



JAGWIRE

Fall 2021 - Issue 4 - Finals



Finally the Finale

Jefferson Academy students navigate their stress, demands, and sleepless nights as they return to their first finals week after the pandemic.

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Teachers Have Lives!

Believe it or not teachers don't actually spend all their time at school! Some are rock-stars, martial artists or even spend their time following their favorite band.

Pages 7

Outstanding Ogre

The Shrek musical has come and gone, leaving in its wake some amazing memories and incredible performances. Take a look at the incredible production that the JA students created for the community.

Pages 10-11

Basketball is Back!

The boys' and girls' high school teams are back on the court, and looking to bounce back from last year. Coach Sharpley and the team discuss their goals and predictions for this season.

Pages 15-16

JA students may be single-handedly keeping the RogerHub Final Grade Calculator in business!

Okay...while this may not be entirely true, stress can be high for students as final exams and projects loom over the last days of school before break.

97 of the 154 students surveyed rated their stress levels between 4 and 5 concerning end of the year work and finals, and 110 students said that their finals were mostly tests.

So whether it be a pile of homework, stress about tests, or worrying about a grade, how can students prepare for the end of the semester while also managing stress?

Ms. LeValley gave some suggestions; one of her main tips was to find a balance between school and free time, such as study breaks every hour or getting outside. This helps prevent burn out and keeps you motivated.

LeValley also pointed out the importance of removing distractions such as phones while studying. "It's really easy to lose an hour or two on social media," she laughs. "So turn off distractions if they're not helpful."

According to The Princeton Review, one of the best study tips is to first tackle the units you struggled with the most, and the material that is most likely to be on the final. Try not to waste time and brain power going over the things you've already mastered.

Also, take care of yourself physically. Give your body healthy food and lots of water so your brain can work at its best. While it may be tempting to stay up late cramming, get some sleep and make time during the day to study instead. You will retain more when you are well-rested.

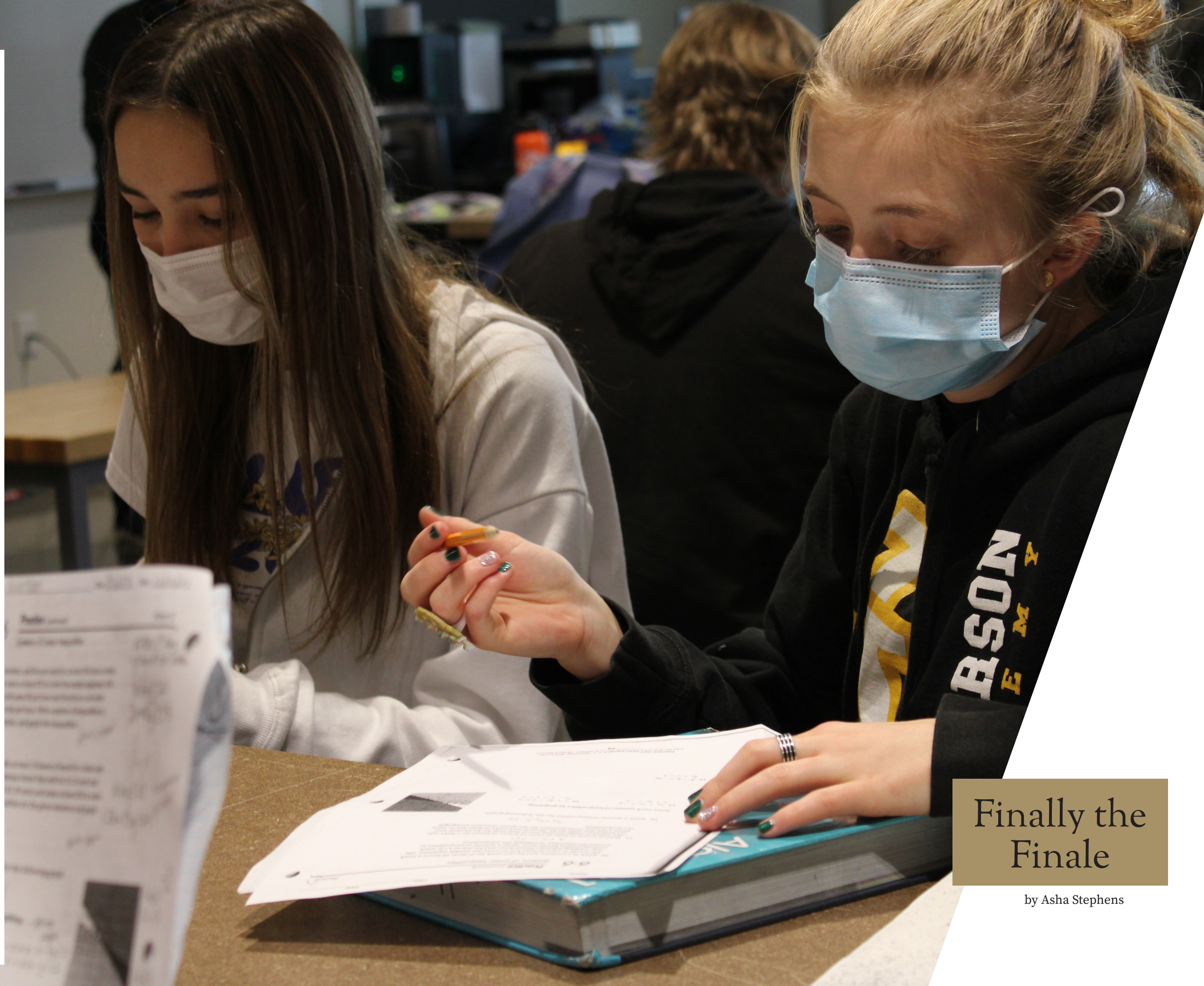
If you are concerned about a grade, talk to your teacher. Ms. LeValley encourages students to get help from teachers and figure out how to improve. "That conversation can alleviate a lot of stress," she explains.

Time management is also important, especially if your final is a project. "They can sometimes take way more time than studying for a test," says Ms. LeValley. Break down your workload into manageable pieces to get it done in time.

Finally, use the resources provided for you by the class. Ms. LeValley recommends using a study guide if there is one because "that alone will force you to study in a great way." Some classes also have quizlets, but sometimes simply reviewing notes and tests is a great way to prepare.

So there are many ways you can prepare for finals and handle stress, but don't feel alone if you are struggling with stress or mental health. There are resources for you here at school. Mrs. Adams and Ms. Parsons are available if you feel the need to speak with someone.

We are almost done, JA!



Finally the Finale

by Asha Stephens

SCIENCE SHOWDOWN

by Rhea Alexander

Students brushing a beautiful crystal string fluorescent light experiment, presenters dressed in formal attire, and fascinating presentations all helped create the 2021 Jefferson Academy Science Fair. As students trickled into the auxiliary gym on December 7th, anxious and excited faces filled the room. Over the first half of the day, students elaborated, expressed, and explained their project to an array of judges, including students and faculty.

After its temporary hiatus during the pandemic, the 2021-2022 school year marked the start of a new era for the science fair: one that is more digitized and eco-friendly. After the sudden and abrupt change to remote learning, the science team here at Jefferson Academy had to implement changes in order to make sure students didn't miss out on quality learning. After the switch to computers, the science team decided to computerize the Science Fair as well. From online rubrics to computer-performed score tallies, the pandemic has made its mark on the annual Jefferson Academy Science Fair.

"Our decision to digitize the Science Fair has made the entire process much smoother and environmentally friendly," reports junior high science teacher Ms. Babcock. "With the new changes we have implemented this year, the Science Fair is more efficient and we use a lot less paper."

A newly digitized program was not the only notable occurrence at the 2021 Science Fair. The experiments and projects put together by the students of Jefferson Academy were curious, immersive, and ambitious. This year's Science Fair featured a wide range and variety of topics. From a foldable toilet to tarantula hair durability, every experiment under the sun was present at the event.

Student Katelyn Harding bewildered and impressed judges with her engineering project: a collapsible toilet. During set-up, eyes were drawn to the neon orange tent in the middle of the auxiliary gym. For her project, inspiration struck Katelyn at her aunt's house when she saw a portable toilet. After several faulty prototypes, Harding saw all her hard work come to fruition with her final product.

"The purpose of my project was to create a product that is both practical and efficient," explains Harding.

In the midst of the Science Fair, student Kim Lighthart shared that she felt anxious before her project presentation. As she prepared her experiment on preservatives and preservation methods, Lighthart began to experience increased stress levels days before the Science Fair. From board assembly to late pictures, Lighthart put together her presentation board with increased anxiety levels. Despite her stress, however, Lighthart's project proved to be interesting and engaging as she won third place in the Chemistry 2 category.

"Getting prepared for the Science Fair was a little bit stressful because there were a few obstacles in my path," shares Lighthart.



"Best in Show" winner Kayla Michel proves that no one is immune to stress, as she began to feel nervous right before the Science Fair began. For her project, Michel tested chicken, steak, salmon, and shrimp at different levels of "cooked" - from raw to well done. At each of these levels, Michel tested for bacteria such as salmonella and E-coli.

From shocking experimental results to complex procedures, Michel experienced a dynamic range of emotions as she conducted her project. Going into the Science Fair, Michel shared that her stress level was at a 9 on a range from 1-10.

"I'm a little nervous about my presentation but I am also excited," commented Michel. "I think this is a topic that more people need to know about and be aware of."

The 2021 Jefferson Academy Science Fair culminated in a whirlwind of organized chaos. From newly minted changes and head-turning experiments to pre-show nervousness, this year's Science Fair was nothing if not dynamic. Several JA students put in countless hours of dedication to create the projects that were displayed at the Science Fair, and their meticulous work and passion goes to show the tremendous capabilities of the students here at JA.

JOINING THE JAPANESE CLUB

by Emma Cox

こんにちは！日本人倶楽部に参加しよう！

Hello! Join the Japanese Club!

Recently, Junior Harvey Watson put up posters all over JA in hopes to start a club to teach the students at Jefferson Academy how to speak and write basic conversations and words in Japanese.

"I really wished that JA did some Japanese classes," commented Watson. "I'll try to bring that into the school as best [as] I can."

Watson hopes that by the end of the 2022 spring semester, the club members will be able to have a smooth conversation with a Japanese school via virtual meetings on Zoom. After students are able

to speak several sentences in Japanese, Watson will teach them how to write in Japanese with a traditional brush and ink.

"I do plan to teach people how to write Japanese," Watson says. "However, my first priority is helping people understand the spoken and reading part of Japanese."

Watson also plans to continue the club after he graduates in 2023. By the end of this school year, he hopes that all the students in the club will be able to do all of the following: "tell time, count, and read and write basic Japanese conversations and sentences."

If you are interested in learning more about this club or are interested in joining, scan the QR code on one of the posters posted around the hallways.

シヤガー

IMPASSIONED LEARNING

by Jesse Pallotta

Building, designing, creating, for some, these are the better ways to learn. And for that type of learner, Warren Tech offers the perfect learning environment.

Warren Tech, a trade school with tons of options and classes to meet everyone's interests, is open for Jefferson Academy Juniors and Seniors. It is a school where you have the opportunity to pursue the education of something that truly sparks your interest and that you desire a career in. It is a place where you are surrounded by peers and teachers with similar motivations and passions, and the ability to reach toward your dreams and make them a reality.

Students who attend Warren Tech spend half of the day at JA, either in the morning or the afternoon, where they take 2 core classes each semester, and then travel to/

from one of the three facilities; Warren Tech's Central, North, or South campuses.

"Currently, I attend Warren Tech Central taking courses in Cyber Security and Computer Science," said junior Nick Ray who attends Warren Tech in the afternoon. "I chose that class because I found it really interesting and useful. The only part I dislike is the drive since it's kind of far, and traffic can be rough, although on Fridays there is no class, so it's like a half day for me."

Warren Tech also offers college credits, and multiple other opportunities for use later in life such as certifications and skills required to get jobs in your desired career field.

"Warren Tech comes with college credits and two certifications," says Ray. "It definitely leads to a better job outlook, and opportunities like internships."

While some people might think that Warren Tech would be much more difficult than regular school, this isn't necessarily the case.

"I think Warren Tech is easier and less demanding because I actually enjoy doing the work," Ray said. "There's also more reward or incentive in it; for example, I'm looking forward to getting my A+ Certification."

To enroll, all students have to do is go to the Warren Tech website where they select the classes they want to take as well as the time: either morning or afternoon. Then, all you need is to contact your counselor and go from there.

"I would definitely recommend it because there are so many programs for pretty much everyone's interests," concluded Ray.

CHERISHING TRADITIONS

by **Gianna Gagliano**

‘Tis the season! With the temperatures dropping, ornaments being hung, and Jack Frost nipping at your nose, Christmas is nearing. Winter break is right around the corner, and it is evident that there are many different traditions unfolding, depending on the household.

Decorating the house is a must do for getting into the holiday spirit. Everything ranging from a beautiful, jolly Christmas tree to wreaths hanging on the doors, as well as stockings over the fireplace or the lighting of the Menorah, is important for the feeling of the approaching holidays. There are a variety of ways to get into the joyful holiday spirit, all through the adornment of the celebratory houses.

“We usually set up stockings in the living room,” says sophomore Connor Scarboro. “We also put a tree up and decorate it with the same ornaments every year to keep a tradition alive.

Sometimes we put lights up, it kind of depends on the year, and our whole house typically has small decorations that symbolize Christmas everywhere.”

sophomore Tyler Fix. “We usually eat this meal in between lunch and dinner at the time of 3:30 so we don’t get too hungry waiting until later.”

Once the meal is over and families have said their goodbyes for the night, an eager night of sleep occurs due to the excitement for the next day, Christmas Day. This is when children are made aware of their behavior over the course of the year because either a piece of coal will magically appear in their stockings, or there will be numerous presents under the Christmas tree waiting for them. Families then show their appreciation for one another by visitations on this special day and another mouthwatering feast.

“My family usually wakes up and eats breakfast together, then we watch a movie of some kind,” says sophomore Keaton Dreher. “We then spend time with each other for the rest of the day until we go over to my grandparents and we all open presents that we’ve gotten for each other there and have a big dinner together.”

With all these traditions comes a special meaning for everyone around the time of the holidays. Christmas gives families a time to come together



After all this decorating, the countdown until the holiday seems to take a significant amount of time. However, once the twenty fourth of December arrives, stomachs begin to rumble at the thought of the delicious feast that is about to take place.

“My Christmas Eve dinner usually consists of the typical Thanksgiving food. This includes everything ranging from ham, stuffing, and mashed potatoes, all the way to turkey and delicious desserts,” says

and celebrate each other while expressing their gratitude through presents and a big meal together.

“Christmas means getting to be with your family and spend quality time with the ones you love and have a good time doing Christmas traditions,” states Connor Scarboro. “In my opinion, Christmas isn’t about presents, it’s about having a good time with your family and showing your appreciation for them.

DECORATION DILEMMA

by **Kirsten Nedved**

No, the library wasn’t robbed of all its computers, Every winter the halls of Jefferson Academy are wrapped in holiday decorations. Lights are hung from the walls, trees are hidden throughout the building, doors are wrapped in festive wrapping paper, posters line the railings and snowflakes dangle from the ceilings. However, the seemingly effortless decorations became quite a hassle this year when the police department got involved.

Around one o’clock in the morning on November 27th, the Broomfield Police Department received a security notice from Jefferson Academy. There was motion detected in one of the lower hallways believed to be a security threat. After arriving at the scene, police scoured the hallways looking for the motion only to find the snowflakes hanging from the ceiling were caught in a draft. The draft caused the snowflakes to swing back and forth setting off the motion detectors.

Rather than removing the students hard work, Mr. Bott, the facilities director, decided to turn off the motion detectors for the night. On

Monday morning StuCo was asked to remove the snowflakes, but there was a slight communication error. Rather than removing the snowflakes, StuCo transferred them into another hallway where the same issue occurred. The motion detectors were set off.

Once again, Mr. Bott decided to turn off the motion detectors so he could speak to StuCo and collectively come up with a solution. Unfortunately, when students arrived at the school on Tuesday, the snowflakes were taken down and placed in Mrs. Ferb’s classroom. There had been a miscommunication between Mr. Bott and the night custodians. Rather than waiting until Tuesday for a meeting with Stuco, the decorations were taken down Monday night.

Mr. Bott recognized the miscommunications on the administration’s side of the situation and would love to work with StuCo to get the snowflakes put back up elsewhere. “I want to help put these up, I want them up. I just don’t want to be here at one o’clock in the morning.” Oftentimes Mr. Bott works with StuCo to work around fire-code and other rules blocking decorations. He loves seeing the hard work students put into decorating the hallways.

WONDERFUL WONDER

by **Nick Hill**

Everyone has heard the saying that the holiday season is “the most wonderful time of the year.” People around the country are putting up their holiday decorations and settling down to watch their favorite movies.

Students at JA sit down with friends and loved ones around the school and admire the company as well as the decorations. They celebrate a few wacky and fun traditions on the week preceding winter break.

These JA traditions can range from just dressing funny, to decorating the halls with festive decorations that bring joy to the community.

Some people think that the holiday season is rightfully deemed the most wonderful time, and

other students said that they would rather it be mid-summer that is considered the most wonderful.

When asked why she thought this time of year was considered wonderful, sophomore Aubry Duncan said, “because the lights are pretty, and people are happy, and family gets to be together.”

The holiday season is well-known for having very intricate designs of string lights and light shows that can be admired by oneself or with the entire family. And family is considered to be a very important aspect of this time of year. Whether it is spent with your entire family, or just your loved ones and pets.

Josh Timmins added, “The ability to flip on cozy 101.1 and hear Last Christmas... it’s great. That plus, you know, when the snow starts falling, the lights go up, trees get all pretty and whatnot.”

OUTSTANDING OGRE

by Sophia Krout

From terrifying ogres to outcast fairytale creatures, the quarter two production of *Shrek the Musical* has come and gone. With a joint effort from Ms. Grace, the actors, and the technicians, a wonderful production was performed last week in the auditorium.

With the semester coming to a close, Ms. Grace's A block musical class finished off the second quarter with multiple performances in *Shrek the Musical*. The cast spent the quarter memorizing the songs, preparing the dances, and learning the show inside and out.

"A musical always makes it more work because you are not only learning the lines and blocking, you are also learning the songs and choreography. It is a ton of work, but that's the fun of it," said Ms. Grace.

This is the first production that Jefferson Academy has had in a while, due to COVID. Everyone is extremely excited to be able to put on a show like this after the theater being dark for so long.

"My favorite thing about being a part of this was being on stage again. It was hard not being able to perform over COVID and all of that going on, so it's nice to be back," said AJ Jett, sophomore, Gingy the Gingerbread Man and Sugar Plum Fairy.



Early in the week, the cast began to feel the nerves creep in before their performances. Many of the cast members were very anxious for the first performance on Thursday, and to finally be performing the show they have spent so long preparing.

"I am nervous about the things that I personally need to work on and, just, you know, being the best I can be," said Daniella Jaramillo, senior, Fiona.

With the nerves, came the excitement. As the shows came closer, the cast became more and

more excited for the performances. Ms. Grace was especially excited for everyone to see the show and the hard work the cast and tech put into it.

"I am so excited for everyone to come and see the show! I love this show. I have wanted to do this show forever. I think it has such a great message," said Ms. Grace.

One of the most exciting things about being a part of something like this for the cast is having their family and friends come and see them in the show. The audience each night was filled with JA students and their families coming to support the cast.

"I really like all the scenes, but I am really excited for everyone to see the ensemble songs, but I feel like the whole show is amazing to be honest," said Isaac Padgett, sophomore, Shrek.

The musical A block class was a perfect bonding experience for the cast. With spending so much time together during rehearsal, and working together to make the show, the cast was able to get to know each other better.

"I think my favorite part about doing this was getting to know the cast as actual people. I didn't know these people until I got in the class, so it was really fun to get to know them," said Daniella Jaramillo.

Shrek the Musical was a beneficial event for everyone. With the stress of the pandemic, and the upcoming finals, it served as a good buffer and break for everyone involved. It also served as a fun outing for families to come and see the show together.

"In a time where we have so much extra stuff, and society having everything that's going on, I think it is good to have theater to escape. The best thing about *Shrek* is that you do get to escape, it's fun and whimsical, but it also has a great message about being your authentic self," said Ms. Grace.



DODGEBALL DATE

by Katie McCurdy

Multicolored balls will fly through the air as screams of terror and excitement will fill the gymnasium...at least that is the hope for the much-anticipated upcoming dodgeball tournament.

After what will be a long, well-needed break from school, Jefferson Academy will host its inaugural dodgeball tournament in hopes to reconnect students and give everybody a fun event to look forward to, all while kicking off the second semester.

Student Council has planned the event and Samantha Lavenhagen, Student Council vice president, has said that "the dodgeball tournament serves to build school spirit and to help keep the

school connected!"

The tournament was originally set to be held in early December, but has been rescheduled to January 12th in order for our students to be able to cheer on their boys' basketball teams. It will cost \$10, which will go toward future student events. Senior Jacob Mullane said he "loves dodgeball and doing it with your friends makes it even better, especially when it is a competition."

In light of it being a competition, the prize is still to be determined, but make sure you keep your eyes out for an update regarding the prize. Student council members are promoting this event through posters, email, and social media, so be sure to keep yourself updated so you do not miss out on this new tradition!

JAG JUICE JUNGLE

by Maddie Leyba

If you need a quick sugar fix or a reason to skip that extra healthy lunch that was packed for you, forget about vending machines and make your way over to the "Jag Juice Jungle" for all your snack needs.

Mr. Sharpley's Intro to Business class is bringing huge opportunities to junior high students. Not only is "Juice Jungle" a great place for students to stop for a snack, but also a great learning opportunity for students to better their understanding of business.

The new business is open for snacks Monday through Friday from 10:10-11:00 and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30-8:10 for breakfast.

Komal Basnet, a junior high student in Sharpley's class, remarked "everyone brainstormed ideas for the business, eventually, the class settled on a snack bar." The items they sell include juice, pop tarts, granola bars, and even donuts and burritos.

While these snacks are all fun, the class had to

jump through hoops to decide what they wanted to sell. They had originally thought about selling candy, chips, juice, amongst other items. However, they couldn't sell whatever they wanted, they had to go to Principal Grantham to get everything approved.

The class worked collectively to create a slideshow that in turn served as a business pitch to present to the principal. After creating their presentation, they then elected four candidates to present the pitch to the admin. They chose those who they thought would best represent and communicate their vision for the business.

While "Juice Jungle" is a great opportunity for students to learn the nitty-gritty of business, it is also great for students who are looking for a snack or even breakfast some days. It is a quick and easy way for students to purchase snacks without having to leave campus.



TRACKING TRACK

by Keaton Dreher

Your heart's racing as you get on the line to run what could be any number of races. Or maybe you're on the field, throwing the discus or the shotput, or doing the long jump or high jump. On the Jefferson Academy Track team, the possibilities are endless. And this season, things are going to be different and better than last year.

"Without COVID we can build more personal relationships without having to stay distanced," said Connor Berg, a member of the track team. They had to do certain things and be more careful which in ways prevented how close the team could get. It will be good to have this this season because they have some pretty big goals too, and they have a plan to get there.

"It's always a goal to work hard," said Sean Beasley, another runner on the track team. He also said that this is especially important to do for the seniors

to make sure they end with a good high school experience. They can't just rely on working hard though. "Definitely getting lots of teamwork and making sure everyone's playing a good part," said Berg on what he thought was important.

According to Berg and Beasley, as long as everyone is working well together by having good teamwork and making sure they always work hard, they can go pretty far. So, what do they hope to accomplish this season? In response to this, Sean said, "there is always the hope of state." He went on to say that this is a challenge because everyone goes out very fast and you have to stay with them to make a big enough dent to get a good spot. This is also more for distance he points out.

Similarly, Berg said, "I don't really know the names of a lot of the meets at the end of the season, but we definitely have goals of going to some of them and then state is always a good goal." So, they agree that state is always somewhat of a lingering goal in the distance for the team. So the question has to be asked, who can get the team to state?

With track being a largely individual sport, who do we have that is talented and skilled enough to

bring us there? Sean said, "Evan Mills is highly likely for mid distance, Noah Douglas for distance, Chrisly Kelly for sprints and jumps, Mark Leoni for hurdles, and the rest I am unsure of, but there can be surprises." He sounded hopeful not just that we have good enough people to make state, but several of them, and in numerous different areas.

But these are just a few select people, and everyone on the team has their own individual goals. When asked what his were for the season, Berg said, "I don't really have much but I'm hoping to get really fast in the mile and improving in distance and the long jump." He said these are the events he performs best in and likes the most, so he wants to make the greatest progress in these for his sophomore season.

When asked about their current practices and how they will change going forward into the start of the season, Beasley said, "Right now we are just doing small school races and just starting off with

long runs to build more endurance, then going more into speed work and we will eventually end in easy days to make sure we don't get injured." So, as might be expected, the team will continue to become more and more speed-oriented the closer it gets to the season. Then toward the end of the season, cut back on training to maximize performance and reduce the risk of injury.

When asked the same question, Berg said, "We practice every day right now and we will continue to with the start of the season, so that won't change much." He did, however, say that for their cross country season they practiced at the elementary school which they won't have to do for track. He likes that aspect. He also said the same thing as Sean where right now they are focusing on endurance and will go more into speed work over time.

There is a lot to look forward to as there are big hopes and lots of personal goals and growths to happen over this next track season. Along with the team now being able to build more teamwork, as long as they continue to work hard, big things can happen.



LEAVING A LEGACY



by Jacob Brackney

After all the hype and the heartbreak of the roaring crowd as the seconds tick away on the last game of the year for the boys' soccer team, the hardest part was facing the crowd that drove miles and showed up for every single game chanting "We still love you!" with tears in their eyes, trying to comfort the sad team. Laying out on the field trying to console their own teammates who had played their hearts out for the school that has helped them so much through their hard times.

Thoughts on next year are varied from player to player but the head coach, Matt Cassell thought this when asked his hope for next year: "That the boys on the team leave better than they came, create lifelong memories and friendships, and that we represent the legacy and future of the program and school well."



Other people have different thoughts about wanting to go to the state championship again, but there is still hope for the new players within the eighth-grade class. People like Luca Arroyo, who has had a promising start in the middle school team and making a great impression on the coaches of the high school team.

According to sophomore Josiah Shehata, "I feel optimistic about the new 8th graders coming into our program. They have some big shoes to fill."

Luckily, they do still have some big hitters for next year, with this year's juniors Evan, Jayden, Jere, Chrisly, Logan, and Jonah.

When asked about how the crowds will support the

team next year, junior Logan Johnson says, "I think that it would be really hard to keep the enthusiasm that school had because we were undefeated and it will be hard to replicate that, meaning that it won't be as hype next year." This acknowledges that the next season will be different due to what happened this season. He adds, "I think the focus will be on playing simple because we are losing a lot of technical players so we will have to rely on other things."

Cassell notes about next year's team, "The quickest way to devalue something is to compare it to something else. However, I think every player and team that has represented JA boys' soccer over the 11-year program has done well and wouldn't expect that to change." Shehata shares, "Honestly, I don't know how next year's team will turn out."

Hopefully, this team will learn to work together and be one team with a record to live up to, thereby keeping the hope of the next state championship within reach for the next generation of this great franchise. People will soon see the talent that is coming to the team from around the high school whether it be returning players like Johnson and Shehata or the new eighth graders that are going to be in high school next year. The entire school looks forward to what the new season will bring to the school.

Just like Johnson says, "I think this year will help us next year. Obviously not losing the players will help, but I think since we lost the finals everyone will have very high spirits and will really want to win next year."

DESIRE AND DEDICATION

by Emerson Zerbib

Basketball season is back!

Last year Covid impacted the team heavily, but this year JA is jumping right back into the excitement of basketball.

When commenting on this year's prospects Coach Sharpley stated, "We didn't make the playoffs but this year we hope to get back into them." The team is making a special effort to get into the playoffs this year. Senior Izzy Villegas-Sisneros said, "Personally, I plan to just work very hard during practice and the trials, and when I don't have to, still get a few shots." She adds, "As a team, I think we all are very dedicated this year. I feel like because we've all been playing a lot we've been more involved and inspired, in a way, to get to the playoffs. I think we all want it a lot more than we did in the past, so we've been working a lot harder than in past years."

Just like parents and coaches, the teams themselves are very excited. Macy Palmer stated, "Yes, I got on the team! I am really excited to be playing!" As a player who's been playing for 4 years, Macy has quite a bit of experience. Other players who have been playing for much longer are also very excited. Izzy Villegas-Sisneros claimed that she's most excited for "making bonds with the new freshmen on the team and senior nights."

How does a player get on the team? "You just have

to try out, you need to have knowledge in the sport, and some ability to play," Coach Sharpley said. Practices, along with the desire to play, are a huge part of being on the team. Players are taught skills for the game, occasional weightlifting, and game strategy. "I like that I am able to get conditioned for other sports, and I just like the sport," Macy stated. Basketball is a very enjoyable sport, and Coach Sharpley said, "Players need good chemistry with the game, a desire to play, and to have fun!"

The first few games, players were pretty anxious. The girls' basketball team lost 2 and won 1. "I was just worried about messing up or worried about my performance and if I got better or worse over the last year," Izzy stated. "I think we played pretty well. There were definitely things I could have improved, but I did pretty well for it being my first game," she continued. "As a team I think we all did really well. I think we did better than what we were expecting. We have a lot more chemistry this year. I think it was a good first game and it showed us how we do have a lot of potential." As for losing the first 2 games, improvement may be something that has to be reached. So how would the team plan on improving? "Improving my defense. I dropped a lot in the last game. So I'm going to do that. I'm also going to try to be louder on the bench to help people who are playing to get more motivated and so they know that we still support them to get their energy up!" Izzy explained



BOUNCING BACK

by Tyler Fix

Exhausted, running down the court with the sounds of your opponent's shoes following your every step, the fans in the crowd roaring as you swiftly make your way towards the hoop: it's an exciting idea that almost everyone who has played basketball knows something about.

Unfortunately, this past year, COVID has taken out so much enjoyment from this sport. Without the fans, basketball is an extremely different sport to say the least. With the hope of the stands refilling with the cheering, supportive crowd, the Jefferson Academy 2021 basketball season is off to a good start.

"I think more people will show up," explained Isaiah Mendez, a swing player for the Jefferson Academy basketball team, "but we should try to get as many as we can to support us throughout the season." Coach Sharpley adds, "Certainly more students and fans will attend games now. The teams will need to win to draw the big crowds and that is the goal."

While bringing back the crowd is such a significant factor of this game, the crucial factor of being successful and stacking up wins is predominant. This season, the Jefferson Academy basketball team is even more willing to show up and work harder than ever before in hopes of being awarded a state title.

When asked just how much the team is doing in preparation for this season Isaiah Mendez replied, "We are doing conditioning and perfecting our defense to hopefully have a good season."

With every high school basketball team, continuity is a rare sighting due to the graduation of the seniors and the progression of the grade levels. Every year, new faces are seen in the program. However, this change means the team must continuously adapt to the new players filling in the missing places of the seniors. This results in a

whole new scene of players on the court, especially with the senior dominated team that was present last year.

"I think that for some people it will take time," says freshman, Isaiah Mendez, "but for the most part we have chemistry with each other already from JAM, so it should just be smoother." Coach Sharpley adds, "Adjustment will most certainly take time. Neither of the varsity teams had off-season games or team camps at full strength. Our rosters are deep with players that play soccer as their primary sport so they only have time for basketball during the regular season. The teams have amazing talent and athletic ability, so once all begins to click on the court collectively, confidently, seamlessly and flawlessly on the offensive end, the teams will have tremendous success."

The first game jitters really made their appearances for the boys' first game this season. Both varsity teams experienced a loss, however the teams see this as an opportunity to grow and prevent those jitters from getting to them in the future.

"The varsity teams had only 3 practice sessions together before the first games, so the teams experienced close

losses," says Coach Sharpley. "All the high school basketball teams experienced early first game jitters and losses with the exception of the boys' JV. Both varsity teams certainly had opportunities to win for sure. The girls' varsity lost with a shot that just missed at the end of the game."

Jefferson Academy boys' basketball is up for a challenge this year, making their name known after winning the Bob LeVoe Tournament recently and blowing the competition out of the water. They are making efforts in and out of the gym to keep this winning streak going and make their way to winning a state championship.

"Our goal is to get back to the state tournament for the girls and boys varsity basketball teams," says Sharpley. "The goal for our younger teams is to have solid records at the end of the season."

