

JAG WIRE

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Positevely Prom

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Pages 2-3

A Final Farewell

With this year's final semester coming to an end, it's time to say goodbye to the beloved seniors.

Page 6

Playing With Heart

This 2024 season has been a roller coaster for the team. While things have been slightly rougher than last year, the girls have remained dominant on the field.

Page 20

Positively Prom

By: Abigail Stephens

Prom is the party and the highlight of many students' high school careers and is preceded by a nauseating amount of spending and days' worth of planning.

"We [started planning] immediately after last year's prom," mentions senior Ava Chung. "Second semester is when we really start picking stuff up and fourth quarter is when we decided on the theme and committees."

It's not just prom that StuCo has poured their time, effort, and funding into. They have planned numerous after-school activities for the week before: a soccer game BBQ on Monday, girls' soccer senior night & food trucks on Tuesday, a co-ed volleyball tournament Wednesday, capture the flag on Thursday, and a prom assembly during school hours on Friday. In addition to the fun events, it was also Spirit Week. From Dynamic Duo Day to Eras Day, students have gotten to dress outside of the norm all week.

Other than StuCo, prom attendees' preparations begin weeks, sometimes months, in advance. "Guys have to – get to – 'propose' to their girl," discussed junior Josh Neely. "It's a huge 'ask:' you over-exaggerate asking her to prom to show that you love her with a poster and decorating a room in her house or her car." Also, an essential part for those going with

dates is buying boutonnieres and corsages. Another student describes a very different pre-prom course of events. "Ask out a girl, get rejected," lists off junior Ethan Watson, "get gym motivation, look JACKED, and then take like 10 minutes to get ready." As Watson explains his plans, all the boys in the surrounding vicinity nod along.

"Also, you need the pre-prom energy drink right before," adds junior Holden Gillings.

"Three energy drinks or a bunch of 5-hour energy things so you can be awake the whole night."

The day of prom is hectic and packed as getting ready takes longer than the actual event sometimes.

"I usually get my nails done and have everything prepped the night before," explains junior Tania Sawaged. "My hair takes at least

an hour and a half and makeup takes an hour and then getting dressed and putting on jewelry is another hour." Sawaged isn't the only girl who takes multiple hours to get ready, as most female interviewees say they take between 3 to 7 hours to get ready.

"[Getting ready] took me about 3 hours," recalls senior Anna Brenneman. "In the weeks leading up to prom, a lot of it is just figuring out what I want the look to be. I get the dress first, then get jewelry, shoes, get my nails done, and decide on hair."

On the other hand, some people put significantly less time into their appearance.

"Shower is optional," begins John Sanborn. "I'll just throw on all my stuff, hope I look good in a mirror, and then pray that my girlfriend likes me for the rest of the night."

Unlike Sanborn, some guys do put a little more effort into their appearance. "30 minutes max," declares junior Luca Quintana. "10 minute shower, 10 minutes getting dressed, 10 minutes out the door, done."

Finally, the time has come for all the prepara-

tions to pay off. The 2024 Jefferson Academy Prom was officially on May 4th. Held at 'Ant Life' in Downtown Denver, the partying was intense and the night felt too brief.

"Prom was good," shared junior Devin Carter. "The venue definitely wasn't what I expected.

It was a little small and there wasn't enough seating but it wasn't bad." While Carter was a little less enthusiastic, he did have fun.

"Prom was pretty great!" beamed junior Aryn Brown. "Although parking did suck. I didn't have to park, but some of my friends did and they had to walk quite a bit." Brown wasn't the only one to mention parking. A lot of students had to park pretty far away and were uncomfortable fending for themselves downtown.

"The venue itself was good, but it was in a bad part of town. Teachers had to be outside if students were outside at all times."

Students are conflicted over the music at prom, with varying opinions. "[The music] was pretty good at first," remarked junior Evelyn Claeys, "but it got worse towards the end." Although some did not appreciate the sheer number of dance remixes, there was a general consensus that certain songs were too short. However, the dance songs were great; students and even teachers could be seen dancing in unison.

Since the venue is called 'Ant Life,' students did have the opportunity to observe the inner-workings of ant hills. "I saw plenty of ants," declares senior Mark Leoni when nearby students state that they didn't see any. "People must've been looking in the wrong spots."



Good & Not so Good

By: Benjamin Schumm

Every school year, there are some incredible events that we'll remember for years to come. On the other hand, there are some less-pleasant memories that most people make during the year. Both experiences are important: they provide fond memories to motivate ourselves and learning experiences for us to improve on in the coming years. This applies to students and teachers alike; everyone shares these experiences throughout the year, albeit through different lenses.

One of Jefferson Academy's most iconic teachers, Mr. Hartmann was kind enough to reflect upon his experiences so far this year. While he knows that no year is without its setbacks, he takes them in stride and uses them to improve his classes for future students.

"My high of the year is probably my A Block winning the recent fundraiser for teen moms," Hartmann remarks. "Even though it might not seem like much, it means a lot to me that we were able to make a real difference and help people who need it the most."

"The closest thing I have to a low this year is probably helping students too much, and not giving them the chance to fail," he says. "I know that sounds bad, but not letting them fail took away some of their learning opportunities."

Mrs. Walker, another beloved JA teacher, was also eager to chip in on her positive and negative experiences of the year. While her highs and lows were different, they still centered around the student body and community that this school has.

"My high is just how awesome this school is. Everybody is nice and accepting, and I love all of the students here!"

Mrs. Walker proudly stated that her high was the school's community. The community is so kind and accepting, in fact, that she wasn't able to think of any points in the year that she would consider a low.

"I don't really have a low this year! I love all of

my classes and students; I feel like they help me to learn too!"

Mrs. Walker loves her students, and feels like they teach her just as much as she teaches them. Every day, she's excited to come into school and see all of her students.

Teachers aren't the only ones who experience ups and downs throughout the school year; every student has their own individual experiences throughout the year, along with their own unique highs and lows. Take senior Ashton Buzick for example: from running track to Senior Seminar, he's experienced just about everything this school has to offer.

"I think my high this year would have to be running 11.93 in the 100-meter dash," Buzick says. "It's been my goal since freshman year, and it felt great to finally accomplish it." An avid sprinter, track is a sport that Buzick is dedicated to. He's been doing it his entire high school career. It was thrilling to reach a goal that he's held for himself since freshman year.

"My low this year was probably my Senior Seminar class. It was a hard class, and I just really struggled with it."

Like all seniors, Buzick had to take the Senior

Seminar class this year. While he knows the class is important to take, he acknowledged that he struggled with it and didn't enjoy it all that much.

Bentley Nielsen, a JA sophomore better known to some as Horton from the school musical, also took the time to share his ups and downs of the school year. From college classes to baseball to the school play, Nielsen has certainly had a busy year so far, providing for unique highs and lows that might not be shared by other students.

"I think my high for this year was being able to play a lead role in the fall play and winter mu-

sical. It felt great to be able to challenge myself in that way, and the people I was with and memories I made make it worth everything." Despite the extra time and work he had to put in, Nielsen doesn't at all regret being in the musical. He regards it as a unique experience that he'll remember and cherish for years to come.

"The low for me was starting out the second semester without a lot of my close friends in classes. This felt weird for a few weeks and a bit lonely but I was able to meet new people and friends I otherwise wouldn't have if I was with my friends the entire semester."



Finally Finals

By: Hannah Strumpher

The last two days of school loom closer and closer. While everyone is excited for these days to arrive, there is one last major hurdle to jump over beforehand: finals.

Many people enjoy how the finals are set up, having split the days in order to make sure we aren't too loaded with work.

"I like how it's only two classes each day, and how it's paired as A & C and B & D," says senior Sophie Kent. "It gives you more wiggle room."

The amount of variety in the finals has been increasing since previous years, and some teachers are doing projects instead of tests. Mrs. Thimsen, for example, is doing a crime scene for her Forensics class final.

"So with my Forensics final, instead of being a written exam it's like a murder mystery where they have to solve a crime based upon all the techniques they learned throughout the quarter," states Mrs. Thimsen. "It's a more hands-on and problem-based kind of final. I would say it would probably be more fun because of that." Many students are relieved at this change and prefer doing projects over tests.

"I am probably most excited about the English [10] final because that one's a project and we get to do a poster," explains sophomore Eva Richling.

When it does come down to tests, however, some people prefer online tests while others prefer paper or Scantron tests.

"I like paper finals actually," mentions Kent.

"It's a lot harder for me to focus when I'm staring at a screen."

Some teachers move away from tests completely and do other things such as projects, presentations, and more. For her Biology classes, Mrs. Thimsen prefers doing both a test and a project for the final. She does this to make sure that she hits every subject and so the grades don't weigh heavily on a partner.

"I like the combination of both [tests and projects] for my regular classes," says Mrs. Thim-

sen. "I think it's important, especially if you're going to go on to college, to get in the habit of retaining that kind of information for a cumulative final. I do also like projects because they can explore different avenues, but the downside is it's a group thing so you're kind of sharing the grades. So I don't want that to be your only final because then you're tied to others within your group."

The finals that many students are most nervous about are the math finals.

"I am probably most nervous about Geometry since it's the hardest because I'm not a math person, and it's an actual test and not a project or something like that," said Richling.

Although they are necessary, some teachers have things that they do not enjoy about the finals. No teacher likes seeing their students in distress. To help prevent this, teachers do their best to make sure that their students know everything they need to know for the finals.

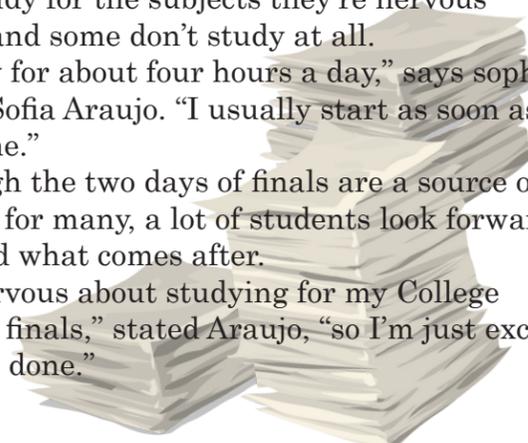
"I think the thing I don't like about it is that it's stressful," explains Mrs. Thimsen. "I do think it's a skill to learn how to take a final and you're going to have to use them if you're going to go on to a college setting.... I like that it's not weighted as much, it's not going to destroy your grade...but I don't like that kids get stressed about it."

There's a big diversity among the students when choosing if they will study for finals or not. Some students study everything, some only study for the subjects they're nervous about, and some don't study at all.

"I study for about four hours a day," says sophomore Sofia Araujo. "I usually start as soon as I get home."

Although the two days of finals are a source of anxiety for many, a lot of students look forward to it and what comes after.

"I'm nervous about studying for my College History finals," stated Araujo, "so I'm just excited to be done."



Superbly Summer!

By: Jordan Leschuk

Ocean breeze blowing through your hair, mowing lawns, sleeping in, packing a suitcase for a trip, the exhaustion after staying up until 4 AM playing video games with friends...no matter what, summer break is something that the majority of students are looking forward

to. Summer break is the chance to get a long break after a tough year of schooling. Some students decided to share what their plans were for this summer break.

One of the most exciting yet tedious things that almost every high school student has done is Drivers Ed.

"[This summer break] I am going to be working at Waterworld as a guest attendant and taking Drivers Ed,"

said freshman Lily Rector.

Many JA students are going to be working this summer at places ranging from Waterworld to your local Target.

"I am working 2 jobs this summer," stated junior Ian Sloan. "One for a ski shop and one for an event center."

Many students get jobs so they can earn money and get experience for future job applications. It is also to help with independence to get out of the house and have responsibility.

"[I am most looking forward to] earning money from my job," mentioned Rector.

Even if students are unable to drive, they still find a way to earn money. Some mow lawns, some walk dogs, and some babysit.

"I am going to babysit like I normally do because I am not fully driving on my own yet,"

shared sophomore Kendall Hand.

Jefferson Academy offers many fall sports such as softball, volleyball, soccer, cross country, and boys' golf. Most of the pre-seasons for these sports take place during the summer break.

"[I will be] participating in preseason for high school soccer as well as summer cross country," mentioned Sloan.

This year, Hand is going out of state with her cousins over summer break and is really excited for the trip.

"I am going to go to Florida with my cousins on the 4th of July," explained Hand. "There is a possibility that it is just me and my brother going to Florida and getting to ditch my parents which would be cool."

Another thing that many people are looking forward to during

the summer break is being able to spend time with the people they care about.

"I hopefully can hang out with friends since one of them isn't ditching me to go to South Africa during the summer," said Hand.

The best thing though about summer break is that it is an actual break away from school. It is a nice way to get rid of all the stress that comes with school and to finally get some rest. No more worrying about tests, and projects, and that homework assignment that you forgot to turn in last week. After all the work that is done at Jefferson Academy, it is definitely a well-deserved break.

"It is nice having free time and it is great not having to worry about school," mentioned Hand. "I will also enjoy having some independence over the summer."



A Final Farewell

By: Sabrina Madruga

With this year's final semester coming to an end, it's time to say goodbye to the beloved seniors.

During all of the struggles, triumphs, and wins, the class of 2024 has been through it all in their past four years of high school at JA. "I feel like everyone is supportive of each other and helps each other when they need it," stated Harriet Seiffertt. "I've also become more confident in myself and speaking out for myself and others."

Throughout the years spent going to classes and roaming the halls, graduating as a senior means a lot of developmental growth as well. "I've been here since 7th grade," mentioned Marissa Martinez. "I've definitely matured a lot because we came into high school during COVID so it was very strange and it taught us how to adapt really well."

Many others found happiness in the community and culture at JA.

"[JA] has made me more comfortable with just being myself because it's a smaller community," declared Olivia Saenz. "My favorite memory is being a part of the golf team and the bowling team. It was so much fun and we got to play games."

Going along with this, other students have managed to create their own path by joining new groups.

"For me, I don't go out to a lot of events, but when I do, everyone is really nice," explained Rose Gray. "I'm glad that I got to join clubs because those have created a lot of really good memories for me."

The list of memories from the many clubs and activities high school has to offer goes on and on, and even if someone may not go to every event, opportunities still present themselves to have a great high school experience.

"Going out to the dances is probably one of the most fun things you can do in high school," commented Jackson Stillman. "You get to go out with your friends, stay out for so long, and

it ends in the morning."

From the hardest academic parts of JA, the triumphs can outshine the not-so-bright moments.

"JA is very rigorous, very hardcore, and academically focused," stated Elliott Waters. "It helped me figure out that not everything is the end of the world and move on. After so many 'failed' tests and getting a B+ I stopped caring, so things that used to be such a big deal don't really matter to me."

Even with the hard times, it can still be comforting to know there is a support system waiting to help get you back on your feet.

"It's been nice knowing the majority of the people," mentioned Chris Rock. "Once I got to high school it was nice to get that influx of people. The community is very hard working, very supportive, and very tightknit."

From the opportunities that come with having a good community comes more assurance when considering the future.

"Having concurrent enrollment has given me good opportunities, and it has pushed me to work towards my future," stated Sean Beasley. "I remember psychology was really fun and I think in college I will probably do that again."



Bittersweet Goodbye

By: Gianna Gagliano

Eleven years ago, first grade Gianna walked through the doors of Jefferson Academy Elementary School for the first time not knowing that the halls of this school would shape who she is now. As I am sitting down to write this article, I am flooded with bittersweet memories and friendships that I have made during my time here at JA.

I will always remember doing reading groups with Mrs. Hose in first grade, taking care of butterflies in Mrs. Sovereign's second grade class, enrichment in 3rd and 4th grade with Mrs.

Pullman and Mrs. Erickson, the Wax Museum in fifth grade with Mrs. Grant, and Outdoor Lab, Greek and Roman Days, and Young Ameritowne in 6th grade with Mrs. Mott.

Although my middle school and freshman year experiences were mainly online due to COVID-19, I managed to meet some of my favorite people. From facetimeing my friends every day during online school to hanging out with them almost every night senior year, I thank JA so much

for the memories and relationships that it has brought to me. I have truly made friendships that will last a lifetime.

From my high school experiences, I will never forget all of the homecoming and prom dances. I will never forget spirit days or playing soccer under the lights in front of our home crowd. I won't forget the bio labs or watching lacrosse games with my friends and family. I'll always remember Senior Ditch Day and Mr. JA. But most importantly, I'll always remember all the people that I have met and their positive impact on my life.

I wanted to thank all of the administrators, teachers, and professors that have been part of my education at JA. Thank you to the teachers for fostering my love for learning, constantly

challenging me, and guiding me through my high school journey. Thank you to the administrators and Ms. Angie and Mr. Cloonan for greeting me with a smile every time I walked in the office, and for making coming to school each day fun.

I specifically wanted to thank Mr. Carwin for your mentorship and always being one of my biggest supporters and advocates. You have left an incredible mark on my academic path. You have taught me to always be confident and encouraged me to take risks and step out of my comfort zone. Thank you for allowing



me to be part of the JagWire for 3 years. It has been one of the most encouraging and safe atmospheres that I have ever been part of, and I never thought that I would gain such a love for journalism. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity that you provided to become Co-Editor in Chief with Kenzie. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to the newspaper and your students. I will always cherish the memories I made while being a

staff member of the newspaper. Thank you to the middle school and high school soccer teams and coaching staff for their continuous support and belief in me athletically. Thank you for creating a fun and supportive environment where my love for the sport grew tremendously. Thank you for making me a state champion. As I am about to start my next chapter in life, thank you JA for making me the person I am and preparing me for my next adventures.

Advisor's Note: This is an annual tradition for the JagWire. Graduating senior staff members are given an opportunity in the JagWire to say goodbye to JA.

Gone In a Blink

By: Mackenzie Estep

I have been at JA since first grade, and though I am not a part of the kindergarten club, it has still been a very long time. It is what I have known for almost my entire academic career, and what I can contribute to many of the staples in my life.

When I look back on my experience at JA, one thing stands out: the people. Through JA I have met some of the most important people in my life. I believe that I have made true and lifelong friendships and I could not have gotten through high school without them.

These connections I've made in the close-knit community created here are something of comfort when looking towards college. Though many of us are going our separate ways I know that I will have those couple important people to speak to and catch up with. Even further I will have many memories to look back and be comforted knowing what an important part of my life this was.

After starting off high school in the 2020 pandemic and continuing the years of healing after that, I can confidently say that my years at JA have gotten increasingly better. Senior year went by incredibly fast and was some of the most fun I've had.

Though it is bittersweet knowing that JA will be something of the past in just a couple of weeks, I know that my experiences here have prepared me for post-grad life and college. With the rigorous academics that at times I had to cry and struggle through, I have learned how persistent and strong I can be. I feel very prepared to face anything that comes my way in college and beyond due to the many challenging classes I have taken.

The teachers are what have truly made me feel this way. Ms. Defiore has been such a nice presence at school. I had not taken a class with her freshman year, but I have had the pleasure of being in Key Club with her as a sponsor for three years. Ms. Defiore, thank you so much for everything you have done for me and for

always offering a smile in the hallways. You have made my experience in my favorite club amazing.

Mr. Ketcham's assignments in his college classes have always been something that I dreaded. However, the many papers and presentations, mainly in college history and geo have made me feel so much more prepared. I used to collapse at the thought of presenting in front of the class, but now it is something I can do without a second thought. Even though I hate to admit it, thank you for making me do those and for being one of the only full class lecturers I remain engaged in for the full hour-and-a-half class period.

Mr. Carwin has allowed me to write for this publication for three years and given me the opportunity to rise from staff member to art director, to finally editor this year. The Jagwire has been such an important part of my high school experience.



In sophomore year, I decided to take an Intro to Journalism course with this new teacher who I had never heard of just because I needed another elective credit. The first day I actually emailed Ms. Levalley and asked to switch out before changing my mind at the last minute after a very compelling speech from my now co-editor Gianna Gagliano.

That last-minute decision to stay in that class was one of the best decisions I had made in my high school career. I not only gained a very important friend from this (Gianna), but also got the opportunity to join the starting group of the Jagwire reboot. I am so glad that I was able to find this joy I have for writing and reporting, and through this I have discovered an interest that I am planning to pursue in college. So thank you, Gianna, and thank you, Mr. Carwin, I could not have done this without you.

While I am on the topic of thanking teachers, I would like to give some recognition to the office. Specifically Angie and Mr. Cloonan. Mr. Cloonan has always been a friendly face to talk to in the office, especially regarding the

Jagwire as he is one of our main supporters. Thank you for always believing in us and being so excited when we walk through the door with the freshly printed paper.

Angie, you are by far one of the best parts of JA. You truly encompass the JA energy and I have always loved coming to the office and talking to you during my off blocks (and sometimes during class). Even though you are mean to me often and make fun of my rbf, I am so glad to have had you as a resource, reference, and person with whom to talk about all the drama. Thank you so much for everything.

It feels like my time at JA has gone by in the blink of an eye. Moving on from this and everything I've known is pretty nerve-racking, but I am excited to see what else life has to offer. Even though life can really suck sometimes, it is important to look around and appreciate the good things. I feel like you never really appreciate what you have until you realize it is going to be gone, so take the time and look around, I know I will in these last weeks. Goodbye JA!



Creative Connections

By: Nick Rector

We are always told that a story is the thing you make with your life, your grand legend, to memorialize your legacy within the people that you know. Many stories are told to convey action, drama, and the bizarre natures of the world. Storytelling is a delicate art that I've always been fascinated with. How does one simply create characters and a world that seemingly lives, breaths, and grows alongside those who wish to use it to escape the real world? I suppose that real life can create that, the grandiose displays in action movies or the intricate feelings of a romance novel all come from somewhere. While it's harder to find the exact roots of some genres than others, they all pale in comparison to the slice-of-life moments. Little moments of life are what make a story unique and make the characters feel alongside the viewer; all those moments come from someplace, almost mirror images of real life. Or that is what I believe.

I am a storyteller at heart, and while I love action and the bizarreness of other worlds, there is always an excited feeling that runs through me when characters are outside of those moments. When characters are just having dinner and talking about their relationships with their parents or what happened to them at school that day, all that makes the characters feel almost more human. It gives the audience a window of comparison.

Creating that window is always difficult for a storyteller, but not as hard as one may think. I always find that it may be easiest to create moments of life by simply mimicking my own. I ended my eighth grade at the beginning of COVID. I started at JA during its climax and felt isolated and unknown. There was no one that I knew, and no one knew me; it was almost refreshing, that was until classes started. Not knowing anyone made it difficult to adapt to COVID-19; most people started freshman year with at least one friend they could talk to, but I didn't. It sounds crazy, but I turned to the age-old art of storytelling and I created a grand world full of magic and life... a lousy action story.

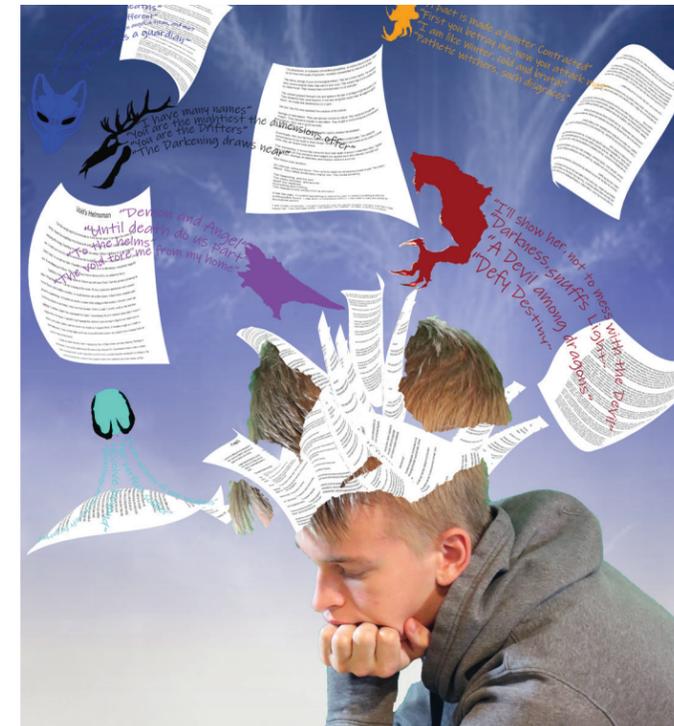
As freshman year progressed, I was able to make some friends; surprisingly enough, all throughout the story that chapter of my life stayed the same. I never really realized COVID would be such an influential factor in my life. I, like most, was overjoyed with having the last month of eighth grade suddenly be done from home, but I never knew it'd follow into high school. Day after day, the same cycle of waking



up and logging onto Zoom got old and tiring and it made maintaining mental health all the more difficult, but I got by with the writing. As sophomore year rolled in, the story didn't change probably cause school didn't change much. COVID was very much still a thing that we had to be afraid of. As the year progressed, I hung out with the same people from the year before and continued to work on the first story. As the second semester started, I started to feel as though I was really a high schooler, and the COVID chapter of my life was coming to a close, and when it closed, so did the story I created.

For the first time, I realized what it meant to be in high school, and thus, the story changed. I experienced more slices of life, and out of them came Nithe, the protagonist of Dragon's Legacy, my current story.

Nithe's story is a complicated one like my own life, almost a mirror image, you could say. Nithe was an outcast of his people and never truly fit in until he found himself on Earth. The first few chapters all guide Nithe to meet the people who are to stick with him 'til the end; these characters all mirror people I consider true friends. After many edits, those characters have changed to better suit the narrative, but the fundamental people who helped to make them in the first place almost made creating



them easier. The connections I've made with people have helped shape and mold Nithe's story in a way that can only be explained one way. My friends really are in the story, many moments I've had with them find themselves in the story, mostly by accident, although I'm not above putting moments in on purpose.

There was a time early in the morning when I was drinking coffee on my sophomore-year Florida trip. I remember one of my friends teasing me about drinking coffee in the morning, wanting to know why I enjoyed the stuff. I found arguing with them about my love for coffee rather hilarious. In Nithe's narrative, he has to wake up early in the morning, and before going to do the thing he woke up for, he stops in the cafeteria to get some coffee. He has an argument with the character of Ashra, and this argument is almost an exact play-by-play minus a few exaggerations. Ashra does eventually give up, folding under Nithe's stubbornness, and so did my friend after a little more arguing and a separate bus ride. Later in the narrative, Ashra does eventually accept Nithe's slight addiction, as did my friend.

While that is one of many comparisons I can point to, I find it is the most obvious and fun one to point to. The scene is only a few pages long and doesn't mean much to the narrative other than the fact that Nithe likes/needs coffee to get by sometimes. But to me, it is a scene I will always be able to remember with near-perfect detail, and a scene that just adds that feeling of life to the story.

JA, while not perfect, has created many different slices of my life that I enjoy sharing. It has helped me create scenes and even chapters that I adore; none can top the portions of my life that I have either consciously chosen or accidentally immortalized within its pages. JA is responsible for that, and I can't deny it. Thank you to those who helped write this story. Whether you just simply lived through this chapter of life with me or contributed in a more direct way, I am truly grateful for it; it has made giving my stories life just a little bit easier. And who knows, you may even find yourself in the pages of one of my books if you look hard enough.

Back at it Again

By: Hayley Smith



Every year, JA hosts the Mr. JA competition, an event that brings together upperclassmen boys in a show of humor, talent, and school spirit. This year's edition saw a select few participants step up to the stage making the attempt to entertain, with the desire to win the prize of two free prom tickets.

The hosts of the event played an important role in planning the evening. Junior Natasha Paul took to the stage for the first time with senior Colette Lynn.

"Our hosts were great this year," stated junior Zach Lemanski, who participated in the competition. "They were great at improvising and embracing the incompetence of the contestants to make things more entertaining."

Chris Rock, a senior who participated, had a similar thought and explained, "Of course I enjoyed the hosts, Colette did an amazing job! I wish she could have roasted me a bit better though, the roasts are always a highlight for me."

Rock took to the stage because he wanted to create a memorable senior year experience.

"I participated in Mr. JA because I thought it would be a great memory to take away from my senior year," mentioned Rock. "I also figured I might as well since I enjoyed powder puff so much and had time in my schedule for it." Despite enjoying the event, Rock noted the challenges faced, particularly in the dance routines.

"I waltzed — if you could call it that — with Elliott. I believe the audience enjoyed it. I wish we spent more time preparing though," stat-

ed Rock. "Ballroom dance is a partner act and while it was funny, I wish we could have looked slightly more professional."

Elliott Waters, aimed to make the audience enjoy the show with his participation.

"I wanted to entertain people," explained Waters. "I love to make people smile and watch their faces light up when I am performing." Many participants knew that signing up for this event would mean an enjoyable time.

"I participated in Mr. JA because I figured this would be a fun opportunity to be on stage, and I knew that because our incompetence was embraced it didn't really matter if I messed up or anything," said Lemanski.

Lemanski's performance included playing the piano with multiple costume changes live on stage. The rush and the chaos of preparation was felt by everyone.

"We originally planned to have two dress rehearsals, but the first one didn't go as planned, and we ran out of time for the second," mentioned Lemanski, noting, however, that the performance was still a success.

Lemanski was also the only junior that participated in this event due to the other boys missing because of a lacrosse game.

"The uncertainty of having anyone in my grade was a little intimidating at times, but I'm glad I did it anyway because I got to know a few of the seniors better," explained Lemanski. "At a certain point you just have to commit to the part even if nobody else in your grade will, and in the end, I think it was well worth it."

Perfectly Purcell

By: Madeline Scoggins

Books, papers, movies, lectures, and discussions are all things typically seen in an English class curriculum. So what makes his classes so special?

Mr. Purcell is one of Jefferson Academy's English teachers. His favorite part about teaching is getting to challenge the students and their ways of engaging in class.

"I think the thing I love about it is the energy that students bring to the classroom and the daily challenge of working with people every day," states Mr. Purcell. "Even if I've taught the students two years in a row, I never get bored."

The energy that students bring is important to a good class. Mr. Purcell enjoys seeing students enter his classroom ready to be a part of class and learn.

"If we didn't feel comfortable talking in front of the whole class, he gave us another option to do so we would still get the points needed," a previous student of his shared.

Oftentimes some students don't feel comfortable speaking in front of the class. Mr. Purcell offers more ways to earn points for kids to not

feel like they have to talk in front of the group. "I like that he takes his time in teaching and provides examples in class for us to try and go over to help our understanding," says junior Kayla Edlund.

Students enjoy that Mr. Purcell takes his time talking about information. He is always making sure everyone is on track and no one is falling behind. Students feel they can ask him for help and he will be able to clear up any confusion on assignments.

"I try to use a variety of methods. Oftentimes I use group work or some

challenging questions," says Purcell. "Activities are usually my best method."

Growing is just as important for teachers as it is for students, and working with kids every day isn't an easy task. Mr. Purcell can connect with his students and help them understand what he is teaching.

"I've overcome the struggle of feeling like I always need to be prepared for situations," Purcell shares. "I no longer feel like I'm not a good enough teacher, and I'm okay with consistently growing."



JAGWIRE

Editors-in-Chief: Gianna Gagliano, Mackenzie Estep

Art Director: Ender Gressett

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Advisor: Bill Carwin

The JagWire is Jefferson Academy's completely student-produced newspaper. The JagWire covers issues and events of interest to the JA community, and its students, faculty, and staff. The paper is reported, edited, and laid out by students. The JagWire is published by JA, as a part of classwork for the Publication Production Newspaper class. If you would like to contact the staff or advisor of the JagWire email us at newspaper@jajags.com

Give me Shelter

By: Abigail Stephens

Every student at JA knows that our community is different from other schools; students who have been here since kindergarten have heard second-hand accounts from friends and family about other schools while other students have experienced different schools before coming to JA. So, just how different is Jefferson Academy from other schools?

“I have been [at JA] since seventh grade and [my old school] was a lot bigger,” recalls sophomore Z Benhassine. “The school I used to go to was a public school and there was a lot more diversity there.”

Like many others, Benhassine has noticed how tight JA’s community is.

“At my old school, everybody was in their own groups and your business was your business. At JA, everybody knows who you are and all of your personal [details].”

Having a close community can be beneficial in some cases, yet harmful in others.

“I feel like the size of the class plays a role in [JA’s culture],” elaborates junior Zach Lemanski. “You’re already familiar with everyone

around you.”

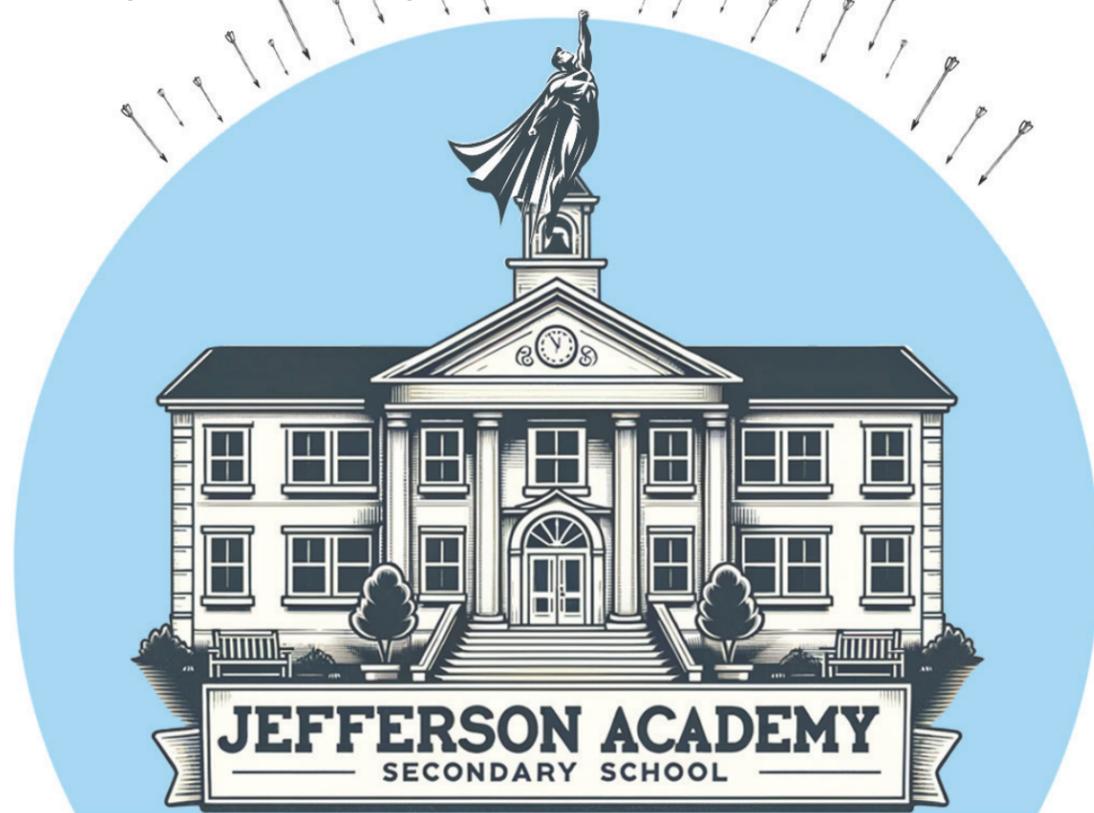
The small class size makes it very hard to change your reputation. Though you may have grown as a person, JA’s tightly-knit community remembers the past for a very long time.

“I feel that Jefferson Academy’s [culture] is vastly different because of what we choose to put our priorities on,” explains JA alumni and current teacher Mr. Mellott. “We are the smallest community in a bigger city.”

Graduates of JA face a radical culture change when they go off to college or get a job and end up meeting thousands of new people in a short span of time without being near those who already know them. Mr. Mellott has a similar observation.

“[The community] knows almost everything about each other, and for the kids who have gone to JA for many years, it’s tough.”

Whether you see it as a good or bad thing, Jefferson Academy is undeniably one big family. The pride of being a Jaguar far outweighs any consequences of a small community.



Dress-Coded

By: Sabrina Madruga

With warmer weather coming in, the impacts of the dress code can be felt now more than ever.

To some, the dress code is not clearly worded, leaving much room for interpretation as to what is allowed and what is not. It is therefore vulnerable to questions and many different points of view.

“It’s not really enforced,” mentioned junior James Jensen. “Based on what I’ve heard, one of my friends noticed at the bottom of the dress code it says it was created by students, teachers, and parents who worked on the dress code, but it doesn’t really seem that way.”

For some teachers, enforcing the dress code is a fair and an overall beneficial idea, however for others it may be difficult to enforce. “I feel like [my experience] has been generally positive,” explained Math teacher Mr. Proctor. “Mostly it’s wearing inappropriate shirts with inappropriate slogans so that’s pretty easy to address. Sometimes it can be hard to interpret.”

Also coming from this point of view, the wording of the actual dress code policy can be read from different perspectives, and because of this, some students can feel singled out when they get reprimanded.

“[Getting dress-coded] made me feel upset, pointed out, and sexualized because other people were wearing worse stuff and I was the one that got called out,” declared sophomore Peyton Sexton. “Plus, it only causes more people to rebel because they’re upset.”

With that in mind, many teachers try to en-

force the dress code while being considerate about different thoughts and opinions such as these.

“I like the idea of allowing students to have some choice in what they wear, but if I do see something I don’t think is appropriate I just say it,” stated Biology and Forensics teacher Mrs. Thimsen. “It can be challenging for some teachers to address it just because they don’t want to make people feel uncomfortable. I just do it from a much more ‘mom’ perspective.” Even with teachers doing their best to keep the students’ best interest at heart, some students still may feel singled out by the authorities.

“I got dress-coded two times at JA,” commented freshman Kim Adams. “The first time I was confused why [I got dress-coded] when I had my volleyball shorts on because I wear them at volleyball practice at school, so why would I get dress-coded for wearing that? The second time I was mad because I was dress-coded and on the same day one of my other friends was wearing her bra straps too, so it wasn’t just me.”

Going along with this, sometimes in these situations it can be easy to analyze the dress code in an alternate way.

“Something that surprised me about the dress code was that it was extremely subjective and not really enforceable,” said Mr. Stadler. “If a gentleman’s pants are sagging and his boxers are showing, then it is very clear and objective. When we say undergarments can’t be shown, whether that be partially or wholly, it is against the dress code.”



Flying High

By: Rylan Mills



The ball flies over the net and hits the ground as JA's first co-ed volleyball tournament kicks off with a bang.

One of Prom Week's most energetic events this year was the new Co-Ed Volleyball Tournament. This tournament saw nine stacked teams bump, set, and spike their way through the night. The entire tournament came to a close during the Friday assembly when the faculty team lost to the third seed upperclassmen team.

"It's been an absolutely great time," senior Levi Hinson says. "I was actually a little bit surprised to see how much the school got up for it."

The tournament had an incredible turn out with nine teams competing against each other in an action-packed evening. Teams included students from all high school grade levels

and even an all-faculty team, consisting of teachers and staff like Mr. Page, Ms. Adams, and even school principal Mr. Stadler. "We've had a good night; old age has treated us well and we've had minimal errors keeping us in games," Mr. Stadler explains as he describes the faculty team's success in the Round Robin.

The teams that were made up of both boys and girls, hence the co-ed designation. The mix of genders allowed the tournament to have a different aspect to it. Not only was the tournament a display of athleticism and grit, but it also allowed more strategic and impressive maneuvers in which communication led to rounds being won. To ensure that each team was co-ed, teams were forced to consist of at least two boys and/or two girls.

"I think that the co-ed actually makes the tournament better because most guys don't play volleyball, so having the technical skill and the expertise of the ladies makes it actually a lot more fun," Hinson comments.

The night featured all nine rounds of games. The two best teams would face each other in the championship game at the Assembly on Friday. After the games on Wednesday, it was Team 2 (Canon Miller, Levi Hinson, Asher Eberling, Ali Smith, Jessie Schaffer, and Emilee Harding) who went undefeated! However, since Team 2 were all track runners and away at a meet, the championship was set to be Team 9 (Mr. Stadler, Ms. Luceri, Mrs. Nelson, Ms. Swaney, Mr. Page, Ms. Adams, Mrs. Severance, Mrs. Chichirico) against the upperclassmen Team 5 (Josh Neely, Emma Parker, Asher Bieser, Riley McManus, Merik Berry, Ry Prevost, Sarah Welsch). After a thrilling match, the upperclassmen ended victorious in a close battle.

"It was an awesome experience!" junior Merik Berry exclaims. "I would love to play again and kick everyone's butts next year too!"

Running for State!

By: Hunter Hobbs

Track and field is one of the most prestigious sports at our school and around the world. Many of our track and field athletes have made significant progress in their goals, beating personal records (PRs) and JA records all while enjoying the season with their friends.

"My favorite thing about running is being with my friends and cheering at track races," senior Valera Noland remarks. "It's fun being at track races and making new friends once I'm done racing."

Noland is a distance runner and loves how the sport enables her to socialize with more people. Many people have their favorite thing about their sport and track and field is no exception. "It's really nice to be able to push yourself in the way that track lets you," sprinter Mark Leoni comments. "You get very defined metrics, and you can compare yourself to them. As much as it's physically demanding, it's also mentally demanding, and you can't push that lane and all of the negative feelings that might come from not performing as well as you want onto other people. You have to deal with it yourself."

Track and field allows not only the progress of physical health but also mental health. It is a fairly independent sport, where you push yourself to get better, as you are your main opponent. There are defined metrics that you are trying to surpass, setting new PRs, and overall improving yourself.

"You feel so close to all the people you run with," sophomore Leyna Gibson explains. "They're some of my best friends, and I love them all so much. You really bond with people when you all suffer the same pain together." Track is a way to get to hang out with friends and can be very enjoyable to compete with people you're comfortable with.

"I like seeing the incredible payoff for my progress," sprinter Finn Bullis says. "In track, you have to work for every improvement in your performance, like in all sports; but in track, those improvements are tangible. It is just very rewarding when your work pays off and you are able to reap the benefits of the work you put in during practice."

Everyone has their reasons for liking their sport, and track and field participants are no different.

"The people on the team are amazing!" team manager Lydia Crookston exclaims. "I love being able to talk to people and see how excited they get when they PR. I really like being involved still, even though I can't participate in events."



Playing With Heart

By: Kris Kientz

The crowd roars as the ball soars through the air and into the net, securing a top spot in the playoffs for the JA Girls' Soccer Team.

This 2024 season has been a roller coaster for the team. While things have been slightly rougher than last year, the girls have remained dominant on the field.

"The girls have been playing very well, all things considered," remarked team manager Jayden Bilby. "There have been a few games where we haven't scored as many goals as we probably should have, but the team is working through it. They're all working together as we move into the postseason. I think they can definitely win another championship!"

Last year, the team won the 3A state championship. A few key players graduated, but the winning roster remains largely intact and the girls hope to get back-to-back championships with their hard work this season.

"We had a few girls leave last year that committed to D1 & D2 schools, and they were at the base of the team," said junior goalie Sofia Pathak. "So we've been working on rebuilding that foundation and developing a new system where everyone can play together again. Back-to-back state championships would be amazing!"

The departure of old players and the addition of new ones has affected the team's chemistry. Some players are slightly concerned about how

that has affected their performance on the field.

"We've been working hard to improve our team chemistry," Pathak revealed. "We have these team bonding events to help unite our players and expand beyond our own personal soccer groups we've played with forever. These team bonding activities let you talk to people outside of your normal circle, which is helping the chemistry."

Despite the challenges, the team is finding a way to work together and overcome any differences in opinion or feuds.

"The chemistry on the team is definitely improving as the season continues," Bilby commented. "They're able to laugh most things off and take on any challenges as a team, which is super important. They're growing from any mistakes they make."

Although the girls have struggled with some of the more challenging matches, they still have dominated and are in the playoffs. One key element to their success this season has been their dedication to the sport, and the willingness of every player to leave their ego on the sideline.

"When it comes time, the team will dig deep and play their hearts out," Bilby observed.

"They leave everything on the field and put the ball in the back of the net. That's the goal, and that's the plan."

