



# JAGWIRE

Winter 2022 - Issue 6 - Memories



## Once in a Lifetime

Jefferson Academy seniors share their memories and experiences upon their return from their once in a lifetime trip throughout Europe.

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## A Witch to Watch

From a forced marriage to the voyage of so-called villains to destroy a bog witch, *The Witch's Princess* is not the show to miss.

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## Censoring Censorship

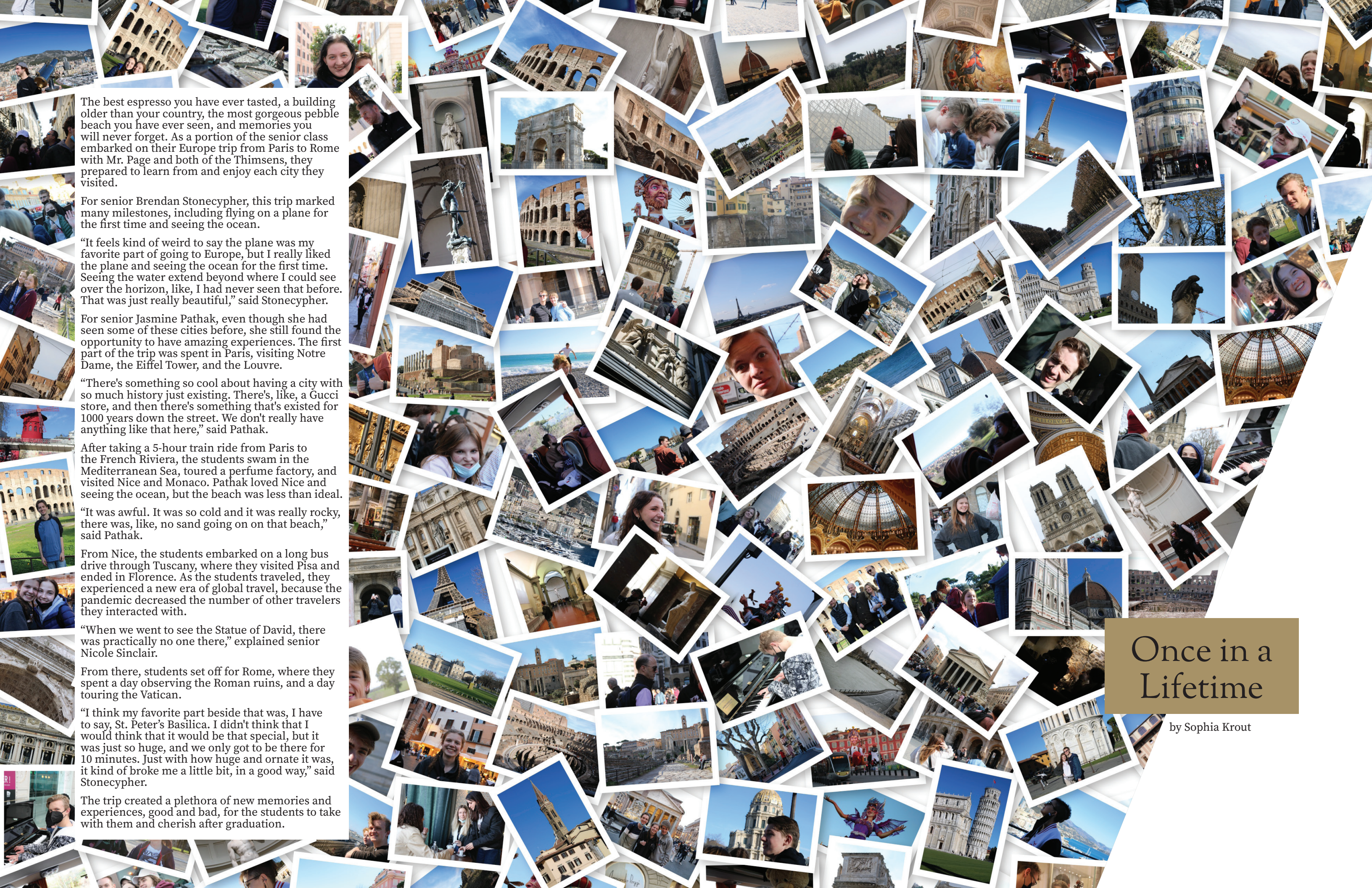
JA students and staff weigh-in on recent events involving book banning and its effects on education of students and the curriculum at large.

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## Grip and Grit

Chalk, determination, strength, no fear of heights, and a crash pad is what it takes to be a climber. With the season wrapping up the JA climbers reflect on a successful climb.

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The best espresso you have ever tasted, a building older than your country, the most gorgeous pebble beach you have ever seen, and memories you will never forget. As a portion of the senior class embarked on their Europe trip from Paris to Rome with Mr. Page and both of the Thimsens, they prepared to learn from and enjoy each city they visited.

For senior Brendan Stonecypher, this trip marked many milestones, including flying on a plane for the first time and seeing the ocean.

“It feels kind of weird to say the plane was my favorite part of going to Europe, but I really liked the plane and seeing the ocean for the first time. Seeing the water extend beyond where I could see over the horizon, like, I had never seen that before. That was just really beautiful,” said Stonecypher.

For senior Jasmine Pathak, even though she had seen some of these cities before, she still found the opportunity to have amazing experiences. The first part of the trip was spent in Paris, visiting Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, and the Louvre.

“There's something so cool about having a city with so much history just existing. There's, like, a Gucci store, and then there's something that's existed for 1000 years down the street. We don't really have anything like that here,” said Pathak.

After taking a 5-hour train ride from Paris to the French Riviera, the students swam in the Mediterranean Sea, toured a perfume factory, and visited Nice and Monaco. Pathak loved Nice and seeing the ocean, but the beach was less than ideal.

“It was awful. It was so cold and it was really rocky, there was, like, no sand going on on that beach,” said Pathak.

From Nice, the students embarked on a long bus drive through Tuscany, where they visited Pisa and ended in Florence. As the students traveled, they experienced a new era of global travel, because the pandemic decreased the number of other travelers they interacted with.

“When we went to see the Statue of David, there was practically no one there,” explained senior Nicole Sinclair.

From there, students set off for Rome, where they spent a day observing the Roman ruins, and a day touring the Vatican.

“I think my favorite part beside that was, I have to say, St. Peter's Basilica. I didn't think that I would think that it would be that special, but it was just so huge, and we only got to be there for 10 minutes. Just with how huge and ornate it was, it kind of broke me a little bit, in a good way,” said Stonecypher.

The trip created a plethora of new memories and experiences, good and bad, for the students to take with them and cherish after graduation.

## Once in a Lifetime

by Sophia Krout

# COLLEGE CHOICE

by Anna Saprón

Opportunities and hopes arise for several students as they look into the future and their careers. College Day gave everyone a chance to see just a few of the options they have to pursue their hopes and dreams.

Twenty-one colleges located all over the nation were represented during the event. CU Boulder, CSU, Oregon State, and University of Tennessee, Knoxville were just a few of the major schools present.

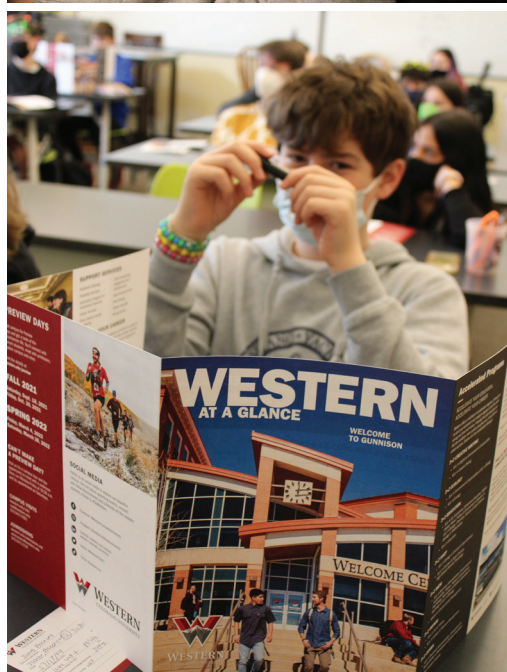
“I was most excited about College Day for the swag,” commented sophomore, Mia Kelso. Colleges that decided to bring goodies seemed to receive extra attention. However, all the colleges had eager listeners in their rooms.

Intentions for College Day can be hard to pin-point, but junior Caden Fullerton had them set. “I am interested in it so that I have more of an idea if I'd actually want to go on a tour of them and potentially go to them for college.”

“We host College Day to show the potential opportunities that students can have post-secondary, whether they decide to go into the workforce or take their education to the next level,” explains Mr. Cloonan when asked about the purpose of College Day.

Mr. Cloonan also mentioned that the survey he sent out after College Day had over a 50% response rate and the majority of the responses were positive.

All the colleges at the event offered what seemed



to be countless majors. Anything from business, to engineering, to anatomy studies were introduced to JA students. That being said, the excitement of what life is like after high school wasn't lost on the students either.

“I'm excited to see what living away from home is like and getting to know new people and have a new place that can be a second home to me,” remarked sophomore Stori Blois about what she looks forward to at college.

# EARLY EXIT

by Katelyn Hickey

You may not have noticed, but there is a missing senior at JA.

Juliahna Williams has been absent from school after graduating early over Winter Break. Early graduation is very uncommon and is not something that is easily accomplished.

“The only thing I did that set me ahead was taking 4 core classes all at once in fall 2021. It was extremely intense mostly because they were all college courses which were 15 credits on top of senior seminar,” Williams explained.

Her hectic schedule this last semester granted her a “stress-free lifestyle,” as she would claim it. Now that she has no need to attend JA, she has been spending most of her time with her family and friends while also nannying. She says she plans on getting her EMT certification soon as well.

When asked what she misses most about school, she claims she misses having tasks to complete.

“I feel like at JA there's always something else to complete, so to go from that to having no one tell you anything ever is a big change,” commented Williams. “The pressure you feel as a student is completely diminished.”

At the end of the day, “Honestly, it's not all it's cracked up to be,” remarked Williams. The decision to graduate early can be a big decision, and when asked if she would've done anything differently she



said, “I think I would have stayed and taken a few more classes such as Psychology and Bio 2, but I can say that despite that I do not regret my decision to graduate early,” concluded Williams.

She does however plan on returning to JA to walk for graduation. Since she uses all of her free time to work and spend time with family, she plans on attending either Texas Tech or Colorado Mesa next fall, continuing her career as a normal student.

# ELECTING ELECTIVES

by Camryn Carroll

Homework may consist of analyzing fingerprints and fiber to solve mock crimes, or it may be looking into the stars to better understand our Earth and how it interacts with the galaxy, or it may even be figuring out why your dog barks and your cat meows. These are all options for classes that may become available at JA because of the new class proposal system that was implemented this year.

On Friday, February 28th, students of Jefferson Academy in 9th through 11th grade took the school's new High School Electives Preferences Survey. Formatted in Google Forms, the

survey took about 30 minutes out of C block for students to complete.

Students in every grade are excited about the new classes being offered and the input they get to have in their schedule, in a very convenient way. In the past, students would have to take multiple hours to print out paperwork and look through long online documents to find the classes they wanted to take and figure out how many credits they would need.

“The form saved me a lot of time, it was a lot easier to fill out and I think that the school should keep doing it next year too,” commented junior Aries Mendez.

The most popular classes among students were Forensics, Animal Behavior, and Disease Studies.

“One of the most interesting classes I saw was forensics. A lot of my friends were also excited about that class, and I'm glad I got the option to choose it as one of my first choices,” remarked junior Matt Van Dyke.

Many students also claimed to be happy to get a 30-minute break from their C block to fill out the survey. Overall, the new High School Electives Preferences Survey was very well liked and appreciated among the students of Jefferson Academy.

# POURING PAINT

by Mackenzie Estep

Vibrant colors will swirl and swish together, creating new and exciting art while proving that brushes are a thing of the past when wanting to create a provocative painting project.

Paint pouring is a somewhat new painting style where paint is layered inside a cup and then is poured on the canvas to make fun and unique designs. The canvas can then be moved around to distribute the paint in many different ways.

JA's very own National Art Honor Society (NAHS) will welcome those looking to try something new to a paint pouring event on March 15. The event costs \$20 for students and staff and \$25 for other outside guests. No experience or artistic talent is needed, the night is a low maintenance event for someone looking for a good time.

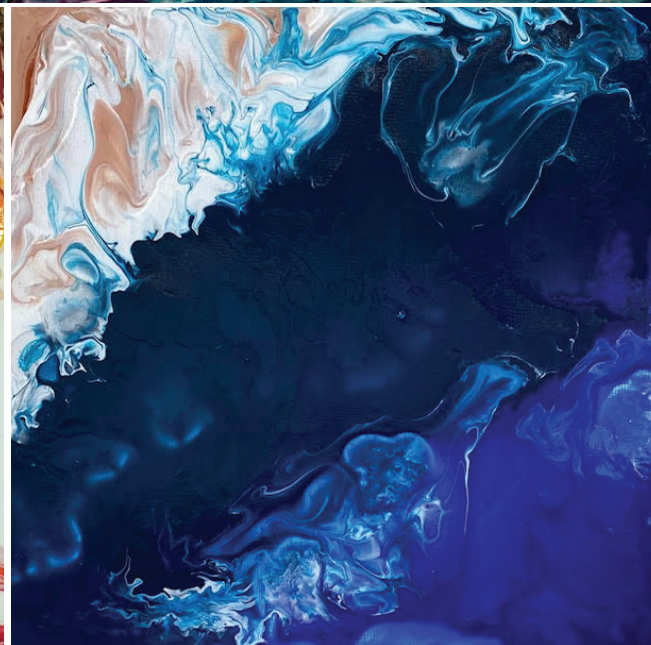
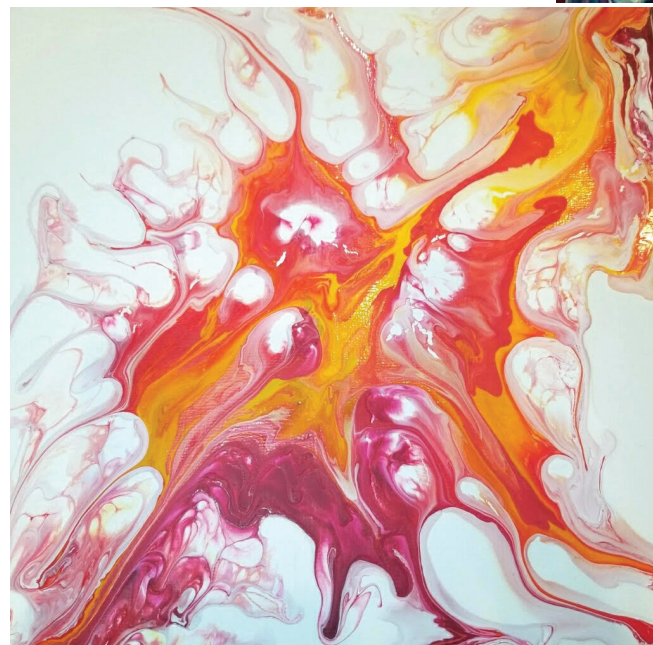
It may seem tricky, but NAHS members will be there to guide and give instruction to anyone who needed it.

"The NAHS members make it easy for participants to follow along and find success so they are more likely to walk away with something they're happy with!" said Mrs. Garcia, art teacher and sponsor of NAHS.

"The event is basically just a fun night of painting, and it gives everyone a chance to see some of the student's art and get to bring home some of their own," said sophomore Anna Brenneman.

Attendees are able to go home with two different and unique creations and with the memories that come along with them. They can experiment with various techniques and colors to make something that is completely theirs.

"I think the best part about this event is trying new things and seeing how people will create their own paintings," said sophomore Harriet Seiffertt.



# A WITCH TO WATCH

by Maddie Leyba

From a forced marriage to the voyage of so-called villains to destroy a bog witch, *The Witch's Princess* is not the show to miss. An adventure featuring a princess against a bog witch, the audience will surely not grow restless.

"It's the story of a girl who is supposed to get married, but there's a curse on the kingdom and the bog witch has to be killed in order for her to be able to get married, and none of the guys that are knights are worthy, so she decides she's going to go kill the bog witch herself so she doesn't have to get married because she doesn't particularly want to get married. She puts together a crew of monsters, like the jabberwocky, Medusa... none of the monsters are as monstrous as we are meant to believe by stories that have been told, but they form this crew that is going to go kill the witch and things are not as one would expect," Ms. Grace excitedly explained.

The show's author, Don Zolidis, recently released this show and Jefferson Academy is one of the first with the opportunity to perform it. This is an exciting chance for A block theater to show off its skills.

There are fourteen students performing the show, only a few of whom have been in any shows recently. *The Witch's Princess* has served as a great bonding experience and will be a great acting experience.

Alexandra Walker, who plays the witty best friend of the princess, says her favorite thing about the play has been "getting to work with my fellow classmates/castmates to produce a funny source of entertainment and I've enjoyed being able to learn more about the theater and coming out of my shell."

When asked what Walker was most excited about, she answered, "I am most excited for my scenes with Matt Van Dyke (Jeff the Courier) because although some of them were awkward at first, most of them are absolutely hilarious." The cast has grown closer not only as peers, but also as friends to perform a witty and comical production of *The Witch's Princess*.

"My favorite memory from the play so far has been watching Chrisly and Aiden come out of their shells with their roles of the Knight of Feathers and the Knight of Blossoms, because they are hilarious," commented Walker.



# CENSORING CENSORSHIP

by Rhea Alexander

“It’s hard to imagine why literature sets off a panic button in our society.” Ms. Larsen’s words connect with many when it comes to the controversial topic of book banning. Ever since the 18th century, book censorship has elicited a wide variety of opinions and emotions from across the world.

More recently, however, a Tennessee school district banned Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel, *Maus*, for its profanity and nudity. This ban has garnered lots of attention, with many claiming that school boards are effectively shielding students from important historical and social topics such as the Holocaust.

The ban on *Maus* is a prime example of the two sides and arguments of book censorship in academic settings, a topic that tends to polarize many populations. One such population is our very own Jefferson Academy, so what exactly does the community of JA think about book banning?

According to a local survey of 215 students, 68.8% of the JA population believes that books should not be banned at all. In addition, 20% of students believe that schools might need to ban books depending on the content covered. Finally, 11.2% of students think that schools should be able to ban books. The survey results display varying levels of tolerance for scholastic book suppression.

“You’d think by now in 2022 we would be getting rid of guns in schools, or even implementing compost or recycling, but it’s scary how the US and schools are banning books,” comments Skyla Rogers. “For what reason? There isn’t one.”

While some students like Skyla Rogers completely oppose the concept of book banning, others including Nathan Harding support the school’s right to ban books.

“I think banning books should be allowed because some books are inappropriate and uncomfortable for people to read,” states Nathan Harding. “Books dealing with sex or nudity are not appropriate to talk about in school.”

Although several students lie on opposite sides of the spectrum, many find

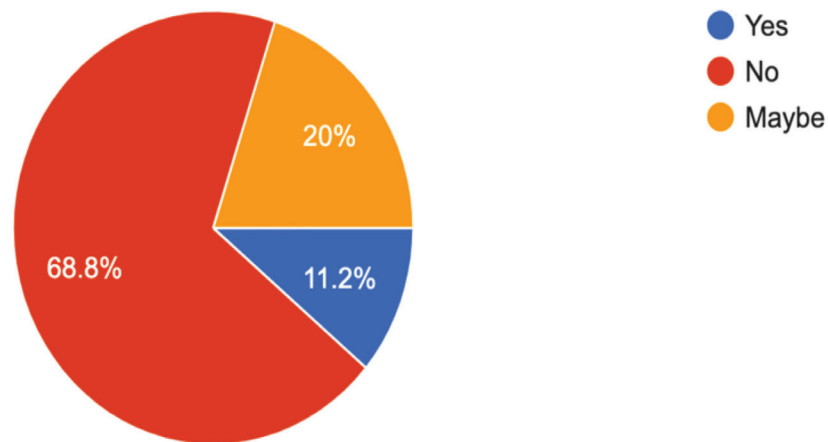
themselves in the middle ground. Students in this gray area support the school’s right to ban books in specific circumstances, arguing that some topics are simply not meant for some audiences. Additionally, these students maintain that restricting certain books does not mean students do not have access to these books and they can instead read banned books outside of school.

“I believe that a school’s right to ban books depends on the book and its content,” shares Ashley Nichols. “I feel that controversial topics, unless absolutely necessary, shouldn’t be covered in school.”

I believe schools can create an excellent and diverse selection of important and historical literature in their libraries and classrooms while also being thoughtful and professional about the content of the books,” voices Makaela Eberling. “Young students should not be reading books about things like sexual assault or extreme violence or glorification of major drug use because some content can seriously harm younger students without them even realizing it; it is the job of older people who know the content and how it could harm them to make thoughtful decisions about what literature is best for the younger students to

## Do you think schools should be able to ban books?

215 responses



The English staff resolutely opposes book restriction, with some even asserting that censoring content can be harmful to students.

“Almost all censorship of content in schools is harmful to the student population. Whether they know it or not, certain knowledge is being kept from them because others have decided for them that they are not capable of understanding or coping with the knowledge it contains, at best. At worst it’s an outright silencing of their ability to experience the content in a safe space and let them decide for themselves whether or not they agree with the message of the content, in essence, robbing them of the power of choice that they should be presented with as a citizen of the free world,” insists Mr. Hartmann.

consume.”

It is clear to see that the students of JA house a variety of differing opinions when it comes to censoring, but what does JA’s faculty think? A group personally invested in this topic is JA’s English teachers, whose curriculum is directly impacted by book censorship. This pivotal group of Jefferson Academy’s community shares similar and strong judgments on the disputed issue.

In agreement with Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Larsen adds on by describing the counter-effective premise of book banning. In many scenarios, including the ban on Spiegelman’s *Maus*, content suppression leads to many audiences reading the book out of spite and defiance. This symbol of defiance then spreads the banned content through wider audiences, rendering the original motivation for book banning ineffective.

“If you ban a book from a hungry mind, the individual will want to read it all the more. We all want to protect our next generation, but bringing the thesis of Ray Bradbury’s novel *Fahrenheit 451* to fruition takes away one’s personal freedom of choice. The conflict between freedom of thought and censorship is a slippery slope in our society. I choose freedom!” exclaims Ms. Larsen.

Adding on to the reasoning against censorship is Mr. Purcell, who believes that schools are obligated to teach students about unfamiliar topics, and to do so in an open and analytical manner. In the current day and age, students can access information about anything under the sun in a matter of seconds. The Digital Age provides students with immeasurable power, and Mr. Purcell feels that it is the duty of the public education system and educators to present these distressing topics in a safe environment.

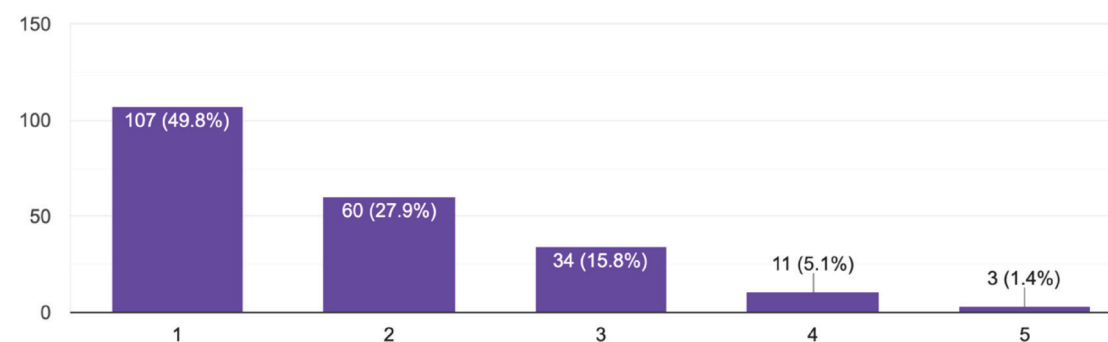
“If your goal is to maintain students’ emotional and intellectual comfort, then banning certain books might help,” admits Mr. Purcell. “But ‘blissful ignorance’ is still ignorance, and learning ought to make us a little uncomfortable sometimes. Also, while banning certain books might make some students more comfortable, it can harm others. When libraries are forced to remove books about LGBTQ characters, for instance, students who identify as LGBTQ are further marginalized.”

Regardless of your own personal standing on book banning, it is easy to recognize that there are a variety of opinions and perspectives at JA. Censorship in a scholastic environment has been

a heated debate for decades now, and it will no doubt continue to remain so. With a wide range of arguments and an even wider spectrum of opinions, striking a healthy balance proves to be challenging. Through voicing our own personal opinions, the students and staff of Jefferson Academy can begin to find a healthy medium that works for our community.

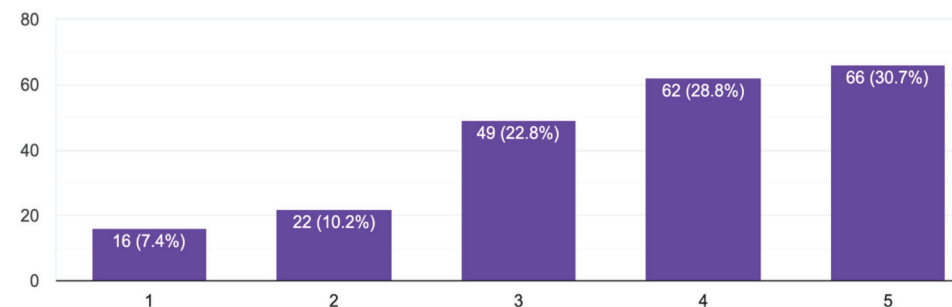
## Rate the effectiveness of banning books on protecting students with 1 being not effective at all and 5 being extremely effective

215 responses



## Rate the potential harm banning books can cause to student learning with 1 not being harmful and 5 being extremely harmful

215 responses



# THE JAGUARS ARE INVADING

by Maddie Leyba

Take cover, at least 50 JA sophomores, freshmen, and eighth-graders are embarking on a journey to overtake the East Coast. During the week of April 4th, the students, three administrators, and a handful of willing chaperones will be traveling to the nation's capital on this year's New York/Washington DC trip. Never have the three grades gone together, and never will they again, providing a unique experience for students attending.

Mrs. Porreco, who has sponsored the trip for over 15 years, says, "This will be the only year. It's a catch-up year to incorporate the 2020 trip, the 2021 trip, and we're all going in 2022."

While the trip is special given who's attending, Covid has put restrictions on it. Due to Covid regulations, the group won't be able to visit the Capitol Visitor Center, but they will be able to see its magnificence from the outside.

"We are going to see Aladdin on Broadway," Porreco explains as one of the many places the group will visit. "We also get to go to the 9/11 museum. We get to go to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. We get to go to Mount Vernon in Washington, DC."

Some parts of the trip have changed from previous years, but the amount of history they will witness is well worth it. The trip is an amazing opportunity to bond with classmates, visit historical landmarks and learn by their own eyes, and develop the responsibility to be on top of things.

"Since it is an educational trip, students don't have to make up the work they missed at school. But we do have an assignment: they have to do a scrapbook with journaling on each day."

This is great motivation for the students to create a lasting memory while making up for missed school as well.

"I would encourage people, if they can, to really take part in student travel. You can go to these places individually, but there is something about traveling with your classmates that makes it extra special," Porreco encourages.



# TACTICAL TENACITY

by Kian Mitchell-Sutera

It's a life-or-death battle in which tactical abilities and sharp play can create a split-second mistake that will cost you the one chance to help save your team and move on to the next round. It's unlike any other high school competition, and JA has a team in the game.

Whether it is the thrill of winning or the sadness of loss, the JA eSports team is out to have the most fun no matter what. Enjoying the game while improving is the key focus of many of the players as they attempt to work their way into the top 32 teams to make finals in high school eSports this spring.

With the spring season underway, a key point of focus for the players is their aim. With the game Valorant, as a first-person shooter, aim plays a big role in the success of a player, and the team.

"I mostly need to improve my aim, coming from a game like Overwatch and playing tank, my ability usage is alright, but my aim is really poor compared

to most of the others," observed junior Logan Davis-Miller.

Aim can only get you so far though, as playing as a team is a major part of the eSports club's emphasis.



"My team and I are pretty good; our communication and skill are pretty up there. However, we do have a lot to work on with team synergy along with executing the right plays," commented junior Jordan Quach after reflecting on possible improvements.

As the team continues to grow and build throughout the season, Ms. Davis is also looking to expand the reach of eSports in the future.

"I hope that it grows as eSports helps students take their gaming to the next level, learning leadership, sportsmanship, and communication skills as they play," explained Ms. Davis. "The eSports team also gives students a way to get involved in something at school and hang out with friends while doing something they enjoy: playing video games."



# SOFTBALL SLIDING INTO JA

by Mackenzie Estep

The swing of the bat, homeruns, and the thrill of the game, all things associated with the popular sport of softball. Next fall, Jefferson Academy will have its very own girls softball team.

Though the season is not going to start until the fall, there are many things for potential players to participate in to get ready for the season. There are preseason workouts on Fridays, starting the first week of March. Players are also encouraged to take part in the preseason scrimmages and practices that will take place over the summer.

“The season starts at the beginning of the next school year and I am competitive, so I am going to do what I can to prepare,” said sophomore Shaelee Torres.

JA has not welcomed a new sport in a while, so many are excited to give softball a try. Others are using this new team as an opportunity to get back into softball, a sport they used to play when they were younger.

“I’m most excited to get back into softball and be able to play a sport that I haven’t played in a really long time,” said sophomore Sonia Mathai. AJ Jett adds, “I’ve played softball for a while and it’s something I really like to do. Our school had not offered it until now, so seeing that we are starting a team, that is really exciting.”

Since the softball team is so new, there is lots of room for development. The start is important because it will form the basis of the program that will be the foundation to grow and expand the institution of softball and Jefferson Academy.

“Our goals for this season are to set the tone of the program and shape the foundation of JA softball. With this being the first ever JA softball program, it is important that we establish good principles, guidelines, and traditions for those who choose to follow in our footsteps,” said head coach Ceteria Foster.

Softball will be a good opportunity for students to find new friendships while participating in something big like the beginning of a new sport. With the new start, there is a lot of room for growth of the program and those who join will be able to enjoy the fact that they were one of the firsts.

“I think a startup is good because there’s not a lot of pressure, so people who have maybe never played the sport or are nervous about playing sports at JA because it is so competitive can have an opportunity to branch out and give it a try. I also hope that it’s something that will stick around for a while. It will be cool to be able to say I was there when it started,” said Jett.

This beginning and this chance to be a part of something like this new team and community is thrilling. Many are looking forward to the season and how the program will flourish through the years.

“I’m excited to get to know all of the players and their families as well as our softball supporters. I can’t wait to get our team out and involved with the JA community, and most importantly I’m looking forward to seeing the growth and development of every player that comes through the JA softball program,” said Foster.

# BASEBALL SWINGING AGAIN

by Jacob Brackney

Memories of the crack of the bat and the cheer of the crowd as the runner sprints down the line. The coaches ushering him to the base as the ball flies through the air, over players, into the outfield, and out of the park. The baseball team is ready for the spring season and all the expectations that come with it.

“During the spring season, the pressure is immense,” commented junior Kelton Ayars.

However, that pressure brings a confidence and bond that none

other can create.

“The community is great, it is nice and they treat you so well. Between the players, there is a great bond and we all treat each other like family,” explained sophomore Jude German.

All players would love to see the team grow with new players and new talent this year and moving into the future.

“I hope as the school grows the baseball team also grows with the size and how good we are,” commented German.

Joining the team can be super

easy for new people. Interested players just need to approach the coach about joining and making the commitment to the team.

Boone jokes about it stating, “It’s easier than freshman seminars, so pretty easy. Just take one text and you are on the team.”

As the program grows the team is facing stiff competition but plans to make it the greatest season in their team’s history. They are waiting for the chance to welcome and teach newcomers while also looking to improve their chances and the current team.

# GRIP AND GRIT

by Gianna Gagliano

Chalk, determination, strength, no fear of heights, and a crash pad is what it takes to be a climber. With the season wrapping up, the rock climbing team lead by Mr. Bilinski demonstrates their grit and love for the sport as they train to get better every day and demonstrate their determination as they advance to the state finals.

First, what does it take to become a climber? Really anyone can be a climber. However, what separates the good from the great is the athletes that possess perseverance.

To be a rock climber, you must not be afraid of falling, and along with that, you must get back up again when you do fall. You also must be dedicated to the success of yourself and your team and push yourself to get better.

“In my opinion, it doesn’t take anyone super athletic or super special,” states

sophomore rock climber Olivia Saenz. “It just takes someone willing to make a commitment to push through struggles and test limits. It takes someone who’s not afraid to fail, but will keep trying until they’re able to reach their goal.”

The climbing team has been very successful as a large number of their athletes have made it to the state championship competition. However, the preparation that goes into that is very important. The team wanted to be as prepared as possible to get the results that they desired.

“I am going to go to the gym and practice a little more,” states Saenz. “I am going to keep up with my strength on my own so I know that I am as prepared for state as possible.”

Going to the state competition can cause some worry for these athletes though, and dealing

with that worry can potentially be too much. But these climbers portray composed and almost professional traits as they stay calm and collected with very specific techniques, although it varies from athlete to athlete.

“I don’t look down,” commented sophomore climber Sean Beasley. “Before, I plan out my climb so I know what I am doing and I don’t have to worry about it while I am in the process of climbing. I also take deep breaths when I get really high up to calm my nerves.”



With all these nerves, however, going to state gives way to excitement. Many of these climbers have been climbing for a long time and have worked very hard for this moment, and now they have a chance to show off all of that hard work.

“This is my first year at state,” explained Beasley. “It is something new, and it sounds really fun because climbing is fun in general. You can see your improvement and this competition kind of puts everything to the test, which makes me nervous but excited.”

After the state competition was completed, the athletes’ hard work prevailed. Sean Beasley placed 177th for JV, Valyn Highly placed 109th for JV, Olivia Saenz placed 92nd for JV, and Maya Magallanes placed 33rd for Varsity. These results ended the season on a high note.

# LOVING LACROSSE

by Jacob Brackney

Imagine you are at the end of the game, the score is zero to zero, you have the ball and you are charging down the field with your teammates. You take the shot and make the goal and then the end of the game happens. It's beyond satisfying, but unfortunately it's also a feeling most do not get to feel. That is because sports are hard to get into. Gear, uniform, and connections with other people on the team are just some of the barriers that keep students from trying new sports, especially for a sport that barely anyone knows like lacrosse.

Lacrosse is different from other high school sports in many ways. It's not a sport you normally see on television, so the rules aren't well known, nor is the strategy or even what the play is supposed to look like.

"Lacrosse is different from other sports because, in my opinion, it is a lot more physical. While games like football and soccer are aggressive games, lacrosse is a game where, in essence, you are beating each other up with metal sticks over a tiny ball. There are obviously rules that limit this, but it can still get brutal," explained sophomore Cooper Douglass, who is new to the sport.

But it is not all about beating the other team in any



and all ways, there is a lot about building a brotherhood within the team as well.

"The community for lacrosse at JA is close and everyone is open, respectful, and always there to help anyone on or off the field," remarked sophomore Mathew Bernardy about his fellow lacrosse players.

Bernardy also stated, "I would like to see the team grow as the school grows because we are one of the smaller lacrosse programs and have one team, so having more players could lead to a JV and a Varsity team."

Trying something new can be a challenge, especially when it is a sport that may not be very familiar, but it can also be very rewarding on multiple levels.

"I had some friends who were already on the team who encouraged me to join, and I thought that I might be good at a sport that is more aggressive like this," commented Douglass. "I can say with complete positivity that it was one of the best decisions I have made in my life. It has truly helped with my mental and physical health and allowed me to become friends with people I might not have even met otherwise."



# IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

by Gianna Gagliano

Practice like a champion. That is this year's slogan for the high school girls soccer team. As the beginning of the season has just begun, this team has big aspirations for this season, with hopes of successful play and a ticket to the state championship.

This team has had a lot of success in the past seasons, including making it to the state semifinals last year. This can all be attributed to sisterhood that is encouraged by the coaches and the positive environment that is created by them, along with the players. A team cannot have success without culture, as it is the most important thing for the team's chemistry.

"Coach Sutton and I have built this program with culture being the center of all we do," commented Varsity coach Hannah Wilson. "Everything is centered around our 4 pillars: Leadership, Unity, Excellence and Courage. We apply them to not only the work we do on the field in training that helps us achieve our success in our season, but also as our success in our development as humans and as students. When we play with the goal of becoming one and pursuing excellence by leading each other, it gives us the courage to take on anything we face."

Large amounts of work will be put in from each player and the coaches as the first game nears, in order to be as prepared as possible. This includes the players practicing both as a team and individually, as well as keeping up with their fitness and strengthening their bodies.

"Right now we are in a period of building the team's game fit endurance," commented Wilson. "We play a brutal 2-3 games per week and play against the best teams we could, and that's even without snow delays. So, we have to have the games in a small window. Our approach is to incorporate fitness into the practice sessions as much as possible. We will push fitness hard now at the beginning of the season and then maintain through the gauntlet and sharpen in the playoffs if we make it."

There is so much to look forward to for these athletes this season. With old and new faces, the

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**- Coach Wilson**

team is ready to take on any challenge. However, the enthusiasm about the upcoming season is very high as players realize that they get to play alongside their friends every day in an environment that develops them as players.

"I am mainly excited about playing with my friends and watching varsity games with everyone," commented sophomore girls soccer team player, Peyton Arndt. Sophomore girls soccer player Kenna Hughes adds, "I am excited to be able to be with my second family again and to hopefully win state because it is something that I have wanted to do ever since I was a little girl."

Led by Coach Denise Sutton, Hannah Wilson and Ryan Proctor, the high school girls soccer team has big hopes for this season, which will hopefully lead to the team representing Jefferson Academy in the state championship game after holding Ralston Valley, a 5A school, to one goal in a scrimmage this past weekend.



# LADY JAGS' SENSATIONAL SEASON

by Stori Blois and Layla Archibeque-Fischer

With the beginning of spring sports, winter sports have finally come to an end. Jefferson Academy's girls varsity basketball team finished out their season in the 3A 2022 playoffs for the state championship this past weekend.

The Lady Jaguars were the first team to make it to the district championship since 2014.

"It's amazing that we were able to make it this far in the season. We have come a very long way and we have proven ourselves," remarked freshmen Rylin Chichirico. "I think our hard work and dedication to the team and the coaches has been a huge factor in getting the team to succeed," she said.

The team has gone through many ups and downs throughout the season, with tough losses against teams like Resurrection Christian and Kent Denver, so the girls really learned what it was like to be on a team.

"The bench and everyone have been super positive and supportive throughout the season and it has made it so much more fun to play. The more fun the team is having the

better we play," commented junior Helen Stegner.

Through the losses, the girls grew together as a team and helped each other grow as players. Because the girls stayed positive throughout the regular season, it led them to two wins that secured them a spot in the state playoffs. It also put them into the district championship as the 6th seed in the Metro State league.

"The team's biggest achievement was beating Kent and Skyview in the district tournament to make it to the playoffs," explained Stegner.

With the team taking second in the district championship, they took a week to prepare for the game against The Academy on Friday, March 4th. The Lady Jags left The Academy with a huge

win that put them into the Sweet Sixteen game for the first time in two years. They played Saturday, March 5th against Delta High School and unfortunately, they were not able to come out with the win.

Because of the loss, this means the girls' very successful season has come to an end. The girls were very sad with the loss but are hopeful for the next season to come.

