



NEWS

The first All School Handshake since COVID and how Lake Forest Academy safely got together amidst pandemic.



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Scarlett Johansson sues Disney over *Black Widow* realted controversy. Is Disney really happily ever after?



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SPORTS

In and outside Crown, newly administered Lake Forest Academy gear is bringing the community together.



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Athletic development: *The strategic plan for sports*

By Mimi Osborne & Connor Drobný

Director of Sports & Assistant Managing Editor of Sports

Whether it has been implementing a renewed focus on female athletics or installing more serious coaching requirements, Lake Forest Academy’s athletic department has undergone significant changes over the past year—all for the betterment of the students.

The requirements to become a coach are far more rigorous than before. In past years, any member of the LFA faculty who was interested in coaching had the opportunity to work with their desired sports team. However, now varsity head coaches must become certified (through their respective athletic federation) to head coach a varsity team. Examples of representative federations are, according to Athletic Director Darrin Madeley, “USA Hockey, USATF is for track and field, and soccer has the USA Soccer Federation.” The certification program often entails completing an online portion and then moving into tailored clinics run by previously certified coaches. Madeley underscored that he is “hiring good people who are qualified to work with students.” Furthermore, Madeley said in regards to students, “You can

be a great athlete, but if I bring you here, and you are not getting good coaching, then I am not doing any favors.” The benefit of this arrangement is faculty who want to coach, but are not certified, can still coach non-varsity teams and be an assistant coach on varsity teams. Madeley hopes the coaches will “want to get to the masters level...It’s the same as a student coming into LFA and knowing that all their teachers aspire to be the best at their discipline. I want the same in my varsity coaches.” Madeley described “no pushback” by non-certified coaching faculty, demonstrating their commitment to becoming the best coaches possible.

While the athletic department has always held a strong emphasis on female sports, the changes made over the past few months have particularly demonstrated this. The department has implemented many changes to girls’ athletics in order to showcase the capabilities of female athletes. Alexis Venechanos, the new Associate Athletic Director, said, “It’s getting more girls exposed to sports they don’t know about.” LFA not only wants students to pursue new athletic interests, but also revel in sports in which they find themselves adroit. To help accomplish this, Madeley brought in four new coaches—



Varsity Field Hockey
2021 - 2022



Photo courtesy of LFA Communications

Lake Forest Academy’s Varsity Field Hockey Team featuring new coach, Greta Kullby.

Greta Kullby, Alexis Venechanos, Izzy Huntington, and Sarah Taylor—to elevate the level of experience given to female athletes. Kullby played Division I field hockey at Lafayette College, Venechanos played Division I lacrosse at Maryland, Huntington played Division II volleyball at Davenport University, and Taylor’s tennis career is world-renowned, quite literally, being ranked 68th globally at the peak of her career. Taylor and Venechanos are also LFA faculty members working as a science teacher, teaching AP Psychology, and Associate Athletic Director respectively. The shift currently emphasizing female athletics occurred

because, according to Madeley, girls athletics was in prior years, “always put on the backburner.” However, he now hopes to showcase that “this is who we are.” The changes began after a meeting that Madeley had with Head of School José De Jesús. Madeley summarized the discussion by stating that it was about “wanting to try something and Mr. De Jesús saying, ‘let’s do it.’” From there, Madeley set himself to work, alongside Dave Atas, Head Athletic Trainer, and Pam Dye, Athletic Operations Manager, to draft a strategic plan for moving forward. After many revisions, the plan was sent through an athletic committee composed of various

faculty members—who edited it even more—and then finally to Associate Head of School Chris Tennyson, Dean of Faculty Tom Johnson, and De Jesús himself. The plan consists of three main steps: focusing more heavily on female athletics, pride and school spirit, and the potential for a new athletic facility. The plan has already begun to unfold and will continue to be seen in coming years. The changes in the athletic department are, as Madeley noted, “tailored for students” in hopes that the new developments will bring positive outcomes for the LFA community.



The new Lake Forest Academy Tennis sign stretches along the fence of the tennis courts.

Photo by Connor Drobný

All-School Handshake: A tradition brought back



Photo courtesy of LFA Communications

Head of School Jose De Jesus fist bumps students during All-School Handshake

By Riya Kapoor and Angie Cotton
*Managing Editor of Collaborations and
 Managing Editor of Production*

This year's All-School Handshake was perhaps one of the most momentous ones in LFA history, primarily because of the absence of this ceremony last year, and the modifications made to it the year prior. During the 2020-21 school year, one of LFA's most cherished traditions wasn't able to be held due to COVID-19 restrictions. Before that, the All-School Handshake had untraditionally taken place in Cressey during the 2019-20 school year due to weather conditions. Coincidentally, the All-School Handshake has not been performed traditionally since Head of School Jose De Jesus's arrival at LFA. Despite the event still not being entirely normal due to the present restrictions, during an interview, De Jesus mentioned how "that feeling of looking at everybody's eyes is just a powerful feeling; it's a reminder that we are a community." When asked about whether he felt the tradition had been broken over recent years, he said he didn't believe that to be the case. "We were going to use 470 foam fingers [for last year's all-school handshake] but we probably would have been violating some

of the guidelines if we did it. The fact that we bought the foam fingers, and the fact that Mr. Freeman and Mr. Tennyson spent hours the night before designing a plan for Cressey [the year before], we've shown as a community how much the tradition matters." Hence, De Jesús feels as if the tradition hasn't really been broken considering the efforts made to go on with the All-School Handshake. Along with other efforts put into this year's All-School Handshake, Anna Kliner, Director of Health Services School played a crucial role in being able to uphold this tradition. In an interview with Kliner, she discussed the hours of planning that went into making sure the All-School Handshake was safe and followed all regulations. It was not an easy decision to make; many concerns crossed the minds of the Health and Wellness Committee members. "There is a group of people who are essential to the well being of the school. There was a lot of back and forth on whether we should carry it through or not, but in the end, we decided that if we were going to bring back traditions, now was the chance," stated Kliner. "Our job as adults is to not enforce the rules, but to remind you as students as to

why they are there. We are not supposed to tell you 'no,' we are supposed to give you reasons as to why restrictions are put in place. We knew from the start that it would be risky but we would do many walkthroughs and re-check in with each of our plans and guidelines to make sure they were in the best interest of our students and keeping you guys safe," expanded Kliner. When asked why it was acceptable to hold the All-School Handshake this year and not last year, Kliner explained the changes that have taken place since August of 2020. "The vaccine rates in our community are high. With more students and faculty members getting vaccinated, we were assured it was safe to hold the tradition outside and masked. We know more about the virus and how it transmits. COVID is transmitted through breathing, and if all community members were masked, distanced, and gave a wave or fistbump instead of a handshake, there would be a very slim chance of a spread," she said. "Many precautions were taken as well, such as testing of our unvaccinated population," concluded Kliner. These precautions being taken made students feel more comfortable in taking part in the All-School Handshake. One of these students was Safiya Nicol

'22, who was joyful to have the tradition back as a senior. She said, "It was one of the first LFA traditions I was introduced to, and I'm happy that it could be one of the last as I kick off my senior year!" However, Nicol believes that the tradition was broken with good reason, as "it's honestly better to be safe than sorry, whether that's not standing outside in the rain, or just keeping everyone safe with only a fist bump or wave." While precautions were taken, some students decided to opt-out for their safety and comfort. In an interview, Jordan Sebolt '23 discussed how he decided not to participate in the All-School handshake this year. "While the school did a very good job making the tradition safe, I still decided to not partake in it because I thought it was too risky. COVID is still very much alive, and I want to make sure that LFA can comply with the COVID regulations as soon as possible," Sebolt explained. "I just want some normalcy to come back to the LFA community, and if that meant not participating in one tradition, so be it," he said. All in all, the community rejoiced to have this tradition back and is optimistic that the school will gain some regularity this school year.

Campus security become LFA employees

By Djasahn English

Managing Editor of Social Justice

This year, Lake Forest Academy opens its arms as our beloved security force makes the transition from contract security to LFA employees. Since 2009, LFA has been in cooperation with the security company Securitas, selected by Sodexo. Since the security staff weren't Sodexo nor LFA employees, they were sometimes skipped over for recognition.

Kristin Paisley, Director of Human Resources & Risk Management, said, "I kind of saw the inequities and frustrations that they didn't necessarily get the representation or benefits that Sodexo or LFA employees received." For the past year, Paisley has worked in tandem with Head of School Jose De Jesus to take the security force off of the Sodexo contract and transition them into being actual LFA employees. Their goal was accomplished on July 1st, providing the security force with increases in pay, compensation, and benefits akin to LFA employees.

Entering his ninth year, Norman Sydnor, Campus Safety and Security

Manager, shared the perspective of the force. "The overall reaction is the support that we have received from the LFA Community since my arrival in 2012. The Officers feel supported, valued tirelessly to provide a safe and secure campus. Each officer has remained virtuous and becoming, living up to the pillars and standards of LFA. "I have always prided myself on having

ing cast of officers who have the same attributes," said Sydnor. This effort has been felt throughout the campus with students feeling safe and protected.

This bridge between the new fully fledged staff members of the security force, and the LFA community is an important one. Allowing students to see a greater presence of campus security at different school events will build even more confidence in the system and staff LFA provides.

In regards to the officers participation in on campus events, Krsitin Paisley said, "While they're certainly always invited, the hard part is there's only one officer present per shift, so it's hard for them to present in all the things we offer at LFA." Despite the restrictions and the tireless work that they do forces on them, their energy is high.

It is clear that this transition will not change the effective structure of the security force. Snyder said, "Our core values remain the same; integrity, vigilance and helpfulness." This transition to LFA employees won't change the impact that our security force has had on the campus. They are just as dedicated to their mission and values as before.



Photo by Djasahn English

Norman Sydnor working in the Campus Security office.

and realize the confidence that everyone has in our department." The security force works around the clock, a good work ethic, being loyal, dependable and dedicated. Also having the ability to recognize and hire a support-

Ferry Hall gets a new head dorm parent

By Nghi Doan

Managing Editor of News

Olivia Poska, English and Performing and Fine Arts teacher, stepped into the role of Dorm Head for Ferry Hall after many years of being a dorm parent.

When asked about the difference in Ferry Hall after becoming Dorm Head, Poska said, "When I used to

come here once a week as a dorm parent, it was a small, little part of what I did, and now as I am Dorm Head, I think about the whole school in a different way. I think about the dorm every day." Poska also mentioned that as a Dorm Head; she was able to think from the boarders' perspective on dorm activities to try and improve them.

With the transition of a new Head

Dorm in Ferry Hall, there are also a lot of changes like the dorm activities and dorm council. Jannie Nguyen 22', a Proctor in Ferry Hall expressed, "I am excited for the future activities in this dorm, and the ideas that Mrs. Poska brings up really add to the creation of new activities for the girls in the dorm to do." The essence of Ferry is kept the same, even when there are

new adjustments in the dorm. "Even though there was a change in the Dorm Head, the traditions of what makes Ferry--Ferry, is still here, like the dorm dinner, but just with more new ideas such as the theme of Olympics that we have this year," Nguyen added.

Not only does Poska help the older boarders that live in Ferry, but she has also played an integral part in helping the new Ferry Hall boarders adjust to the dorm life. A new, sophomore border to Ferry Hall, Sidney Do 24', commented, "This is my first year here at Ferry, and I am excited to experience living here. Last year, I was not able to participate in many dorm activities, but this year, I am looking forward to going to the dorm events that would be held here"

Moreover, when asked about her future plans for the dorm, Poska mentioned, "I have plans to create more connection between Ferry and Field and create a sense of shared fun like celebrating holidays together or doing something together. I think I would try to put more plants in the dorm too." With new ideas, Poska is helping the students adjust and brings a fresh feeling to the place while still keeping the traditions of the dorm.



Photo By: Nghi Doan

The Ferry Hall dorm has just received its second ever Dorm Head.

Advice on academic adjustments

By: Anusha Srivastava & Nicholas Bisulca

Asst. Managing Editor of Production and Managing Editor of Photography

Each year, school becomes progressively harder, and it may feel strange adjusting to your new classes, thinking you've forgotten everything. Walking into a language class and not recognizing any words, sitting in math class unable to solve a simple problem— it happens to everyone. Oftentimes, a new school year will bring difficult classes and more homework than you're used to. You may need to take a step back and focus on how to adjust yourself to get the grades you want. Here are some of the different ways to get back into your grind and improve academically this year.

A big tip you've likely already heard numerous times is learning how to manage your time. It is easy to have homework stacked up at the end of the day because you had a busy schedule; maybe you had an away game, or a long club meeting. Whatever the reason, it is important to find a balance between your activities and school. One great way to help with time management is to use your free periods to study and get homework done. It can be easy to fall into the habit of using free periods to socialize, but having a division

between which frees you want to use for work versus hanging out is important; for example, if you know that you have an activity after school that is going to take up a significant portion of your afternoon, look ahead at your schedule and see what homework you can get done within these periods. Not only is it important to figure out where you can work, but also who you can work with. When you are working, focus on having a distraction free environment that works for yourself. For some, working in small groups is better, but others may find this distracting. Finding a quiet spot around campus is probably one of the most productive ways to get work done.

As the workload of the school year gets heavier, it's easy to become overwhelmed with the great deal of material from our classes that we learn simultaneously. Every now and then, we lose attention in class due to stress or a variety of other factors, which leads us to struggle and take longer than usual to complete our work. What matters most is how to learn the misunderstood information. It might seem scary at first, but setting up a cycle meeting with your teachers is a beneficial way to clarify material. Another way to get help is through the biweekly math and science help on Monday and Wednesday, along with the Sunday

through Thursday night Writing Center.

But please don't forget, everyone is different. These tricks may not work for you, but they are generally help-

ful. Practice makes perfect, and you'll slowly adapt to the difficulty of your new classes. Don't be afraid to ask questions in class, and email teachers for help.



Students study in the Garden Room during their free periods.

Photo by Nicholas Bisulca

The return of the Club Fair

By: Connor Drobny & Richard Zhang

Asst. Managing Editor of Sports & Managing Editor of Digital

After two years, the Club Fair has returned to LFA, bringing back in-person signup for clubs and the atmosphere of pitching clubs to prospective members. However, although the Club Fair returned, it was done with precautions to the "new normal," spread out across the whole campus instead of just being in Lower Reid as it usually is.

The scrambling of club sign-up locations was one of the most significant changes to the Club Fair. Sign-up sheets became dispersed throughout Reid, Corbin, and even the outer reaches of Korhummel. Ambika Gupta '23, one of the leaders of Amnesty International, said that she, "did prefer it (the Club Fair) all in Reid since it was all in one area." The greater spread of club and affinity group tables from Reid to Korhummel led to many students running around trying to sign up for clubs that they did not know the location. Gupta explained that she got "68 signatures" for her club, which is no small feat, although she might have gotten more in Reid.

Student organizations were located in different parts of the school depending on where the faculty advisor of the club teaches. Sam Wold, a history instructor, is the faculty advisor to Amnesty international, so Gupta's club got stationed in



Students explore the Club Fair, searching multiple buildings and levels for new interests and activities to pursue.

Photo courtesy of LFA Communications

the very back of Korhummel, shrouded by posters, tables, and an abundance of people. Clubs outside of Reid were disadvantaged, since most students stayed centralized in the walkways of the Armour House. By no means did clubs outside of the typical fair location receive scant signatures, but the sites of the club tables, without a doubt, impacted the amount received, especially the smaller clubs.

Although there seemed to be some draw-

backs associated with it, the Club Fair's return was certainly a positive experience as well. Many club signees and club leaders alike expressed their satisfaction with the return of the event and the ability to sign-up for and get a good look at clubs in person. Isaac Park, a sophomore, remarked that he was really happy to go to his first Club Fair and talk to the club leaders and advisors. Owen Coxe '23, leader of the Ski Club, stated that, "It was

great to see everyone back and together at the Club Fair after two years, and to be able to actually pitch my club to my peers instead of pre-recording a video."

Debate Club co-leader Bradley Ma '23' said that he "loved the atmosphere at the club fair and how [he] was able to actually listen to other club's pitches in person." All in all, the club fair's return was a success and made signing up for clubs and affinity groups fun again.

Editorial: New dress code regulations spark controversy

By Connor Drobny

Assistant Manager of Sports

To say Lake Forest Academy's dress code is only controversial would be dishonest. Students, faculty, parents, and essentially every demographic one could imagine previously clashed with compelling arguments concerning the issue. Some students feel the dress code is unnecessary, some students feel that the dress code is pleasant, some students feel the dress code does not matter, but every side feels dedicated.

The past school years have been no different. However, appeasement has been given to the student body during the pandemic. Throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year, there was little enforcement of the dress code, which many students appreciated.

The mask mandate allowed for

slightly fewer restrictions in general and the taking away of, most importantly, ties for males. Over the months, the relaxed rule led to essentially no dress code for boys and little dress code for girls by the end of the fall. Including a less formal dress code during the 2021 - 2022 school year is a positive, but it does not come without flaws.

Many small groups of students raged about the forced long pants in almost 100-degree August weather this year. Virtually no students knew the change would occur until the days leading up to the announcement, aggravating students vividly.

How can long khakis and colored jeans be comfortable in such humidity? What upsides do the extra foot and a half of cotton and denim bring? The typical student is left unanswered

and feels they have little voice. It would be wise to educate students on how these decisions are made to avoid confusion.

Riya Kapoor '23 said, "I think clarity of the dress code is important because there have been so many times where I have been approached by new students asking questions about what they should wear, and I myself couldn't answer them."

In the past, prefects have done a great job advocating for students, and the faculty has done an even better job of listening. I hope this trend continues in the future, but the fact that there was not an utter of retort to such an absurd change frightens me. I, along with the majority of LFA's student body, fully trust in the decision-making process of LFA to give fairer rules in the future.

Back in-person, but everyone this time

By Maya Mitckess

Editor of Blogging

A social life, a balanced academic schedule, and being able to do a sport you love were not a part of everyday life for a remote student during the 2020-21 school year. As remote students return after a year-and-a-half of remote learning, readjusting to the schedule of life as an in-person learner at Lake Forest Academy can be very exciting.

Alan Nigmatullin '23 was an international remote learner for all of last year. When asked about what his schedule was like, Nigmatullin said, "It was still really tough because I would have classes late into the night and then I would have to wake up for my early morning class."

Remote classes were held early in the AM and late in the PM so that the classes, which were mostly made up of international students, were accessible to students in different time zones than Chicago's. Although, these classes were still at challenging times of night and day for some students.

I was a remote student for all of last year and had a different experience than most of my classmates because I was a local student. My classes went from 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. every weekday except Fridays, which did not have evening classes. Home-



Photo by Maya Mitckess

Students engaging in their virtual classes during the AM/PM schedule of last year. work was done in between those classes, making no separation between free time and school time.

Ruby Yan '23 says, "I didn't really have any social life, I was just sitting alone by myself everyday. I didn't really get to do sports either." Our schedule made us live a certain way with a lot of our day consisting of sitting in front of a computer screen with little other activity accessible.

Though we were in different circumstances, both international students and local students could agree that the schedule was not ideal. On this subject Nigmatullin said, "A lot of the time, I felt like I was unable to have a stable sleep schedule and would have to be up for events that took place in Chicago time. Though not incredibly difficult per se, a lot of the time it felt demotivating." To fulfill both my responsibilities at home and attend classes throughout the day, while also keeping up

with a heavier load of homework that came with sophomore year, sleep was never fully promised.

Returning to LFA's campus could not have come sooner. Remote students got to have their normal lives back with seeing friends, playing sports, having a normal academic schedule, and having an easier learning experience with being in-person. When asked about how readjusting to in-person academic schedules was going, Nigmatullin said, "I am actually held accountable and able to get all my work done."

On the other parts of coming back to LFA, Yan said, "After I came back to LFA, I got to do sports and I got the opportunity to socialize." I feel lucky to have the ability to be in-person, and I hope everyone at Lake Forest Academy realizes what it means to have everyone back on campus again. As Ruby Yan said, "I prefer life at LFA."

The Lake Forest

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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 Amanda 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.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I don't think a tough question is disrespectful."
- Helen Thomas

All-School President interview with Ferdoss Ibrahim

By Riya Kapoor

Managing Editor of Collaborations

Lake Forest Academy senior, Ferdoss Ibrahim, has been a leader ever since her junior year as class president, and this year, has stepped into the role of All School President. Ibrahim discussed her plans for this year which include: advancing Sodexo, collaborating with faculty and students, and prioritizing mental health.

"I would like to start a schoolwide project where we show our gratitude to Sodexo. They do so much for our community, and we should take their efforts into consideration," said Ibrahim. She hopes that, as students, to show our appreciation we can start by cleaning up after ourselves, saying thank you in food lines, and being cautious of following the dining-hall protocol.

Another one of Ibrahim's plans for this year is working with student and faculty leaders on improving our community collaboratively. "I want to work with students and faculty on a collaborative Google document this year so everyone feels included and like their voices are heard." One of Ibrahim's top goals is to take all opinions into consideration when making major decisions for the school. The needs of students are important to Ibrahim, therefore, she has been planning to make arrangements for sporadic mental health days.

"Sometimes, you really need a day off. Students need to be able to take time for themselves without following any certain schedule," stated Ibrahim. She believes that the way to thrive is to take care of yourself by sleeping, catching up on homework, and enjoying time with your friends on days off. While Ibrahim intends to carry out her plans, COVID has had quite an impact on them.

"It's definitely much harder to plan with all of the restrictions," said Ibrahim. "I feel like participation levels are low because we can only have a certain amount of people in a room. The capacity rules bring down the energy levels." Ibrahim hopes that with the vaccination levels rising, we will be able to start planning community events again. Taking on the role of All-School President is not an easy job; it comes with many nerves.

"Right before I went on stage to give my speech, my heart was pounding. I've gone up on stage many times before but never as all school president," said Ibrahim. "The most awkward part was when Isaac Park was playing the piano--by the way Isaac if you're reading this, that was AMAZING--I just didn't know how to stand." When asked how she calmed herself down, Ibrahim stated, "I knew it was like anybody else going on stage, I don't hold myself higher or lower than anybody else." As

Ibrahim expanded on her morals, she wanted to give advice to all incoming students.

"Firstly, run for council. Secondly, make school what you want it to be. Have a positive attitude, and try to focus on the positive things. Thirdly, go out of your way to interact with someone new. If there's one thing this school has taught me, it's that community is so much bigger than

what's around you. And lastly, go to 'Diners On Us' with Mr. Wold; I promise you won't regret it," concluded Ibrahim.

Ibrahim's goal for our community here at LFA is to "be inclusive and make everyone just a little bit nicer to each other." She looks forward to incorporating a bit of every student into this year and making it unforgettable.



Ferdoss Ibrahim '22 poses for her senior pictures.

Photo courtesy of Stuart Rodgers Photography

Fun and festive fall activities begin to reopen near Lake Forest Academy

By Nick Bisulca

Managing Editor of Photography

Students who live at LFA may find it difficult to get away from campus. Van runs are always a great option to go out and have some fun, but sometimes they just don't offer activities that many of the students are interested in. Here are some local places to visit for fun fall activities:

Heinz Orchard in Green Oaks offers superior apple picking. It's only ten minutes away, and there are no admission or parking fees. However, at least one person in your party must buy a \$10 bag for apples. Kroll's Fall Harvest Farm is another great place for a classic orchard experience. It's 20 minutes away in Waukegan and offers a corn maze, petting zoo, pumpkin patch, and even movie nights. Don't forget to buy and carve a pumpkin before Halloween! Speaking of Halloween, The Great Highwood Pumpkin Festival takes place from October 8th through October 10th. They are attempting to break the Guinness World Record for the most pumpkins carved and lit at once! The festival is also a fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish foundation in Illinois.



Kroll's Corn Maze for this 2021-2022 season!

Photo Courtesy of Kroll's Fall Harvest Farm Website

Elawa Farm is also an excellent location that is just seven minutes from LFA. It offers beautiful scenery along with an incredible Wildlife Discovery Center. All of the animals are incredibly well kept and cared for. They also have a garden market that's open on Fridays and Saturdays, which

sells produce, herbs, and flowers that are harvested from their garden. Elawa Farm (and LFA) also sit next to the Middlefork Savanna which has amazing hiking trails which span across nearly 100 acres of land.

On the topic of hiking trails...forest preserves can also be found all around the Lake

Forest area! Old School Forest Preserve, Captain Daniel Wright Woods Forest Preserve, and Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve are some accessible personal favorites.

So with all of these great places in mind, there is no reason not to go. Grab some friends, call a taxi, and enjoy the fall!

Showcase: Olympics Younger athletes in the Olympics

By Max Ma and Sage Ye

Photo Editor and Managing Editor of Showcase

Despite all of the obstacles the world had to overcome, after a year of delay, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics were able to take place this year, with a total of around 12,000 athletes competing. Many of the athletes were put in the spotlight for the first time after anxiously waiting for an extra year to compete. This year, the attention seemed to be directed towards the

younger athletes, who have historically been just as good at taking home medals as the other athletes.

Young athletes participating in the Olympics is not a new occurrence. In fact, there is no specific rule that states athletes must be of a certain age to compete. However, recently, there has been a growing trend of athletes below the age of 18 competing in the Olympics.

Just in this past Olympic season, 20 athletes below 18 entered

the Olympics as competitors. The youngest of them, table tennis player Hend Zaza, was only 12. Skateboarding alone has been dominated by young athletes, with 4 female skateboarders, Mojimi Nishiya, Sky Brown, Cocona Hiraki, and Rayssa Leal, all 13 years old. Nishiya became the youngest athlete to compete and win a medal for Japan.

With the young age of these athletes comes concern for their mental health. According to Darrin Madley, the Athletic Director here at LFA, turning kids into pro athletes at a very young age is a dangerous trend with a high cost since, "They are not allowed to be kids and have a normal life, so they miss out on the important social part of growing up. You only have one chance to be a kid, and one chance to be able to go to high school with friends." In exchange to compete in the Olympics, their enjoyable and deserved experience of being a kid is sacrificed. "You look at Tiger and yes, he is a legend, but what was the

cost? Could he have had both? Athletes are forced to leave at a young age to chase a dream, and by doing that, they lose the safety of living at home with their family."

Quan Hongchan, a 14-year-old Chinese gold medalist in women's diving, revealed in an interview that for the assembly training for Olympics, she had not been home to her family since November 2020. When asked what she would like to do after the competition, she replied that she would like to first visit her family and then play the arcade claw machine for the first time in her life. It was a poignant response, reflecting a happy childhood lost in her Olympic quest as a child. As the trend of having young competitors in the Olympics continues to grow more and more obvious, from the perspective of its threat to mental health, this trend becomes more and more questionable. In pursuit of the Olympic sports dreams, every athlete also deserves a fulfilling childhood.



Photo Courtesy of Creative Commons

Many younger athletes participated in 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Mental health and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics

By Amelia Osborne and Ambika Gupta
Director of Sports and Managing Editor of Global

Simone Biles, an American gymnast with 32 Olympic and world championship medals, shocked the world at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. She withdrew from the individual all-around final as well as the team event. She credits her withdrawal to a psychological phenomenon called the "twisties," which is a mental block that affects an athlete's spatial awareness. After removing herself from the competition, Biles tearfully stated, "I have to do what's right for me and focus on my mental health, and not jeopardize my health and well-being."

Simone Bile's decision to retreat from the Olympics has been met with both positive and negative feedback from the gymnastics community and the world in general. Many people perceive her recent departure as a result of her fear of losing, and some resent her for doing so without advance notice. However, Biles notes that she is experiencing a more positive reaction than she had anticipated. On July 28th, she tweeted, "The outpouring love & support I've received has made me realize I'm more than my

accomplishments and gymnastics, which I never truly believed before."

Nirali Dalia, one of LFA's counselors and Health, Wellness, and Community teachers, remarked that Simone Biles "broke the ice" by coming forward, making it easier for other athletes to come forward with their own stories and struggles. Furthermore, Dalia feels that Biles' actions encourage more open discussions regarding mental health, something that is so often overlooked in today's society.

Mental health in the athletic world has been a pressing issue for many years, and oftentimes athletes struggle to talk about their challenges with others. Dalia appreciates the strides Biles, with her large platform, has been taking regarding mental health awareness. Biles's social media acts an inspiration to other young female athletes as she shares her recovering mental health journey to her nearly 7 million followers.

Biles is not the only athlete at the 2020 Olympics who shared her mental health experiences and was one of the many athletes to begin dialogue about this neglected issue. The International Olympic Committee, conscious of the mental health struggles athletes

face, heavily increased its mental health resources before the Tokyo 2020 games. A "Mentally Fit Hotline" was established to provide free 24-hour service to athletes in more than 70 different languages. Furthermore, Olympics.com created a series called the "Olympic State of Mind," which provides a platform for Olympic athletes to share their mental health journeys with the greater community. The International Olympic

Committee took great strides to increase awareness of mental health before the Olympics started and plans to continue improving their resources going into the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Discussing mental health continues to be a challenge for most people, not simply athletes. However, Biles' story has reassured many that it is okay not to be okay, and that prioritizing oneself above other people's expectations is an act that requires great courage.



Photo Courtesy of Creative Commons

Simone Biles has won 32 Olympic and world championship medals.

LFA welcomes new

By Shylee Saladi, Angie Cotton, Bela DeJesus, Kirstin Palaz, Ambika Gupta, and Ella Gartz

Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor of Production, Editor-in-Chief, Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor of Global, and Managing Editor of A&E

Nirali Dalia



Nirali Dalia, class of '98, has returned to LFA as a therapist as well as a health, wellness, and community teacher. Her interest in psychology started when she was a student at LFA, where she first learned that counselling can be a profession. Mrs. Dalia loves to read and watch Bollywood movies in her spare time. She hopes to impact at least one student's life in a way that makes them feel more comfortable with being who they are and help them stay true to themselves during their time at LFA.

Eric Frempong



Eric Frempong is LFA's new pre-calculus and geometry teacher. In addition to teaching, he also coaches JV-B Soccer and is a dorm parent for the Warner dormitory. After researching LFA, Mr. Frempong was drawn here for the diversity of cultures and the "activeness of faculty in student's life." His motto for both teaching and life is that with hard work, "anyone can do anything that they want to do."

Diego Duran-Medina



Diego Duran-Medina is the Director of the Stewart Center and focuses on travel opportunities and directing service programs. He was born in Venezuela but recently moved from the Tampa area in Florida. Before he came to LFA, he worked as a director of learning in St. Petersburg, FL. He is also a big LEGO fan, and he mentioned that he has a chihuahua called Dewey.

John Basbagill

Dr. John Basbagill is one of the new math department faculty members who joined LFA this year, and is currently working with LFA's math team. He coaches both Cross Country and Track and Field. Before LFA, he worked in Silicon Valley (in the tech industry) for about ten years and then went on to earn his PhD at Stanford in Civil and Environmental Engineering. He enjoys working with both international and students from the U.S, as well as teaching in a school that has a positive "social impact cause." Dr. Basbagill strives to help his students enjoy math and looks forward to teaching the subject for years to come. Overall, LFA is a "perfect" fit for Dr. Basbagill.



Sarah Michaelson

Sarah Michaelson teaches physics and chemistry at LFA. In addition to teaching, she is the assistant JV Field Hockey coach, as well as a dorm parent in Marshall Field. She has taught at various public schools in Iowa, and at Westover, a girls' boarding school in Connecticut. While she liked the boarding school atmosphere, she wanted to be closer to home, which brought her to LFA. She also mentioned that she'd like to start a debate team at LFA. A fun fact about her is that she's a devoted Harry Potter fan.



Patrick Coyle

Patrick Coyle is LFA's new Chief Communications Officer. He describes his job as telling the story of LFA in creative ways. Hailing from Washington D.C., Coyle previously worked at Georgetown Prep. He went to Dickinson College where he played basketball, and even played with LeBron James and Chris Paul! He decided to make the move to LFA after learning about the school and falling in love with both its mission and the community.



faculty to campus

Swati Tanwar



Swati Tanwar is a new French teacher in the Language Department. She is from India and just recently moved to Chicago with her husband. She lived in Europe for two years and has traveled to many different European countries, her favorite being Norway. She has been teaching for the past ten years at various institutions, and when she heard about LFA, she fell in love with the atmosphere of the school. She was drawn to the beautiful campus and great academics. She enjoys the connections that teachers are able to make with their students.

Mireille Palm



Dr. Mireille Palm is LFA's newest Spanish and French teacher, who has earned her PhD from the University of Chicago. Though she grew up in France, she also has lived in both Montana and California. However, she currently resides in Highwood with her husband and two kids. She heard about Lake Forest Academy while she was earning her doctorate, and was drawn to the school due to its diversity and boarding school environment. Her mission here is to "not just be a teacher, but an educator." She strives to "open a dialogue" and make her classroom discussion meaningful and timely. She reflects on her education and values what she learned from her teachers beyond just the lessons.

Sarah Taylor



Dr. Sarah Taylor teaches AP Psychology and coaches LFA's Varsity Girls Tennis team. She went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for her undergraduate degree and then went on to earn her PhD in Experimental Social Psychology from Ohio University. She recently moved here from Ohio, with her wife, Alexis Venechanos, and her three young daughters. What she loves most about LFA so far is having multiple interactions with students throughout the day: from the classroom, to the dorms, and out on the tennis courts.

Gilmer Cook-Hoet

Gilmer Cook-Hoet is the new Global Concentration Department Chair and an 11th grade English teacher. He previously worked at Dominican University, and his mission at LFA is to develop global courses and the Global Concentration program. He learned about LFA after attending Jose De Jesús' investiture, and fell in love with the school's global mission. A crazy fact about Cook-Hoet is that he played saxophone as a child, and even played at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center!



Mike Hall

Dr. Mike Hall teaches AP Calculus AB and AP Statistics. He coaches LFA's first-ever Girls Golf team and, in the spring, Boys Baseball. He said, "The main reason I chose LFA is the student population. It is really diverse and matches what I expect an independent school to be." Throughout a life of academia and athletics, Dr. Hall has also found a love for art, photography, and live music. In welcoming Dr. Hall to the community, please recognize that to him, "The biggest reward in teaching is making connections and helping students become the best they can possibly be."



Nancy Nassr

Nancy Nassr joins LFA in two newly created positions-- Assistant Head of School and Academic Dean. She's an Egyptian immigrant, mother of two LFA students, and a life-long educator with a passion for learning and joy for teaching. She was drawn here because of the "remarkable students, incredible faculty, and reputation for being a school that both challenges and supports its students." She hopes to, along with students and faculty, co-construct "an academic experience that is second to none." She believes that joy can be found in even the smallest of experiences, and a fun fact about her is that she's a modern-day Dr. Doolittle. Nassr has a gift for communicating with animals!



Photos courtesy of LFA Communications

Scarlett Johansson is the “Black Widow” in break-up with Disney

By Elinor Gartz, Ambika Gupta, and Ava Trandel

Managing Editor of A&E,
Managing Editor of Global, and
Managing Editor of Features

Scarlett Johansson’s lawsuit against Disney over the controversial release of her new Marvel movie *Black Widow* has ignited a Twitter dispute and stirred a debate between Marvel Cinematic Universe enthusiasts. Furthermore, it has also sparked conversation to a broader issue as this lawsuit represents Hollywood and the general entertainment industry.

In July 2021, Disney decided to release a new addition to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, *Black Widow*, in theaters and on Disney+, on the same day. Since films typically hit theaters prior to streaming services, this was an unexpected move on Disney’s part, shocking both audiences and Scarlett Johansson herself. Johansson argued that the chronology of the movie’s release was a blow to her potential earnings, since a great portion of her salary was based on box office revenue. She stated this to be a direct breach of her contract with Disney, and simply unfair.

Disney attempts to defend themselves against the lawsuit as they claim that Scarlett’s accusations are a “callous disregard” for the COVID-19 pandemic and its “prolonged global effects.” Many argue that this is hypocritical, as some claim that Disney decided to reopen their parks prematurely. This calls into question the authenticity of their concern over the pandemic as a major corporation.

Others are frustrated about potential underlying gender issues at play. Specifically, Disney’s treatment of Scarlett Johansson relates to gender-based inequality in the media. Bela De Jesús ‘22, a major Marvel fan, said, “Women being taken advantage of by huge corporations is nothing new.” Disney mentions in their statement that Johansson earns an \$20 million additional compensation, which acts as a shaming tactic. This further suggests that successful women like Scarlett Johansson are too greedy. Women in the workplace often face criticism, especially in the public sphere, about “taking more than they deserve” when simply trying to stand up for themselves.

Another bone of contention uncovered in this situation is the growing marketabil-



Photo by Ambik Gupta

Izzy Bonaguadi ‘23 conveniently streams Disney+ movies on her iPad at the JC Cowart Student Center. This marks a new era of movie culture as fans can microwave popcorn and tune-in from home, rather than make the trip out to traditional theaters. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this, as long as everyone is in the loop. Movie release plans should be made clear to actors or actresses before they are expected to sign any contracts. Thus, they will be aware of their expected earnings and will not be caught off-guard in the way that Johansson was.

An Indian-American lead is featured for the first time in *Spin*, a Disney Channel original movie

By Shylee Saladi
Editor-in-Chief

From the South Asian casted characters to Disney’s first Indian-American lead, Disney’s *Spin* is written by Josh Cagan and Carley Steiner and directed by Najari Makijany. *Spin* is an incredible representation of South Asian culture aside from the traditional Bollywood movie. Not only did the directors cast Indian actresses and actors to fill the roles of characters that were meant to be Indian, but the film also goes deep into what it means to be an Indian girl growing up in a Caucasian neighborhood.

This movie is centered around Rhea Kumar, a hard working and passionate high school student, played by Avantika Vandhanu, an Indian actress. Rhea’s family plays an important role in who she is as a person in the sense that she always thinks about her family before making a decision. Eager about helping at her family’s restaurant and excelling at school, all while making time for herself, Rhea struggles as she has to learn to prioritize what she wants to do with her time. We notice how her family is at the core of everything she does, whether it may be in coding class, outside of school, or making playlists for the dinner rush at the restaurant. She finds that her passions lie between both her familial responsibilities and her love for creating music. Rhea didn’t want to admit that she can’t do everything. Even though Makijany directed a fun and



Abhay Deal (Rhea’s father) and Avantika (Rhea) in the family restaurant.

Photo Courtesy Disney

energetic overall movie, the actual storyline of the movie could have used more depth in the sense that there needed to be more than one thing that tied everything and every person together. It was evident that the actresses and actors were trying to mesh and become incredibly interconnected throughout the viewing of the movie. In some instances, there was even a disconnect between what was happening in one scene and the one right after it. *Spin* encompasses a mature theme, as it involves many Indian cultural aspects of

celebrating more of the fun holiday celebrations such as Holi, the festival of color, as well as different types of Indian music.

Even though this movie is supposed to be all about how Indian culture is portrayed to the outside world, this movie does not accurately represent how normal Indian students live their lives. *Spin* shows more of a fictional version of a typical Indian student’s life. Many people may think that every Indian student joins the coding club and also finds the time to help their family all while being on top of

their schoolwork, but that is not true at all.

Out of the many categories of movies, *Spin* falls under the category of feel-good movies and happy endings. *Spin* does not fall under the classic Disney movie of princesses. It definitely has that simplistic version of what many Indian students may experience, but overall, *Spin* is a great example of how diversity adds to the plot of the film. There were pros and cons to watching *Spin*, but the best part of it was how inclusive the casting was in terms of South Asian actresses/actors.

Charlie Watts dead at 80: The Rolling Stones lose their drummer

By Avery Martin and Gemma Fink
Managing News Editor and Mentorship
Coordinator

On Tuesday, August 24, 2021, the Rolling Stones devastatingly lost their first longtime member, Charlie Watts.

Charlie Watts served as both the drummer and backbone of the iconic rock group for nearly sixty years. He brought a dapper sense of style and passion for jazz music to the Stones, contrasting with his raucous bandmates who, for the most part, lived and breathed “rock and roll.” In an article released upon his death, *Rolling Stone* magazine referred to him as “one of the most famous and respected drummers of all time.”

Watts was born in London on June 2, 1941, and grew up loving jazz music. Though he first tried learning to play the ukulele, his frustration with chords drove him to dismember the instrument, using its wooden pieces to instead craft a makeshift drum set. Eventually, he traded his handiwork for a real drum set, beginning his career as one of history’s greatest drummers.

The Rolling Stones have fans that span every generation. LFA teacher and Co-Ax leader, Steve Ryder, who grew up in the band’s homeland, explained, “If you’re English in the sixties, it’s the soundtrack of your life. Songs like ‘Satisfaction’ and ‘Paint It Black’ were part of our lives and always will be.”

Similarly, Ava Trandel ‘23 spoke of her realization that the young artists she had imagined performing their timeless tracks are no longer so young. As she explained, “Even though their music doesn’t age, they do, and it’s weird to think about.” Both Ryder and Trandel claimed that Watts’ death was the “end to an era.”

A few weeks prior to his death, the band’s publicist announced that Watts would not be performing in their upcoming U.S. tour, titled “No Filter.” Though it was no secret that his health had been declining for quite some time, the announcement still shocked many.

His cause of death was not revealed to the public, but it was most likely related to some sort of ongoing or previous health



Photo Courtesy of Bradford Timeline

Charlie Watts drums for the Rolling Stones.

issue. He passed away peacefully in a hospital in London, surrounded by family.

Throughout his career, Watts served as the band’s heartbeat. In some ways, one could argue that he was more Beatles than Stones, but ultimately, this is what set him apart.

As his bandmate Keith Richards said in 1979: “Everybody thinks Mick and Keith are the Rolling Stones. If Charlie wasn’t doing what he’s doing on drums, that wouldn’t be true at all. You’d find out that Charlie Watts is the Stones.”

Demon Slayer: Mugen Train review

By Aylin Tepe

Editor in Chief (Digital)

After breaking studio records in 2019 with the animation of the popular Manga Series Demon Slayer, the release of the

movie *Demon Slayer: Mugen Train* was a film long-awaited by loyal fans everywhere, and for millions, it was worth the wait. The movie managed to sell a global total of 41.35 million tickets, earning

about \$475 million and dethroning the long-standing record holder, Hayao Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away*, making it the highest-grossing anime film worldwide. While many try to bring down the series’ success by tying it to the fantastic animation carried out by Ufotable studios, *Mugen Train* made it evident that this anime is more than just beautiful colors and smooth animation.

Directed by Haruo Sotazaki, who also managed the series first season, *Mugen Train* managed to pick up exactly where the first season ended, allowing fans to smoothly transition back into the world of *Demon Slayer*. The story follows the main protagonist, Tanjiro Kamado, who sets out on a mission to cure his sister Nezuko who involuntarily got turned into a demon. Criticized for being “too gory” or “violent” for a Shonen series that typically caters to younger audiences, *Demon Slayer* manages to avoid unnecessary violence entirely, making every altercation relevant to the plot in some manner (besides the few comical spats the main character gets into). Sotazaki manages to execute the tragedy of the story and complex emotions felt by each and every character, allowing not only redemption for the crueler villains but character growth for the series underdogs as well. The movie received a PG-12 rating in Japan, however, the U.S Motion Picture Association gave it an R-rating, making its success in the U.S even more relevant.

In *Mugen train*, the plot follows the Manga series published in 2016, which can leave audiences who are unfamiliar with the premise to be left in the dark. However, it is not long before even the newest anime watchers become engrossed in the movie’s tragic, yet thoughtful plot.

And while in some sense it does rely on the belief that the audience has previous knowledge, the writers managed to do an amazing job at showing why viewers should care about the rag-tag band of characters. The biggest receptor of this is Kyojuro Rengoku, also known as the Flame Hashira, who in the initial season was given minimal screen time and zero to no background information. *Mugen Train* focuses entirely on his motivation, strength, and drive as a character making him one of the series most beloved characters.

This choice pays off as Rengoku manages to stand out in a movie that is already so action-packed, allowing for the most memorable moments of the entire plot to be circled back to his character.

Aside from the canonical plot adaptation and the lovable characters, part of what makes *Mugen Train* such a good movie is heightened by the incredible animation, and the soundtrack. With sequences in which fire and water clash, blurring the lines between dreams and reality, and songs that are instantly recognizable, studio Ufotable manages to morph some of the most notable plot points of the series into unforgettable scenes on the big screen.

Overall, *Demon Slayer: Mugen Train* encapsulates the series’ appeal with moments that not only tug at the heartstrings, but leave the audience at the edge of their seats nearly every second of the two-hour production. With captivating characters, emotional grandeur, and non-stop action, *Mugen Train* managed to solidify its seat as one of anime’s most memorable films, and ultimately, a thoroughly enjoyable experience for anime fans everywhere.



Photo courtesy of Studio Ufotable

Demon Slayer: Mugen Train Film Poster

New coaching expertise at LFA

By Maya Mitckess
Editor of Blogging

Lake Forest Academy now has five outside coaches in its athletic program, three of which are new this year. As LFA undergoes a period of change and rebuilding in its athletic program, the decision to bring in new outside coaches to the variety of sports programs was a necessity.

Coach “Q” Marquone Edmonds, Coach Greta Kullby, and Coach Izzy Huntington are all new at LFA this year. When



Photo Courtesy of Lafayette College Athletic Communications
Coach Greta Kullby posing at Lafayette College.

asked about the process of finding new outside coaches, Athletic Director Darrin Madeley said, “The process is a difficult one because we are trying to find coaches that can coach at 3:30 every day. In most cases, it is unrealistic because they have jobs and that is the number one priority.” Madeley also noted that he “felt so lucky” to have found all the outside coaches.

Coach Q is the new trainer in the fitness room that helps students fulfill their P.E. credits or just get an extra workout in. His day job is also being a fitness coach, and he owns Quest Performance Training. As someone who’s a professional in the fitness world, having Coach Q greatly adds to the athletic program and makes a nice fit.

Kullby and Huntington, contribute to different sports programs at LFA. Huntington is the new Head Coach of the Junior Varsity Volleyball team. While discussing her background in the sport she said, “I started playing volleyball in 4th grade and instantly fell in love with the sport. I played club volleyball at Wisconsin Juniors and then Sky High. After high school, I played Division II volleyball at Davenport University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.” As a student studying to become a surgical technician, Huntington has a goal of becoming a surgical first assistant. She also elaborated about her goals in contributing

to LFA’s volleyball program, “I have a lot of freshmen on my team and they will be seniors in a few short years. I want to make sure that they will be set up for success in the future of the program. If they can learn the basics now, in the next couple years they can perfect their skills and be amazing leaders on their team senior year!”

Kullby is another outside coach that came to LFA this year as Head Coach of the Varsity Field Hockey team. Having picked up a field hockey stick for the first time when she was twelve, Kullby has played field hockey at club, high school, and college levels while also coaching her club field hockey team in and out.

When Madeley was asked about working with her as an outside coach he said, “Our field hockey coach has a passion and love for the game while also just coming off being an athlete. She knows that this program is on a rebuild, and every day she is telling me something positive that happened with the team.” Kullby is working her first year as an elementary school teacher while also trying to rebuild the field hockey program. He continued, “I want to see [this program] built back up. I want to see people having fun while they are playing field hockey, but students wanting to win and it being a winning team as well.”

New coaches both from last and this year



Photo by Maya Mitckess
Coach Izzy Huntington outside Crown.

have already made an impact on the athletic program at LFA. The hope is that this progress continues, and with that, Madeley shared some final thoughts, saying, “[I] hope that all of our coaches leave an impression on the students, that they will look back and say that coach really helped me become a better player and person, but that coach also cared about me as a person. When that happens, an athlete like I was, would go through a wall for them.”

Venechanos: Associate Athletic Director

By Bia Leffingwell
Managing Editor of Op-Ed

As Associate Athletic Director, Alexis Venechanos works behind the scenes to make every sporting event happen. She labels herself as the student body’s “biggest fan” and works for hours everyday to make sure each student has what they need to be successful.

Originally a Lacrosse player and coach, Venechanos has a lot of experience with a variety of sports environments under her belt. She played lacrosse goalie for Maryland University, and was named NCAA Goaltender of the year. After her playing career, Venechanos coached as an assistant at Northwestern University, and then moved to UMass Amherst for her first Head Coach position. Afterwards, she went on to Ohio State University’s Women’s Lacrosse program, serving for nine years as their Head Coach. Additionally, she led Canada’s Senior Women’s team to a silver medal in the 2013 World Cup.

Needless to say, Venechanos has years of experience and knowledge to share with the LFA community. She is most excited to share this knowledge with her Girls’ Lacrosse team, which will start their season in the Spring. Venechanos views athletics as an outlet in her life, and pursued her position

as Associate Athletic Director to inspire and impact the student body. She is also excited to use her many years of coaching experience to mentor several Lake Forest Academy coaches.

Venechanos appreciates what LFA has already established in the athletic program, and said, “One of my roles, which I like, is filling in the seams already established here.” She works on different tasks each day, whether that is setting up the cross country course, communicating with sports opponents, scheduling games, or scheduling buses. Venechanos declared, “I do a little bit of everything!”

When asked about her favorite part of being the Associate Athletic Director,

Venechanos had many things to say. She started with her appreciation for seeing excited LFA athletes, and watching them file into Crown at the end of a school day. “It’s really cool being able to be one of your biggest fans and seeing students in their element. I like seeing those friendships and relationships develop organically.” Venechanos highlighted how her goal is to always encourage students to be excited about their athletic commitments.

Outside of her Associate Athletic Director position, Venechanos is a co-advisor with Science Department Chair Debbie Witmer. Witmer, and she also works in the dorms on some nights. She lives on campus with her wife, Dr. Sarah Taylor, who is LFA’s

new AP Psychology teacher. She has three daughters -- Olympia, and twins Theodora and Cecilia. In addition, they also have two dogs! Venechanos finds love (outside of sports, of course) in cooking with her family.

She notes that she tries to cook a meal with her girls at least once a day, especially because she loves the passion and confidence that they build from it.

LFA continues to give Venechanos a warm welcome to campus, and she has expressed that she is already fond of many parts of our community. We’re so excited to see what else she will bring to the Athletics program and wider community both this year and beyond!



Photo courtesy of Ohio State Athletic Communications
Alexis Venechanos coaching girls lacrosse at the Ohio State.

The new athletic dress code:

A spirited look for LFA sports practices

By Kirstin Palasz & Ava Trandel
Editor-in-Chief & Managing Editor of
Features

Athletics at Lake Forest Academy have been changing for the better. Over time, the Athletics Department has been making strides to improve school unity with athletics. One of those major changes includes the new dress code.

All LFA athletes are now required to wear school colors: black, orange, white, and grey. That means no matter what athletes wear to practice, it must be one of the colors or an LFA t-shirt. Athletes are no longer allowed to wear any other schools name or colors.

When talking about why this change came about, Darrin Madeley, Athletic Director, said “It was all about pride. I was tired of seeing other high schools represented when it should have been LFA represented.” Since LFA is trying to increase their school spirit, wearing other schools colors makes it very difficult for the school to feel pride.

Ackim Mpofu, a history teacher and coach for JV Boys Soccer, shared his thoughts on the new athletics dress code by praising the idea and saying that it is great because, “it shows professionalism and boosts team spirit.” He also said that he believed the dress code will help prevent athletes from wearing gear from other high schools and colleges, which is another important part of raising team spirit and looking committed to one’s sport.

Since the dress code surrounds the idea of school pride, Madeley points out that wearing school colors all the time is an important aspect in getting school spirit to

be higher. He mentioned how LFA doesn’t look uniform when “one kid is in a Loyola hoodie, one kid is in a Duke t-shirt, and another kid is in a New Trier Jacket.” He stressed that we don’t want to see other schools’ colors when an opposing team comes into our facilities. “You can wear it to the building, but once you have practice you must wear black, orange, white, or grey.” Each athlete received LFA warmups, two T-shirts, and two pairs of shorts. The best way to make sure the dress code is upheld is to ensure every student has something LFA to wear to their practices.

However, some students and coaching staff have expressed drawbacks to the dress code. When asked to consider any issues with this dress code, Mpofu mentioned how it is hard to enforce a specific dress code when athletes are given limited gear to work with. For new students, along with ones who are not able to purchase additional clothes to practice in, Mpofu described how the process of washing their practice clothes everyday or every other day is a task that some students would find to be time-inefficient and unrealistic. He added how laundry can also be costly, and not every student is in the position to spend money on doing laundry so often. There is a hope that as the year continues and in future years, athletes will gain more LFA t-shirt and clothing items that are allowed at practice; this therefore would help solve the laundry issue.

If an athlete is not abiding by this code, a coach is allowed to implement consequences. Madeley said, “Coaches are supposed to send them back into the locker room to change or not participate in practice.” Mpofu mentioned that not



Photo by Kirstin Palasz

Ferdoss Ibrahim '22 (left) and Beverly Fishman '23 (right) wearing their new LFA athletics t-shirts.

all coaches have a desire to enforce the practice dress code, so as the year continues, the process of how to enforce the dress code could continue to evolve.

On the other hand, many athletes are glad this dress code has been put in place. Beverly Fishman '22, a member of the Girls' Varsity Volleyball team said, “At first, I felt it was going to be hard to find an LFA t-shirt

for every day of practice. But now I actually like it because our team feels closer, and we look so much better walking into games.”

With all the new additions to LFA Athletics, the dress code is overall a very positive change for school pride. Madeley hopes that sports can not only continue this dress code, but also serve to make the student section spirit skyrocket.



Photo courtesy of LFA Communications

The Girls' Cross Country team at a service trip wearing their new LFA athletics gear.

The fall of Cuomo

By Jacob Powers and Djasahn English
Staff Writer and Managing Editor of
Social Justice

On Monday, August 23rd, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo gave a farewell address in which he spoke about both his prior resignation and multiple accusations of sexual harassment. The question remains: How did a series of events get to this point for Cuomo?

His first acquisition was in December of 2020, by Lindsey Boylan, who accused him of sexual harassment and forcefully kissing her against a wall. Cuomo responded, saying, "It's just not true."

Following that, Charlotte Bennett, Cuomo's executive assistant, came out saying her story shared parallels with Boylan's, forcing a statement from Cuomo, where he said, "I never intended to offend anyone or cause any harm." Over the next several months nine more women came out against him, including Alyssa McGrath, a current employee of Cuomo. She claims Cuomo frequently comments on her physical appearance, stares at her body, and makes sexual comments.

Following this, on August 9th, 2021, The New York State Assembly Judiciary Committee announced it would hold hearings throughout the rest of the month in regards to Cuomo's acquisitions of sexual harassment. The next day, Cuomo announced

he would resign as the 56th governor of New York, followed by a statement saying he "[sees] the world through the eyes of [his] daughters," ABC News says. New York Attorney General Letitia James appointed the independent investigation team, which was led by Joon H. Kim and Anne L. Clark, that resulted in Cuomo's resignation.



Former New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo.

The investigation was opened on March 1st, 2021, after Lindsey Boylan's acquisition, and concluded five months later after they had enough evidence to pursue Cuomo.

Throughout Cuomo's farewell address, he upheld the notion of his innocence, attacking the integrity of the investigation. According to NPR, Cuomo said, "It was a political and media stampede,

but the truth will [come] out in time. Of that I am confident," enforcing his belief that James politicized the situation.

In Attorney General Letitia James's press release, investigators found that Cuomo's timeline of events, "stood in stark contrast to the strength, specificity, and corroboration of the complaints... and reports of many other individuals," increasing the likelihood of Cuomo's fault.

School Counselor, and Health, Wellness and Community Chair Jennifer Madeley, shared how social justice movements could have impacted the proceedings against Governor Cuomo, saying, "I believe that the #MeToo movement has brought to light how common sexual violence is. It seems that this awareness has aided in holding people such as Andrew Cuomo responsible for their actions, even though I think he would disagree."

Just a year ago, Governor Cuomo was being praised for his brazen approach at handling the COVID-19 pandemic deeply rooted in New York. Now, next in succession, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul is already leading as New York state's 57th governor, stating to NPR that, "[she is] prepared to lead." New York now stands on the precipice of change, walking away from an abuser, to swearing in the first female governor.

Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

The controversies of Tokyo 2020

By Anusha Srivastava & Maya Mitckess

Asst. Managing Editor of Production & Editor of Blogging/Staff Writer

Sexual Misconduct in Fencing

An alternate on the United States Olympic fencing team, Alen Hadzic, has been accused of sexual misconduct that occurred between the years of 2013 to 2015 by three female fencers according to *The New York Times*. Hadzic was suspended from the sport by U.S. Center for SafeSport, but when he denied the accusations and appealed to a mediator, his Olympic eligibility was restored.

In protest, Hadzic's teammates shunned him and wore pink face masks to support sexual assault victims. Safety measures were put in place because of the United States Olympic fencing team's resentment: Hadzic was no longer allowed to stay in the Olympic Village, he had to travel separately from his teammates, and he was not allowed to train with female fencers on his team.

Ban on Swim Caps Designed for Black Hair

Soul Cap is a product that accommodates thicker and curlier hair to give a better fit

by having extra room to do so. It has been given a spotlight at Tokyo 2020 as a topic about systemic racism in the sport of swimming since the cap's ban came to light. Backlash about Soul Cap's ban occurred during a BBC interview with its founders showing what the International Swimming Federation concluded about the product.

The conclusion was that the Soul Cap does not follow "the natural form of the head." The Black Swimming Association's chair Danielle Obe just wants black swimmers to be included and have the equipment that will decrease the barrier of participation according to *The New York Times*.

The International Swim Federation is currently reviewing the ban of Soul Cap products as of July 2nd, and are committed to "understanding the importance of inclusivity and representation".

THC Ban

Another issue in the Tokyo games was that many athletes were disqualified for having problems with following rule 15's guidelines—the Anti-Doping Rules. One problem occurred with the use of THC (marijuana), a controversial topic recently revisited during the games.

In the spotlight of the discussion was Sha'Carri Richardson, a USA Women's

Track athlete, who was ineligible to participate in the sporting event due to testing positive to THC a month prior to the Olympics. This raised questions about the invalidity and unfairness of THC being on the list of prohibited drugs.

Currently, according to the World Anti-Doping Agency, marijuana is not considered a performance enhancing drug as it habituates a series of negative side effects.

Suspension

Another problem with rule 15 was the testing requirements. According

to NPR, "At least three no-notice out-of-competition tests conducted no less than 3 weeks apart 10 months leading up to a major event," were required.

Originally there were 23 track and field athletes supposed to participate from Nigeria, but 10 were ineligible due to the negligence of the Nigerian athletic officials.

But, on the other hand Russia, who was previously banned from all international sporting competitions, was allowed to compete under a new flag and title—the Russian Olympic Committee. Both stories



Nigerians protesting the ban in the Tokyo Olympic Village.

Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

Unpacking the Taliban takeover

By **Ambika Gupta and Finnian Harrison**
Managing Editor of *Global*
Senior Copy Editor

For nearly two decades, Afghanistan has been looming in the background of American politics. Now that the conflict has finally come to an end, at least for the United States, many Americans have been trying to understand the conflict.

The Afghanistan war began in 1978 when a coup known as the “Saur Revolution” overthrew the Afghan Republic and established a soviet aligned socialistic government. In response to this, many conservative militia groups within the country immediately rebelled against the newly established secular government. At the beginning of discord within the nation, the Soviet Union sent ground troops to protect the newly established allied government. This sparked a 40-year civil war.

After many years of fighting and the withdrawal of the Soviets, a new interim government was established. However, this interim government quickly fell into chaos as many rival groups began fighting for power. Eventually, a group known as the Taliban took control of the majority of the country except for the northern provinces. This group was one of the more extreme organizations that fought the Soviets, believing in strict Sharia Law, and (without the threat of communism) turned towards the West as its primary ideological enemy. On September 11, 2001, this hatred of the west would come to a horrifying conclusion.

On September 11, 2001, two planes hit the World Trade Center; one plane hit the Pentagon; another one crashed in Pennsylvania. These coordinated hijackings quickly were attributed to Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization which was harbored by the Taliban-controlled Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. After giving an unsuccessful ultimatum to the Taliban to extradite members of Al Qaeda, the US invaded the country on October 7, 2001, driving most of the Taliban out by December 17th and establishing the American allied Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. However, the Taliban would reemerge resulting in constant fighting and delaying the pullout of American forces for nearly two decades.

In February 2020, then-President Donald Trump signed the Doha agreement which promised a reduction of troops and full withdrawal of American and allied troops by May 1, 2021. However, after President Biden’s inauguration, the administration soon realized that May 1 was an unfeasible date, so the Biden administration postponed the withdrawal to August 31, 2021.

Many Americans saw the war as a repeat of the stalemate and guerrilla warfare of Vietnam. Vietnam had been America’s longest conflict prior to Afghanistan and ended in failure. Even by the announce-



The map displays Kabul, the sight of the airport attack that halted refugee evacuation on August 16, 2021.

Courtesy of Creative Commons

ment of the Doha Agreement, the war in Afghanistan had already surpassed Vietnam in length. After much bloodshed, Americans were eager to get out.

Though the Taliban did not make enormous tactical advances, the American-supported Afghan government and military quickly fell apart in the wake of the American withdrawal. As numerous soldiers abandoned their posts, the Taliban captured city after city before finally capturing Kabul and securing the nation.

Upon securing the capital, the Taliban redeclared the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan with control of almost all of the country. On September 6th in Panjshir, where resistance to the Taliban began, the Taliban took control of most of the province except for some mountains where resistance continues. Human rights violations have already begun. Reports have emerged that claim that many young women are already being forced into marriages, and that women’s access to education has been limited.

China and Russia have announced their plan to recognize the Taliban as the sovereign of Afghanistan should they uphold some form of civil rights. As the Taliban consolidates its power in the nation, it is likely that it will gain more legitimacy on the world stage. This could result in Afghanistan being legitimized in other more powerful countries even if its civil rights abuses continue.

On August 26, 2021, two suicide bombers took the lives of more than hundred

people and thirteen US soldiers at the Hamid Karzai International Airport where people were boarding planes to flee Afghanistan. ISIS-K, Islamic State Khorasan Province, claimed responsibility for the attack. ISIS-K was founded by members of the Pakistani Taliban, and this emerging group embraces an extremist and violent version of Islam. ISIS-K targets both US’s allies and the Taliban while denounces the Taliban’s takeover citing that their version of Islam is not radical enough.

Over three million Afghans are internally displaced within Afghanistan. The US evacuated about 65,000 Afghans. If applicable, the refugees are sent to live with family within the US, about 24,000 refugees were able to do so. Those without family members in the US are sent to military bases. About 43,000 were sent to US military bases in Europe and Asia. The US has plans to accept at least 50,000 refugees into the US in total. Canada plans to accept 20,000 refugees.

Some international aid groups have chosen to stay in Afghanistan. Many that have decided not to leave have distanced themselves away from US-led operations and have worked during Taliban rule in the 1990s. Even before the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan was in need of aid. The US and Europe have stopped supplying monetary aid to the new government. However, China promised to give thirty million dollars in aid which will go toward food and vaccines.

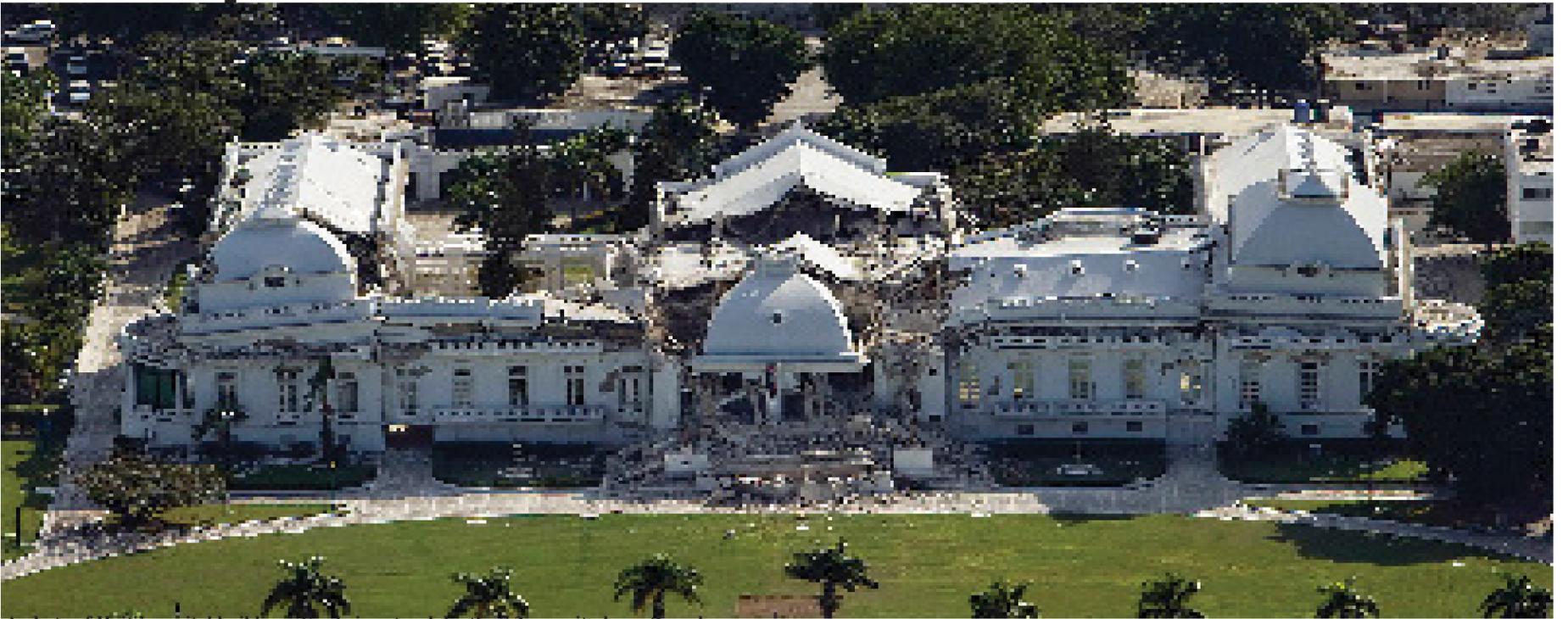
Previously when the Taliban were in

power, the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice enforced regulations on dress, behavior, and movement through a “morality police” whose punishments include public humiliation and physical violence such as whipping. Women accused of adultery were frequently stoned to death. In some provinces, some women are told that a male escort is required to leave the home. A university in Herat, the third biggest city in Afghanistan, was guarded by Taliban soldiers who prevented female students and instructors from entering. Within Kandahar, health care clinics for women were closed down after the Taliban gained control of them. Areas where the Taliban have not directly enforced restrictions for women are still affected. Women dress in head-to-toe coverings in preparation as well hide within their homes.

Furthermore, the Taliban’s power surge means constant fear of violence for the LGBTQ community within Afghanistan. Historically, the Taliban has declared same sex relationship illegal and have executed people for defying that law. Overall, the Taliban means apprehension for many minorities within the country.

Dr. Aviral Pathak, one of LFA’s History & Social Science Teachers, believes Afghanistan’s future to be a “little bleak” as many democracies, including the US, abandon embassies due to “too much uncertainty.” This uncertainty epitomizes the current state of Afghanistan as Taliban rule only exacerbates the unstableness of the region.

Earthquake leaves Haiti in a state of shambles



A photo of Haiti's capital building after being struck by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake.

Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

By **T.J. Minsky and Finn Harrison**
Staff Writer and Senior Copy Editor

For the second time in two decades, Haiti has been devastated by a major earthquake. Just over a month after the assassination of its President, Jovenel Moïse, an extreme earthquake hit the small country of Haiti. Political and economic instability has been rampant in the country since nearly its founding; however, such instability has been amplified by the onset of many natural disasters over the past several decades.

In 2010, a similarly sized 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the area near Port-au-

Prince and caused years of infrastructure and economic damage which Haiti is still recovering from. The earthquake killed an estimated 250,000 people. The question now is if this will have the same effect as the last earthquake, and how soon Haiti can recover. Due to the recent political chaos following the assassination of its President, Haiti will need to find better ways to clean up the mess left by the earthquake.

Along with the earthquake devastating several families, it has struck homes, businesses, schools, and more. Nearly 61,000 homes have been completely destroyed,

while 76,000 have sustained major damage. Haiti was also struck by Tropical Storm Grace in the middle of August, provoking flooding in the communities which further slowed down relief efforts.

On the matter Noelle Balson, member of the Language Department, said that no members of the language or global department had ever travelled to Haiti on the basis that it was "Probably one of the poorest countries on earth. One disaster after another and extremely dangerous conditions for foreigners and locals."

Haiti is currently experiencing one of

its darkest times as a country. The assassination of its President and the unfortunate striking of a 7.2 magnitude earthquake has left the country in shambles. For those who'd like to donate - <https://www.unicefusa.org>. UNICEF will use the proceeds for "...the aftermath of a devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Haiti, where children were already suffering amidst surging COVID-19 cases, severe acute malnutrition, and gang violence."

Making history: The first female governor of New York



By: **Richard Zhang**
Managing Editor of Digital

Kathy Hochul takes the oath of office for Governorship of New York

Photo by NYS Senate Media Service

On August 28th, 2021, history was made as Kathy Hochul took the oath of office and stepped into her role as the 57th and first female governor of New York. Hochul takes leadership of the state in unprecedented times, as it struggles to recover from both the pandemic and Hurricane Ida. She is a Democrat hailing from a blue-collar Irish family in upstate Buffalo, New York, and has taken a long road to get to where she is now.

Hochul started off in politics as a young

attorney and aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and then worked for fourteen years as a member of her town board, before being appointed Erie county clerk in 2007. Her big breakthrough was in 2011, where, in a special election in a mostly Republican district in New York, Hochul was elected to the House of Representatives. Her win was viewed across the country as a referendum to then House Budget Committee leader Paul Ryan's stance to bankrupt Social Security and Medicare. As a

result of her strong stances in congress, now-former governor Andrew Cuomo picked her to be his running mate in the governor's election in 2014, where they both eventually won as Hochul was named the lieutenant governor of New York. She was re-elected in 2018 and was named governor after the resignation of Cuomo.

So far, Hochul has promised to communicate effectively with the public and her staff, and be transparent, unlike her predecessor. She has already released the true

facts and figures of the number of deaths in nursing homes in New York, which is something that Cuomo had tried to hide from the public. Additionally, she has promised that anyone who applies for aid will be barred from eviction for another year. In addition to this, she has already appointed multiple women to her staff and hopes to set an example for young women, as she said in a recent interview with CBS, "I want every young woman... to realize that this is a place where they have a role. We need their voices. We need that diversity. We're getting there. We're making progress on more elected women. But I want by the end of my administration, for every woman to say there are no barriers... We're looking forward to making sure that my reputation and the reputation of my administration is one that is completely ethical."

Hochul, now a former lieutenant governor, has already tapped someone new for the position. She nominated New York state senator Brian Benjamin, who currently represents most of Central Harlem and a few areas around it. Hochul and Benjamin have both promised to bring diversity, experience, and most importantly transparency to the city in its darkest hour. This change of leadership in New York will hopefully help lead to the end of COVID-19, and bring back the city of bright lights that people love.