



Op-Ed

Yay! Time to get into the holiday spirit! Head over to Op-Ed to understand more about the holiday season and celebrations other than Christmas.



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Features

Check out the continuation of the age-old debate, what is the best Thanksgiving food? With very controversial opinions and hot takes.



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Centerfold

Perhaps no one's semester has been impacted more than international students. Learn what it's been like from their many perspectives.



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A fiery election cycle comes to an end

By Garisoon Sloan
Editor-in-Chief

It came as no surprise that the 2020 American Presidential election was one of the most contentious in the nation's history. After a heated Democratic Primary, the general election pitted two of the oldest candidates ever put on a major party ticket against each other, one of them being one of the most unpopular incumbents in American history, in a race defined by major issues including race relations, economic turmoil, and a raging pandemic. Simply put, few expected this race to be anything less than the two sides exchanging blows of harsh rhetoric, further fanning the flames of division. Yet somehow, nearly a month after news outlets declared Joe Biden the winner of the race, the divisiveness continues.

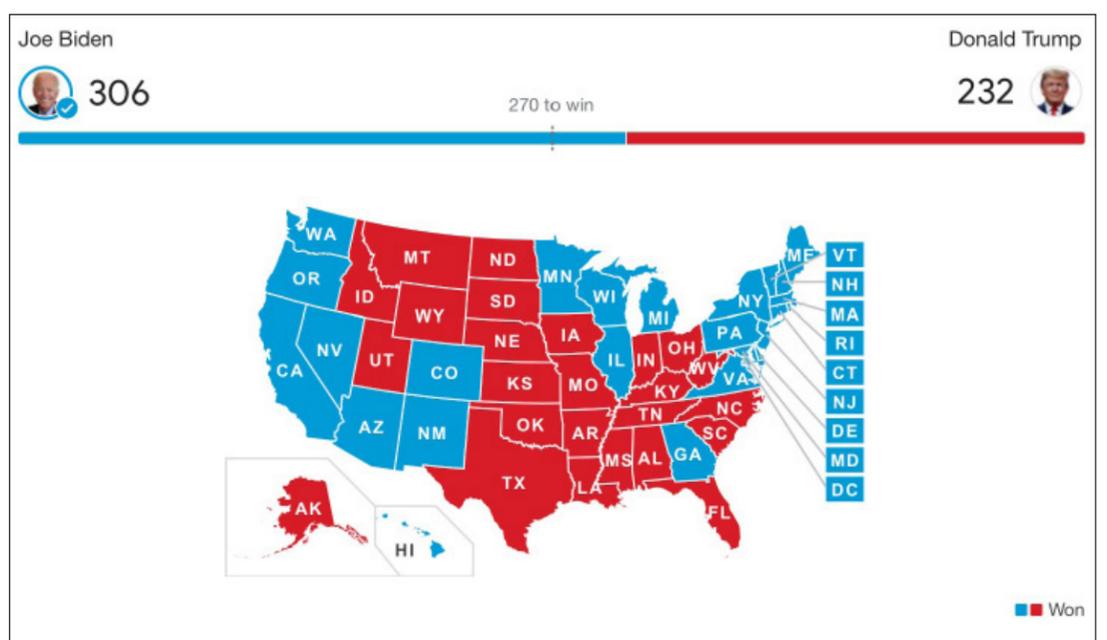
The 2020 presidential race effectively began mid-2019, with the beginning of the Democratic Primary campaigns to decide who would become the party's nominee to take on Donald Trump. Immediately, a crowded field emerged, with 29 major candidates jumping into the bid for the nomination. Despite a poor showing in the initial Iowa Caucuses, Biden ran a strong, centrist campaign, eventually winning the Democratic nomination.

As the general election between Biden and Trump began to peak over the summer, so did a number of key issues. The police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked nationwide protests calling for racial equality and police reform. At the same time, COVID-19 was raging uncontrollably, with much of the blame for this being put on the inaction of the Trump administration, which failed to address the issue earlier.

When Election Day arrived

on November 3rd, voters were well aware that this was not going to be a typical election. With COVID-19 still a massive threat, states moved to allow for easier access to mail-in and absentee ballots. However, many experts produced a theory about the eventual election results: due to Trump's constant claims that mail-in ballots would be a breeding ground for voter fraud, it was anticipated that a much lower proportion of Republicans would utilize mail-in ballots, and would instead vote in-person. This was anticipated to cause a scenario where it would look like Trump had a significant lead by the end of Election Night; however, Biden was expected to gain ground as more absentee and mail-in votes were tallied.

This scenario is exactly what played out. With numerous key swing states appearing to lean red, Trump falsely claimed victory on Election Night, despite no major news outlets calling the race in his favor. Throughout the week, absentee votes in the key swing states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, Nevada, Georgia, and Pennsylvania were counted, and, as predicted, leaned heavily in Joe Biden's favor. Wisconsin and Michigan were both called for Joe Biden on Wednesday, the day after Election Day. Several other news outlets called Arizona for Biden that day as well, putting him on the threshold of the 270 electoral votes needed to win the race. Finally, on Saturday, November 7th, Pennsylvania, which had flipped into Biden's hand the previous day, was called in his favor, winning him the race. A few days later, the remaining four states would be called (Nevada and Georgia in favor of Biden, and Alaska and North Carolina for Trump), putting the



A graph picturing the states' Electoral Collage votes, how President Elect Biden defeated President Trump. Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

electoral vote count at 306 for Biden versus 232 for Trump.

Following Biden's victory, the Trump campaign launched a series of legal challenges in a desperate attempt to change the results. In Georgia and Wisconsin, Trump requested hand recounts of all ballots cast (both states completed these recounts, which only certified Biden's win). In other states, the Trump campaign brought forward court cases peddling baseless claims of mass election fraud, all in an attempt to get legally cast mail-in ballots thrown out. The majority of these challenges were targeted at heavily Democratic cities including Detroit, Atlanta, and Philadelphia; however, almost all of them were dismissed due to a lack of evidence. At this point, the Trump administration has authorized the transition to the Biden administration; however, Trump himself has still refused to formally concede the race.

Supporters of both candidates were not quiet during this period either. On Biden's side, supporters rushed to the streets of major cities across the country to celebrate when he was declared the

winner on November 7th. Some of the largest celebrations occurred in Times Square in New York City, and outside the White House in Washington, D.C.. On Trump's side, a number of demonstrations took place protesting the results of the election. Prior to the race being declared for Biden, pro-Trump demonstrators gathered outside polling places. In Arizona, where Biden was ahead, these protests were urging pollsters to "count every vote," while in states such as Wisconsin, where Biden was initially behind, protesters were chanting "stop the count," a phrase that had been tweeted by President Trump on Election Night. Following the election, pro-Trump demonstrators gathered in D.C. for the "Million MAGA March," supposedly to show off the size of Trump's electorate, though official estimates put the march's attendance well short of 1 million, at just around 11,000.

The win for the Biden campaign was a historic one, for several reasons. Biden's campaign received the most votes of any other presidential candidate in history, at over 80 million. In

general, the total number of votes cast was staggering. Both Biden and Trump, who received around 74 million votes, surpassed the record for the most votes cast for a presidential candidate (the previous record was 69 million, set by Barack Obama in 2008). Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, will become the first woman to serve in the position of Vice President, as well as the first person of African American and Asian descent to hold that office.

With just over a month until Inauguration Day, the Biden campaign is going to be facing a number of struggles. As of December 10th, a group of Attorneys General joined the lawsuit filing that Texas initiated asking the Supreme Court to invalidate the results of the election in several swing states. In addition to that, and the standard duties of an incoming administration to appoint cabinet members and have them approved by congress, the Biden administration will also have to confront a still-raging global pandemic, racial tensions, and attempt to bridge the political divide between the American people.

2020 college process summary

By Mimi Osborne
Managing Editor of A&E

COVID-19 has impacted nearly every aspect of 2020, and college is no exception. The college application process has been an intense challenge, requiring more effort and perseverance than previous years. However, the students and faculty at Lake Forest Academy were more than adequately prepared for these struggles.

Andrew Poska, Dean of College Counseling, reflected on the process as one with tremendous changes, all of which present obstacles for students. He says that the most significant physical change is, “the fact that students have largely been unable to visit colleges and universities last spring, or this summer and fall.” The absence of in-person visitation has influenced where many students decided to apply. However, for students such as Yvie Gerber ‘21 and Arthur Pan ‘21, they feel that where they decided to apply was not based on in-person visitation, but rather the core values of the school itself. Ger-

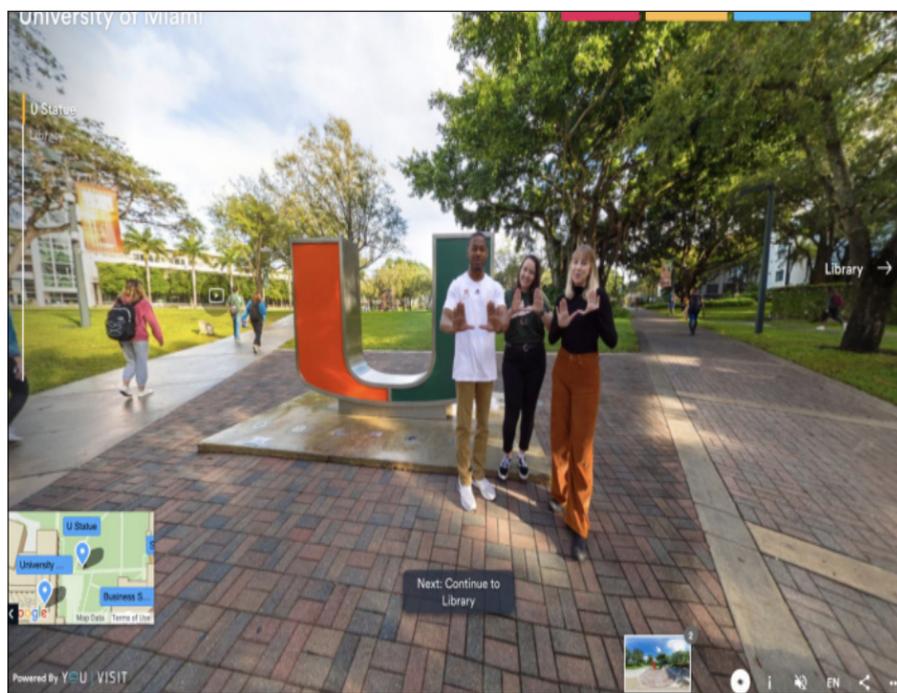
ber said, “Although I have only been able to visit schools a day trip away, I don’t feel my decision would change completely if I were to visit, say, the international schools I have been looking at.”

Another major change in the application process was the ability to apply “test-optional.” Poska said that students who have, “outstanding credentials but low testing will

benefit from the test optional policy.” All around, going test-optional is beneficial to most students; for students with strong test scores, it allows them to show their strength in academic testing, whereas for students who are not as strong with standardized tests, it presents the opportunity to showcase their extracurricular strengths instead. One LFA student decided to apply test

optional as they feel that standardized testing does not accurately reflect who they are as a student, but rather only stresses a certain type of learning. Arthur Pan, on the contrary, decided to apply with his SAT score as he felt it accurately reflects his academic ability.

The largest change, however, as Poska mentioned, is the unknown. Poska said that not knowing about, “the loss of revenue for colleges, the financial impact on many families to pay for college, changes in recruiting strategies, new ED plans, etc.” is what will rise above as the greatest change in the process. As students embark on their pathways into college, it is important to remember that college is an opportunity to grow as an individual and further discover oneself. Above all, the college process has changed dramatically due to COVID-19, and it is comforting to know that though this can seem overwhelming and intimidating, this is a challenge impacting students all across the country, you are not alone.



A screenshot from a virtual tour of the University of Miami.

A regulated campus: the new norm for boarders

By Sage Ye
Staff Writer

A new semester has almost come to a close at Lake Forest Academy. To say the least, things were—bizarre. With the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, almost the entire world went into lockdown, and many schools across the country turned to e-learning. LFA, as a private boarding school, chose to open up the campus, but approached it with caution.

Lake Forest Academy has implemented new policies for their students. It includes the typical guidelines when it comes to the virus, such

as social distancing and wearing masks around other students. However, for the boarders, there are more sets of rules that were put in place.

Boarders have had to follow these guidelines after school days, as well as on the weekends. Recently, around late October, rules were put in place that restricted boarders to go off campus. Van runs to go shopping and eat have been limited, and mostly delivered to campus. Students have been permitted to go into the common area of another dorm, but were refrained from going into rooms. The rooms themselves were limited to the capacity of one visitor from

that dorm, making the maximum capacity three people to a room.

With the mental health of students taken into concern, the Academy has done everything that they could to help boarders stay active within these weeks. From open pools to socially distant movies, the campus has held virtually every activity within the parameters of the campus.

With these new rules, life has taken a complete turn for the boarders. Kamal Nigmatullin, a junior who attends Lake Forest Academy and lives in Warner, commented, “It’s... like, hard to adjust to not being able to go outside, since for the past years we frequently go off campus during weekends.” He says, “Everyone is confined within an area, and since we can’t go (off campus), it feels--different.”

These procedures are new to many people, but to some, being away from home itself is a new experience, like freshman Warner resident Jason Xing. Xing said, “I don’t really know what to feel like; this is very new to me.” Many freshmen and new students like him have never known what it is like to live on a campus free of pandemic restrictions.

While some students expressed their objections with the new rules, stating that they were too strict or confining, Ted Golota, mathematics teacher and dorm parent, ex-

plained everything that he could about these new rules. “They can’t be changed as of now. It has been decided, you know, that we can’t have kids going on and off campus,” he states, “We don’t know who they will be in contact with, and it’s way too big of a risk.”

Despite discontent being shown from some, there were still a large number of students who got behind these new rules with their support. Matthew Arpas, a senior resident in Atlas, said, “I believe the school has done a great job in handling the virus, we are limited to one guest per room, and day students aren’t allowed. We also wear masks in the commons, so at all times we are protected.”

“I genuinely appreciate all the effort dorm faculty put into making sure we had a good time,” said Rachel Johns, who is a Proctor of Ferry Hall this year. “It’s been a very hard semester for boarding students and dorm faculty so I appreciate everyone’s dedication to our community’s safety, well being, and entertainment.” Going into next semester, boarders should expect similar rules to be put in place. However, with a bit of optimism, since the vaccine has progressed far enough, we can all hope for this pandemic to be over by the end of the semester.



Residents of Warner enjoy a socially distant game of “Among Us.”

Photo by Sage Ye

December 11, 2020

Opinion: A reflection on first semester

By Rachel Johns

Managing Editor of News

When I started high school, I imagined the worst thing I would face would be all-nighters to finish boatloads of homework. This year has proven my freshman naivety wrong, as we are in the midst of a global pandemic that has inhibited our ability to connect with one another physically, socially, and emotionally. Looking back, this semester has undoubtedly been one of the bleakest points in LFA's history for reasons well beyond everyone's control. Though I do want to take a moment to express my deep gratitude for all the faculty, staff, and students who worked hard to illuminate our small corner of a darkening world.

I arrived on campus in late August after a series of shaking global and personal events. In years past, I said I wanted summer to never end, but this year school couldn't come fast enough. I was ecstatic to return to campus and to see my friends, albeit under strict social distancing measures. After months of isolation, I felt as though every fiber of my being radiated sheer joy since I was just so thrilled to even be at school.

Excitement, however, is blinding. At

first, I couldn't sense how deeply I missed the things that made LFA what it is. I longed to play my own sports and to go support all my friends at their games. I wanted to go to the club fair and meet new people interested in the same things. I missed having massive House Cup competitions and hearing goofy announcements at morning meetings in Cressey. As the hours of daylight waned throughout the semester, so did my excitement and passion. I was a supernova of elation, and like a dying star, I was fated to collapse in on myself.

Loneliness, which pervaded even in the company of friends (through no fault of their own), opened my eyes to how empty this past semester has felt. It's my and most boarding students' first time living without a roommate in the dorms. While I initially looked forward to having a single, I found myself alone almost as often as I had over the summer. I find myself coveting the annoyance of sharing a room from years past, like late-night door slams and lamps left on 24/7. Those inconveniences conveniently reminded you that you weren't alone, even when you wanted to be.

Pain is magnified under the spotlight of isolation. While we are all experiencing

similar events and feelings during this pandemic, the lack of social connections and outlets makes us feel more alone than ever before. The cruel irony of this age is that we feel more isolated despite the hyperconnectivity offered by the internet. The most strenuous thing is that in order to connect in person in the future, we have to continue to social distance and uphold covid protocols. By no means am I suggesting that anyone should disregard rules and recommendations surrounding COVID-19. Such selfish carelessness is what prolonged this situation in the first place.

The other day, I was decluttering the photos on my phone, and I was jarred by what I saw. Life was so vibrant before. Perhaps it's the early nightfalls of winter or the stress from exams, but I could see life getting grayer and emptier in photographs. There are still dashes of color throughout this year, and I am immensely grateful for those who have put them there. My friends and classmates have brought much needed positive energy with them to school each day, even though they are all experiencing loss and pain themselves all while adhering to strict measures. All of the faculty, especially the dorm parents, have worked

so hard to ensure our physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing as they simultaneously work to move the curriculum online. The staff has helped so much by keeping our community clean, healthy, and safe. Their cheer and kindness is exemplary. The school has done its best to boost morale and have fun events for us in this difficult time. I am incredibly grateful to be part of such an outstanding community.

Being home and learning online has come as a relief. Because I am not on campus 24/7, I don't have to be constantly reminded of the experiences I'm missing out on. Returning home has also allotted me a bit more freedom in my leisure time. Instead of being locked down on campus, I can at least go to a park or hiking trail. It's also nice to see my parents and dogs after months of not being home. While I don't love e-learning, it has been a needed change of pace.

With the end of the semester, I feel something that I haven't strongly felt in quite some time--hope. Vaccines will be circulating soon, so hopefully anti-COVID measures will relax a bit. We may be able to connect the distance between us soon enough. I am hopeful life will bloom again in the spring semester.



Photo courtesy of Shylee Saladi

Shylee Saladi '22 (left) and Victoria Mesrobyan '24 (right) at a tennis tournament's doubles competition. Tennis was one of the few sports that could have a "normal" season with tournaments and matches. While there were several guidelines and restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the team had a successful season.



Photo by Rachel Johns

Regina Cummings '24 decorates a pumpkin during a social distanced dorm activity in Ferry Hall. Many dorm events had to be altered or scrapped to fit social distancing guidelines. These new parameters have pushed dorm parents, proctors, and dorm councils to come up with new, creative activities.



Photo courtesy of Darina Serik

Hannah Liu '21 (left) and Darina Serik '21 (right) celebrate their season swim team season. The swim team was able to have a more traditional season than other sports due to its low-contact nature. High-contact sports like soccer and field hockey were unable to play games against other schools, but they were still allowed to practice throughout the week, receiving a PE credit instead of the usual team sport credit.



Photo by Rachel Johns

In lieu of the annual haunted house, Tyler Madeley offered a terrifying ghost tour of LFA to get students in the mood for the Halloween season. The haunted house, which takes place in the cramped and eerie basement of Reid Hall, did not meet COVID safety guidelines. The tour, however, was completely outdoors, and students distanced themselves from one another, meeting COVID safety guidelines.

Christmas connotations and the overshadowing of others

By Mimi Osborne

Managing Editor of A&E

The date was November 1st, 2020. My mother and I were doing some impulse shopping, when I saw a rather alarming sight--all around me, there were Christmas decorations. It was the day after Halloween, and I saw no more pumpkins nor witches nor even Jack Skellingtons. Instead, I saw a blinding display of lights hanging from wreaths across storefronts, all flaunting their garish decor. It was as if, somehow, Santa will come sooner if they engrave jolly spirit into every shopper and send them off with pulsing visions of red and green. Shortly after this, the overwhelming fear settled in--Christmas is coming, and all the stores are about to play Mariah Carey. I was horrified.

Now, quickly think back to the beginning of this story. A very real fear regarding a very real scenario. However, I am sure that you, too, were so distracted by the descriptions of lights and color to

even realize that November 1st is a very important holiday for a vast group of people. It was Day of the Dead, and I did not see a single decoration celebrating it. Now, I understand that the area I was in is primarily white and, therefore, this lack of festivity makes sense. However, this is not a valid reason to stray away from the larger problem at hand--Christmas overshadows other religious or cultural celebrations of the same caliber.

During the months of November and December, there are well over 20 holidays from religions such as Hinduism, Judaism, Catholicism, Islam, and others that are not well acknowledged by the Lake County community. In Hindu culture, there are two major celebrations that take place in the winter months: Diwali and Navratri. Though many of us have heard of the Festival of Lights before, the holiday Navratri remains resting in anonymity for many. Navratri is the nine-day celebration of the Goddess Durga and her victory over the Demon Mahishasura. In

Islamic culture, December 5th is marked by Ashura, which is the Sunni's remembrance day over Muhammad's fast with Muslim people. On December 8th, many Christians celebrate with a feast of Immaculate Conception, believing that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born without sin. For any student who studied AP World, you are aware of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the great symbol of syncretism between Christianity and the native religions of Mexico. On December 12th, many Catholics, particularly those of Hispanic descent, honor this saint. If you, like me, were unaware that there are so many other holidays celebrated during the winter months that exclude Christmas, there must be some curiosity rising inside you as to why.

In a study conducted by Jay P. Dolan, a famous historian, it was revealed that nearly 63% of all Catholics in the state of Illinois live in Cook and Lake County. To no avail, it is fitting that the most mainstream holiday in these



Photo by Mimi Osborne

Christmas trees are put up early, as they symbolize the grandeur of the holiday.

counties is Christmas; however, this does not support the fact that many other religious holidays are not being acknowledged by the larger community. Despite this, LFA performs a superb job with regards to the inclusion of these smaller holidays into various announcements and newsletters sent from the school. This is mainly due to the fact that we are a community with a very diverse student

body. However, for surrounding schools which mainly consist of a white or latinx enrollment, this broad spectrum of celebrations is not recognized as it should be. Although, in the grand scheme of things, this may be a miniscule issue, but it is still one that should be taken into consideration when you decide to hang spruce-scented wreaths or blinding Christmas lights right after Halloween.

Stolen spirituality: appropriation vs. appreciation



Photo by Briana Murphy

Tarot cards and crystals are examples of popular "spiritual trends".

By Briana Murphy

Creative Director

Spirituality has grown to be attached to numerous meanings and personal connections, regarding the human spirit and the beliefs that people hold in a more religious aspect. The concept of spirituality varies from person to person. It all depends on the way people are getting in touch with their cultural and spiritual roots. Whether there is a cultural obligation, social obligation, or no obligation, more people are getting connected to their spirituality in 2020, even if the conclusion is that they do

not align anywhere in particular.

People are making a point to be more socially and culturally aware, and within that, old ways to express spirituality are discovered by new people. There is a drive to find a way to expand the spiritual connection that people have. Of course, it is remarkable that people are discovering ways to find their spiritual connection to the world; however, some unintentionally appropriate religious practices from both closed and open practices.

Usually, it is acceptable to be misinformed as long as the steps to get more informed after the incident are taken. Still, many people are going about their spir-

itual journey quite publicly, leading to even more trouble. Being disrespectful on camera or in the watchful eyes of the internet never goes away and could become a problem later on, sabotaging careers or relationships.

For example, Cardi B recently had to apologize for posing as the Hindu goddess Durga on a magazine cover because it was disrespectful to pose as a god in an attempt to be artsy. Religions that are not one of the three Abrahamic religions of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are often practiced to be "aesthetic" rather than to feel an actual spiritual connection. It is an appropriation of spirituality, and it makes the people who practice it feel disrespected.

While it may be unintentional, it is crucial to research before engaging in more religious-specific practices. The connection between tradition and modernity is something that is always changing; however, things that deal with spirituality and, in some cases, religion deserves a certain level of respect. Symbols such as the evil eye are coveted as a spiritual and cultural symbol in various ethnic groups across the world. Using it without understanding the true meaning, especially on a public platform, can be disrespectful

and offensive to those who hold the symbol close to their heart.

Often, people accidentally disrespect closed practices such as Voodoo, Santeria, Shamanism. Closed practices are restricted to a particular group of people with specific requirements, although people can be initiated into closed practices. After initiation, it is appropriate to take part in and explore a closed practice, however out of respect for the culture and the people who engaged in the practice, do not engage if there is no explicit permission. When researching a spiritual practice or potential religion, figuring out if the practice is closed is essential.

Being informed and educated on the roots of new practices used on the individual's spiritual path is essential. It could help decipher what the activity means to the individual engaging in it and sort out whether it is the right decision for them in general.

For example, the Chakra system which originated in India some time ago, is frequently used by people in the present who do not truly understand it. Just google chakras; there will be hundreds of videos, articles, blog posts, and even podcasts full of explanations about the system and how to navigate it, which would

usually be considered useful. The issue is that not all of that information is correct. People can tend to follow this misinformation further, and it leads to eventual appropriation. A prime example of this would be Tiktok, a place for people to share videos of themselves for others' entertainment.

Many people use the app to post videos explaining various things about their spirituality, which has historically been a very private thing. Still, in an attempt to spread information, people have been taking to public platforms. While there are people out there to inform, there are others who want likes or attention. Some creators will spread misinformation about witchcraft, tarot readings, the use of crystals, and paganism. They were telling the general public sometimes completely untrue facts about spirituality.

The outcome of this widespread misinformation is appropriation. People can misuse different terms about witchcraft and take items and practice paganism in a disrespectful or mocking manner in an attempt to be more informed. The moral of the story is that it is necessary to fact check and do proper research before engaging in spiritual or religious practices that are new on an individual path.

Your December horoscope has arrived!

By Tyler Watts
Staff Astrologer

This month is divided between Sagittarius and Capricorn seasons. A special astrological event is featured the day of the winter solstice, December 21, 2020. Jupiter and Saturn will be in alignment under the sign of Aquarius, also known as a conjunction. This is also the dawning of the Age of Aquarius-- a rare phenomenon that hasn't occurred in centuries! The shift in energy will likely be palpable and centered around social changes. But for now, here is a forecast for the rest of the month. Apply to sun and/or rising signs.

Fire Signs:

Aries: Do not confuse optimism with naivety. Your perspective can produce very different results
Leo: Change your hair up!
Sagittarius: Explore the ideas of a new philosophy

Earth Signs

Taurus: If you're in a generous mood, share with those around you :)
Virgo: It is ok to relax!! Cancel that meeting if needed
Capricorn: Keep your shoelaces tied

Air Signs

Gemini: Embrace honesty by being a clear communicator
Libra: You know what they say, it's sweater weather!
Aquarius: do people laugh at your jokes?

Water Signs

Cancer: You need to rest, but then dedicate your energy to making moves!!
Scorpio: If you feel the need to fidget, maybe buy a stress ball or some silly putty
Pisces: Now is a good time to try out initiating rather than responding

The Lake Forest

SPECTATOR

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PUBLICATION

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EDITORIALS

Opinions of the staff are presented in the form of unsigned editorials. Personal views are bylined or presented as formal dissents.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

The Spectator welcomes responses to its articles in the form of Letters to the Editors in addition to letters on subjects of the author's choosing. Please e-mail Letters to the Editors to Mrs. Krause at akrause@lfanet.org

AWARDS

The Spectator has been awarded several prestigious journalism awards in recent years. It has consistently taken first place in competitions against schools of similar size held by the American Scholastic Press Association and the Kettle Moraine Press Association.

December Spectator Wordsearch

U	T	A	H	F	R	O	S	T	Y	E	R	S	E
C	C	A	I	F	H	O	I	A	E	I	L	Y	N
O	E	V	E	S	R	A	E	Y	W	E	N	A	C
N	S	T	E	A	S	J	N	R	N	V	N	D	G
O	K	K	V	H	N	H	A	U	E	Y	N	I	R
I	A	V	P	V	E	R	H	C	K	S	O	L	A
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SNOW
CHRISTMAS
RELAX
NEW YEARS EVE
FROSTY
HOLIDAYS
SLEEP IN
VACATION
GLOVES
SEMESTER
GRATITUDE
HANUKKAH
JACKET
HOT COCOA

Quote of the Month:

“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”
- Albus Dumbledore
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Re-ranking Thanksgiving food

By Nick Alutto
Editor-in-Chief

It is the duty of fine journalists to admit when they are wrong. Without building trust and always adding corrections for misinformation, a newspaper can have no credibility. Which is why, ever since it was published last year in *The Spectator*, I have stayed up every night waiting to correct the inaccuracy, nay the fabrication, that was Lily Drury's, 2019 ranking of Thanksgiving food. A list that stands in such contrast for what this fine publication stands for, that it must be corrected. Below, I will present her rankings with my critiques and reranking of foods, and we shall let you, the reader, decide which list is more accurate.

#7 Mashed Potatoes (formerly ranked #5)

Excerpt from Lily Drury's ranking:

"It wins best supporting act, but not quite the star of the show."

I know this may come as a surprise, so let me explain. Almost no one eats mashed potatoes plain. They rely on the crutch of gravy or other sides mixed together to gain a good reputation amongst Thanksgiving celebrators. Mashed potatoes are like a canvas, and the food that mixes in with it is like the paint. For the same reason that there aren't many blank canvases in art museums, I can not in good conscience place mashed potatoes any higher on my list.

#6 Roasted Vegetables (formerly ranked #3)

Excerpt from Lily Drury's ranking:

"I'm gonna give it to you straight. These are good. They're great...I can still appreciate the psychology of having these on the table to try and trick ourselves into thinking we're enjoying a balanced meal."

Vegetables are important, but they are not third place important. The day I get excited for Thanksgiving, and my mind goes to roasted vegetables instead of quite literally any other side dish will be the day that my childhood dies. On the other hand, eat your veggies.

#5 Mac and Cheese (formerly ranked #2)

As someone who has been trying to get mac and cheese a spot at the Alutto Thanksgiving table, it may seem that this should be higher on my list. My argument for its lower ranking comes in two parts. First, too many people simply don't view mac and cheese as a Thanksgiving dish and recognizability plays a factor in this list. Second, there is way too much variation, if you

have the wrong person making your mac and cheese, they could show up with some microwave stuff. There are plenty of times that are perfect for microwave mac and cheese, but Thanksgiving is not that time.

#4 Sweet Potato Casserole (formerly ranked #4)

Excerpt from Lily Drury's ranking:

"I owe sweet potato casserole an apology. For many years as a child, I refused to give this dish a chance. I fell victim to the age old mistake of judging food based on appearance."

Even a broken clock is right twice-per-day. Sweet potato casserole is great (as are all the #1-#4 choices). The reason it isn't higher is because the quality of your sweet potato casserole is almost solely in the hands of whoever is cooking it. With so much variation in recipes and what gets mixed in, experiences with this side dish are not very universal. Accordingly, if you have never liked the sweet potato casserole served in your house, I would suggest handing over chef powers to someone more deserving.

#3 Green Bean Casserole (formerly ranked #6)

This is the one dish that is always gone before leftovers on Thanksgiving. Whatever you think the appropriate amount of green bean casserole is to make for whoever you are eating with, double it. It amazes me that this food is eaten almost exclusively on Thanksgiving because of how surprisingly great it is year after year. To be honest, I don't even really know what a casserole is. What I do know is that we should keep making more because we have really knocked it out of the park with both green bean and sweet potato casserole, and it's a shame that there aren't more casseroles out there.

#2 Stuffing (formerly ranked #1)

A fact, albeit a negative one, I learned about stuffing this year was that there is actually a slight chance of catching Salmonella or E. coli if stuffing is cooked in a turkey at too low of a temperature. If I ever learned a similar fact about a less tasty food, let's use celery as an example, I would never touch celery again, but stuffing? No hesitation. It's like basically just moist croutons, and it's amazing.

#1 Cranberry Sauce (formerly ranked #7)

Excerpt from Lily Drury's ranking:

"I truly don't understand how this became a staple for Thanksgiving. Why

would you want to submerge your turkey in that sickly sweet compote as opposed to the creamy, rich, well-paired gravy? It just seems out of place on the table."

Throughout this entire article, you may have thought once or twice that my list and Lily's list weren't all that different. However, this sole ranking decision is where I take offense. When I edited last year's Thanksgiving food ranking, seeing cranberry sauce in the last place position inspired many sleepless nights where I would think about the duty I had to write a new list that would restore cranberry sauce's tarnished name. Cranberry sauce was openly mocked as, "essentially jam intervening with my stuffing." Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, and I understand that some people simply don't like cranberry sauce. However, I wish to present my argument for why

it will always remain at the top of my list.

Name me a single other sauce that can be eaten plain without the person eating it looking absolutely crazy. Soy? Barbeque? Sweet and Sour? Could you imagine what you would think of someone who sat down in front of you and just started eating plain barbeque sauce, you may fear for your life. Cranberry sauce transcended this barrier and became a sauce that tastes great on its own as well as mixed with any other side dish. It has become as synonymous with Thanksgiving dinner as turkey, and it has earned its place on the top.

As you can see, this list represents *The Spectator* appropriately, while also correcting the errors of our past. If you would like to see a more complete list covering a more extensive menu of Holiday dining, feel free to visit caxynews.com to view Garrison Sloan's in-depth ranking of Holiday foods.



A man, a can, and some cranberry sauce: bliss.

Photo by Tyler Watts

Broken barriers, burned bridges

By **Ramya Herman**
Chief Editor of Print

On November 7, 2020 many people of all races, ages, and genders watched as the electoral votes for president elect Joe Biden pushed past the 270 mark. While this signified defeat for some, and a bitter-sweet victory for others, it was a major moment in history either way. It was on this day that Kamala Harris became the first female, black, and asian vice president.

While this marked an upward ascension for many marginalized groups, it was also the source of much internal conflict. Many people experienced simultaneous pride and concern as we entered into a new political course with candidates described by some as the “lesser of two evils”.

Both Kamala and her campaign partner Joe Biden have a rather controversial past when it comes to things such as criminal justice reform, and have been known to make decisions that negatively impact communities of color.

Joe Biden specifically has also said some very racially charged things in the past, so the pairing is odd and gives even the democratic side of the black community plenty of pause. These transgressions include aiding in mass incarceration (which gravely impacts people of color, especially black and brown communities), supported the 1994 crime bill, and

referred to black people as super predators.

With their combined past, those who voted both for and against Biden and Kamala have expressed feelings of wariness and anxiety. Thus, there has been a clash with those sentiments and the overwhelming pride that many are also feeling at having broken a long-standing barrier for black people, asian people, and women.

As a woman of color, I took the day the winners were announced as a personal victory. Someone in high office looked like me, had experienced some

of the same intersectional marginalization that I had faced. Representation is a major part of being able to self-identify with confidence, assurance, and pride.

The circumstance provides a wonderful parallel for much of life and how two-sided the coin of reality truly can be. It reminds us that we must not idolize people, especially politicians, those whose job it is to tell us the things we want to hear.

Instead, this is an opportunity to begin holding elected officials accountable for keeping the promises they have made and

properly maintaining the positions they have assumed. At the same time, after uncovering so much of the racial unrest that has been boiling under the surface of America’s skin, it is time to rejoice over this step towards social progress. Many older women and people of color in general are seeing one of their wildest dreams come to pass, and many young people have been given confirmation that the previously intangible is now a plausible reality.



Photo Courtesy of Creative Commons

Kamala Harris (right), the new Vice President-Elect, poses for a photo with a supporter (left)

The first working First Lady

By **Bela De Jesús**
Managing Editor of *Global Perspectives*

With the eyes of the world focused on the United States during an unprecedented election, history is being made in many different ways. Amongst these historic events include the induction of Dr. Jill Biden, who will be the first First Lady to work while in the White House.

During President-Elect Joe Biden’s term, Biden plans to teach full time at Northern Virginia Community College while living in the White House. With two masters in English and a Doctorate in Education, Biden has a deep love for teaching and her students. Although the task of not only being First Lady but also a teacher seems strenuous, Biden has experience with this undertaking, as she taught while being second lady of the United States.

Many see this path as an immense shift in the role of the First Lady. To express how great a development this was, History and Social Science Teacher Christian Dozois stated that, “The First Lady has veered from being a hostess [in the past] to taking on a cause that is their calling card.” Due to the history of the role of

the First Lady being more on the surface, Biden is developing that role further, and showing that the First Lady can do much more than the precedent set for her. Dozois expressed that she is a great model for the future of the role, which has changed greatly over the course of the United States.

However, Biden still plans to focus on her own cause like first ladies before her. Her goals are bettering the community college system, helping military families and veterans, and advancing cancer research. These ideals go hand in hand with her life experience, and are a reflection of her husband’s politics as well.

When asked what Jill Biden’s role means for the United States education system, and public school teachers especially, Tameka Carter, Assistant Dean of Pluralism & Multicultural Affairs and former public school educator, said, “She is going to bring importance to the profession and help our great United States realize that everything starts in education.” Carter believes she will fight for all types of education, and that her wisdom due to her years of experience will create special opportunities for teachers across the country.

Jill Biden is a shining example of how



Photo Courtesy of Creative Commons

Dr. Jill Biden dances with her husband Joe Biden at the Homestates Ball in 2009.

the United States is changing for the better. She is proof that strict roles placed upon women, especially on women in pow-

er, are capable of change, and that being a respected First Lady does not mean she has to give up what she loves the most.

International Student Voices: Here and abroad, but still calling LFA home

Anyone who knows the LFA community knows that no two students' experiences are the same. That's part of what makes our student body so special. However, while LFA has been able to continue offering learning in-person, in these times of the pandemic, many of our international students are perhaps having more varied experiences than ever before. There are those who've been on campus all along and missing their friends, some who have never even stepped foot on school grounds, as well as everything inbetween, so it's worth pausing to take in all our perspectives, for we are all LFA.

We grow by overcoming

By Ryo Nambara
Guest Writer

This school year has been nothing similar to my first two years at LFA. Half of the students came to school and the other half was learning remotely from their home countries. Most students had a difficult time keeping up with the changes. As an international student myself and experienced both remote and in person, I personally think that going through such experience united the LFA community.

My junior year kicked off normally until the unexpected pandemic started. Early this year, when COVID-19 began to spread around the world, I was no longer able to stay in the United States and flew back to Japan. It was not the best time for me and other international students learning from overseas. Due to the time difference, my classes were from 10:30pm to 5:30am. Drinking coffee at night and sleeping during the day became a routine as time went on. However, later on, teachers made 30 minute

classes from 7pm, which is 5am in Chicago time. Their dedication and thoughtfulness was something that changed my mindset towards learning. In addition, they reached out to students individually more often and I got closer to them.

Once the first wave of COVID-19 passed and things started to come back together, I decided to return to the United States. I was one of the lucky ones, since most of the Chinese students could not come back. I was confused by the new rules on campus, such as the arrows on the floor and the tables in the student union. At the same time I felt safe, because all the members of the LFA community were following the strict rules and were trying to overcome this pandemic as a whole. This showed that we care about each other. Also, by staying with limited numbers of friends in dorms, I got to spend tons of time with each of them. Of course with social distance.

I believe that this unfortunate situation separated us physically but connected us mentally.



Photo by Sage Ye

Juniors Rosie Kim, Sage Ye, Ryo Nambara, Bela De Jesus, Ezzat Suhaima, and Sophia Sokhi connect through Zoom during the pandemic.

By Nghi Doan

Guest Writer from Journalism I

With COVID-19 rates skyrocketed in America, many international students shy away from returning to Lake Forest Academy this fall. This lack of international students has had a significantly negative impact on the community. Since the appearance of COVID-19, many international students did not have the opportunity to return to campus, this affected the local environment. Yue Chen, a member of the language and fine arts faculty, is someone who works closely with the international students at Lake Forest Academy had her opinions on this issue from a teacher's viewpoint. Ms. Chen said that students would feel "isolated one way or another" because they could not communicate with each other as freely. Not only that, international new students who were able to be on campus could not connect with other international upperclassmen, they did not have a mentor figure other than teachers to connect and guide them through the school year. In addition to not having older students to mentor, local students would not have the same diverse environment as pre-pandemic times. The Dean of International Admissions, Adam Gerber claimed that "I do not have

Here and missing what was

the opportunity to meet the international students that I had interviewed nor that I would be able to see what different traditions that the new students could bring. Not only that, I could not see older international students and that it was very different from last year". Local students would come to Lake Forest Academy to experience a diverse environment with many students across the globe, sharing their knowledge and culture with each other. Now, the environment is different, so the local students would not be able to experience differ-

er perspectives from different nations. Furthermore, the remaining international students feel like a minority amongst the local students at Lake Forest Academy. Jannie Nguyen who is an international student from Vietnam feels that since the international population with only a handful of students, this small community would feel that they would be underrepresented. She believes that "the international students here do not have as large of a voice because compared to the local students, international students have a small-

er population." Due to this disparity, the overwhelming large population of local students whose interests differ from the international students' would overpower the international student's opinions. The international students feel that there is a lack of community at Lake Forest Academy. This was because unlike last year, there were many celebrations dedicated to different holidays and cultures. Now that there are not as many international students here this year, there are not as many celebrations dedicated to them at Lake Forest Academy.



Photo courtesy of LFA's Communications Office

International students celebrate the Lunar New Year on campus during the 2019-2020 school year, before the pandemic hit.

International Student Voices: Here and abroad, but still calling LFA home

Wishing she was back

By Anna Wu
Guest Writer

I am currently a freshman who used to be a pre-freshman at Lake Forest Academy. As the Corona pandemic swept the globe, I was forced to go back to my home country in the middle of my ESL classes. This remote situation is still going on now.

As a pre-freshman, I wished to meet my peers soon to get more of a sense of belonging at school. Now I meet part of them, but only virtually. It is unfortunate that at the start of my freshman year, what I can see are only the little squares on Zoom, yet on the

other hand, the E-learning actually gives me more expectations for returning to campus-- to not only meet my Zoom teachers and schoolmates, but also to reunite with my friends who are already on campus. I have more to look forward to, the gorgeous campus in summer and fall--(I only experienced the other two)--and my peers across the globe, because it has been a long time studying at home, lacking the opportunity to be in a school's learning atmosphere.

In addition to the growth of my eagerness to return, I also miss my dorm life in Ferry badly, which was my first experience being in a boarding school. Ferry brought me so much warmth and joy, and

Never been to campus

By Jonathan Xiao
Guest Writer

I'm a freshman e-learner who is currently in Beijing. Due of the pandemic and the visa problem, I haven't come to LFA campus yet. To be honest, E-learning to me is a completely new and unfamiliar experience. Why is it new? I was in Chinese public school for 9 years and had basically "lectures" every day with tons of compulsory homework like copying everything from the textbook five times times, rote memorization, etc. However, starting with LFA, everything has changed. We are having discussions, debates, presenting in class, making learning much more vivid. What I really relish is student being able to participate, as everyone shares their ideas or thoughts with the class and thinks in-depth. For example, in Word History I, there was groupwork about using Daoism to solve government problems, which was really challenging. Moreover, we are learning from different platforms, ranging from books and documents to film and videos, even online science labs. Speaking of unfamiliarity, it is mostly because I

can only stay at home and see my friends and teachers on screen for two hours each day. Although there seems to be a lack of connections, I can use apps like Wechat or Discords to chat, adding a sense of community to my life. (However, fools like me still don't know how to sign up for Instagram!). In short, it has been a challenging but fun semester to me as a remote learner, and I sincerely hope that the pandemic will be over soon, making it possible for everyone to be in-person again safely.

By Jade Yu
Guest Writer

As a remote freshman from Beijing who has never been to the LFA grounds, I'm very curious about what campus life is like. Based on what I have experienced over the course of this semester, the life of a remote student can be both challenging and comforting.

Learning remotely, I often have a strong feeling of detachment from life on campus. I don't have the opportunity to participate in many other aspects of student life, in-

I truly felt as if I was at home when living in another country by myself for the very first time. Also, I love the secure feeling of having a roommate since I always had someone to talk to if I struggled with anything or had any concerns, but I don't have one now. I miss that companionship.

It might not be a perfect start of high school life for a remote freshman like me, but I am sure what we are doing right now is in preparation for a better reunion and the anticipated following years at Lake Forest Academy.



Photo by Jonathan Xiao

International students in one of the many AM/PM classes initiated to help with the time-difference.

cluding various campus events, sports teams, clubs, and dorm life. Also, not being able to sit in a classroom together with other students makes me feel alone sometimes, which does take its toll on my motivation. Besides, staying at home can also be very distracting and unproductive at times, since basically, you can do anything you want without restrictions.

There are also many other challenges about remote classes that I have to face. Obviously, we cannot cover as much content or go through a topic as in-depth as in-person classes because of shortened class times. Not being able to see teachers in-person also makes it less encouraging to communicate with them. Moreover, Zoom classes are not perfect and sometimes can be very ineffective due to internet problems; they are also limited--physics experiments for example. Most of my classes are taught in the late evening or close to midnight because of the time difference, making it difficult for me to concentrate.

However, there are always possible solutions to the above difficulties. Remote learning has taught me to cope with these

challenges in a way that is making my overall transition from a Chinese middle school to an American high school much smoother than expected. The biggest advantage of studying at home is comfort and safety, especially considering the COVID situation right now. There are less things to worry about and more time to put into studying. Thanks to the internet and other modern technologies, I can have a glimpse of the school life, especially academically. I have come to understand what a typical American school class is all about and how homework should be done properly. As a result, I have learned to mind the schedule and manage my time effectively every day. By meeting the specific requirements from different teachers and addressing all kinds of issues, my communication skills, time management, and productivity have all improved a lot over this semester.

I think I have had a good time learning remotely this semester. I have become more confident and well prepared for the upcoming busy high school life. Above all, I really look forward to going on campus as soon as possible to finally meet everyone in person!

Pulled away from LFA

By Aylin Tepe
Staff Writer

E-learning can be a challenge regardless, but it has proved to be a particular challenge for international students, who usually study in the United States, but are now scattered all over the world, due to the substantial difference in time zones. As an international student myself, I have gone through both in-person and online school this semester, and here is my personal take on the changes and challenges between both schooling situations.

At the beginning of the semester, I was excited to go back to school and see all of my friends since we had abruptly gone home without much notice before spring break. One of the joys of attending a boarding school is that you get to live with your peers, schoolmates that are basically family. I was most excited about seeing my roommate, since we had spent the summer

planning out our room and prospects for the new school year. However, before school officially began, we were notified that most students were not allowed to room together in order to keep social distancing at a maximum in order to prevent any possible cases. Living in such close proximity has its risks; this was a compromise that was to be expected, and social distancing was implemented throughout the dorms at all times.

The situation in school was the same, with courses modified in ways that ensured students were physically interacting as little as possible. Four of my six classes were online anyway, which made it easier to transition to remote learning once I got back home. Both students and teachers were doing their best in these trying times and I had plenty of assistance while trying to ease back into e-learning.

The reason I had to head back home was due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Turkey, and I was afraid that I would

not be allowed back into the country. In the last couple weeks alone, Turkey's virus cases have gone up by a whopping 270,000, causing the total number of reported cases to reach 700,000 in total. In my city, there is a consistent lockdown from Friday night to Monday morning, with the exception of a few supermarkets. The fact that both of the countries that I live in--Turkey and the U.S.-- have such a high number of cases is quite terrifying, but I am glad to at least be with my family.

Transitioning to remote-learning was quite the challenge during the first week, and I had to make many compromises. Since both my math and history classes overlap time-wise, I can only join each class twice per week. This makes it much harder to catch up with the rest of the class, but my teachers are more than willing to help out whenever I shoot them an email, which is reassuring. Jet-lag was also an issue when I first arrived, and it

took a while to get used to the change in time-zones; however, the timing of some of my classes makes it difficult to sleep at a normal time. This is an issue most international students face since the differences in time drastically affect our ability to go about with a regular schedule, and even though the introduction of early AM and late PM classes sought to help with this, and does, it still doesn't cover every class, nor does it necessarily help students who aren't currently in East Asia. Upon writing this article, several weeks before the end of the semester, many other international students that went back to campus during the beginning of the year have also returned to their homes, and have faced challenges of their own. The LFA community is still banded-together, even if half the student body is unable to be on campus, and I hope that things will get better over winter break so that we can finally get back to a normal school-life.

Seasonal depression during COVID-19 times

By Angie Cotton

Managing Editor of Features

As every year goes by, the seasons roll by, and with that comes seasonal affective disorder (SAD), otherwise known as seasonal depression. According to Mayo Clinic, seasonal depression is a type of depression that affects individuals differently based on the seasons, with the most common cases happening during the colder months of winter.

With that time of the year coming around, it becomes worrisome for individuals who experience this type of depression. This year, however, it becomes much more concerning as this issue of mental health clashes with the mental disruptions caused by the global pandemic.

Health, Wellness & Community Department Chair Jennifer Madeley brought up the fact that, “not only will there be shorter daylight hours and less sunlight, people will be more isolated, and their normal daily routines will continue to be disrupted.” These factors could potentially

put those experiencing SAD at a higher risk than when there isn’t a pandemic going on.

Health & Wellness Prefect, Briana Murphy, also commented how the few activities people do look forward to during these colder months have also been affected because of social distancing. Reasonably, things get harder without having much to look forward to.

However, to avoid getting into a depressive state, Murphy mentioned that it’d be helpful for people to “really get into their hobbies or find something that makes them happy and de-stress.” She also recommends being surrounded by happy colors like yellow, orange, pink, red, and lilac, which might help improve one’s mood.

If one has already been hit by seasonal depression, Murphy recommended that it’s important “to take it one step at a time and focus on simple tasks first.” She also mentioned that it’s beneficial to focus on what one has done instead of focusing on what they have to do or haven’t done.



Photo Courtesy of Shutterstock

A snowman depicting the concept of SAD.

“If you’ve taken a shower, great, that’s an accomplishment. If you’ve completed a homework assignment, focus on that and then try to move onto the next task.”

Finally, Madeley remarked “don’t for-

get to keep to a routine, eat healthily, exercise, get enough sleep, and make social connections. If you are struggling, remember SAD is treatable, so please don’t be afraid to ask for help.”

Ranking Holiday Songs

By Mimi Osborne and Kirstin Palasz

Managing Editor of A&E and Photo Editor

Over the past few years, holiday songs have become increasingly popular among people of all ages; Mariah Carey, Michael Bublé, Josh Groban, and many other artists have become staples throughout the winter months. Despite having different tastes, music serves as a connection between people of varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

At Lake Forest Academy, there is an extremely diverse student body; each individual brings a unique musical taste to the community. Therefore, the holiday songs listened to differ for each student.

As everything in life is a competition, the holiday season does not fall short of this: seeing who has the brightest lights, flashiest decorations, jolliest spirit, and most importantly, the best holiday song. In order to determine what song is truly the best, a series of rigorous criteria were taken into consideration when judging the student body’s favorite songs.

On a survey sent out school wide, with over 115 responses and 60 different songs, the top eleven were meticulously selected with regards to the following standards: if it is catchy, if it is overplayed, and, finally, if it makes the listener feel as if they are walking in a winter wonderland. Without further ado, the top eleven songs are as follows:

1. All I want for Christmas is You by Mariah Carey

To no avail, the most submitted song this holiday season is “All I Want for Christmas is You” by Mariah Carey. Eighteen people said that this was their most joyous song to listen to and, under expert review, is ranked 4/5 snowflakes. This song is catchy and teleports one into a beautiful winter wonderland; however, it is overplayed in most stores throughout the entirety of winter and, for this reason, is only given 4/5 snowflakes.

2. White Christmas

Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas”—a song with no religious affiliation—ranked second with five student votes. This song is very catchy and upbeat, however has a very sorrowful backstory. The song was written to mourn the loss of his son and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, just three weeks prior. Though having melancholic lyrics, the beautiful and mellifluous tune gives this song 5/5 snowflakes.

3. Feliz Navidad

Also with five student votes, “Feliz Navidad” is simply put one of the most iconic Hispanic holiday songs. Having an incredibly catchy melody and one-of-a-kind beat that one cannot help but tap their feet to, this well-crafted song earns 5/5 snowflakes.

4. Silent Night

Played in nearly every Christian church on Christmas Eve, “Silent Night” is one of the most soothing and euphonious songs played during the holiday season. One student even noted that the song is best played during the midnight candle service. However, for the amount this song is played, it earns 4/5 snowflakes.

5. Last Christmas by Wham!

Having over 750,000 digital downloads, “Last Christmas” by Wham! is one of the most well-known songs for the holiday season. The iconic chorus allows for people of all ages to sing along and simply bask in the winter glory (most likely whilst sipping on a hot chocolate). The overplayed nature of this song, similarly, gives it a mere 4/5 snowflakes.

6. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Few things beat the dulcet sounds of child Christmas carolers: hot chocolate, snow, and the melodious sound of Michael Bublé. His song “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” is one of the most played songs during the holiday season, topping over one million streams each year. Its elegant nature truly makes one feel as if they are in NYC, watching the ball drop on New Year’s Eve. However, its high play count gives the song 4/5 snowflakes.

7. Baby It’s Cold Outside

Place yourself in Gimbel’s Department Store bathroom early in the morning as Buddy the Elf sings along in this unforgettable scene from one of the most famous Christmas movies of all time: Elf. “Baby It’s Cold Outside” creates the chilly feeling that makes the taste of hot chocolate fill the mouth. With its catchiness and the fact that this song is not overplayed, it earns a high ranking. Although not ranked in the top 5 of LFA students, the song has earned 5/5 snowflakes that will absolutely bring the holiday spirit.

8. The Christmas Song by Nat King Cole

Although the name might deceive, this is one of the most famous Christmas songs of all time and will transport you into holiday spirit any time of the year. With only four students claiming this as the best Christmas song, it earns 4/5 snowflakes. The song is well-crafted and will make you feel the warmth of winter fire, but the song lacks that catchiness that many Christmas tunes leave stuck within the mind.

9. The Chanukah Song by Adam Sandler

This song has an unexpected loveliness that is sure to bring a smile to any face. Its originality is truly what makes the song bring the spirit of Hanukkah to any listener. The song has been rewarded with 4/5 snowflakes as it is very catchy with its various rhymes, but falls short at truly transporting a listener into the holiday spirit. After all, who knew Adam Sandler could sing?

10. Mistletoe by Justin Bieber

Stand under the “Mistletoe” and get a quick kiss. Justin Bieber is sure to get listeners into the holiday spirit with one of the most catchy Christmas songs. Earning a spot on Billboard’s Hot Digital Songs, the song will have listeners singing out for days. However, with its spot on the charts, it is simply too overplayed earning the song 4/5 snowflakes.

11. Jingle Bell Rock

Once again, “Jingle Bell Rock” is seen across various Holiday movies that is sure to get listeners into the holiday spirit. The originality of the songs separating from the classic Christmas trees and Santa Claus, brings any listener into a holiday mood. Although only 2 students found this to be their favorite Christmas song, it receives 4/5 snowflakes because it is underplayed and has a stand-out rhythm that will leave listeners singing “that’s the jingle bell rock” everyday during the holiday season.



Photo by Kirstin Palasz

Left to right, Wham!’s *Last Christmas*, José Feliciano’s *Feliz Navidad*, Adam Sandler’s *The Chanukah Song*, Mariah Carey’s *All I Want For Christmas Is You*

Remembering Alex Trebek

By Nick Alutto
Editor-in-Chief

Long-time *Jeopardy!* host Alex Trebek passed away from pancreatic cancer on November 8, 2020. A statement on the show's Twitter account announcing this news read, "*Jeopardy!* is saddened to share that Alex Trebek passed away peacefully at home early this morning, surrounded by family and friends. Thank you, Alex."

News of Trebek's health issues came as a shock to many *Jeopardy!* fans when Trebek recorded a video announcement on the

television show's Youtube channel, saying, "Now, just like 50,000 other people in the United States each year, this week I was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Now normally, the prognosis for this is not very encouraging, but I'm going to fight this, and I'm going to keep working."

True to his word, Trebek continued to film the show while going through treatments for his worsening health condition, and continued to film through the pandemic. Even in the final weeks of his life, Trebek filmed his final episodes of *Jeopardy!* with his final episode being recorded on

October 29, 2020. These final episodes will continue to air until Trebek's final episode airs on Christmas Day 2020.

On top of continuing to host *Jeopardy!*, Trebek was inspired to write a memoir about his life following his diagnosis. Entitled *The Answer Is...: Reflections on my Life*, Trebek writes about personal anecdotes to give his fans more of an insight of the person who they have been watching on *Jeopardy!* every night.

As the host of *Jeopardy!* from 1984-2020, Trebek had become a staple in many homes across the country, including in

the lives of those who weren't even alive when his hosting duties began. This wide appeal made him a pop culture icon across generations.

Avid *Jeopardy!* watcher Rachel Johns '21 said, "The show and Alex Trebek were a staple to so many people's daily routines, and it's upsetting to lose him in a year that has taken so much. Trebek was a great host because he was so caring and engaging. Despite the obvious generational difference between him and many of his fans, he was so genuine that he could connect with anyone watching."

Although some fans are skeptical of what the future of *Jeopardy!* holds and who is worthy of carrying on the legacy of Trebek, *Jeopardy!* announced that Ken Jennings, who won 74 consecutive *Jeopardy!* games in 2004 and 2005, will be the first of a series of guest hosts after the show starts up again in January 2021. As for Trebek's thoughts on who should replace him, the host answered this question in an interview with ABC News in December 2019.

"Don't ask me who's going to replace me because I have no say whatsoever. But I'm sure if you give them the same love and attention and respect that you have shown me...then they will be successful and the show will continue being a success. And until we meet again, God bless you and goodbye."



Alex Trebek in the show *Jeopardy!*

Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures Television

The show must go on: Filming movies and shows during the pandemic

By Shylee Saladi
Managing Editor of Production

With New York City as one of the most popular places for filming to take place for movies and shows, it is of utmost importance for the public to know how the actors and actresses are staying safe during the pandemic.

Many TV shows have started filming again despite the global pandemic still occurring. Though the same rules apply about being socially distanced, wearing masks, and limiting face-to-face interactions, movie and television production has not stopped. According to Peter Clews, producer of Disney's live-action *Mulan* and other major movies, there are always health and safety measures put in place for every movie and production, which ensures that every screenplay is produced safely.

Cast and crew have adapted to the strict COVID-19 guidelines, such as wearing a mask whenever possible, staying six feet apart outside of recording scenes, and doing hair and makeup with masks on. Every actor and crew member has to wear a mask and a face shield while on the production site. Many film and television producers have made sure to have their

employees, cast, and crew tested for the virus. The only people on set that can take off their personal protective equipment (PPE) on set are the cast members that are filming at that moment. Everyone else on set has to remain socially distanced with their full PPE on.

The Producers Guild of America (PGA) Production Safety Task Force have mandated that all safety plans for said movie or show be submitted before filming has started in order to keep everyone safe on set. The safety plans have to include what PPE will be used and how long a production company can shoot everyday, with a maximum of 10 hours a day.

As the virus continues to surge, there are worries it could hurt the recovery of the film and television industry financially due to the many shows that have been delayed or canceled during this pandemic. Since many TV shows and movies are filmed in New York, there is a certain concern that the governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, might declare New York a "red zone," which is when a place is currently experiencing more than 100 cases per 100,000 people, and declares that all non-essential businesses should close once again.

Many shows and movies that once had an in-studio, live, audience, have had to cut the audience due to the Coronavirus regulations. Through these many challenges, many medical TV shows such as *Grey's Anatomy* and the *Good Doctor* have been able to address this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic within their episodes. These shows have turned mask-wearing and full PPE into a new "normal." Not only have

shows taken a toll on how much money they are making, but also the amount of people that can be in the filming location as well has been minimized.

COVID-19 has taken a larger toll on the filming industry than what meets the public eye. Producers have had to make the hard decisions of where to film, how many people are on set at once, and how to enforce safety measures on set.



Live audiences are not allowed in studios anymore, so shows have had to make do with a scarce audience.

Photo Courtesy of Creative Commons

The effects of Covid on the Cressey atmosphere

By: Riya Kapoor

Guest Writer from Journalism I

The Cressey Center of the Arts at Lake Forest Academy has always been a place full of life, music, energy and joy, but this year, it's not the same due to the effects of COVID-19. The usually lit up Cressey has become cold and empty.

Lake Forest Academy offers an Arts Concentration Program for its students, which is one of the things that makes our school unique. The program gives opportunities such as private voice lessons each week, small ensemble rehearsals, solo performances and other gatherings to help improve the arts for students intending to pursue those disciplines in college.

In an interview with Miranda Hernandez '23, a first year Arts Concentration student, she took a trip down memory lane and spoke about her favorite moments from last year. Hernandez talked about how COVID has affected her time with Peg Plambeck, Adjunct Voice Instructor in Fine and Perform-

ing Arts, and Timothy Plambeck, Director of Music for one on one voice lessons. She discussed how in pre-covid times, she was able to meet with both of them three or more times per week, and now, due to time constraints, she is only able to meet with them two times per cycle at most. Another thing Hernandez reflected on was her memories with the seniors before we left for e-learning in March as she said, "My time with the seniors was cut short, and I wish that I got to finish out the year again."

In an interview with Tim Plambeck, I asked about what is going to happen next regarding choir performances. Plambeck discussed how he is hoping to be able to livestream performances, but he is not sure on what is going to happen. He also discussed that voice lessons with students are able to continue because of PlexiGlass dividers helping protect everyone. When asked what he missed the most, Plambeck discussed how usually the Fine Arts Department does a trip to New York every other year to go to Broadway and do other



Photo Courtesy of LFA Website

Lake Forest Academy performance of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* in 2019.

arts-related activities. Plambeck's hope is to go to New York next year and rekindle this tradition. Even though COVID-19 has had a heavy impact on our arts department here at Lake Forest Academy, our hopes

are that slowly and gradually, everything will start returning back to normal as the years progress, and our beloved Cressey center will regain the glow that it once had.

Masked Musicians: How the LFA choir and orchestra were still able to perform in the midst of a pandemic

By: Anusha Srivastava

Guest Writer from Journalism I

With this year having many complications due to Covid-19, the LFA performing arts, specifically choir and orchestra, have had to find new ways to express their artistic abilities. As following the CDC guidelines, both programs have been able to adjust, allowing their students to still perform. Both Director of Music Tim Plambeck and Orchestra Teacher Sally Stephenson recognize the difficulties that year has brought so far. Both teachers acknowledged the drastic differences between this year and past years, but in turn noted that these new challenges and changes allowed a new sense of community to develop between the students and the teacher themselves.

Plambeck, a proud member of the LFA community, has been teaching at LFA since 2001. Since then, he has taught various performing art centered classes, including Choir, AP Music Theory, Piano 1, the Arts Concentration program, and offers opportunities for various independent studies. In late March of 2020, he explained, he had one of his first experiences teaching high school choir online. At first he said it was difficult but as it turned out, "It was a blessing in disguise". In the beginning, he assigned assignments about music theory and had the students submit mini vocal recordings using apps like Acapella. Everyday on the regularly scheduled class period, the choir would zoom in as Plambeck felt it was necessary to socialize in the uncertain times. Later in the "at home quarantine," he started to assign projects. These projects really helped the choir learn more about each other as the students were able to present themselves and their families, making the choir grow closer as family.

When school was reopened in August, the choir was able to, for the most part, resume class without many extreme changes. Plambeck read many choral instructors courses of action to find the best and safest



Courtesy of LFA's Communications Office.

Lake Forest Academy's orchestra practicing outdoors due to COVID-19.

way to continue choir. In the beginning of the new school year, the choir practiced outside in the warm weather, socially distanced and with masks on. Plambeck tried to keep the students outside as long as possible, and when the weather permitted it. Later when it started to become cold outside, the choir moved into Cressey lobby where they were able to spread farther apart and still sing safely. Due to travel restrictions, the choir lost many of their international members unable to safely come back to the LFA campus. This year, the choir has 14 members compared to the usual number of 45 members last year. Even though the choir is smaller, Plambeck sees this as the perfect opportunity to work more closely with the students on campus.

The orchestra director Sally Stephenson is a newer staff member of the LFA community, having recently joined in January of 2020. At LFA, she teaches Orchestra, Advanced Music Production, and Electronic Music Ensemble. At the start of the March lockdown, she assigned short music pieces through an app called Smartmusic. Here, she was able to assign the music that was begun before the break, continuing the performance of the pieces. She also at the end of the year had the students perform a final piece of their choice through the app. When back on campus at the start of the new school year, new challenges arose with how to perform with so many students that play wind instruments. Originally, she had created small chamber groups to per-

form and practice outside, but with the ideal weather, was able to have the whole orchestra perform together for a few months. Outside was a struggle because the wind blew around music, and many people stood around. Playing outside also changed the way a piece sounded due to being in open air, making it difficult to judge what areas of pieces need more work. Ultimately Stephenson said, "I was willing to do anything to play, even if it was uncomfortable." Stephenson wanted to try everything, seeing what worked and what didn't. When it started getting colder, she continued the chamber groups with the right instrument covers and safety equipment in places inside like New Hall, Cressey, and Little Theater. These little groups and Smartmusic allowed Stephenson to assess and accurately form groups to play different pieces that fit individuals. She felt as if she "got to know the players individually". She said being able to know everyone because she gets to listen to them individually and meet them in small groups allowed her to learn the students strengths and weaknesses. This enables her to help individuals grow as musicians. The little groups allowed Stephenson to not only grow stronger relations with her students, but it also allowed students to learn more about each other.

As stated by senior Lizzie Dozois, "This year is different from the ones before, but it is nice to know people I would never have the opportunity to talk to on a daily basis. I really get to know more of our community members and about them."

With safe practices and being able to perform socially distanced, both programs were able to safely conduct a fall concert. The fall concert was outside in front of Reid. The choir showcased a variety of songs from pop to Disney. The orchestra played a few spookier pieces in the spirit of Halloween and a march. Even though Covid-19 has imposed many new challenges for the performing arts of LFA, in many ways it has been "a blessing in disguise" because it allowed the arts program to grow stronger.

Ranking One Direction albums

By Angie Cotton

Managing Editor of Features

Closing in on the British boyband's 10th anniversary as a group this year, it is without a doubt that One Direction—composed of Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Liam Payne, Harry Styles, and Louis Tomlinson—has become what is perhaps one of the most successful boybands in history.

Throughout the boys' five years together going on massive world tours and releasing albums back-to-back, they had many hit songs off of every single one of their albums. Below is a ranking of One Direction's five albums, from best to worst, based on a criteria for lyrics, vocals, sound development, and album arrangement.



Photo Courtesy of Genius

Up All Night, 2011

“You're insecure, don't know what for”

Consists of a constant shift of songs you'd dance along to and then songs you'd want to bawl your eyes out to. It's a constant hormonal change. You're unsure whether you're supposed to be happy or sad, because before you can figure it out, the song has already changed and a different emotion is being played.

Take Me Home:

7.5/10

Best songs: *Live While We're Young*, *Little Things*, *Rock Me*, *I Would*, *Over Again*

Not even a year after their debut album was released, *Take Me Home* would be released in 2012 with what is clearly a hint of maturity entering the band's style. Despite still being pop, it's not quite what one would consider as pop-dance music, and it instead brings a slight hint of acoustic-ness to the table, building a more mature sound for the boys. Lyrically, the band performs something more unique, in which they really get a bit

more insightful into how there's different types of relationships in the real world. Compared to *Up All Night*, which focuses around meeting the perfect girl at a party and then making out, *Take Me Home* explores some flirtatious concepts along with some issues that may arise in a formal mature relationship between two people. Co-writing on 25% of the songs, the arrangement in this album is for sure a fresh change from the actual emotional rollercoaster that *Up All Night* was.

Midnight Memories:

8.5/10

Best songs: *Best Song Ever*, *Story of My Life*, *Midnight Memories*, *Alive*

At what could be considered the peak of One Direction's career, as the boys continue touring, making songs on the road, and now have a film production on their hands, one would expect *Midnight Memories*—released in 2013—to lack much effort. However, this is clearly not the case. The boys explore new boundaries, as the genre shifts over to pop-rock. More specifically, pop similar to that of your typical 2013 song, while also bringing in the classic rock style of bands like AC/DC and The Rolling Stones. The sound has matured even more, and the reliance on FX as instrumentals has been wiped out and instead used as what FX are supposed to be in music: just a fun extra. Not only is the genre boundary broken, but the lyrical boundary is too. The lyrics become much more contemplative and insightful on life itself while also

Up All Night:

6.75/10

Best songs: *One Thing*, *Tell Me a Lie*

Released in 2011, One Direction's debut album consisted of exactly what you'd expect from a boyband during this era. Aiming to hit the “pop” target on the genre spectrum, *Up All Night* is very similar in sound to the sounds musicians like Katy Perry and Kelly Clarkson were releasing in the early 2010s. The lyrics are, too, exactly what you'd expect: a flirtatious mix of fun at parties and the overused “baby”s. With the boys co-writing only 17% of the songs on this album, the album's layout

keeping the romantic concept all throughout. A new style is brought in as storytelling becomes much more prominent in *Midnight Memories* than in any other of their albums. Co-writing on 83% of the songs, which is a significant difference from the rest of their albums, the arrangement works well as the first three songs and last three songs are a great way to introduce the concept of the album along with closing it. They sum up the three main ideas in this album perfectly. However, it's a bit lengthy of an album and some songs don't feel necessary at times.



Photo Courtesy of Genius

Midnight Memories, 2013

Four:

7/10

Best songs: *Girl Almighty*, *No Control*, *Change Your Ticket*, *Act My Age*



Photo Courtesy of Genius

Four, 2014

With a new peak to surpass, there's no wonder why *Four*--released in 2014--is perhaps the boys' most neglected album by the audience. Genre-wise, *Four* shifts over to a bold mix of alternative indie rock and pop while also shifting over to much simpler sounds and less instrumentally-heavy songs on occasions. Still sailing on the same boat, even more unique concepts for love songs are brought into play in *Four*, along with “*Girl Almighty*” being about their fans. The strive towards writing with more metaphorical concepts becomes much more prominent in this album as well. Co-writing only 75% of songs on *Four*, the album's arrangement is a nightmare. There's, for the most part, no pattern nor congruence, song after song. The shifts in tone are too drastic, but not in the same way that *Up All Night* was, as that actually had a purpose in the arrangement. It nearly feels as if a ton of songs they made and liked were randomly tossed into a pile of an album and called it a day.

Made In The A.M.:

8/10

Best Songs: *Perfect*, *Olivia*, *History*, *A.M.*

Shortly after Zayn Malik left the band in March 2015 (which left humanity heartbroken, although one must sympathize with his situation), One Direction would for sure never be the same. Released in 2015, *Made In The A.M.* definitely marked the end of an era. The genre in this album switches back to pop, this time only to what one would associate with musicians such as Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber in 2015. It's clear that the thought process for the overall sound of this album was much longer than in any of their previous albums. Every single song manages to have its own unique ring; you'd be able to tell the instrumentals apart even if you're not a big One Direction fan. With Malik not partaking in this album whatsoever, the four other boys seemed obligated to leave their previous vocal comfort zones in order to make up for the lack of Malik's god-like voice (however, this isn't matched as so since it just simply would not be the same without Malik's presence in the band). A bit of everything is brought into this one lyrically: there's storytelling, a few more unique romantic concepts, and even a shoutout to their moms in “*Drag Me Down*.” One way to describe the lyrics in *Made In The A.M.* would have to be that moment when you're somewhere and you're happy, but then you get sad knowing that it'll have to be over at some point, but then you scratch it off and keep enjoying the moment. The boys co-wrote on 77% of the songs on *Made In The A.M.* As for structure, there's a great opening song and even greater closing song. Everything in between seems to be arranged in small groupings based on tone, despite the actual congruence between these small groupings seems a bit misplaced.



Made In The A.M., 2014

Photo Courtesy of Genius

“This is not the end, this is not the end”

“The fire beneath my feet is burning bright / The way that I've been holdin' on so tight / With nothing in between”

“Her light is as loud as as many ambulances / As it takes to save a savior”

With a new peak to surpass, there's no wonder why *Four*--released in 2014--is perhaps the boys' most neglected album by the audience. Genre-wise, *Four* shifts over to a bold mix of alternative indie rock and pop while also shifting over to much simpler sounds and less instrumentally-heavy songs on occasions. Still sailing on the same boat, even more unique concepts

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A personal guide to being an online student-athlete

By **Bia Leffingwell**
Staff Writer

Online school was not a new experience for me when the Coronavirus hit; while E-Learning caused many difficulties for others, in fact, it made my life a lot easier. When I turned ten, I started competing intensely for horseback riding; during the winter, I would travel to Wellington, Florida to compete. This was not an easy task, as having a student who was not in person for several consecutive months was very new for my teachers.

Wellington has been deemed as the “horse capital” of the world, in which horseback riders of all levels compete for a 12-week circuit to qualify for bigger championships later in the year. For this previous season, the Winter Equestrian Festival was the main circuit to qualify for the 2020 Olympics. This changed due to the Coronavirus, and now the upcoming season will be crucial for those athletes to try to qualify for the 2021 Olympics, or any other major events of the year.

As I got older, school got harder, and I had to juggle a more avid competition schedule with harder schoolwork. There weren't any Zoom meetings nor any recorded lessons- just notes that I would look at everyday. When

LFA went online, I felt ready. I already knew how to balance a busy schedule and copious amounts of schoolwork.

Being away from in-person learning is never easy, but I've learned strategies that work for me and may work for you as well. Taking time for yourself, staying true to the schedule you implement, and balancing out your priorities are the main things of importance.

The first step to being a student athlete, or really any busy student, is creating a schedule. Whether it's in your head or written down, organizing yourself and creating a schedule for each day allows comfort in your busy day. Be able to create slots of time for your sport and for school, but also for some personal time. It's also important to recognize which one comes first--is school more important, or is your sport the top priority?

This may not be easy, especially for an avid athlete who travels or spends a lot of time doing the sport they love. Doing homework at the end of the day may take some time, as your sport will easily tire you out during the day. Remember that your teachers are there to help you--if you need extra time on an assignment, and you explain your situation in an effective way, chances are your teacher will allow for some extra time or help.

8:45- wake up
9:30- Zoom
11:30-1:05- Free period (Eat and go check on horses)
1:10-1:55- Class on Zoom
2:00- Get ready for riding
2:30- Leave for the barn
2:45- Get ready to ride
3:15- Training session
4:15-5:00- Clean up my stuff and feed my horse
5:00- Go home
5:15- Workout
6:15- Start homework
7:30- Dinner
8:00- Finish homework and write schedule for tomorrow
11:00- Go to bed

Photo by Bia Leffingwell

Bia Leffingwell '22 writes out her schedule for the next day so she can budget her time wisely.

Being a remote or hybrid learner is a challenge, but in the end, it has its benefits. You have more time to do your sport or hobby, spend time with family, and take some time for yourself in the comfort of your own home. So, take a deep breath, and communicate with the adults in your

life to create the best system for you.

Online learning may seem scary, or like a chore, but it is also a great opportunity to create more time to do the things you love. Stay organized, stay diligent, and most importantly, make sure you do what's best for you and your health! Believe me, it can be done.

Safe practices: Making the workout room work out

By **Ramaya Herman & David Oluwole**
Editor-in-Chief and Senior Sports Editor

As LFA approached an unprecedented school year, the community as a whole was forced to make adjustments and sacrifices in several areas of our academic and social lives. The fitness center plays a major role in the Caxy experience for most students, and it was also subject to some changes this past fall.

The new protocols that have been in place include alterations to the max number of occupants, the timing, the sign-in and entrance process, and the “attire.” There are four different time slots where students are able to sign up and go to the gym. They can choose either the 2:30, 4:00, 5:15, or 6:30 time, and must be one of the first 15 to sign up for that slot, as that is the maximum number of students allowed per group. Sign-in and a temperature check are required prior to entering the gym, and students

must have their masks on upon entering as well as while working out. There is one entrance at the front of the training room and a separate exit at the back in order to avoid congregating or unnecessary contact.

In order to keep the gym safe and as germ-free as possible, there are multiple sanitizer and cleaning wipe stations placed throughout the gym, as well as a 15-minute buffer between groups so that the equipment can be sanitized and wiped off. With that said, occupants should still be mindful of the space and wipe off any equipment after use. Trainer Eric Ball is the one who primarily does the cleaning; however, he acknowledged the great source of assistance that students have been.

“My seniors have been a big help this year with new protocols, especially Constantine, Zuzanna, and Nicky Mesrobian. They have all chipped in a significant amount to help with keeping things running smoothly up here in the gym.”

Ball mentioned that they also help with bringing up groups, leading warmups, and setting up and breaking down equipment for the day's workout. He noted that while clean up is more frequent than in previous years, it is not far off from what has been done in the past as far as tasks go and is concluded each day with a nightly cleaning of the space. Ball said that even in regular circumstances, “With

the amount of traffic we get, you have to stay on top of sanitizing equipment to avoid MRSA or a Staph infection.”

Overall, this system, while not ideal, has been keeping students healthy. While most schools do not have access to their campus, LFA students have been able to enjoy both their classroom buildings and the athletic center, and have been doing so in a safe and gracious way, taking care to comply with the restrictions and regulations that have been put in place for their safety.

Upon reflecting on how things have gone in the gym so far this year, Ball summed up the success of the semester by saying, “I do commend my kids for taking all of these new rules and protocols amicably. Though they may not fully understand or agree, they abide by them and we have no issues in the gym. I for one understand how hard it is to complete the workouts we do in general, so to do so while wearing a mask on your face the whole time is a huge ask. There are times I have to tug on my mask in a gesture to remind them to cover their face, but even while exhausted, they've been great about following the rules.”

As we enter into winter break, take pride in knowing that we have all done our part to keep our community safe for this first semester, and anticipate how you intend to continue this positive effort when we come together again in January.

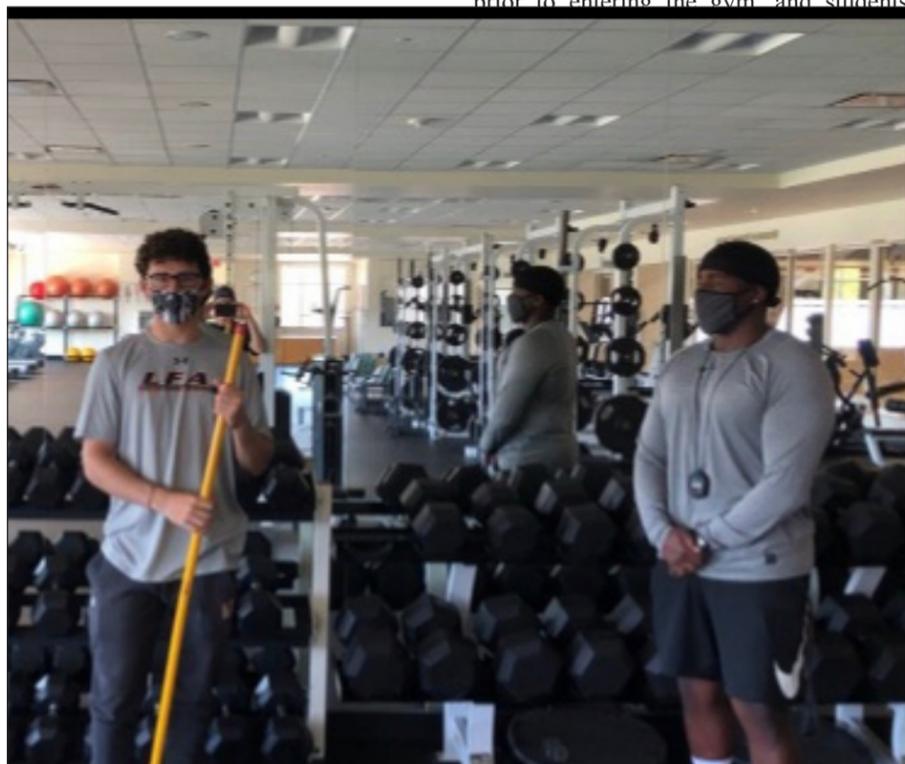


Photo By Constantine Alexos

Constantine Alexos '21 and Trainer Eric Ball exercising in the workout room while wearing masks and staying six feet apart.

DECEMBER 11, 2020

The dilemma facing professional sports

By **Kirstin Palasz**
Photo Editor

From the first pitch to the initial kick-off, a sports game's beginning is just the start of the fans' adrenaline; however, as COVID-19 continues to sweep the nation, sports have been completely altered for many die-hard fans. With new regulations implemented in Major League Baseball, the National Football League, and the National Hockey League, many fans are stuck at home watching games on their TVs instead of going to the games in person. COVID-19 has not only taken away most of the in-person attendance, but the overall viewings of the games have gone significantly down since the start of the pandemic, affecting both the industry and the players.

In the past few months, many sports franchises have been trying to make the best out of what they can do. Professional baseball and hockey have successfully completed their seasons inside an isolation bubble they created. Yet as ratings decrease, it's clear that not as many watched their games. Football season, kicking off in September, has not created a bubble as some teams allow fans to watch in person. The games are held across the country, increasing exposure risks. Football ratings have gone down as well.

The World Series, baseball's championship series, has an average rating of 38 million views; the 2020 World Series has gone down to 9.6 million views, an all-time low. No fans were allowed in any of the stadiums, which would suggest that those fans would watch the games from home. However, the views have still experienced an extreme drop this year. Many fans are devastated that fewer people have watched baseball this season. Mimi Os-

borne '22, a big fan of the Baltimore Orioles, said, "Baseball is a sport that connects people. In American households, baseball is something that everyone can talk about. It is simply heartbreaking that the amount of people watching baseball has plummeted since COVID-19 started."

Likewise, the NHL did not permit fans in any of the rinks during the Stanley Cup playoffs. There is normally an average of 5.33 million viewers for the Stanley Cup; however, the number dropped to 2.15 million viewers in 2020. Similarly to baseball, the loss of in-person attendance is not the cause of the decrease in ratings.

Contrary to the MLB and NHL, the NFL has taken different measures to ensure the safety of everyone. With stadiums allowing for over 60,000 people, some NFL teams have opened up the opportunity for a small capacity of 5-10% of fans to come to the games. However, even with a small number of fans allowed to come to the games, the ratings and views have gone down this season. There is a 6% decrease

in the number of viewers on television per week, which is still a significant decline in viewers compared to previous years.

Many fans have been staying up to date with the scores but have not been watching the games. One explanation for the loss of watchers is that the restriction of in-person attendance has also taken away the experience and atmosphere of watching it at home. The excitement from the fans at the games translates into the homes of the viewers. Kyle Koncz, Assistant Dean of Admission and Head Varsity Boys Basketball Coach, said, "The atmosphere and energy of the games isn't the same without fans, which at times takes away from the experience of watching."

Another experience that has been lost is the social aspect of watching games. Ben Wetherbee, Assistant Dean of College Counseling, mentioned, "A lot of the enjoyment I get out of watching sports is experiencing them in the vicinity of friends and when that social component of the watching experience is removed, I tend to watch less."

Not only has the change in atmosphere contributed to the loss of viewers, but with everything that's been happening in 2020 people are not focused on sports. It may seem like people would have an increase in time to watch the sports, but even if there is the time, there are larger problems people have been paying attention to. 2020 has brought a variety of things that viewers have been paying attention to; an on-going pandemic, a rise of racial awareness and movements, and the election. Koncz said that the events of 2020, "drew attention away from the sports on television." Sports have, therefore, become lower on the "to-do" list for many people. On top of that, coming out of a long quarantine of watching Netflix, many people have not spent as much time watching sports as they have playing them outside. Koncz mentioned how he "tried to spend as much time as possible outdoors during the last few months, away from television and trying to be active after being stuck inside for so long."

With the loss of viewers, the industry and the athletes have been affected as well. There is an obvious loss in revenue from ticket sales to food and drink consumption in fan shops. Wetherbee mentioned how this really hurts the small business and communities that support these franchises. Not only has it affected the franchise, but it has affected the athletes. The athletes thrive off of the energy that the crowd creates. Koncz mentioned how "fans give players energy, at both home and away games, and I think the sports industry has really missed that during the pandemic." Hopefully, the sports industry will get back to normal, so all the fans can enjoy watching the games again and the sports industry can rebound.



Courtesy of Creative Commons

The Washington Nationals' stadium, Nationals Park, is filled with cardboard cutouts in place of in-person fans.

Disregarded regulations: Recent actions at Notre Dame increase COVID count

By **Rohan Miglani**
Managing Editor of Sports

In college sporting events, storming the field, where all the fans come out of the stands and onto the field to celebrate, has been a tradition after a big win for many decades. This has created some iconic moments at college football games that stand the test of time, such as "The Play", when the Stanford Band rushed onto the field. However, this year due to the spread of Covid-19, many of these storming the field moments have not occurred due to the superspreader of the virus that storming the field could be.

This year when #4 ranked Notre Dame beat the #1 ranked team Clemson in football, the Notre Dame fans rushed the field to celebrate the win. This resulted in nearly 11,000 fans, the capacity of the stadium for the game, being on the field in close proximity to one another. While it was an amazing win for all in the Notre Dame community, the storming of the field was scary to many, and with Covid-19 already spiking on the

campus, the fear of increased spread of the virus following this event was a major concern amongst many in the community.

The President of Notre Dame, John Jenkins, imposed mandatory Covid-19 testing for all students following the weekend of the game and threatened strict penalties for those who didn't comply with the protocols. The storming of the field at Notre Dame stadium led to an uptick in Covid 19 cases on Notre Dame's campus, and it called into question many of the safety precautions put in place at various colleges, especially at Notre Dame itself. Along with increasing the Covid-19 case numbers at Notre Dame, the bad press that the university took as a result led to many people believing that Notre Dame was not taking the virus seriously.

The spread of Covid-19 that took place on Notre Dame's campus, due to the lack of social distancing and masks while rushing the field, has mirrored various superspreader events that have taken place around the country. For instance in New Orleans, the swinger event led to 41 people at the event

testing positive for the virus, due to many at the event not following the social distancing and mask protocols put in place, similar to what transpired at Notre Dame.

During a time in the United States that has seen a major increase in COVID-19 cases, social media and the national media have frowned upon events that have failed to follow social distancing and mask protocol. The event that took place at Notre Dame Stadium not only led to an uptick in Covid-19 around the

campus, but it was also shown live on NBC, allowing for all to see the failure of Covid-19 protocols at Notre Dame.

Many of these instances that have become Covid-19 superspreader-events are as a result of failing to follow protocols put in place for the safety of individuals at a given event. It is important for all to understand and follow protocols in an attempt to limit the further mass spread of the virus when it can be avoided.



Courtesy of South Bend Tribune

Notre Dame fans rush the field following their win over previously undefeated Clemson.

EndSARS and ACAB: A global look at the advocacy battle

By Ramya Herman
Editor-in-Chief

In the past, SARS has been an acronym used to describe a contagious respiratory virus, but is now taking on an entirely new meaning. EndSARS is a term that came about on October 8 of 2020 as the leading slogan of a social movement which speaks out against police brutality in Nigeria. SARS stands for Special Anti-Robbery Squad, a unit of the Nigerian police notorious for abusing and killing citizens, soldiers, and even other officers.

The phrase is comparative to ACAB, the acronym for All Cops Are Bastards, a protest slogan that began trending in America only months earlier for a similar purpose. It also bears some resemblance to Black Lives Matter, a U.S. based political movement advocating for an end to police brutality and violence against black people.

EndSARS began this summer following a video showing a SARS officer shooting and carjacking a citizen. According to the CNN article "In the wake of tumultuous #EndSARS demonstrations, Nigerian photog-

raphers tell a story of strength and hope," protests arose shortly after and proceeded for two weeks, coming to a close after what is now known as Black Tuesday in Nigeria. SARS officers showered bullets onto a crowd of protesting youth at a toll gate, an event marked by darkness, screams, and recording cell phones. The total death toll of the night was 48, adding to the larger number of 100 individuals killed since the beginning of the protests in early October.

This isn't Nigeria's first bout of outrage over the policing practices of this group. The Nigerian government had previously announced in 2014, 2015, and 2017 that the squad would be disbanded, and received this promise again on October 11th, a promise that has yet to be delivered on.

Advocates in Nigeria reached out on all social media and news platforms to ask for help on a global scale, and the hashtag received some attention here in America during the height of the country's activism excitement. In the states there was not as much debate over whether or not it was a reasonable cause, and perhaps the reasoning behind that was

people's removal from the issue because of the physical distance between themselves and those who needed help.

The comparison begs the question of how far an individual's desire to advocate will extend. Many people are willing to express some form of moral courage when it comes to the things that are on their social media feed, but will they experience that same level of passion for issues that don't directly affect them or their communities? Inversely, is there a stronger in-

clination to debate the legitimacy of issues that people feel are more likely to impact them, despite the equivalent legitimacy of parallel problems in other countries?

During moments of chaos and corruption in our world, we must take moments to reflect upon our own actions and reactions to the injustices we witness. We must decide how much we are willing to acknowledge them, how hard we are willing to fight for or against them, and how our implicit biases impact our lives.



Image courtesy of Creative Commons
Nigerian activists protest the Special Anti-Robbery Squad outside of a police checkpoint.

Election responses from around the world

By Bela De Jesús
Managing Editor of Global

After the election winner was announced on November 7th, the United States was not the only one waiting for the news. Countries across the world were also invested, and the front pages of their newspapers are the perfect example of how the divisive election impacted the globe.

Germany
After showing an image of Trump holding the severed Lady Liberty's head on their front page in 2017, *Der Spiegel*, a German

magazine, shows Joe Biden reattaching her head on the front page November 7th.

India
In India, a newspaper shows side by side photos of President Elect Biden and Vice President Elect Kamala Harris separately just a day after the results.

Scotland
After the election, *The Scotland Times* shows a Trump focused headline with a picture of Biden, meant to show contrasting opinions and reactions from the candidates.

Kenya
Kenyan newspapers *The Sunday Nation* and the *Sunday Standard* show the contrasting ideas of the election, one headlining Biden's win and the other headlining Trump's loss.

Italy
Italian newspaper *La Stampa* shows the victorious President Elect and Vice President elect with the caption translated as "Biden-Harris, the United States. Harris first female vice-president. Trump does not recognize defeat"



Papers from all over the world cover the U.S. election.

A time for thanks or a time for mourning?

By Ramya Herman
Editor-in-Chief

If you take the time to look up “National Day of Mourning” the search results will reveal a practice taking place on the same day as Thanksgiving. This is by no means a coincidence. While some Americans sit down to enjoy a meal with their loved ones and talk about everything they are thankful for, others, the ones who were here first, take the time to honor Native ancestors who have died attempting to protect their land.

On December 26th of 1941, Thanksgiving became a national holiday—a day to commemorate the arrival of the pilgrims and their successful settlement on what they decided to rename America. Thirty years later in 1970, the National Day of Mourning also began being recognized. This day, along with many other holidays during the fall season, mark periods of grief and disrespect for indigenous communities.

The discrimination that native people face on a daily basis is amplified during the fall and winter months. It seems as though for every month, there is a different way to dishonor native culture and heritage.

Starting in September with football season, fans clad themselves in jerseys with the faces of indigenous people plastered on them like cartoon characters or decorate their heads with headwear mimicking traditional native headdresses. Teams like the Washington Football team, formally known as the Redskins, chose to name themselves after slurs or derogatory terms that were consistent reminders of painful experiences native people have faced. The phrase redskin was used to refer to the scalped head of an indigenous person in early America.

The disrespect progresses into October,



Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

Traditional native headdresses are often used as costumes despite their position as sacred items.

when some people choose to dress up in sexualized versions of traditional Native American Ceremonial Dressings. While it has been said many times before, this past October the phrase “my culture is not a costume” along with similar ones rang out even louder as more people took time during quarantine to educate themselves on the discrimination native people face.

At the close of the fall season is Thanksgiving in November. Marked by gluttony and false images of pilgrims peacefully accepting help from natives, this one Thursday in the month is a hefty laugh at what actually

happened years ago. Those who came to colonize America slaughtered and infected 90% of the indigenous population, killing an estimated 55 million people. Some of the 5 million who remain take this day to remember the millions of ancestors who they lost with the arrival of the pilgrims.

While we cannot change the past, we can ensure that it is told and honored properly. Take the time to educate yourself on the struggles and suffering of other cultures, what has caused it and what can be done to combat it. Be conscious of the practices you engage in and be sure to appreciate cultures

without appropriating them. Instead of falling into the pattern of harmful traditions with dark meanings, engage in those which properly honor the sacrifices that people have made and the lives that have been lost.

No one can solve all the world’s problems, but a good step towards living a more respectful life that expands your awareness beyond the issues that affect you is to learn and reflect. If you would like to begin learning more, below is a website that can be used to determine whose land you are truly living on. <https://native-land.ca/>.

LFA’s 2020 election polls

By Rachel Johns
Managing Editor of News

In mid-October, an anonymous Presidential Election Survey was given to the students of Lake Forest Academy. LFA students were some out of the 7,018 students around the country who took the survey administered by the National Research Center for College and University Admissions. It is important to note that this survey sample size is not completely representative of the nation as a

whole. There are over 15.3 million high schoolers in the United States, and sixteen states were not included in this survey.

Of the LFA students surveyed, 59.1% said they would have voted for Joe Biden, while 18.2% of students supported Donald Trump. These results reflect Biden winning Illinois, the popular vote, and the electoral college. However, Biden’s win of the popular vote was by the much smaller margin of 4%.

Nationally, 23% of students said they would opt out of voting in lieu of choosing either

candidate, but only 17.7% of LFA students said the same. LFA having more politically minded students speaks volumes about the school’s well informed community.

Similarly, 76.7% LFA students stay up to date on news and politics compared to 65.6% of high school students nationwide. CNN is evidently the most popular news source among students as 25.6% of LFA students said they get their news from there. 19.5% percent of students get their news from “Other” sources, presum-

ably the internet and social media. ABC News (13.7%) and Fox News (11.9%) proved to be the third and fourth most popular news sources among students.

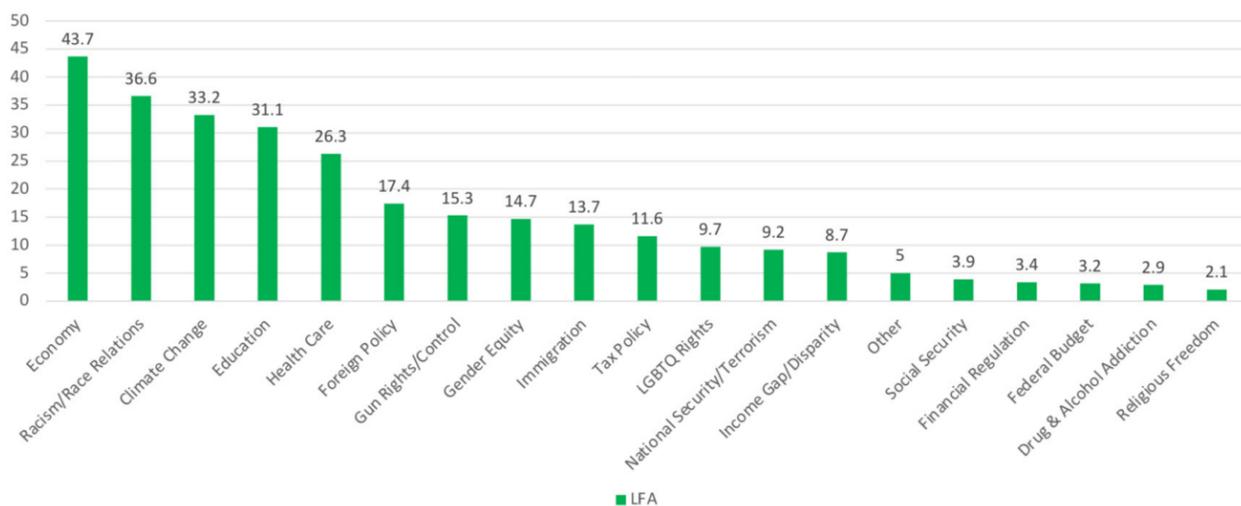
The political issues of most concern to LFA students are the economy (43.7%), racism and race relations (36.6%), and climate change (33.2%). The political issues of least concern are religious freedom (2.1%), drug and alcohol addiction (2.9%), and the federal budget (3.2%).

Within the LFA community, Trump has a high disapproval rate, with 58% of students that disapprove of his presidency. His approval rates are rather low as only 21% of LFA students say they approve of his job performance. 21% of students said that they have no opinion on Trump’s presidency.

On a similar note, only 13.3% of students believe that the nation is headed in the right direction while 54.3% said that the nation is not moving in the right direction. The national uncertainty of these times are reflected in the 32.4% of students who don’t know if the nation is headed in the right direction.

Perhaps the general despondency about the future of the United States correlates to the lack of trust in politicians. 44.7% of LFA students reported that they generally do not trust politicians, and only 9.2% of the community said that they generally trust politicians. The generally low trust in politicians reflects Gen Z’s need for transparency and increased representation in politics. In order to so, politicians, local and national, must be held accountable, and students need to stay informed when taking political stances.

LFA’s Top Three Political Issues (in percentages)



Graph courtesy of Jessica Gimbel