roommate, and the other friends I’ve already made.”

In college Curtin will pursue a degree in History and already has a goal in mind to pursue Law after graduating college. She is thankful for all of her teachers who have helped her along the way but she can highlight a select few that have made a major impact in her life.

“I would be doing a disservice to all of my teachers at LCHS if I picked

only one,” said Curtin. “I firmly believe that I am the composite of all of my teachers. Each of them had an impact on my life, and contributed to the person I am now. I will, however, recognize three teachers whose dedication and mentorship will have an everlasting impact on me: **Mrs. [Lynn] Krepich**, whose kindness and enthusiasm for learning solidified Latin as a permanent part of my life; **Ms. [Nancy] Thomas**, who instilled in me a passion for history in which I intend to major in college; and **Mrs. [Mel] Hefty**, who challenged me to look at problems in different ways and to be courageous when things were tough.”

Her time at County was filled with fond memories and great experiences.

“In eleventh grade, the Academic Team won our district meet against the seemingly unstoppable Valley team, which was known for defeating LCHS in meets,” said Curtin. “The moment our team realized that we were going to beat Valley was exhilarating, and it demonstrated to me the power of teamwork.”

“My time on the Academic Team with my hilarious friends and amazing sister will be my favorite memory,” she said.

Like many seniors she wants to leave a lasting impact on her school and she wants the next generation of



students to enjoy Loudoun County as much as she did.

“I want everyone to realize that they are the ones who define their own success, not other people,” said Curtin. “Humility is key, and when you compete with others, you sell yourself short because you’ve defined your own success based on the success or failure of someone else. Be yourself, push yourself, treat everyone with kindness, and pick yourself up and fight on when others put you down. Lastly, stay true to yourself! Don’t become what others say or want you to be.”

“I hope that my peers and friends remember me for my patience, my commitment to their success, and my joy of learning,” she said. “I also hope that I inspired others to achieve academic success.”

Sirra Faal

Sirra was very involved in Loudoun County and hopes that she made a lasting impact on the programs she was in.

“I hope that my actions are able to speak for themselves, and that the time and work I spent amongst different organizations and clubs in the school will continue to develop and improve,” said Faal. “I also hope that some of the connections that I formed with my peers will help to influence change in the school in a positive way, and establish traditions amongst the programs I was involved in.”

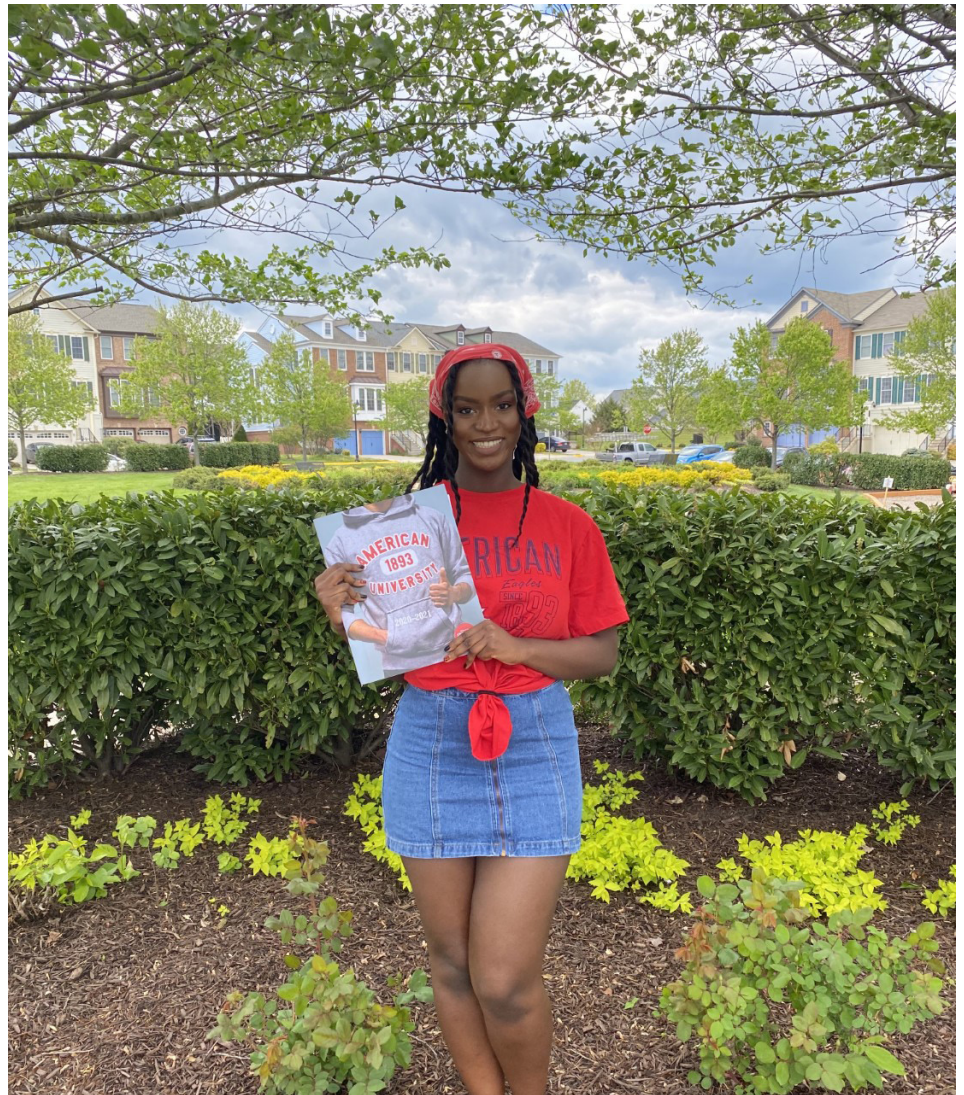
She hopes that the next generation of students is able to use every resource available to them to succeed.

“I would say that there’s a lot of opportunities at our school, and, unfortunately, many of them go to waste,” she said. “Make sure that if you need help, or that you have a goal you want to reach that seems too big, you really sit down and look into the resources the school has to help you. In almost every situation, where there’s a will, there’s a way!”

In the fall Sirra will attend American University on a full ride as a part of the Douglass Distinguished Scholars Program. “At AU, I will be double majoring in Theatre and Communications Studies,” she said. “I hope to take advantage of the research and study-abroad opportunities my school and scholarship provide!”

She is looking forward to her fall semester and hopes she can really push herself this semester. A pressing concern for Sirra, as for others, is safety on campus during the continued coronavirus pandemic.

“When looking at the bigger picture, I hope to get involved on



campus, and to take courses that are outside of my comfort-zone,” said Faal.

Faal credits many of her teachers at County, noting “a good few who I know will continue to impact my life in many ways beyond high school,” she said. “If I had to choose just one, I would say **Mr. [Richard] Ricci** had the greatest impact on me. I was in Mr. Ricci’s CAMPUS class all four years of high school, and I truly believe that his mentorship and guidance is one of the primary reasons that I am where I am today.”

Faal has also had a lot of really great memories at County and she can recall some really great moments.

Her favorite memory happened

during choir class. “It was right at the end of the quarter, and our district assessments were coming up,” she said. “Everybody was stressed and overwhelmed, and we had been working nonstop to be ready for districts. We came into class prepared for another day of hard work, but **Mr. [William] Rosenfeld** sat us down, told us to breathe, and then let us spend the majority of the class talking about what was on our minds and helping us through it.”

Another favorite moment happened on a bus ride home from a Forensics competition.

“It was late and we were all so tired and worn-out that the conversations that ensued were hilarious,” Faal said.



Daniel Gribbin

Daniel Gribbin is a funny, energetic, and kind-hearted senior moving on to Virginia Tech in the fall.

“I want to be remembered as a person who is always a pleasure to be around and willing to help anyone in any scenario,” said Gribbin. And he has.

He, like many of his other senior peers have had really great memories and experiences at Loudoun County.

His favorite memory from high school involves a pencil sharpener during Spanish class.

“I went up to sharpen my pencil in front of the entire class and used one of those cranking sharpeners,” said Gribbin. “As I was sharpening my pencil the pencil sharpener just broke. I was just standing there looking at the entire class as the teacher was still teaching. This small moment al-

lowed me to start making friends in that class.”

Another favorite moment was meeting his best friend. “As I walked into English I sat down and there was one other person in this class. She spoke first and said, ‘Hi, my name is Noelle,’ and I responded with, ‘Hi, my name is Danielle.’ She started laughing hysterically and that’s how we became best friends in that one moment.”

He hopes that his fall at Virginia Tech will be normal and he can focus on what he does best, echoing the hopes of his classmates.

“The main focus will be making new friends but education always comes first.”

He wants to let rising seniors know that senior year will be busy but they should just hang in there and be persistent. He also highly recommends going to every football game.

Robert Huie and Daniel Gribbin deliver the highly-anticipated “Lame Joke of the Week” at the end of morning announcements on a Friday morning. Photo courtesy of Daniel Gribbin.

2020 HELEN NIMAN AWARD

for outstanding journalism

Valerie Egger | Newspaper Adviser

The Helen Niman Award for Outstanding Journalism is given by The Woman's Club of Loudoun in honor of **Helen Niman**, newspaper advisor at LCHS in the 1960s. Niman was a demanding final editor and a precise grammarian. It was said that she ran the school newspaper like a professional paper. Recipients of the award have their names engraved on a plaque that will be displayed in the school lobby, courtesy of the Women's Club of Loudoun. Well over fifty students have been honored over the long history of this award.

This year is, obviously, a bit different than most. I'm usually standing on stage presenting this award in front of the senior class. So many deserving students did not receive the public recognition that usually accompanies the awards. In this small way, on this page, I

hope to bring recognition to the two senior editors, **Cara Hodge** and **Mackenzie Munn**, who have helped to make this year's editions of The Loudoun Raider excellent.

In August, I was terrified to be starting from scratch with a totally new staff. Normally, there are a few students rising from past years who know the ropes and can lead the team. Last year, they all graduated. It was a situation Mackenzie would only describe as "trash."

After the first day of class, I realized that all my fears were unfounded. The new, small staff worked well together, and most importantly, they were open to new ideas. In fact, it was a "trash-to-treasure" situation. Our staff bonded quickly, enjoying discussions and work sessions and a final trip to the Newseum before it closed.

Led by this year's recipients, the staff agreed to take a critical look at the design of our publication and

search the Internet for inspiration and ideas for ways we could modernize our layout. My two seniors stepped up to lead discussion, making sure to include everyone. In what should be a student-run publication, I worried that I might have to do too much of the talking/planning, taking away from student ownership. Mackenzie and Cara made sure that was not the case.

Whether it was calmly discussing school policies, moving the heavy computer desk out of the way to access our checklist for the issue, or making sure I stopped asking about "The Crucible," I could always count on them. Their dedication to journalism and layout, their ability to tackle InDesign for a photospread, and their leadership among the staff made them an easy choice for this year's award.

I'm pleased to present the 2020 Niman Award to Cara Hodge and Mackenzie Munn.

Cara Hodge and Mackenzie Munn take a break from brainstorming in the publication lab to pose for a selfie.



ARTIST OF THE ISSUE

flourishing artist emphasizes focusing on improvement, not perfection

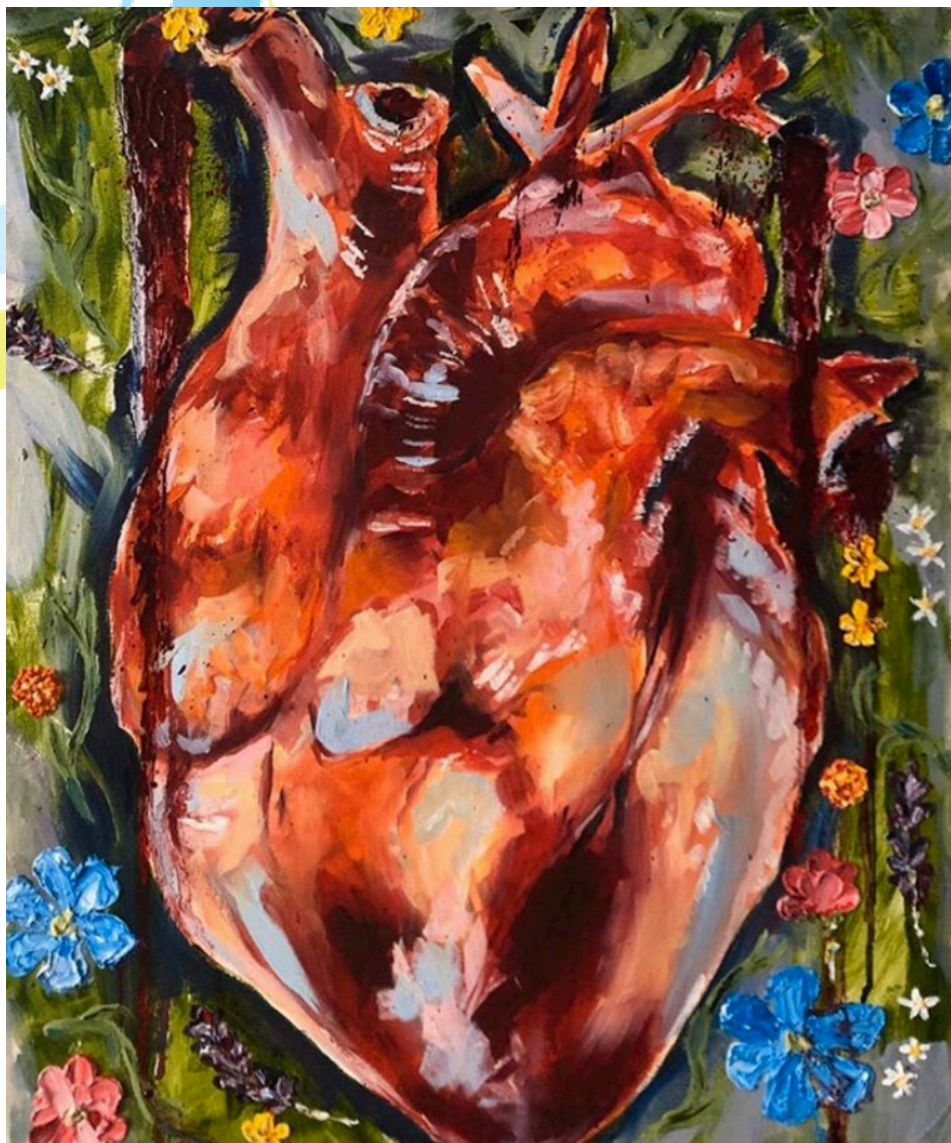
Michaela Scott | Editor-in-Chief

Many people believe that art is an immediate gift someone is born with, and is almost instantly apparent the second one holds a brush, a crayon, or a pencil. However junior **Amie Holstein** realized her true passion as a ninth grader, in her first art class, and began working on her skills personally at home. “Something I believe is important to keep in mind is that there is no ‘talent’ you are born with,” said Holstein. “The talent someone has, has come from hours, months, and years of practice.”

Holstein’s love and familiarity with paintings sprouted at a young age, as she would observe and paint alongside her mother to keep busy as a small child. Now Holstein practices her art as a stress reliever, and something to share with the community, which motivates her to always create more.

“To me, art is anything that someone creates, it doesn’t have to have any sort of meaning which is what I think makes art so widely enjoyed,” said Holstein. “I’ve always liked painting the most, more specifically, oil painting. However, I’ve started really loving printmaking since I can easily share it with others by being able to reproduce the design on different products.”

Holstein admits her art requires zero planning prior to the start of each piece of work. The process starts in her desk at home where



Amie Holstein’s art piece, titled “Splattered,” began as an idea from viewing an anatomy book and analyzing the complex human heart. The idea sparked when she realized how unappealing its appearance is, and wanted the organ to give the impression of being something compelling and pretty to look at.

she brainstorms and tries out every new project, and sees where it takes her from there. Holstein also credits the band ‘1975,’ which significantly has aided in inspiration to her work, such as the political and social is-

ues in America that are brought up in the music.

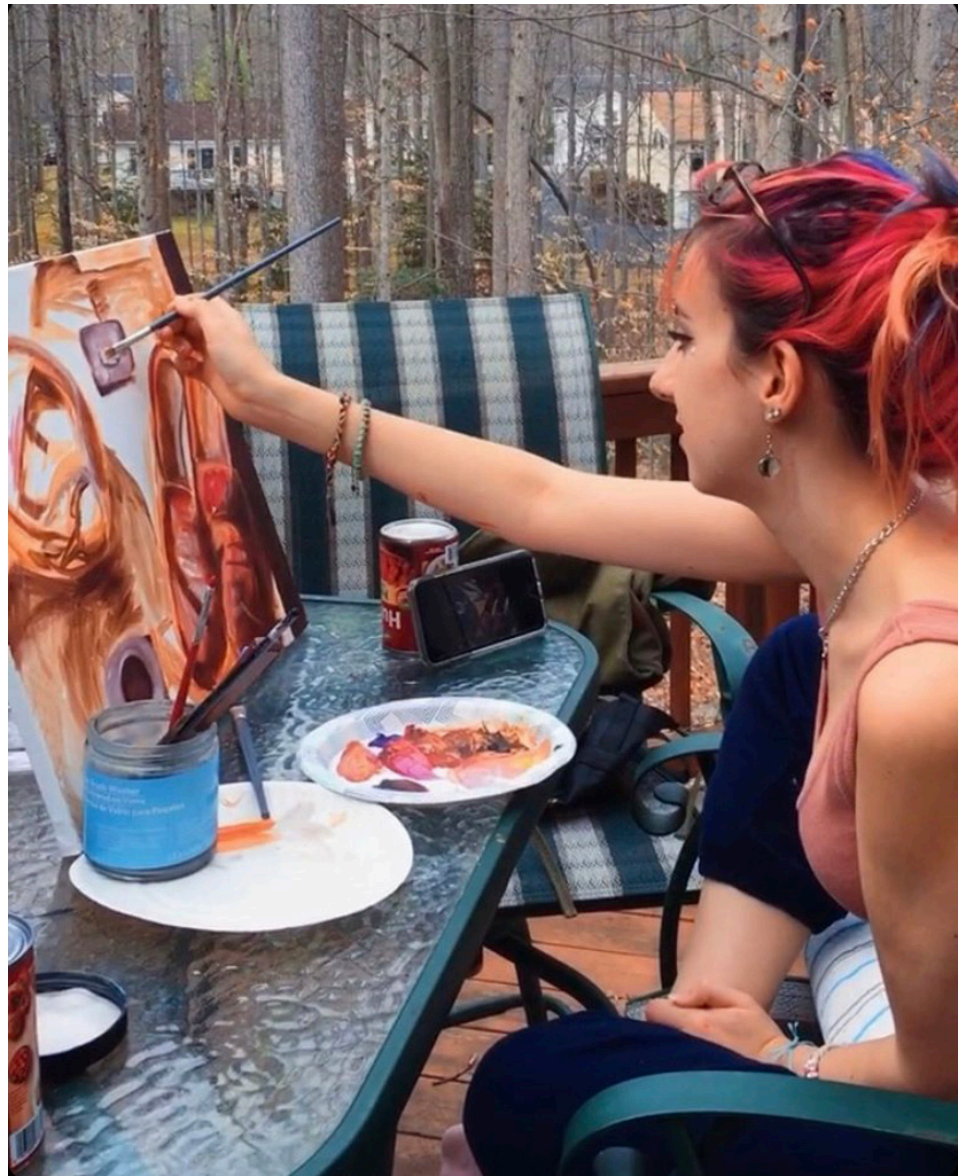
Holstein’s goal is to make people happy, or to create a piece of work that’s nice for someone to gaze upon. However, at times she aims to

express things with bigger messages. “Sometimes I’ll make art to get people thinking about issues in this world,” Holstein explained. “Some examples are a painting I did describing the unjust American prison system. I’ve made a few paintings with trash and animals to show the state of our environment as well. I like to keep a good balance between serious ‘get people thinking’ art and pretty ‘nice to look at’ art. I honestly enjoy both.”

Holstein’s most prized piece of work comes from a situation that started as a mistake and soon developed into a series of paintings called, “Accidental Visit.” It came about when she unknowingly walked into a men’s restroom at art school and decided to photograph the objects, such as the urinal, because the scenario would be unlikely to occur a second time. Holstein’s instructor also was a major influence in the piece, encouraging and showing much pride in her ability to turn an accident into work using a collection of photographs.

Other creations of Holstein’s art have gotten much recognition like a painting done of her own feet, which has been hung in Washington College. County’s literary magazine has also featured several of her pieces. Professionally, Holstein hopes to make a profit and share her work to others through sales, magazines, articles, and galleries.

Currently, Holstein advertises and sells her work through online social platforms. “I showcase my work on my instagram, ‘@thesshack’, my depop, and my Etsy account,” said Holstein, who sells her work at ([Thesshackk](https://www.thesshack.com)). “I started using an instagram account and then expanded from there to widen my audience and be able to sell my



Amie Holstein paints an oil still life on her deck in March. The painting was created for leisure during lockdown, however she used a collection of photographs taken in Downtown Leesburg prior to the shutdown to use for the piece.

work.” Looking further into her future career, Holstein plans on pursuing a job involving art and working with others. “I’ve been really interested in art therapy or teaching of some sort,” Holstein said.

Beneficially, the past few months in quarantine has driven Holstein to further productivity and increased creative development. Holstein aims to continue her work and grow her abilities throughout this isolated time. “Before the pandemic unfolded I was busy 24/7 with school,

jobs, and friends,” said Holstein. “However, now I am properly social distancing and out of work so I have a lot of extra free time to develop and expand platforms.”

Holstein has also mentioned new works of art involving resources other than the traditional canvas, such as shirts, bags, postcards, and accessories.

“People tend to get discouraged when they aren’t yet at the skill level they would like to be,” said Holstein. “But it is just important to focus on improvement not perfection.” •

WORKING FROM HOME

Lord Loudoun staff completes yearbook despite pandemic

Bella Albert and Kayla Spratt review a spread in progress, while Hannah Dick and Mallory McKnight work in the background. Photo courtesy of Chris Colston.



Matthew Starchville | Guest Writer

The yearbook staff has worked hard all year to produce the Lord Loudoun yearbook. With the school year cut short by this pandemic, it would be harder for the yearbook to be completed, but with the persistence and drive of yearbook advisor **Chris Colston** and the yearbook staff, the 2020 Lord Loudoun was finished on time.

Colston credits the help of his staff and his senior co-editors. “None of this would have worked

if I hadn’t had my co-editors **Hannah Dick** and **Sierra Martin**, who are reliable, diligent, and responsible,” Colston said.

One of the setbacks the yearbook staff faced after school was closed on March 12 was communication with the other members. This was a problem because the yearbook relies on teamwork to get the job done.

“Finishing the book virtually was a challenge that I obviously didn’t expect to face,” said Dick. “With the support and hard work

of my staff made the process relatively smooth.”

During a normal school year, the yearbook meets during regularly-scheduled class time every day. On a usual day at school they would start the day off with a quick meeting about deadlines and tasks that they needed to achieve that day. Then they would make a checklist for all the things they had to do that day. With everybody at home they had to rely on online ways of communication.

This 15 person staff had conference calls every week to talk about what the plans were for that week to resemble their meetings they had during the year discussing what needed to be done.

“We used teleconferences, email, the app Remind, and to a lesser extent Google Classroom to communicate assignments,” Colston said.

The app Remind has become a popular way for teachers to notify students on upcoming tests or assignments by sending notifications to the students phone like a text.

“For us, Remind was the single most important tool because the students can get messages on their phone as a text and respond quickly,” Colston said. “We probably wouldn’t have gotten the book finished without Remind.”

Perhaps the biggest challenge was contacting students for information. “The main difficulty was identifying people and getting quotes,” said Dick. With schools closed, yearbook staff had to rely on electronic communication to contact those who would appear in the yearbook.

“We were able to text students



*Editor **Hannah Dick** works **Camryn Monroe** on a yearbook spread prior to school closures. The schools closed on March 12, leaving the yearbook staff to finish their publication virtually.*

for interviews and generally received quick responses,” said Martin.

Another change was the spring sports section. “Since there were no games, we included profiles on several athletes from each team instead of having a traditional layout,” said Martin.

Senior **Camryn Monroe** was new to the staff this year and was tasked with the baseball layouts and senior sports commitments.

“During my time online for yearbook I was doing the baseball layouts and senior sports commitments,” Monroe said. “On the staff everyone helped everyone. If someone had a spread to do but also had to interview someone we would all pitch in to help that person.”

Martin was initially frustrated with good reason when she found out that her senior year would be cut short. “However my worries quickly disappeared, as I was reminded of the dedication of all the yearbook staff members, who spent hours at a time

working on spreads,” she said. “That is when I knew I didn’t have anything to worry about.”

Dick found additional benefits to working from home. “Being at home actually gave me more time to make the spreads how I wanted them with the ability to spend more uninterrupted time on things,” she said.

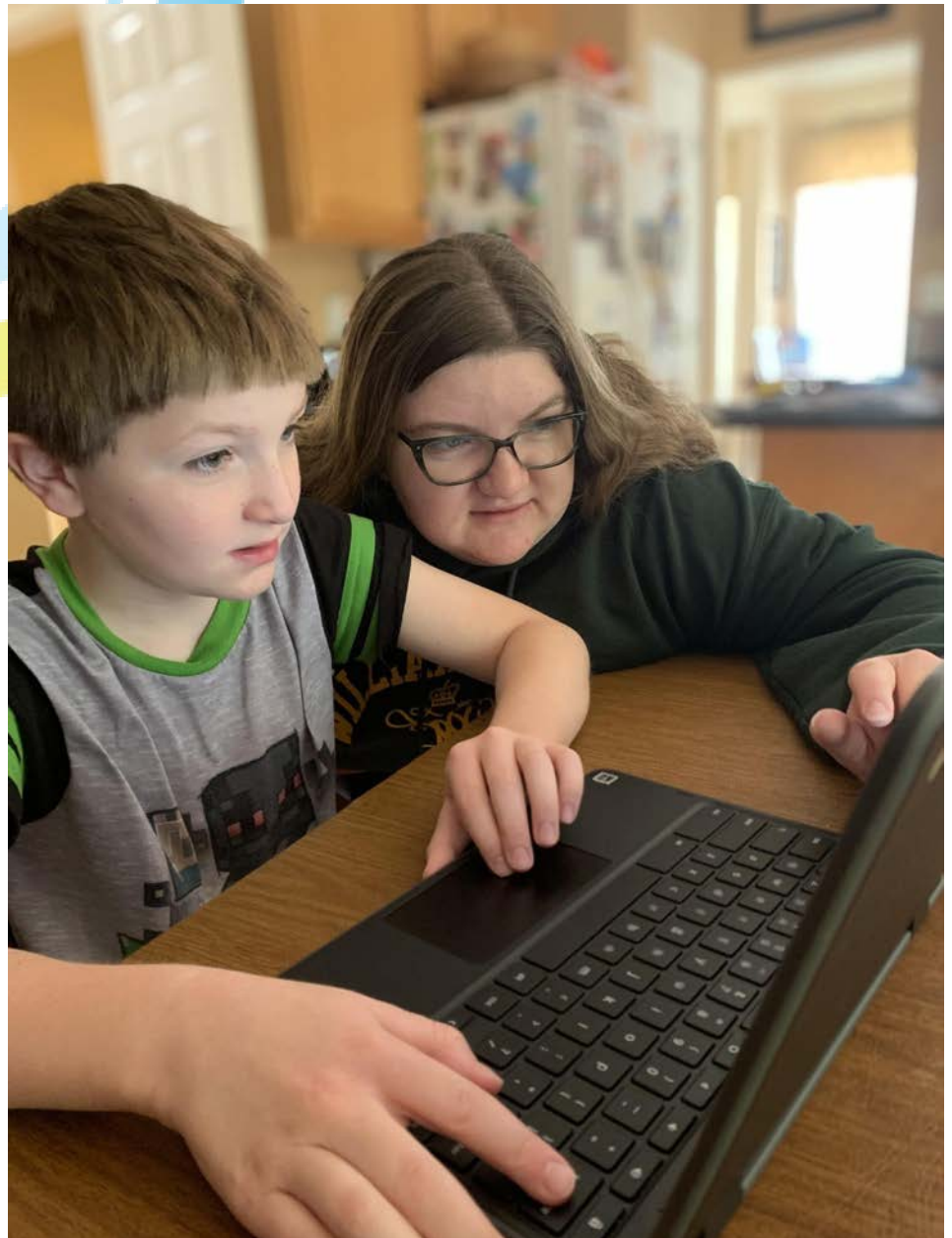
In the end, the staff found the positive in the situation.

“It was really exciting and rewarding to see confetti appear on the computer screen once we hit the publish button,” said Martin. “This yearbook is unlike any before and I know that everyone who purchases one will value it for decades to come. Our book will be even more valuable than books from past years because we included coverage on this pandemic.”

Dick agrees. “I’m actually grateful that I was able to be a leading editor on such a significant yearbook in a year that everyone won’t quickly forget,” she said. •

INNOVATIVE OR IMPOSSIBLE?

distance learning challenges students during pandemic



Senior Meghan Kirk helps her brother, fourth grader Matthew Kirk with his assignments for school.

Lauren Kirk | Guest Writer

Since the school closure, online learning has become our new normal. LCPS decided that there won't be fourth quarter grades, and students' grades can't be negatively

impacted during this unprecedented time. It has been difficult for some students to adjust. Whether they are in elementary, middle, or high school, it's a new thing for everyone.

With students being out of school, and having the freedom to work at their own pace, many students are left with free time to explore hobbies, play games, and relax. “During my free time I have been baking, running, drumming, binge watching, organizing and many more,” said eighth grader **Carolina Martinez**.

While she enjoys doing all of those things, Martinez also has schoolwork to keep her occupied.

“When it comes to school work it will usually take me the whole week to finish every assignment,” she said. She is able to complete her work, but finds it hard that she is always on a device, and sometimes struggles with a lack of motivation to work.

Fourth grader **Matthew Kirk** has been doing work and playing games to stay occupied. His teacher assigns him hyperdocs with weekly assignments, and has video calls with his class every other day. “The worst part is that your teacher isn’t there to help you or give instructions, and sometimes when instructions are written down, they aren’t as clear and you mess up,” Kirk said. Even though this pandemic has been a challenge for him, he is able to find ways to do school as well as have fun. He has enjoyed spending his time watching Youtube videos, playing video games, and practicing basketball after he finishes his schoolwork.

Senior **Lauren Jackson** has been spending her free time painting, drawing, watching Netflix, and playing the video game Animal Crossing. Along with having fun and playing games, she is also focusing on her academics. “I’m usually able to complete all the assigned classwork (except for some AP review activities that are for

exams I’m not taking),” she said. “Normally, I have work for about three of my six classes each day.”

Some students, like Jackson, work on a balance of fun and work, so they can prepare for their schooling next year, but also do things they enjoy. Since nobody has experienced a situation like this pandemic before, it takes time to figure it out and adjust, but many students are figuring out what works best for them academically.

While most high school students go to just one school, there are some that spend every other day at the Academies of Loudoun, such as juniors **Katherine “Kate” Manson** and **Sejal Gupta**. Manson goes to Monroe Advanced Technical Academy, and Gupta goes to the Academy of Engineering & Technology. Since the school closure happened, they have had to work on the assignments for Academies of Loudoun from home along with their other schoolwork. Manson takes the Biomedical Technology class at Monroe. Most of her assignments are put into hyperdocs, and her teachers do video conferences once a week.

Gupta takes Physics, Engineering, and BC Calculus at the Academy of Engineering and Technology. “We’ve been using Google Meet so that the teachers can explain assignments to us and so we can ask our teachers questions, and I think it’s as good as it could be in these circumstances,” she said. When we go back to school again, it will be an adjustment for almost everyone, but she isn’t very worried about getting used to working at both schools again.

The Academies of Loudoun are using the same guidelines as LCPS. The Academy of Engineering and

Technology and Monroe are not issuing summative fourth quarter grades, but they are also showing teachers next year the work that has been done so they can see how hard students worked on their assignments. Some Academies of Loudoun teachers are reviewing material, preparing the students for AP exams, and getting them ready for next year.

According to Gupta, classes at the Academies of Loudoun were 100 minutes long instead of 88, which allowed them to discuss more in depth about the material they were learning. During the pandemic, the difference of times has been reduced. Her teachers are using Google Meet to explain assignments, instruct students, and answer questions.

Seniors Meghan Kirk and Jackson, like the rest of Loudoun County’s seniors, had their last year of high school suddenly stopped, forcing them to miss out on their last prom and traditional June graduation.

“I prefer to be in a classroom, especially because I do Teacher Cadet,” Kirk said. She has done the Teacher Cadet class and has been a member of the Educator’s Rising club. Because of the nature of the teacher preparation program, in-person instruction is easier.

Like all students, they are having to find ways to adjust. Both Kirk and Jackson find it helpful to work at their own pace with their assignments. Kirk finds difficulty in not being able to talk to a teacher when confused. “You have to rely on the fact that they will text or email you back,” Kirk said. “I have to figure stuff out on my own and hope that I get a reply quickly.”

Jackson finds it hard to manage her work and time. “I would

have each teacher post a schedule at the beginning of each week stating what they are assigning for that week and when,” Jackson said. “Some of my teachers already do this, and I think that if they all did this, then it would be easier for students to manage their work and they’d feel less overwhelmed.” Jackson’s comments echo the fact that at school, teachers hold students accountable for completing the work they assign by a certain time, but now students have to hold themselves accountable for getting their work done.

There are also many possible distractions that cause people to struggle. Siblings, pets, parents, and many other things that can lead to a student being distracted and losing focus. Some find it difficult to concentrate with a lot of noise around their house. While some students like having their siblings around to help, others find it to be stressful. “I think it’s great having my sister around in case I don’t understand the material,” Martinez said. “At the same time I can find it a little stressful having her around. She is a college student so I am used to working in a quiet house but since she is done with her classes she can just roam around the house when she pleases.”

While everyone is going through similar struggles and seniors are having to accept the fact that they won’t get to go back to school, they are still having hope and working through the challenges they have.

“I mostly just think that everyone should make sure they keep communicating, because knowing that we’re all more or less on the same page is reassuring,” Jackson

said. “If teachers and students know what to expect from the other and what is expected of them, then everyone feels less in the dark about things.”

“I email teachers to let them know if I’m feeling overwhelmed by work or why I’m not doing some of their assignments, which gives me a sort of peace of mind knowing that they aren’t working completely blind,” Jackson said. “Many teachers also email to ask for feedback and make sure we’re doing okay with the work.”

Many teachers assign students work, as well as communicate with them, on many different platforms and websites. “My teachers have been using Edmentum, Hyperdocs, Google meets and additional videos,” Martinez said. “I find it stressful that I can’t be in one certain place 24/7.”

Manson and Gupta both worry that the upcoming school year could be affected. “This will also affect many fall activities, such as marching band, fall sports, and robotics,” Gupta said. Many students enjoy doing music, playing a sport, or another activity, and along with being nervous about schools not opening on time, they are also worrying about extra-curriculars getting cancelled or postponed.

Even though we are uncertain about whether we will get to start school next year in person, some students are staying hopeful about it, while others may be nervous about transitioning to a new school.

“I feel like it might be difficult to start up school in a new and different environment after such a long period of time away, but it will only get easier,” Martinez said. “I have no doubt that I will

struggle significantly after we are back to our ‘normal.’ ”

“It’s possible that I may have had my last first day of school without knowing it,” said Gupta. “I’m worried that the school year won’t be the same if we’re forced to start the year virtually, and then resume in-person classes later on in the year. However, I’m honestly still much more upset about the effect this has had on my junior year: colleges normally look at this year’s grades as well as the activities we do during this time, but all of us are forced to stop them, and our grades are essentially on pause.”

Gupta is finding it difficult to stay motivated to do work, and finds it easy to get caught up in one class then ignore the others. “The best part about working at home is the fact that I am able to proceed at my own pace, which, ironically, is also the worst: sometimes, it is difficult to find the motivation to do work for a class you don’t like, which isn’t a problem in school because you are in the room with a teacher,” she said.

Although Gupta and Manson admit to sometimes struggling to focus on work, they are able to get it done.

The school closure was an adjustment for everyone, and is slowly becoming our new normal. While it will affect the transition back to school, students are finding ways to get their work done, and also take time for themselves. “If I find myself stressed in the moment I like to just walk around and take a quick break,” Martinez said. “I always remind myself that this is all new for everyone and that it’s okay if I struggle and I know I’m not alone.” •

FOR LOCAL RETIREE

COVID closures mean no golf



On February 1, 2010, Kent Verner took the first shot of his golf tournament at Burke Lake Golf Course. Since the novel coronavirus, Verner has chosen not to golf.

Jevonte Heron | Guest Writer

Kent Verner has been home a lot lately. A retired businessman who lives in Fairfax, Virginia, is being affected by the world pandemic in the usual way. But for him, the call of the warm spring sunlight and gentle breeze is perhaps more painful than for most. In ordinary years, this time of year would find Verner on the green, playing golf in leagues at many different courses with his friends. But with six feeling distant, many golfers are afraid to risk getting close to other people, even if they do not have symptoms of the virus.

With the coronavirus spreading significantly at the beginning of March, Verner decided to stay off the golf course for now, and he doesn't have an idea what his golf skills will look like when he returns.

"My golf game has been on hold for the last two months, so I am not sure what my skills will look like when I start to play again," said

Verner. "My last round of golf was late February."

There are temporary rules on different golf courses that the government has come up with and Kent agrees with them.

For instance, Twin Lakes golf course in Fairfax has posted on their website that they are open but they have made a few rules, which change based on which phase or reopening we are in at the time. For instance, "Golf carts are not restricted to one person, players may share golf carts if wanted" and "Bathrooms are open but have guidelines on the door."

"The rules have varied across different courses, but in general I support the new/temporary rules," said Verner. He agrees with all of the rules, understanding they are for everyone's safety. As for dining at the courses, there are a couple food services available for carry out, so no sitting on the patio. Another dining facility, located in the clubhouse, is closed, so there is no option for hanging out in there, nor are golfers able to enter the building to check playing time. All playing times will be posted on the website.

With Verner not being on the golf course for a while, he thinks he will take him a little time to find his form again when he returns to the

golf course.

"I am sure I will not be as precise as I was before I stopped playing in February, with a week or so of practice I am sure I will find my form again," said Verner.

Verner has decided to stay at home with his family instead of golfing. Even with the rules he agrees with, he doesn't want to risk getting sick. With his age group being the most affected statistically by COVID-19, he chooses to stay safe in the house

"As with any unforeseen challenge in life, you just adjust as appropriate," he said. "The restrictions on my movement in the public environment has allowed me to spend more time at home with my wife and daughter. I read more, work puzzles, solve riddles, take online courses, and think about things I will probably do when the restrictions have been lifted," said Verner.

With the virus going around now for almost three months now, the Kent family is staying healthy and safe.

"So far my immediate family members have all indicated their health is okay," Verner said. "Financially no one seems to be stressing out, but the emotional effects of staying home is unknown at this moment in time," said Verner. •

QUARANTINED

Loudoun county athletes stay ready

Mathew Starchville prepares to catch the baseball in his short time as County's catcher. Photo by Tom Starchville



Casey Hughes | Guest Writer

Spring sports would be in full swing right now. Athletes would be getting into their spring routines with early morning workouts and after school practices. It's this time of year in Loudoun county where you would hear the ding of the bat, the grass would be deepening, and runners would be out breaking in the track. Athletes would be attempting to balance their increasing workload with their intense practice schedule.

This spring is different. Athletes are forced to stay home as a result of governor's orders and social distancing practices. Athletes from track to baseball athletes need to figure out a routine while maintaining a sense

of normalcy if they want to stay in shape for their sport.

As hopes for late spring sports or abbreviated summer seasons get slammed shut. Loudoun county athletes are waiting to hear news from **Governor Northam** and VHSL about fall sports. Which would normally start in August with pre-season in June and July. Some athletes would take pity in their situations, but not **Sean Rombach** and **Matthew Starchville**, two athletes who consistently work on their craft in order to get better.

Rising senior cross country and track runner Rombach found his outdoor track season cut short in March, when the governor ordered schools



Sean Rombach rounds the track during his leg of the 4x800 at an indoor track meet earlier this year. Photo by **Nolan Jez**

shut down for the rest of the year. He's staying in shape for whenever sports resume.

"I usually wake up between nine thirty and ten in the morning, then I go on a run at around 11," said Rombach. "Depending on the day I'll be done between twelve thirty and one thirty, then I'll come home and do some school work. On easier days

I'll go for a walk or a bike ride, and of course the occasional Netflix at night."

Staying in shape is key to these athletes' success, and the nationwide shutdown is no reason to stop.

"I've been running six days a week, and I am currently at fifty miles per week," said Rombach. "It tends to be one recovery day, two easier work-

outs, one hill workout, one speed workout, and one long run."

Diet is also very key to an athlete's success and with the shutdown comes more opportunities to eat right and do the proper workouts.

"I meditate for fifteen minutes a day," said Rombach. "In terms of diet, I've been eating much more calories to make up for the ones I'm burning while still making sure what I consume is healthy."

With nationwide gyms shut down, the necessity of home workouts has become prominent in many athletes' daily routines. Rising sophomore Starchville wasn't expecting to have his first baseball season cut short. However this hasn't stopped him from continuing to lift and shape up his body.

"I'll start with arm bands to get loose, then bench press," said Starchville. "After that I will go into push ups. Depending on the day if it is lower body I will do squats and split squats."

This rising sophomore also consistently works on his game.

"I'll start with high tee to work on hitting high pitches and then low to work on low pitches," he said. "I will also throw a tennis ball against a wall to work on receiving."

Losing a season can leave a great hole to be filled inside of an athlete, but these two athletes are not wallowing in self pity they are using this time to get better at their craft.

"I definitely miss the team aspect and the races that test you," said Rombach. "But for now I just have to build a strong base for cross country in the fall. It's definitely new to me running without races in sight, but it's my only option if I want to get better."

"It's tough to know that all the work you put in the winter will go unknown," said Starchville. "However I'm really excited for next year." •

SENIOR ATHLETE AWARDS

The LCHS Athletic Department is proud to announce the recipients of the 2020 LCHS Senior Athlete Awards.

Brooke Kirstein **Raiders Spirit and Sportsmanship Award**

A four-year member of the



Varsity Soccer Program, Kirstein helped the Raiders earn their State Championship in 2018 and Runner-Up in 2019.

Kirstein earned All District, All Region, and All State Honors in soccer.

She joined the Raiders basketball program as a senior and earned a starting position.

In addition, Kirstein was co-leader of the Raider Riot.

She plans to attend Duquesne University, where she will continue her soccer career.

Chandler Vaughan **LCHS Senior Female Athlete of the Year**

Vaughan earned All District, All Region, and All State in Volleyball as a senior, and she helped the Raiders win 4 District, 3 Region, and 4 State Titles.

She led Virginia 4A in service aces with 98 this year. She finished

her career with 214 Aces, 592 Digs, and 1447 assists.

This year, she served 24 points to end the set at 25-0 — a “Perfect Game.” and a District, Region, and 4A State record.

Vaughan will attend the University of Central Missouri, where she will study cybersecurity and play volleyball.



Joseph Groves **LCHS Senior Male Athlete of the Year**



In football, Groves made All District as wide receiver, Defensive All Purpose, KR, PR as a Junior

He earned All District as defense all purpose and punt return as a senior.

He earned All Region as receiver, defensive all purpose, and kick returner as a junior.

Groves earned All District, All Region, and All State teams as defensive all purpose as a senior.

In lacrosse, Groves was a three-time All-District and two-time All-Region.

As a Junior, he was the highest scoring midfielder in the district through nine games before an injury ended his season.

He plans to attend LaFayette University, where he will continue his football career.

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HISTORY INFLUENCES ALL AGES

students collaborate to teach history

Kayla Elahi (front left), Alex Pekala (back left), Thaddeus Sledd (back right), and Laila Gonzalez Neira (front right) greet their fourth grade counterparts via video call in the weeks before the school closures. The students were able to finish their project in time before schools were closed in March. Photo by Tracy Cody.



Maggie Sheridan, Managing Editor

While working on projects at school, many teachers like to collaborate with other classes.

Tracy Cody's government classes have taken it to the next level, publishing a book on Amazon along with fourth graders from Evergreen Mill Elementary School.

The idea all started when Cody was talking to her daughter, **Kathryn Hicks**, who is a fourth grade teacher at Evergreen Mill.

"We realized there was some overlap in fourth grade history Revolutionary War unit and the 12th grade government Foundations of American Democracy unit and we thought it would be fun to work with the classes to create a book with the seniors writing the story and the fourth graders drawing the pictures," said Cody.

Both teachers met a huge amount of support and kindness from their

principals. They had a lot of helping hands to make their ideas come to life. "Ms. **[Kyla] Jenkins** had the art club draw the pictures of the cover and our librarians, Mrs. **[Tonya] Dagstani** and Mrs. **[Christina] Burge**, helped with organization, technical support, and by providing space to do our video conference," said Cody.

The teachers had worked on this idea two years ago when Hicks taught at Dominion Trail Elementary School and decided to try it again. The students were very excited to be a part of it. "Both sets of students had an agenda and goals to accomplish for each session so they were able to stay on track," said Cody.

The students each had special jobs in order to contribute to the books. The fourth graders contributed ideas for the story and helped with the plot. The seniors wrote the story for each chapter and the students worked

together to decide what pictures the elementary students should draw to support the story.

They also had video conferences to talk through ideas. These were held in the library on the computers. The seniors went to Evergreen Mill to work on the rough draft with the elementary schoolers. "All groups worked very well together and seemed to have a fabulous time. The seniors had an agenda for each video conference that helped the elementary students stay on track," said Cody.

They created four books with six chapters. The chapters focused on different units in history. These include the creation of American De-

mocracy and topics such as **Thomas Jefferson, James Madison**, Causes of the American Revolution and the Constitution.

The books took about three and a half months to complete. "We had a total of three video conferences per class between January 8 and February 5," said Cody. "We created a rough draft and did an in-person field trip on March 10 and 11. After that we did the final editing and submitted the books for publication."

After finishing the books, they decided to put them on Amazon and have already sold 49 copies. "The price of the books are about what it costs to print them. The minimum royalties that might be earned will

be used to purchase copies of the books for the libraries at the respective schools," said Cody.

The project was a huge success for both age groups. "It is the highlight of the year for many and the second and third graders at Evergreen Mill are already asking if they get work with high schoolers when they get to the fourth grade," said Cody.

"This is a fun and interactive project that requires cooperation from lots of different groups including the libraries at both schools, the art department at the high school, the fourth grade team and four senior government classes. I hope it was a memorable activity for all involved," said Cody. •

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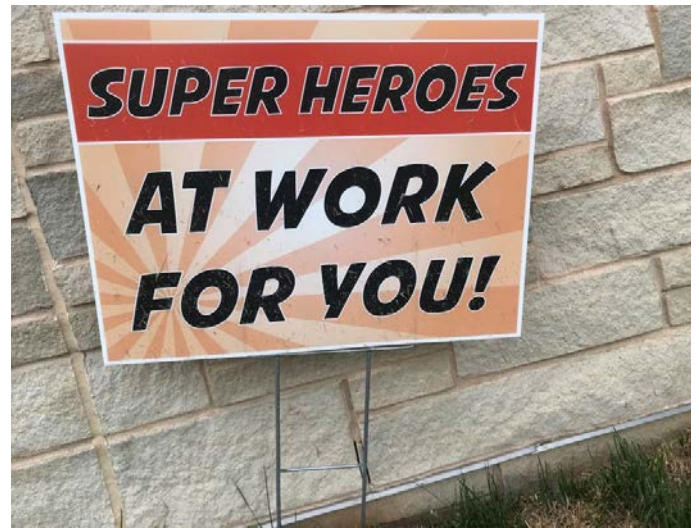
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LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

neighbors spread positivity during the pandemic

Paulette Frexias | Guest Writer and Photographer



Top row: An anonymous neighbor wrote “You can do this,” “Keep going,” and “You got this” in chalk on the sidewalk for neighbors. Due to the closure of gyms, many neighbors have taken to the sidewalks to get their exercise in, whether it may be walking, running, biking, and rollerskating. **Bottom left:** Unknown neighbors left this message for front-line workers outside of their Sterling neighborhood. The coronavirus has forced essential workers to put their lives on the line in order to keep the country safe. **Bottom right:** Hospital worker put this sign in front of the entrance of StoneSprings Hospital Center in Sterling to show their willingness to protect communities from the coronavirus. Hospital workers have put their lives on the line to cure those afflicted by the virus that has killed over 100,000 Americans.



Top left: An anonymous resident left the message “You’re amazing” on a rock next to a sidewalk commonly used by neighbors. Many messages such as this one have been written on the sidewalk in chalk and in signs on front lawns amid the coronavirus pandemic. **Bottom left:** 2020 graduation signs are a common sight in neighborhoods as the coronavirus and its consequential school closures have deprived seniors of their end-of-year festivities. Graduates have missed their prom, graduation, and last day of high school. **Top right:** A neighbor leaves slips of paper saying “patience,” “love,” and “hope” for others to take as needed. They have all been taken by neighbors for support during these trying times. **Bottom right:** The Morning Show at Hot 99.5 offers signs to the front line workers at the DMV to thank them for keeping the area safe. This neighbor put the sign in front of their house. A Hot 99.5 online advertisement reads, “Doctors, nurses and all front line workers are going above and beyond the call of duty to keep the DMV safe during COVID-19. They are our HEROES. We’re giving them the recognition they deserve. Your Morning Show is showing our appreciation for local heroes by traveling across the DMV to deliver custom signs right to your front yard!” •

SKILLFUL STUDENTS

Lauren Kirk | Guest Writer

With schools closed and activities cancelled, many students have been finding extra time on their hands during distance learning. Here's what some of us have been doing with the unexpected gift of time.



*Left: Senior **Anna Campo** shows off the butterflies she has pinned. Campo has learned to pin as well as display butterflies while stuck at home. "It's a really rewarding hobby because the money going into buying the butterflies, which die of natural causes, goes to preservation farms that support the environment," Campo said. Photo courtesy of Anna Campo. **Bottom Left: Freshman Liberty Harrison** has been working on art in quarantine, painting on canvases, as well as water bottles. "I painted a city skyscape at night," Harrison said. "I've always enjoyed the contrast of the beauty of human science and engineering against the beauty of nature." Photo Courtesy of Liberty Harrison. **Bottom Right: Freshman Lexi Donnelly** practices the guitar. She originally learned in fourth grade. "I'm reteaching myself guitar because I have nothing else to do so now is the time to do it," Donnelly says. Photo Courtesy of Lexi Donnelly.*





Top Left: Senior **Meghan Kirk** has taken up cross stitching to occupy her time in quarantine. “I’m an old soul,” Kirk said. “I wanted a fun hobby.” The picture above shows her first finished cross stitching project. **Top Right:** Freshman **Valerie Encinas** cares for the plants in her garden. During the school closure, Encinas has started to work on gardening to stay occupied. “I enjoy it because I get to spend time with my parents,” Encinas said. “My parents and I always talked about having a garden.” Photo courtesy of Valerie Encinas. **Bottom Left:** **Olivia DeWan** shows her powerlifting equipment. She is using it to work on her strength and exercise, lifting up to 190 pounds. “I started powerlifting so I could get stronger for field hockey,” DeWan said. “Since I’ve started lifting, I’ve noticed a huge difference in my speed and my ability to hit stronger drives.” Photo Courtesy of Olivia DeWan. Fourth grader **Matthew Kirk** shows off his pogo stick skills. He received it from a neighbor and quickly picked up on how to use it. “I like pogo sticking because if you just practice jumping, even without the pogo stick, you’ll get better” Kirk said. “It took me a while to learn, but my new record is 547 jumps in a row.”

COVID CLOSURE

won't take away athletes' spirit

Matt Starchville | Guest Writer

The abrupt end to the 2019-2020 school year not only affected the way that we learn but ended all sports in the process. Rising senior **Casey Hughes** and graduating senior **Stephen Sommer** both found their baseball seasons cut short almost as soon as they began. Although the coronavirus ended sports, these athletes won't let the quarantine crush their athletes' drive and dedication to get better.



An abrupt ending to his season was not what graduating senior first basemen Stephen Sommer expected. Like Hughes, Sommer has been putting in extra work to stay in shape.

"In the morning I go straight to my gym where I have a variety of weights and after that I hit off of a tee along with other baseball drills," Sommer said.

Sommer is committed to Hood College to play baseball. This makes it even more important to stay in shape and ready physically for the next season.

"After hitting off of a tee I will do some sprints to warm up for the next part of my workout," Sommer said. "Then I will flip a 400 hundred pound tire. To finish the workout I will do more sprints but this time have weights attached to a belt around my waist. All of this is to stay ready for college."



Rising senior cross country runner Casey Hughes hasn't stopped working out since the quarantine started.

"I run everyday to build cardio and to stay in shape," Hughes said.

Not only is Hughes focusing on cross country, he is preparing for a crucial AAU season. As a junior this is a critical time for athletes to get scholarships. Casey has diligently been following workouts given to him by his basketball coach. Casey has been playing basketball his whole life and has dedicated a lot of his weekend to tournaments.

"For basketball drills I'm working on my quickness and finishing at the rim," Hughes said.

"For me nutrition is everything, so I cut out all processed food and I'm sticking to water and propel because they don't contain sugar," Hughes said. "Changing my diet has helped me get in better shape."

During this quarantine it is easy to gain weight because you are always home with not much to do, so for athletes it is important to keep your nutrition on track. Nutrition can help you build muscle and help those muscles recover. •

FINDING PEACE

community finds ways to smile

Teacher **Amy Sibley** dons a mask at Heritage High School to assist with students picking up items on May 29. Across the county, teachers have been volunteering to sweat it out, helping to distribute materials to students and collect textbooks and other items, practicing required social distancing.



With school closures and stay-at-home orders in full swing, someone has been leaving rocks on monuments such as this statue of **Stanley Caulkins**, a renowned jeweler who passed away in 2018. No one knows who the rocks were created by, but we do know that Caulkins seems to be enjoying the secret.



Right: Sophomore **Jessica Booker** eats s'mores by the fire with friends while socially distancing in late May. **Far Right:** Sophomore **Amanda Carkin** went to her family's house on the Rappahannock River over the weekend to relax during quarantine in late May. •





artwork by Lauren Jackson