



Stereotypical

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Stereotypical

By: Abigail Stephens

There's always that one grade level that seems to have a bad reputation or alternatively, be all the teachers' favorites. Each class has its own perception of other grades and themselves, some good and some bad. The contrasting opinions from different grades of the same group of people can be incredibly interesting to see. Eighth graders James Goodin, Joshua Burns, and Ben Meier are very fond of this year's freshmen, and they have a definite image that comes to mind when the word "freshman" is said. "We knew [the freshmen] last year," they shared. "[The freshman stereotype] would be athletic, have an Airpod in their ear, and be a bit crazy." To senior Olivia Saenz and other upperclassmen at Jefferson Academy, the sophomore class is seen as boring and timid. "Sophomores are mid," Saenz laughs. "They're quiet this year, and they're all in relationships!" In comparison, freshman Ravel LaBerge has noticed that the sophomore class has a wide variety of personalities. She interacts with the sophomores very differently from how an upperclassman would. "Some of the sophomores are obnoxious but most of them are pretty nice," describes LaBerge. "The few loud [sophomores] kind of dictate the group and give it a bad name." The junior class has created a somewhat questionable name for themselves this year, and the underclassmen dislike them a fair amount.

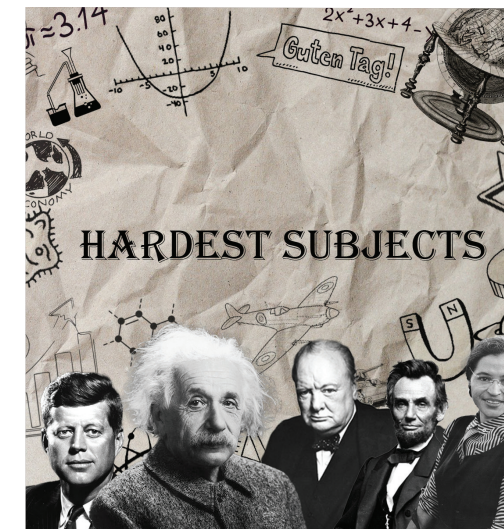
"[The juniors] can be jerks," explains sophomore James Brenneman and Eliza Eichelberger. "Well, not all of them, but when they are they are pretty bad. They'll throw stuff at us from the balcony like hot sauce packets that explode sometimes." However, not all underclassmen feel the same way about the juniors, and the students who talk with the right ones have characterized them as athletic and open-minded. "I think there are some good juniors," shares LaBerge, "most of them are pretty calm-ish and down-to-earth." The seniors are concerned for the juniors because of their clear lack of motivation towards finishing school. "[The juniors] seem to be less motivated towards school than us," explains senior Marissa Martinez. "It seems as if senioritis hit them and not us." The seniors were commonly mentioned as students' favorite class. They are basically viewed as adults to the underclassmen and middle schoolers. They turn towards their experienced peers for ideas and guidance. "[The seniors] are very mature," comments eighth graders Lorelai Hill and Jordan Wazny. "They're almost adults!" The juniors see the senior class as friendly and many of them will really miss the friends they've made throughout the years. "I think the seniors are pretty chill," describes junior Mariah Healey. "I like the seniors, they're a very energetic, laidback bunch."

Headache

By: Mackenzie Estep

Headaches, ruthlessly long study nights, and tears are common experiences among many JA students who have chosen to take the "hardest" classes. At JA, there are many classes that are notorious among the masses for being the toughest you can take, the main ones being College Bio and AP Euro. There are many reasons why a student may choose to challenge themselves with these courses, but the main ones are a boost in GPA and to look good for college applications. Senior Anna Brenneman, who strove to take the most challenging courses, including both AP Euro and College Bio said, "There is a great deal of pressure to take the hardest classes, especially if most of your friends are doing them. There is a lot of competition in the JA environment, sometimes beneficial and other times more toxic. Either way, it compels students to take these hard courses. Most JA students choose to take these classes as a way to make their academic portfolio stand out, and also to succeed in a college prep environment." Another reason that many students choose to take these classes while in high school is to get the college credits out of the way at no cost to them. Though taking these courses is incredibly challenging, it is worth it for most students for their college careers. Though there are a lot of benefits to taking these courses, they are infamous for being the hardest for a reason. The workloads and effects on students are very prominent through their long semesters. The most common stressor among students during these classes was ultimately their grades. When asked if they were worried about grades in these classes, junior Alton Peacey answered, "Yes, all the time. In fact, I started praying at the end in hopes that I would magically get an A."

When asked the same question, senior Olivia Saenz said, "I was very worried. I was scared I wouldn't pass or that it'd reflect poorly on my learning abilities. I just needed to pass and I couldn't rack my brain trying to get the best grade." Many students in these classes strive for perfect grades and allow those grades to define them as students, which is the main reason why they have such an emotional toll. "The hardest part of these classes is watching everyone else struggle but not struggle as much as I was. Everyone was thinking they sucked when they'd get grades back and they got Bs and Cs, but I was more concerned about the first F or D I had just gotten. But in the end, you just have to realize you're not a failure just because you didn't get an A or a B on a test. And it's ok to just want to pass rather than be the best in the class, just have fun and learn," said Saenz. These classes are a right of passage for many JA students, especially those who strive to succeed in the competitive academic environment here. Though they have rigorous workloads and have a major mental and emotional toll on the students, they are important because they push students to succeed and are a good learning experience. When asked what advice they would give incoming students wanting to take these classes, Brenneman answered, "I would tell them that they shouldn't be afraid to rely on other classmates and teachers to succeed in these classes. I know that working with other people helped me understand the content, and my teachers were also very willing to help me if I needed any extra instruction." Saenz's advice was, "I would say, don't overthink it. You might be used to acing everything and everything coming so easy, but that won't be the case for everything you do and that's ok."



Bio Buddy

By: Cass Carpenter

Mr. Nathan Kirkley, Jefferson Academy's very outgoing and very energetic Earth Science teacher, is commonly seen as one of the funniest and quirkiest teachers at JA.

"The students at JA for the most part want to be here, want to learn, and in general want to know what's next," Kirkley remarked when asked about teaching at JA. "They are teenagers, but with an overall solid foundation that needs to be built upon and every day will be different. JA has built a winning culture and I feel like I'm helping the next generation of amazing adults."

In addition to his love for the students Kirkley is able to introduce the community to his passions, acquainting them to some of the more unique qualities of his personality.

"Considering I don't know how to be quiet, most of the staff and administration know my entire life story," he comments, "but for those students and parents who don't know, Science and animals are my passion and JA has become my second home. I'm the coach of the High School boys' golf team, the JA bowling team and lastly the Junior High baseball team."

Along with the sports he coaches, Kirkley is always involved in clubs as well.

"I started gaming club almost 10 years ago, sponsor the environmental club, and enjoy helping Ms. Grace with the musicals because I love seeing the students enjoy a different aspect and the arts/drama part of their education," stated Kirkley.



Although this amazing science teacher has a great time helping out around school and even goes as far to say it's his second home, there are still many things he enjoys doing in his free time outside of school as well.

"First and foremost, doing stuff with my own kids, who are known amongst most upperclassmen here at JA," he said when describing his off-campus joys. "Outside of that I also love video games and feel they are a great way to distract from the challenges of the real world and are a great stress reliever."

There are many things that Kirkley loves to do and stands by a certain motto that he uses daily.

He said, "I live by the motto: You have to grow old, but you don't have to grow up."

Hearing about all the things that Kirkley does for everyone is truly inspiring, and he mentioned what it's like to be put in the limelight.

"I am honored to be put into the teacher spotlight, but I also feel kind of guilty because I know my fellow colleagues are awesome," Kirkley remarked. "I don't like to take away from what they do as well, but like I said before, if that's what the students want then I will help them with whatever they need. Honestly I'm not sure why, but probably because I can relate to kids...maybe it's my motto or maybe I just see you all as young people trying to find your way in this world, but you also have a voice. I'm willing to let you have your voice and guide you the best that I know how."



Too Early?

By: Sabrina Madruga

It's the most wonderful time of the year...until traditional autumn holidays get in the way. As the lights and decorations go up for Christmas, some people are left wondering how we've managed to skip Thanksgiving.

For some members of society, the day after Halloween marks the beginning of the Christmas season; yet for others, Christmas is a holiday which will only come after they've stuffed themselves full of turkey on Thanksgiving.

"After Thanksgiving is the right time to decorate for Christmas because it's not okay to decorate before that," states sophomore Peyton Sexton. "December 26 is also the right time to take down Christmas decorations. Since New Year's Eve is five days later, you can't have Christmas decorations up for that."

Similarly, other students dislike the idea of a plethora of Christmas lights blinding the rest of society from the joys of additional holidays during the season.

"If you dare to put up decorations in November, then you are just a foul human being," mentions senior John Sanborn. "November is way too early to decorate because it's the month of Thanksgiving, where we should be happy and gleeful for our family members. Despite this, people love to decorate for Christmas in November, completely skipping 'Turkey Day,' which is annoying."

With that being said, some students have an opposing point of view when it comes to the annual debate of whether or not it is too early to decorate for Christmas. "After Halloween, I say go for it," declares sophomore Lizzie Gould. "Some people

don't like celebrating Thanksgiving anyways."

Some students choose to take a more neutral stance on the matter, however. They believe that it's not something that needs to be argued about. "People just need to not take it so seriously," mentions freshman Vinam Hoang. "For my family, we stay decorated for Christmas from mid-November to early February, which is mostly because we're too lazy to take it down, but when the snow starts melting it's definitely time."

Furthermore, from a more general perspective, the overall debate could very well stem from our community lacking the ability to savor the current moment.

"It's crazy, but it also reflects our society and how it functions as a whole," junior Charley Harrold states. "Everything is so fast paced, and we're always waiting for the next big thing before it happens. It puts a lot of pressure on everybody to decorate on time and then they get backlash for it. We should just calm down and enjoy what's going on right now."

Who Dunit?

By: Hannah Strumpher

The audience's laughter fills the auditorium as the actors of *Clue* take a bow and pose for the flashes of several cameras. For many weeks, the high school drama club has rehearsed at every meeting to perfect their performance for this year's fall play.

"I was looking for murder mystery comedy, and I heard really good, good things about it," mentions drama club advisor Ms. Grace. "It had been talked about...so it's kind of been in the back of my head as something that I thought not only would be fun, but would also draw a good audience because people kind of are familiar with the game."

Both Technical Theater and the Thespian Honor Society worked really hard to make the production an enjoyable play for those watching. "I think a lot of parts of the show came together really well to create a super fun, final product," says Nine Muller, a senior in the Technical Theater Club. "I know it was a lot of work for both the actors and the tech people, but I think a lot of that work paid off."

Ms. Grace is really proud of everyone who participated and worked on the production, and she enjoyed seeing everything play out.

"I think the funnest part is just watching it all come together in the end, because you always have those times when it looks like it's not going to come together and then it actually finally comes all together and the audience is laughing and it's just great," shares Ms. Grace.

Through everything, both the cast and tech crew have been able to bond both on and off stage.



"I feel like everybody's comfortable with each other," mentions Trevor Nichols, a freshman in Thespian Honor Society. "We all like each other. It's a very good cast and a great group of people involved."

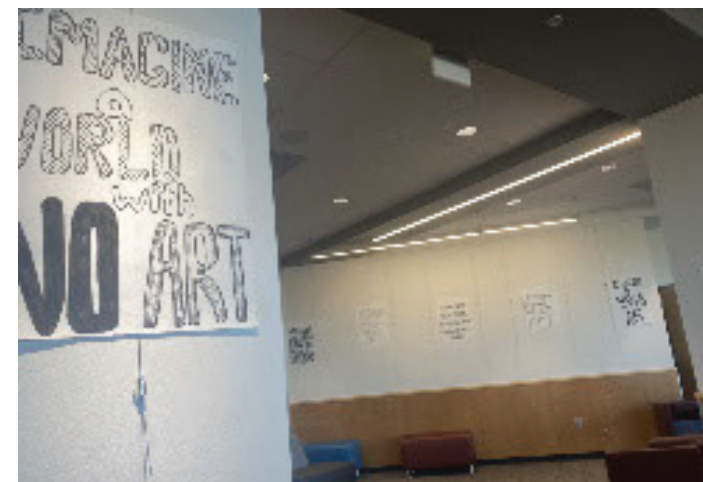
A lot of people agree with Ms. Grace's decisions on casting with this play and believe that the roles were played perfectly.

"I think it was cast really well...Everyone seemed to know their role and everything seemed perfect for the role they did. I think they all did really well," states Jayden Hughes, a sophomore in the Technical Theater Club.

For the first time in her career, Ms. Grace has a partner to work on plays with, and would like the partnership to continue in the future. "I would like to say that I am incredibly fortunate to be working with Miss Mac!" exclaims Ms. Grace. "This was her first show as the technical director. She really did an amazing job with the students and everything that was going on. So I'm really thrilled to have a team member because I've never had a team member in the drama department, ever. It's always been kind of up to me... As far as an actual teaching team member that's part of the teaching of a theater, I've never had that before."

Many members in the audience thoroughly enjoyed watching this production, and can't wait for the next one.

"Great job. I really liked watching everyone!" cheers sophomore Kendall Hand. "I thought everybody had a great part and a great character that they played very well, so good job!"



After a water fight broke out in the art lounge, food and trash were found in the furniture, and the art was at risk, Mr. Bott and Mrs. Garcia made the decision to close it.

"There was food and wrappers all over and under the furniture when there is a clear sign that lists the expectations for the space," Mrs. Garcia states. "I never want to close the space, I think it takes away opportunities from our artists to showcase their hard work, but it needs to be done."

In order to keep the lounge open, Mrs. Garcia commented that students need to take the initiative to keep the space clean and ensure that the art won't get damaged.

"I think students need to take ownership of this space, it's not my gallery!" Mrs. Garcia

Good for the Soul

By: Lucia Mott

The popularity of music will never wane, even as trends rise and fall. Students at JA have very strong opinions about the topic that has teenagers around the world in its grip.

An 8th grader at JA, Amar Ormergic listens to the standard popular music of today's day and age.

"I can't listen to Taylor Swift, it hurts my soul; country music too, I just can't listen to it," Ormergic said. "Music helps kids focus more. It isn't okay to listen to music when directions are being said but any other time I should be allowed to listen to music."

English teacher Mr. Hartmann finds that he can relate to the musical tastes of his students. Unlike most of the faculty, he doesn't care if

Imagine

By: Ender Gressett

says. "If artists are going to put their work in there though, they need to know that it is safe. It's time for you as students to help educate one another and keep each other accountable for appropriate and respectful use of the gallery."

Junior Charley Harrold, who worked on a video discussing the closing of the gallery, thinks that the posters, which students put up to bring attention to how the lounge was being misused, were effective. To keep the art lounge open, Harrold thinks that both teachers and students need to follow the rules of the space, and a system should be made to make sure that the regulations are adhered to.

"I think that teachers and students should respect the rules that are already in place," Harrold states.

Junior Chris Meier also agrees that following the rules of the art lounge would be effective in keeping it open, and putting up the posters was a good step in this direction.

"I think that every day, people can encourage the space to be used as it's intended to be," Meier says. "Just practicing the rules for yourself. You don't have to do much."

students choose to listen to music in class. "My Chemical Romance is timeless, I just find that their lyrics are meaningful at any point in my life," Hartmann remarked. "As for listening to music in class, as long as I'm not giving a lecture or instructions they can do it. They still need to be able to hear me if I say anything, though."

Students think they should be able to listen to music in class and teachers agree to this within reason. It is very important to them to explore their tastes and discover new artists.

"Music helps me while I do my work. I can focus more and I don't have to listen to the distractions around me," Ormergic explains.

¿Como te Va?

By: Benjamin Schumm

Since Jefferson Academy is a competitive college prep school, it isn't uncommon for students to speak or learn a unique language. Learning a new language is proven to improve both social skills and memory, so it shouldn't be a surprise that so many JA students take on this challenge.

Matthew Blake, a sophomore, isn't just learning one language. Instead, he's learning three. "I know a little bit of Hawaiian, a decent amount of Spanish, and I'm learning Scottish Gaelic," Blake shares. Blake has different reasons for learning all of these. He's learning Scottish Gaelic in order to connect to his heritage and Hawaiian because he wanted to bond with his dad.

Each language has different challenges that come with it, but he is determined to learn them all. "Scottish Gaelic is my ancestry, and then Hawaiian I was kind of just doing it because my dad wanted to do it with me," Blake reveals. "Scottish Gaelic is definitely the hardest because it is constantly changing, like English. The Hawaiian language is more dead than Scottish Gaelic, so it's not evolving in any way." The sophomore has the basics of each language down, but specific endings and tenses are still difficult for him. "[For all three languages], memorizing words is pretty easy, but memorizing how to conjugate those words, just like in Spanish, is not as easy as it sounds," Blake says. "The key to learning new languages is dedication. Just dedication."

Other students like sophomore Leyna Gibson have decided to only learn one language, but she has taken on one of the most challenging languages: Mandarin Chinese. Mandarin requires the understanding of a whole new alphabet, which is a task difficult for even the most talented students.

"It's pretty difficult to learn, because you've got the tones, so the same words, there's five different ways you can say it, and every single one of them means a different

thing," Gibson laments. She has been learning this language since first grade, which is a huge commitment.

"When I was about six, my parents gave me a choice because the elementary school I went to had Spanish, Russian, and Chinese," Gibson remembers. "I chose Chinese because they don't have a traditional alphabet, so I thought that sounded cool. I did the language pilot program for Mandarin Chinese at our school, but it was really basic. I probably could have sat down and done it all in like five hours if I wanted to. So, it's just been something I kind of know. I haven't really brushed up on it much." Some people learn languages not for the experience, but because they have to in order to communicate with their family. This is precisely the case for Landen Lee, a student and child of Korean immigrants.

"In second and third grade, I visited Korea," Lee recalls. "I was able to pick up some Korean there in order to communicate with my family. I'm extremely glad I know the language, as it helps me better connect with my relatives in Korea and my parents here in the States."



JA Instas

By: Benjamin Schumm

From JA couples to the cafeteria food, students have created many unofficial JA Instagram accounts. Some memorable accounts were JA Bending Over or JA Bad Posture. Two popular pages, however, are still up and running - JA Bad Parking and JA's Next Top Mr. Clean. Valyn Highley, the owner and creator of JA's Next Top Mr. Clean, is currently a senior here at Jefferson Academy. In September 2022 (her Junior year), along with fellow student Adriana Kahanek, Highley decided to create an Instagram page to consensually post pictures of other students from a funny camera angle that made them appear hairless.

"We started this page because we were taking .5's of each other, and in one of them we looked bald," said Highley. "We thought it was really

funny and reminded us of Mr. Clean, so we wanted to start a page that was a competition for who could look the most bald."

A page that's currently active is the infamous JA Bad Parking page. Dedicated to posting photos of the cars that are a bit too far over the curb or over their line, this account has been posting since January of 2022.

Luckily for everyone except those posted, there's no indication of this account going inactive at the end of this year; the owner says he plans to pass on the account. "This account has been a ton of fun to run, and I don't want it to go away after this year. I plan on passing it to an upcoming senior in order to keep the page alive."



Speedy

By: Lucia Mott

There's always a rush of adrenaline when a brand-new driver first gets their permit: the thirst to get on the road for the first time and try out a new piece of freedom. However, the students at Jefferson Academy have very different experiences and opinions when it comes to driving.

Owen Davidson, senior, has been driving

for just over a year. He once got pulled over for speeding 80mph on a 60mph road, so he feels strongly about the topic.

"A good driver pays attention to the road, doesn't hit people, and doesn't speed," Davidson explained. "I am much better about speeding now."

Younger drivers tend to have a different mindset regarding

driving and speeding. Calvin Campbell has only had his permit for two months.

"When I get my license, I am excited to drive to girls' houses and speed!" Campbell exclaims. Sophomore Grace Parsons is going to get her license in December, so she has been driving with a permit for close to a year.

"When I get my license, I can't wait to drive around with my friends and go shopping. I won't need to ask my parents for a ride somewhere," Parsons said.

Beginning to drive is scary for some teenagers, but those who have been driving for a while can be just as afraid. Since he has been driving for longer than both Parsons and Campbell, Davidson has experienced more unsafe drivers.

"The other people on the road can be scary," Davidson stated. "I feel better now about long drives and night driving, but it was kind of scary when I first was driving."

Pulsera Project

By: Hayley Smith

Colorful thread is woven and worn as Jefferson Academy's Spanish Honor Society works to carry out the Pulsera Project. The Pulsera Project is a fundraiser for the club that also raises funds for local artists in Nicaragua and Venezuela. Its success relies on student participation in purchasing the bracelets.

"It's basically a project where we get a shipment of handmade bracelets from Nicaragua and Venezuela," explains club member Valyn Highley. "It's a good source of profit for them outside of their area. Everyone that buys the bracelets supports the local artists and all the money goes back to them. I think it would be great if more students bought bracelets, but I am happy with the students that have." Ravel LaBerge, another member of the club, agreed with Highley that the project is for a really good cause. LaBerge explained that for the club to participate in the event, club members must be involved, with each of them taking shifts at the stand.

"We have a signup genius to volunteer for selling them at lunch for club hours," LaBerge shares. "It's mainly the presidents and Mrs. Bocenegro who work to set it up

each year. We all do a great job with it, but I think our presidents Colette and Olivia are really good!"

The project makes a significant impact on the world as a whole, with the profits going to local artists and the diversity of the designs making the world colorful.

"I think it definitely makes an impact, especially with all the schools that do this across the country," Highley comments. "It really helps support the artists. I think it is a really great cause and there are some really beautiful bracelets, there's one that speaks for everybody!"



Senioritis

By: Mackenzie Estep

Sitting there as the clock ticks by, while staring at the piled-up unfinished assignments and endless 11:59 due dates, and feeling absolutely no energy or motivation has been a very common experience for many students, especially seniors since the start of the school year.

The infamous phenomenon known as Senioritis affects pretty much every senior, as they approach the end of their high school career.

Mark Leoni shared his definition of senioritis by saying, "Senioritis, in my mind, is the period in your senior year where you realize that you're going to college, and you've already got your money and your applications done, so you just stop caring. There's also an interpersonal aspect in my mind, where you start to drift away from friends as you realize that you're not going to see them again."

This overwhelming sense of dread and procrastination is famous for hitting seniors towards the end of the year, but at JA, many seniors are already feeling its effects. "It is very hard for me to find motivation to get my work done or anything done. I procrastinate on every assignment I get because I feel unmotivated. When I'm feeling like this, I set everything aside and watch a movie until the last minute, then I crank out my assignment," said Olivia Saenz.

Though the only true way to get rid of senioritis is just to push through, some seniors have found other methods that help assist with their issues as well.

"When I am feeling unmotivated I usually give myself a task or break for a few minutes before going back to my work. Sometimes it helps to take breaks every time I finish my homework for a certain subject before going on to the next thing," said Anna Brenneman.

Senioritis and having no motivation for many seniors is caused by the stress levels surrounding college applications and thoughts about their post-secondary plans.

Saenz shared her worries by saying, "I think those [college applications] stress me out even more. It's not like I don't want to apply to stuff but I just can't bring myself to apply because I feel like the second I do high school is going to end."

Leoni added to the effects of college applications on senioritis, "The thought of college and applications is definitely a part of the senioritis. I think it's because of the fact that you are going to college and going to a

whole new part of your life that causes senioritis to happen. And the idea of applying for applications on top of everything else is draining." Though senioritis is already plaguing the JA halls, is it still important to see the big picture and focus on having a good senior year, while also completing what needs to be done. Brenneman shared her thoughts on this by saying, "I think it'll just be important for me to recognize how far I've already come, and to end on a high note."



Escape from reality

Signing Day

By: Cass Carpenter

From traveling across the country to maintaining good grades in school, Gianna Gagliano, Jefferson Academy's high-energy girls' soccer player, begins her senior year and a journey she will never forget!

After committing to the University of the Pacific, emotions are high as she gets closer and closer to playing D1 soccer.

"I feel super excited about committing and having this opportunity. It is very surreal being able to continue playing the sport that I love at the Division 1 level," states Gagliano. "I am most excited to be able to make an impact on the team and continue doing what I love at the next level."

With this being a big decision and a leap into the rest of her career, there were some obvious choices that had to be made on what made the University of the Pacific feel like home.

"I chose the University of the Pacific because it is in the perfect location," Gagliano says. "It is

not too far from home, but not too close either. It has a beautiful campus with a strong college surrounding my desired major. It is in a very strong conference (The West Coast Conference) with very supportive coaches."

Although going through the commitment process may look or seem easy, Gagliano goes into what really happens and what that looks like for the very lengthy, but successful, process. "The process of committing was long and stressful to begin with. It consists of emailing numerous coaches and asking them to come watch you play. They will come, then, if they like you, they will ask for a phone call. This phone call is treated like an interview for both the coach and the athlete. The coach then ends

the call by discussing the next steps with the athlete, which typically involves a visit, or watching them play again. After this, if the coach still likes the athlete, they will give them a verbal offer, which the athlete can either accept or decline," explained Gagliano.

After going through the process with many different schools Gagliano chose the University of the Pacific, where she will have the opportunity to play Division 1 soccer.

"It feels pretty cool being the only one that has signed so far this year. I know that there are other awesome athletes who are planning on signing this year as well, but being the only

one so far is fun," Gianna states. "I feel super excited about committing and having this opportunity. It is very surreal being able to continue playing the sport that I love at the Division 1 level." Being able to say you get to play Division 1 soccer is a big deal. Apart from the commitment process and making sure

you choose the right school, it is something that you have to know you want to do from a young age and continuously pour your heart and soul into it. You must always work towards achieving that goal that you know is possible to achieve.

"I have played soccer since I could walk, and I have always known that I wanted to play collegiate soccer, so I prepared for this by competing with and against some of the best soccer players in the country in the Girl's Academy League," Gagliano states. "I do think that all my work has paid off to get me to this point. I have poured my entire life into soccer, so being able to continue playing the sport I love at the next level is super exciting for me!"



New Heights

By: Kris Keintz

A complex maze of stones and overhangs lies before JA's climbers as they prepare both their minds and bodies for the new season. The climbing team has a new season beginning in just a few weeks and they could not be more excited. Each athlete is conditioning themselves to reach higher and complete more challenging courses every day.

"Our first competition is December 10th," Mr. Mellott, the assistant coach says. "We really have to get in shape for that and find what our limits are. Everyone is figuring out how to navigate the different courses together, and it's been really rewarding for a lot of them.

Many of the climbers are very excited for the new competition season. However, quite a few of them are looking to make slight changes that would make practices run even smoother. "I like being able to work on whatever skill I want to on any particular day," junior E Fisk comments. "That being said, I'd like to have more guided help so I can really get better and focus on specific things I can improve. I can only improve at skills I know how to get better at, so some coaching direction and examples would be great."

Different team members have different goals and aspirations that they'd like to achieve during the season. Some of the group focuses

on the social aspect of climbing, but others prefer to work towards quicker and stronger times on routes.

"I'm working on moving up a level in competition right now," senior Alex Yeh remarks. "I'm trying to do a 5.13 for top roping, and I really want to be top 20 at state finals for my last year competing." Although the sport has many physical advantages, the vast majority of the team is there for the mental benefits that climbing offers.

"I love that I can get in shape with climbing, but I love the mental side to it even more," Fisk states. "I've found that my overall mental health has gotten better since I started last year. Climbing is a great escape where I can hang out with friends who want to have fun, and I can forget about any other problems going on in my life."

The climbing community is a unique group of people that is brought together in the most unlikely of ways. Even though they're all there for a common purpose, the camaraderie they find in one another is different from any other sport.

"The reason I wanted to join climbing in the first place was because of the community," Mr. Mellott comments. "It's a fun and athletic environment, and everybody is so encouraging and supportive. The team really builds each other up and everyone wants to see their teammates do well. You have strangers all working on the same problem together and we're all working towards a common goal. It's surreal at times."



Hitting History

By: Jordan Leschuk

The crowd held their breath as the ball soared through the gym, and everyone erupted as soon as it hit the ground. The JA Girls varsity team had made yet another outstanding victory against Wellington and Aspen High School on Saturday, November 4th. This was the first time in JA history that the volleyball team had



ever gone to State!

Before their game, there was a bit of anxiety, but a lot of confidence going into it.

“We were pretty excited, we’re playing easier teams because we are second in the league and they are all in their 20s and 30s and so we were all pretty excited,” said junior Taylor Yoon.

Although the excitement was there, it was unknown territory that can bring its own challenge.

Ali Smith, who is also a junior, added, “I was excited but in my head, I was a little bit worried because we have the chance to go to state for the first time in JA history.”

The team felt really prepared and excited for



this amazing opportunity to grow in the sport they love and to see how much they have improved over the last few years, but the lower teams come with some troubles.

Smith stated that one thing that she found to be difficult was the “...team has a hard time when we play lower teams that are slower than us. We tend to go down to their level and play how they are playing rather than the standard way of playing that we already have established.”

This would be the theme that would play out through the state tournament.

Smith said, “I think that everyone was just really nervous and we were not playing to the potential that we could have. I also think that since we were the 2nd-seed team we were overthinking it too much.” The other teams had definitely gotten into their heads and it made it really difficult to play.

Although it was not the outcome that they had hoped for, it was still a great experience for the team that will live on in JA’s history books. The team had an absolute blast at state and it will be an unforgettable moment for them.

“The best part was just, like, being there, to be honest. We were very thankful to be there and grateful because we worked our butts off to get there,” stated Yoon. “No matter what the outcome was, we still got very far. We were the first team to make it this far and to ever make

it to state, and so we take pride in that. We could have played better but at the same time, we pushed as hard as we could.”

There is some concern among the Lady Jags about losing some of their star players for next year, but that is not going to deter their goal to repeat their run for state.

“We are going to need to work our butts off more than we did this year because we are losing our center and two of our middles and our best outside hitters,” Smith shares. “I think the best part was getting to experience the state tournament for the first time. We realize we are the only team to do it, the worst part was losing and also realizing that this was our last game with this team and the seniors.”

The seniors for the varsity team hold the same sentiment, knowing that they accomplished something amazing, and truly one of the best ways to end their career at Jefferson Academy. “Going to state was everybody’s dream the whole season,” recalled senior Jessie Schaffer. “All the work we put in was to get there in the end. After thinking my junior year was our last chance, getting another shot this year was a huge blessing. I have loved this sport since I was a little kid and to get to play it at the Denver Coliseum with my incredible team against the best teams in the state is more than I could’ve asked for in my senior season.”

JAGWIRE

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Stated Success

By: Gianna Gagliano

With an uncharted trail ahead, the rhythmic sound of shoes hitting the ground marks the end of the successful 2023 cross-country season. Showing much determination on the girls' side of the program, they took home a very deserved 10th-place finish at state. This was such an impressive feat for the girls as this was the second-best finish in all of JA's history.

With two individual state qualifiers, senior Valera Noland and senior Maya Ross, combined with the team's historic finish, the end to this season is bittersweet.

"State was great," says senior Sarah Welsch. "We pushed through the difficult parts and placed pretty good as a team. We did good at pushing each other and getting far. I enjoyed running and being in a positive environment because it helps you push when times get hard."

With a new school record, the boys' team also found significant success at the state competition. Taking home a historic 5th-place finish, the boys have lots to be proud of. This includes Sean Beasley's fourth-place medal, a befitting way to end his victorious high school cross-country career. "State was a great experience," states senior Sean Beasley. "I have been with the team for 3 years and it was great to see everyone progress up to this final moment. It was really inspiring to me, I'm proud of the guys. The team did well with competing and pushing through pain; it's a difficult course. I enjoyed finishing and doing a cool down with the boys and hearing about their experience. It's always good to celebrate

with them after."

The success that both the boys' and girls' teams have found this season can be attributed to the work ethic of these athletes during practice and meets. Two words can be used to describe both of these teams: determined and passionate. Throughout the entirety of the season, they were willing to do whatever it took to be

successful, which significantly aided them in their state competition. "Without my team, I don't think I would be able to enjoy this sport as much as I do," says junior Aden Garza. "My teammates' determination and passion for this sport inspires me every day and I couldn't do it without them. Without our team's support for each other, we wouldn't be where we are now." Alongside work ethic, the team's success can also be attributed to the supportive coaching staff. All athletes know that a coach can make or break them, therefore



having such encouraging coaches as leaders was so important to the team. These coaches aided them in their high finishes at the state competition.

"Without the coaching staff, I don't think our team would be successful," Garza says. "To have such a dedicated coaching staff is such a blessing and I don't think a lot of teams get to experience what our team experiences with our amazing coaches. Our coaches' belief in us and in us working hard means a lot and their dedication to us is a huge part of our success at state."