



JAGWIRE

Fall 2022 - Issue 4 - Winter Break



Showcasing Science

The science fair has been a long-standing tradition inviting students to explore science and find an answer to their scientific questions. This year's fair included everything from kombucha to Legos.

Pages 2-3

All in the Family

The Addams Family hit the stage December 8th and 9th, pulling audiences in new directions.

Pages 6-7

Try It; You'll Strike It!

JA bowling is back! Many students around the school joined the team, led by Mr. Kirkley, and are currently fighting for their standings in the league.

Page 10

From homemade foot cream to exploding volcanoes, the Jefferson Academy science fair has seen it all. The science fair has been a long-standing tradition inviting students to explore science and find an answer to their scientific questions. This year's fair included everything from kombucha to Legos.

"It's an opportunity for students to design an experiment," Mrs. Thimsen, a head of the science department says, "share it with others, and present it, showing the culmination of what scientific research looks like."

Science, being the pursuit of knowledge within the social and natural worlds, makes up everyday life. The science fair allows students to take questions they have pondered and work out the steps to find the answer.

"I want them to learn. It's a real-life scenario. They're taking a scientific question, they're researching it, they're going through the scientific method, then they get to present," notes Mrs. Thimsen regarding the intent of the event. "Which, later in their life, they are going to have lots of jobs that will require them to be able to present information. I think it's an important skill that they learn, to be able to show what they know."

The science fair is not only an opportunity to answer scientific questions, but also to practice presenting among a wider variety of audiences while connecting with the community. Exploring questions other students have asked and how they solved them is a great way to gain insight into peers and what fascinates them.

The science students have spent the last semester working on their experiments to showcase to the student body. All the honors science students were required to participate as the rest of the student body received an invitation.

During the science fair, students showcased experiments highlighting things such as which fertilizer works best for growth and whether or not acetone will dissolve plastics.

Keeley McCormick, an eighth grader, participated in the science fair for the first time this year. "I'd say that [the science fair] requires good teamwork because I did mine with a partner. It takes a lot of time."

Science experiment criteria were open to all participants (excluding chemistry

students who needed to revolve around chemistry) with categories including engineering, behavioral sciences, natural sciences, and more.

"We did engineering," Keeley states, "so it is a little different. It is a hidden key holder, so solving the problem of people getting robbed. We remodeled a different design that would improve a hidden key, so people, instead of putting it under their doormats, can now use what we invented."

Not every experiment went according to plan, however. From unaccounted-for variables to the wrong substance being chosen for the experiment, it is fascinating to see how experiments strayed and how the experimenter accounted for it.

James Brenneman, a 9th-grade science student did his project on dissolving plastics. "I tried to use a chemical solution to dissolve it [polypropylene made of a polycarbonate commonly found in marine pollution] using salt water and acetone. It started working, but the thing about acetone is that it gets dissolved in water and evaporates really fast, so you kind of got a time limit on how long it is going to be effective. It kind of worked, but I ultimately had to reject my hypothesis."

"The most surprising thing has got to be how incompetent you can be as a high schooler," James says about participating in the science fair, "because you will have a hypothesis and it will make sense scientifically, but you, being a high school student, make a lot of mistakes or you make a lot of oversights and you have a bunch of extra variables that you don't necessarily want in your experiment."

Cece Baker and Ali Smith, sophomores, did their experiment on the effect of different conditions on kombucha.

"We were testing how the time of fermentation and type of tea affects pH levels [in kombucha]. We did two trials and they both turned out acidic, and not safe to drink, which is a little sad, but we still got results that can help us in the future."

Not every experiment proved the hypothesis true, but every experiment provided a learning experience for the Jefferson Academy community. Students and classes sifted through the science fair over the course of three hours and were able to gain knowledge on the different experiments.



Showcasing Science

by Madeline Leyba

Cramming with Cocoa

by Madeline Leyba

With finals around the corner, there is an abundance of ways students can prepare themselves. Whether that includes drinking hot cocoa and cramming or competing against classmates in kahoots, every measure taken is beneficial.

Ms. Javelet, one of the school librarians and sponsor of the Student Library Advisory Board (SLAB), offers her advice: "I am a very verbal and conversational learner. I think that people getting together with friends who are doing the same thing or working on the same stuff and then taking turns and explaining it to each other or discussing stuff is the way I learn the best. Of course, if you are just trying to memorize stuff, maybe just use flashcards. I do think that having a discussion and finding a way into a subject that allows you to really grasp onto it and get it in your own head is the best."

Studying is something that comes in many shapes and sizes. It can be anything: writing notecards, rewriting notes, going through Quizlets, or taking practice exams, the possibilities are near endless.

Student Government (STUCO) hosts an annual Cocoa and Cram; "The purpose of cocoa and cram is to get students together in an environment where they can work together on studying with study

guides that the teachers made for their classes," explains Caden Fullerton, the vice president of STUCO.

"STUCO is heading up the cocoa and cram but we [SLAB] will of course have coco and cramming here in the library," Ms. Javelet points out. "It will be a space where we will have some space for quiet study but also for taking breaks or being able to collaborate with other people and maybe talk through things and even teach someone."

SLAB and STUCO's Cocoa and Cram is not the only place to study. Senior Addie Grip shares her go-to study methods: "I'll find a quiet space then I will just zone in. I like flashcards if it is very memorization-based. I like going to coffee shops and studying. I feel like I have to put on a front and make everyone around me feel like I'm a successful human being by actually doing my work. I don't know what it is, but it motivates me to actually do my stuff because when you are alone, there is no one to impress."

Whether you are a note-oriented person or an active learner, make sure you find a way to study that helps you learn and retain information. Methods that work differ from person to person, but in the end, whatever works, works. Find what works and utilize it.



Two Roads Diverged



by Madeline Leyba

The future holds many opportunities with said opportunities varying from student to student. Stereotypes might suggest that students need to go to college directly after high school, get a well-paying job, and start a family, but that is not the case for everyone.

There are endless possibilities of paths to take after high school. The opportunities include attending community college, applying to a four-year college, going to trade school, joining the military, taking a gap year, or joining the workforce off the bat; the possibilities are endless.

Damien Edlund, a senior, has recently committed to the US Air Force. "I did all my testing, qualified for the Air Force, qualified for like 90% of the jobs. I ship out a month or two after school, down to San Antonio, and go from there."

Committing is just the first step. "Most likely I'll get a job opportunity out of the country, so I'm going to take that. I'd like to travel a lot. Maybe Germany or Japan, whatever job comes up," Damien explains. "I really didn't see myself going to college, I didn't know what I'd be studying. It just didn't look like anything that was interesting to me, so I decided on the military. Air Force is what I like the most."

Not every choice you make will be right on the first try. Sometimes things do not work out the way they were planned, and that is perfectly okay. Plans changing is a part of life and a way to show growth.

Mr. Cloonan, the student/family engagement specialist, discusses his immediate post-secondary experience: "When I graduated high school, I was sixteen years old, I wasn't ready. At that time, there was a lot of pressure from my family and society. I went to school, didn't do great, and found myself not interested."

"If you are a senior and you're not sure what you

want to do, you have to talk about it with your family and be honest with them," advises Mr. Cloonan. "In hindsight, it took me ten years to figure out and experience what I wanted to do. All that being said, if you know what you want, you should go and grab it. I think you should chase your dreams, and if it doesn't involve school but going forward in another direction, I would advocate for that too."

A lot of pressure is placed on students to attend college directly after high school. "I am going to go work," TD Mader, a senior, shares about his plans post-secondary. "Schooling is too expensive, first off, and I don't see the value in going to college when I have nothing in particular that I want to do. And if I want to go, I can go later. Don't let your parents bully you into college."

When dealing with pressure to follow a certain path, it is important to voice your feelings and opinions. After all, no one can live your life but you. Sometimes voicing your opinion means talking to family about alternative options such as trade school, the military, or joining the workforce off the bat.

"I am going to take a gap year," Evan Hawes, a senior, notes. "I might go into a trade school, to be honest. I will just work until then. I really don't think college is for me. I think there is a huge role for trades right now, especially since everyone is going to college. I feel like there is an open opportunity and I'm going to try and take it."

There will be times when the future is unclear or plans fall through, but that is a part of life. The reactions that take place after that make a difference. "I think it's a gut feeling," Mr. Cloonan said when asked about how to decide what path someone should take after high school. "Sometimes you got to fall to find out. Sometimes that fall hurts a bit, but you learn from it."

All in the Family

by Mackenzie Estep

“When you’re an Addams, you have to really stir the pot.” This year’s musical presented by JA’s theater department did that and more. The Addams Family hit the stage December 8th and 9th, pulling audiences in new directions.

The students enrolled in this quarter’s B block musical class have been spending the last, very short, couple months working hard to put all the pieces into place to ensure this year’s musical was one to remember.

“There is a lot that goes into making a musical. Everyone has to learn what parts to sing, and we have to learn all the moves that go in the dances we are on. We do not have a lot of time to go through scenes, so you have to memorize a lot by yourself,” said junior Valera Noland who played Pugsley Addams.

With the short turnaround time that comes with the musical being in the shortest quarter of the year, the preparation was slightly sporadic and stressful for the actors and production team.

“It was very chaotic in a fun way. There was a lot of running around and figuring out where the props and costume pieces are, but I think it always turns out even when tech and the actors don’t really work together until tech week,” said junior AJ Jett, Wednesday Addams.

Acting in a musical in front of the whole school and their parents can be extremely nerve wracking. The extreme anxiety that it induces is surely not for everyone, but some actors enjoy the rush.

“When I walk into the auditorium, I am actually very nervous. My legs start shaking, yet I feel so energetic.

I thought I would have grown out of that by now, but it seems the only thing that changed is that I know how to deal with it. I think there is something therapeutic about how it builds and releases anxiety,” said Chris Rock, Ensemble.

Performing on a stage with the lights blaring down on you while being watched by a packed audience can also be a perfect way to break someone out of their shell.

Valera Noland shared her experience of how playing a lead role this year helped her out of her comfort zone. “It is so amazing to have a sort of lead role this year. I used to not even be able to sing in front of people, but my character has a whole song, so that actually helped me be less scared. It’s so cool to have so many lines and be a character that most people know.”

While not only helping people feel more confident in their own skin, this production has also brought a dream to life.

“Wednesday has been my dream role since seventh grade, and I could not be more happy or excited to bring her to the stage. It’s a lot of pressure, but I am super excited about the opportunity,” said Jett.

The cast was ecstatic about the opening of The Addams Family Musical in JA’s very own auditorium. These musical productions only occur once a year at JA, so this show was especially important to everyone involved.

Before opening night, Jett shared, “I think the best part is always opening night, the first time you hear the curtains open and feel that spotlight on you...It’s amazing,” Noland added. “I love the energy of performing and I am so excited for everyone to come watch us and see how well it turned out!”



Spirited Season

by Madeline Scoggins

Spirit week is a way to have fun before the stress of finals; choosing different themes every day and dressing up with friends for the holiday season creates a fun environment at school.

Sophia Renner, a senior in Stuco says, "I love spirit week, and I love trying to be as creative as possible. Spirit week encourages students to be creative and lets them feel like they are a part of something bigger."

Having a week to dress up allows students to be creative and be a part of something rather than just worrying about school. It includes everyone from students to teachers. It encourages students to step out of their comfort zone and dress up.

Sophia explains, "I think it allows students to express their individuality through their interpretation of the spirit day, while also being united as a class or student body." It gives all of us a chance to express ourselves by dressing up in our own way for each theme, and it shows how everyone has their own definition of what each theme means. It also allows us to be together as a school and celebrate the themes together.

Grace Parsons, a freshman, states, "I enjoy spirit week! It gives me a reason to be excited to go to school since I get to dress up and have fun making outfits for the theme of that day."



It's a way to be excited to show off your outfits and what you come up with and have fun figuring out the themes.

"I feel spirit week benefits the school because it gets everyone involved and makes everyone feel included," says Grace.

It brings us together as a student body and makes everyone feel included by participating in spirit week.

Sophia says, "At the beginning of the year, Stuco made a list of themes for the year that we could use for various spirit weeks."

Stuco chooses a set of themes at the beginning of the year to use all year; when they choose themes for a week they choose them based on what is relevant at the time. This week started off with Holiday Movie Monday. This theme allowed students and teachers to dress up and represent their favorite holiday movie. Top Artist Tuesday was in time for Spotify Wrapped to come out, allowing us to show our musical tastes by dressing up as our favorite artists. Wednesday was Role Reversal: this theme could've been interpreted many ways, but most students dressed as their favorite teachers. White Lies Thursday evoked writing something on your shirt showing the opposite of what you mean. Friday was Ugly Christmas Sweater Day. It relates to Christmas Break and the holidays coming up, and allows us to show our holiday spirit before school gets out.

Hands-On...Literally

by Eden Woodward

Jefferson Academy offers multiple science classes, ranging from Earth Sciences to College Biology I and II. One of the science classes offered is Anatomy & Physiology, which gives students the opportunity to explore the human body and learn how it works. And what better way to learn about the human body than to explore it yourself?

Recently, Anatomy & Physiology students went to the Red Rocks Community College Arvada campus for the exciting opportunity of attending a cadaver lab. Students got to examine two cadavers, and were able to interact with and touch the organs and internal workings.

Senior Jacob Sayre recounts the experience in a positive light, saying, "It was great. I got to see the real thing, as opposed to seeing diagrams, which can only go so far."

Students got to have hands-on experience at the lab. Its intention was to help give students a hands-on way to learn. After more than three months of learning from diagrams and textbooks, the cadavers gave students an opportunity to view the body up-close and personal.

Sayre recounts, "I got to take the liver out of one cadaver and a kidney out of another. Finding the parts was really fun, because that's what we've been learning all year."

At the end of the day, while some might view this as a scary or nerve-wracking experience, students reported that this opportunity was overall enriching and fascinating to participate in. "It was awesome," reports Sayre, "and I'm really glad that I was able to do this."

Virtual Competitors

by Memphis Larson

The Jefferson Academy ESports have received their jerseys and are ready for the continuation of their seasons. The team consists of students who play a variety of games from Valorant to Minecraft at a competitive level. This is the first time that the Jefferson Academy Esports team has received jerseys in its four-year history, and it serves as an important moment for the team.

"Esports is much bigger than it was at the start," says vetted member Jordan Quach. "I've been in it since it was founded in 2018, and it is very different now. Everything is bigger, and we feel more like a team instead of having it be like a club. We have our jerseys and shoutcasters and are livestreaming the games."

Also new to Esports this year is their effort to allow



these matches to be viewable by students, similar to if someone were to go to any other sporting event. There are new roles in the team for things like advertising and graphic design, and they live stream matches on the platform Twitch, complete with shoutcasting done by student team members.

"I provide commentary similar to something like a sports announcer in football does," says Sam Rizzo. "I put in my two cents, and talk about what's happening, and add the audio to the experience. I've always sort of been friends with the members of Esports, but this is my first year actually doing something officially."

Esports all around the nation are becoming a larger and more influential school activity, and those involved at Jefferson Academy are very happy to see it growing at a local level.

Happy Holidays

by Gianna Gagliano

As the temperature starts to drop, and snow begins to cover the frozen ground and bare trees, the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year begins to wrap up. Excitement, and even relief, begin to become very prevalent emotions throughout the student body with winter break right around the corner.

Once school is finally let out, holiday traditions are able to begin. Traditions are typically the customs or beliefs passed down from generation to generation that allow these different age groups to feel connected to one another. These generational traditions are a very common aspect of the holiday season for most families. However, it is also very common that some families create their own, new traditions.

"My family and I watch the movie 'A Christmas Story,'" states sophomore Sofia Pathak. "We also cut down a tree off of our property in the mountains and take it home to decorate."

Aside from all of these festive traditions, everyone always has a part of winter break that is very significant to them. This special part of break is something that they look forward to, whether that be relief from the stresses of school, or doing fun activities like snowboarding and skiing, or even baking and seeing family/friends.

"My favorite part of winter break is the ability to

stay inside and not worry about school," states junior Kate Rock. "I love making cookies and handing them out as well. It is overall really relaxing, which makes winter break so good."

To be able to participate in all of these fun traditions, and make winter break activities special, being in the holiday spirit is important. Avoiding being a "grinch" may be an easy task for some, however, for others it is extremely difficult. Therefore, getting in the holiday spirit allows this time of year to be magical. This makes winter break very exciting for students.

"My family and I usually put up our Christmas tree while listening to Christmas music to get into the holiday spirit," states junior Connor Scarborough. "I enjoy decorating the house with stockings and buying gifts for loved ones. I also really enjoy having that time off of school to relax. Drinking hot cocoa is my favorite thing to do when it gets cold out, so that gets me really excited for the winter weather, and winter break, and puts me in a 'Christmas mood.'"

There are so many positives to winter break for students, which makes it a highly anticipated ordeal. With significant snowfall already, these aspects of break are seemingly inevitable for the student body with the holidays right around the corner.

Try It; You'll Strike It!

by Mackenzie Estep

The striking sound of balls speeding down the lane is deafening, and in the distance a group of friends celebrating a win can be heard. A deep breath is taken before practiced steps fall in line, an arm swings back, and the bowling ball is released toward the pins.

JA bowling is back! Many students around the school joined the team, led by Mr. Kirkley, and are currently fighting for their standings in the league.

Unlike other sports at Jefferson Academy, while still being competitive, the bowling team is a lot less of a commitment. The team meets twice a week: Tuesdays are tournaments and Thursdays are practices.

Comparing other JA sports teams to bowling, Olivia Saenz said, "It's more about self-improvement and it's very self-paced. There is no stress to be better than anyone else and it's a very encouraging community."

Junior Harriet Seiffertt added, "I joined the team because I wanted to do something that wouldn't take up too much of my time, and that was something fun that I could do with my friends."

Bowling is for the most part an individual sport, but the team standings and points require input from everyone involved.

Junior Maisey Harris claimed, "I would say the team is coming together really well. A lot of us were already friends before the season started so it was

easy for us to get into a groove."

Many of the students who joined this season do not have a ton of experience bowling competitively, so the main goals for the season were just to get better and learn how the game works.

"Throughout this season I have been able to improve how I bowl a lot, though I still have things I could improve on. I really want to be able to keep getting better and learning all the techniques that go along with bowling," said Seiffertt.

Tournaments are the most stressful part about the team. There is an individual ten frame game, and then after that there is a team collaborative bakers game played.

These games contribute to the team and individual standings, which can be nerve wracking.

"Tournaments are very fun, but I am always super nervous. Everyone is always so nice even if they are on the opposite team. It is really cool to have such a comfortable and enjoyable environment," said Saenz.

The JA bowling team is fun and laid-back and could be a good opportunity for anyone looking for a low-key after school activity to join.

Maisey Harris on why others should join the bowling team for next season stated, "It is a fun chance for everyone to make some friends and have a good time regardless of skill level. It's really nice to have a place to go after school where I feel like there's no real pressure, but still an opportunity for competition and growth."



Back on Track



by Grace Beck

The thumping of runners is in the halls again, and you know what that means... pre-season track has officially started again. As it is still months away from the start of the official season, some of the runners on our track team have already started training.

The team starts with easier workouts to get back in track shape and to get used to running again for those who do not run XC in the fall. Coach Thimsen, Coach Witkowski, and Coach Hershelman have been working hard writing workouts for all the runners who chose to start preseason.

The preseason and the official season are very different in many ways, including intensity, the time commitment, and the atmosphere. "The intensity is very different, we ramp it up slowly going into the season so their bodies aren't shocked," Coach Thimsen states when asked about the difference from preseason to real season.

The difference in time commitment is marked, preseason is usually 3 days a week and is voluntary, which means people show up when they want to. This makes it easier for multi-sport athletes to get training and still be able to go do their in-season sport. For example, there are a few basketball players who do some preseason workouts on top of practicing for basketball.

Of course, the main reason that people chose pre-season is to get more training in preparation

for the upcoming track season. Some athletes are even competing in indoor meets to get even more prepared.

"Doing this will hopefully help me be the best I've ever been and give me that edge over other schools' athletes," commented senior Asha Stephens.

While the track and weight room have mostly veteran runners working out, the team also has some newcomers working out for the first time. Track preseason is a great time for people who are on the fence about joining track to be able to try it out and see if they like it without being committed to the team. The team will happily take any person who wants to try track out.

The reasons for joining track seem endless to the runners; after all it is one of the most popular sports in the school.

"It is a great way to get in shape and get involved in the school," remarked Stephens. "My teammates and coaches have been such a great community to be a part of and others should join this community too!"

As the runners start to get back into running and lifting, they hope to welcome many more potential teammates throughout the preseason. They are looking forward to this unique time in between seasons to start to meld as a team and grow relationships, get better as runners and humans, and enjoy many lifting dance parties and beautiful sunsets.

Movin' On Up

by **Gianna Gagliano and Jacob Brackney**

The ref blows the whistle as the opposing teams battle in the center of the court to win the tip off. The swoosh of the hoop, and the crack of the rim as the basketball hits it are all too familiar to the basketball team. As the weather gets colder, the new season for the boys and girls basketball teams is just getting started.

To have a successful season, preparation is a necessity. This preparation allows players to be able to start the season off strong with little to no hesitation. This preseason groundwork that includes conditioning as well as participation in a "club league" called JAM can be cited as a reason for the previous success of both the boys and girls basketball teams.

"We have done JAM weeks to get all of our touches back," states junior basketball player Emma Parker. "We have also been doing team conditioning with the trainer."

All of this preseason work will be essential to the season ahead because of the promotion to 4A that both the boys and girls basketball teams recently received. With this new league, although the team will face some of the same opponents, they will also face new opponents, meaning new challenges to overcome. While this new league title might seem daunting, the players remain unfazed despite the challenge.

"I don't think the league move will affect us that much," states senior basketball player Daniel Mathai. "A lot of 3A teams moved up with us, so we'll play the same teams over the season. When we get into the playoffs, that's when we'll see different teams that we have not faced this season."

There is always a mental challenge that can come with the uncertainty of a league promotion in a sport. This mental negativity or uncertainty can be combated with motivation and positivity from teammates and coaches. There has been so much to look forward to this season, so motivation between players can mean the difference between success and failure.

"The move up will affect us mentally and physically," states Parker, "But we cannot be scared of the move and just need to play the basketball that we know, and it will in turn make us better players. It has helped a lot and been great to have both the guys team and the girls team supporting each other

and helping motivate each other."

Although this promotion to 4A can mean different competition, the teams have already laid a solid foundation. They proved their belonging in the new league this season with the boys team's recent victory in the Bob Lavoe tournament, hosted here at Jefferson Academy. With this early success, this season is sure to be one for the books.

