

THE LANCE

Volume 57, Issue 2

La Follette High School, Madison, WI

The Student Voice of LHS

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Twins Evelyn and Demetrius Walker (12) embody Lancer PRIDE. pg. 18

THE LANCE

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La Follette Gets a Major Facelift



Above, a model from the district's plan for a new front entrance at LHS.

Photo Credit: MMSD website

MMSD referendum passes, bringing significant renovations our way.

By Elijah Rader

The people of Madison voted to pass a historic school referendum in the Madison Metropolitan School District. Under this new referendum, an additional \$317 million will be borrowed for the district to make a wide variety of improvements. This could exceed the current revenue limit (the amount of money the district is allowed to raise from state general aid and property tax) by \$6 million in the 2020-21 year, \$8 million in the 2021-22 year, \$9 million in the following year, until the 2023-24 school year when it reaches \$10 million, which will bring the total to a constant \$33 million in extra funds each year after. Included in this brand new budget will be \$70 million going to each of the district's high schools, which, of course, includes La Follette, which hasn't received major renovations since the 1960's. This referendum gained massive support, getting over 75% "yes" votes during the November election. Now, we know that the budget is being increased, but what will that extra money do? "This referendum will impact us at LHS by giving our building a serious facelift! Unused spaces will become functional and usable, and our building will change to meet the demands of our current time period," La Follette educator Darcy Poquette said. This means goodbye

to our outdated classrooms and floors, and hello to a new modern look that is sure to be a welcome addition. "I am looking forward to our students feeling excited about the new changes in the building and proud of the way our building looks," Poquette added. Although it may seem small, walking through an updated and modern area can give students the extra boost they need. A clean environment seems to always help the mood and overall vibe of a school. With old unused rooms being updated and equipped for learning with new materials, the building will gain a great leap forward in not only the look, but the overall education and wellbeing of students. The area at La Follette known previously as "The Pit" is going to be renovated into a brand new instructional space. There will also be new STEM and fine arts areas implemented, as well as upgrades to the Welcome Center in hopes of making it a more secure and accessible entrance to the school. To improve hallway congestion, the district would like to expand the busiest corridors of the school, including the C-Wing. There is an additional push to focus on sustainability and energy efficiency to reduce La Follette's carbon footprint. This could include an increase in natural and LED lighting, the use of solar panels, and updates to the school's mechanical systems. Moving forward, check La Follette's website to stay up to date on opportunities to share your feedback on the proposed renovations. Students, staff, and families are all excited to see this vision take action.

What Happens When The Test Comes Back Positive?

Two La Follette students and one staff member who lived through COVID-19.

By Zella Milfred

La Follette sophomore Jayquan Jaeger couldn't smell onions. Not even when he held one up close to his nose. He, along with his father and two sisters, had just tested positive for COVID-19.

Even with state-wide precautions and regulations, Wisconsin has surged with coronavirus cases and many have gotten sick, including young people. According to local public health officials, among 10-19 year olds in Dane County, there have been 6,300 confirmed cases, 14 hospitalizations, and one death (as of Jan. 10, 2021). It's not just names in the news, or numbers on a graph. It's people right here in our community and at our school.

When Jaeger received a positive test result on a late-October morning, he was filled with shock and worry. His body has always reacted stronger than usual to the common cold, so his family was concerned about how he would be affected by this virus. His symptoms resulted in a loss of smell, a stuffy nose, and an irritated throat.

Due to the timing of his sisters and father's positive results, his family quarantined for an entire month and a half! Jaeger's socially distanced Saturday meet-ups with friends were canceled, and his family began ordering groceries online. The coronavirus became a hot topic in his household as they tried to understand the source of their exposure and why only some of the family had tested positive. Luckily, he was able to continue his boys choir practices and LHS book club meetings virtually during this time.

Jaeger advises students who confront the virus to continue getting exercise in the house, relax, and stay hydrated. "Your experience really depends on how it affects

you," he said. For example, his cousins, who also tested positive, grappled with fevers and vomiting.

La Follette sophomore Katie Sanchez Gutierrez went to the Alliant Energy Center to get tested after her mother began losing her sense of taste and smell. They both received positive test results in late-October. Her only symptom was a loss of smell, and she says, "I'm very thankful it didn't affect me as much." After working at Pick n' Save throughout the entire pandemic, she was surprised when she actually got the virus. During quarantine she missed her routine trips to work and the gym, and her mother was also forced to stay home from work. Sanchez hopes that students take the coronavirus seriously and wear their masks because "it isn't a joke."

La Follette's Coordinator of Student Engagement, Molly Hayes, remembers stopping dead in her tracks when hearing that her family had been exposed to COVID-19. "My heart dropped a bit, a sense of worry goes over you," she remembers. At first, only her husband and eldest son tested positive, but upon further testing, her entire family did. They likely contracted it from her son's participation in flag football last fall. She says the hardest part was making phone calls to those they'd been in contact with to inform them of the bad news. This included her parents and in-laws who are currently in their 60's and 70's. "The amount of guilt you almost feel that you've hurt someone else is the hardest part," she says.

Out of her family, the virus affected her husband the worst. He lost 20 pounds due to a severe loss of appetite, and he stayed in bed for three days straight with body aches. Hayes says that her symptoms didn't catch up to her until everyone else

in the household was feeling better. "I tried to put mind over matter," she said. "I didn't want to get behind in work, I have all these kids and my husband is really sick." In the end, she had a sore throat, loss of smell, and extreme fatigue. "That's what I think the scariest part of the virus is, you just don't know [how it will affect you]."

Contact tracing is the practice of informing people when they have been exposed to COVID-19, helping them get tested, and encouraging them to self-quarantine if they were in close contact with the virus. When students who are learning online become ill, such as Jaeger and Sanchez, Public Health Madison & Dane County handles the contact tracing for the community. At La Follette, though, there are still a select number of staff and special education students who have continued to work face-to-face within the school. When these Lancers come in contact with the virus, it is La Follette Nurse Margaret Corbae who handles all of the contact tracing. In this role she is in charge of monitoring quarantines, providing safety education, and distributing protective equipment to staff. "School nursing is a lot of community health," Corbae shared. Though Corbae is not the contact tracer for students learning virtually, she still regularly connects with all students and families who get COVID-19. "The numbers at La Follette are significant," she says. "There have been cases with staff, in-person students and virtual students." From what she's seen, the racial disparities that exist in Dane County data are equally evident at La Follette, and the risk of high school age individuals spreading the disease seems to be similar to that of adults.

The district has announced that we will continue with virtual learning until at least April 24th. Hayes, much like Jaeger, feels optimistic about the distribution of a vaccine, and hopes that La Follette will be able to do a graduation ceremony for our seniors at the end of the school year. "I could cry I miss La Follette so much, I thrive off that energy of the building and those connections," Hayes says. "Mask up and do your part so that we can be back together soon."



Sanchez



Jaeger



Hayes

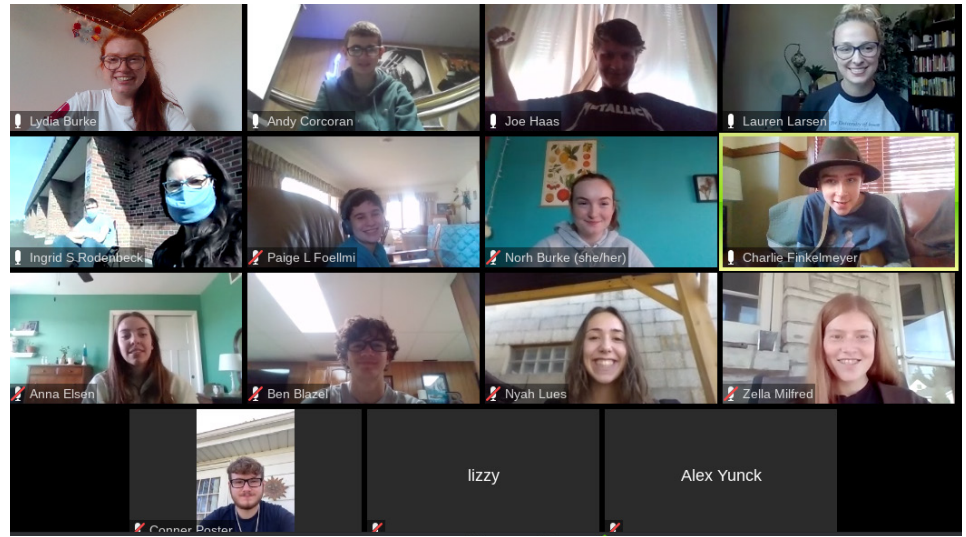
Online Learning Impacts Special Education

La Follette's special education program perseveres through the challenges of online learning.

By Allison Rau

Online learning has impacted us all, but it has created a set of unique challenges for special education students. When schools closed early March of 2020, many students had to learn how to manage a new schedule. This was a major change for special education students, as they were used to having a set routine and familiar space to learn. Routines and consistency is a major part of many special education students' success. It allows for students to know what they can and can't do and helps build confidence in their strengths.

As schools across the country, including La Follette High School, continued to teach those with disabilities, programs had to get creative to ensure that they had all the right tools to continue to follow special education students' learning plan or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP is a contract that outlines what the school will provide for the individual student every year to help them succeed in their studies. On March 12 and March 21, the US Department of Education ensured that all students with disabilities would continue to receive all of their required services under the Rehabilitation Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This was to ensure that all special education students would receive the same education that they received during in-person school. Teachers at La Follette have been following IEPs to ensure everyone gets the correct accommodations, but they have also been using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) an online learning program that creates an equal opportunity for all students. "UDL offers flexibility in the ways students access material, engage with it, and show what they know," Susan Filo, a special education teacher at La Follette, said. The most important part of online learning is mak-



Despite school closure, La Follette's Project Unify club meets online every Friday, creating a fun and safe space for students of all abilities to connect. Above is one of their Zoom call from last fall.

ing sure that you are meeting the needs of all students and finding what works best for each student.

During virtual learning, special education students are able to choose what they would like to work on. "During virtual instruction, most classes offer a great deal of student choice," Filo said. "This not only benefits students with IEPs, it helps all students to engage and experience success." When students have an opportunity to choose what they would like to do, they are going to be more engaged in their learning and retain more information.

With everything happening online, many students are falling behind on getting the extra practice they may need to remember what they learn. Some special education students across the U.S. have not received the correct instruction needed to progress in their learning, which creates more challenges for parents. While many lessons are possible to do over Zoom, there are also many hands-on exercises that are not. La Follette has allowed some students to have the opportunity to get hands-on learning in a safe space. "For a few students with IEPs who are unable to successfully access virtual learning, we do offer some in-person instruction on a limited basis, in a socially distanced, safe manner at La Follette," Filo said. This is an opportunity to teach those who need extra instruction, while being safe.

Many special education students have the opportunity to collaborate with two teachers over Zoom, or they are able to work one-on-one with a teacher. "Many classes today have two teachers, which means more support and differentiation for all, even in the virtual world," Filo described. "For students with significant disabilities, a Special Education Assistant may work with them virtually and support them in class either 1:1 or with a small group of students."

While schools across the country are doing what they can to support special education students, there is only so much that they are able to do over Zoom. Many parents have had to quit working to be able to take care of their child who may need extra support and become both the parent and the teacher after students weren't able to return to school.

La Follette special education teachers and support staff are continuing to learn about what is working and what is challenging, but most importantly supporting all students to the best of their ability. Everyone in the program has shown incredible resiliency. "The important thing is that we all learn, grow and continue to support each other during these times," Filo exclaimed. All of the staff are doing what they can to make sure that every student is getting the best education possible, even while being online.

COVID-19 Vaccine Brings Hope and Controversy

The long awaited vaccine makes its way into the public's arms.

By Ava Kaminski

As the pandemic continues to cripple Americans, one can only hope that a solution is coming soon. Many fear that without a vaccine being distributed quickly, our lives locked at home won't come to an end. Even with a vaccine being distributed, many worry about its effectiveness and unprecedented research cycle.

There are two major companies that are producing a vaccine at the moment, Moderna and Pfizer. In Moderna's trials participants, the vaccine was seen to be 94.1% effective in preventing Covid-19 while the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective. Now that vaccine distribution has begun, it will first go to frontline healthcare workers, residents and employees in nursing homes, essential workers and other at-risk populations. Those in this population that are BIPOC, 65+, lower class, or have preexisting conditions will likely receive a vaccine before many of their co-workers. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) vaccines work by introducing the virus to the immune system so it can later fight it off. Every single day we are exposed to pathogens, germs and viruses. When a virus is introduced into the body, whether from a vaccine or of natural causes inside the immune system, two types of lymphocytes form. The T-lymphocytes leave a "memory" of the virus so that the body is able to identify it later on while B-lymphocytes will remember how to fight the virus off in the future. It typically takes a few weeks for this process to occur and for the immune system to be ready to fight off an actual infection.

Most vaccines take anywhere from 10-15 years to develop; this vaccine has come out in 9 months. This leaves many worried about the effectiveness and safety of the vaccine. Some may even refuse to get the vaccine - which is their choice - but it comes with consequences. One of the many things that is talked about with the coronavirus is herd immunity. This is the theory that if people are unable to get the virus a second time - meaning you get

it once and are immune - then ensuring everyone contracts it will allow us to move on. The problems with this philosophy are that: a) the theory of herd immunity has yet to be scientifically proven and b) many people will have to die in order for this to happen. In the United States there is a death rate of 1.9% and if everyone were to get infected in order to reach this herd immunity, 6,235,800 Americans would die.

Communities of color are some of the most devastated by the coronavirus. Many factors contribute to the case, hospitalization and death rates in Black communities to be 1.4%, 3.7% and 2.8% respectively. Lack of access to healthcare, socioeconomic status - less likely to be able to work from home - and facing a racist health care system all contribute to these numbers. Black people and other people of color have been victims to the healthcare system, across many instances.

The medical community has a long history of racism that leaves many hesitant to trust the vaccine and those administering it. For 40 years starting in the 1930's the U.S. Public Health service conducted a study where they recorded the effects of untreated syphilis on Black men in Macon County Alabama. Most of modern gynecology can be linked to Dr. James Marion

Sims who completed many procedures on slaves without their consent or anesthesia. Even now, Black women are 2.5 times more likely to die due to pregnancy-related mortality rates. There are even medical professionals who believe that Black people feel less pain and have "thicker skin". This is just the tip of the iceberg when talking about the racist way in which our healthcare system functions.

As a person of color Shiva Bidar-Seilaff thought it was important for others in her community to see that getting vaccinated was a safe option. She is one of two participants of the Covid-19 vaccine trials in our community. "This was a decision that I could make myself, and it's in my control. I was also just thinking about how I could do something to contribute to the greater good," Bidar-Seilaff said.

If we want to return to any semblance of normalcy this vaccine is crucial to that transition. According to the CDC roughly 70% of American need to be vaccinated before we can ditch some social distancing guidelines. With vaccines making their way through society take some time and think about whether or not you'll be receiving it. Ultimately it is a personal choice that everyone gets to make, just make sure you do some more research and think about all of the perspectives.



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2020 Was (Literally) Out of This World

Lost in the craziness of 2020, UFOs are confirmed.

By Parker Olsen

The year 2020 will go down in history as the year of uncertainty and craziness. From a world war threat to kickoff for the year to the unprecedented pandemic that has dominated our lives for longer than imaginable. Lost in the craziness of the year, with constant news flow, the United States government confirmed UFOs and it hardly got attention.

The statement from The Pentagon confirmed what many have speculated for years. Stating that there was no real reason to keep the videos classified, the three videos released in April showed Unidentified Flying Objects from 2004 and 2015. In order to confirm whether or not the videos were real - the videos had been leaked in years prior - the Department of Defense released the videos saying "the aerial phenomena observed in the videos remain characterized as 'unidentified,'" according to the BBC.

Government statements on UFOs are quite uncommon, especially when you look internationally. A mass majority of reported UFO sightings come from the United States, the country that has arguably put forth the most effort to investigate the otherworldly anomalies. Seeing and hearing official confirmation of UFOs is rattling, given that they have largely stayed as a mystery within American pop-culture. "Knowing that UFOs are real is kind of weird," says Kala Algreem (11). "It's something that you'd only expect in movies, it's like unicorn type stuff," she continued.

Since the 1940's, America has been a hotspot for UFO sightings, sparking movies, books as well as tourist attractions. The most notable inspiration for the extraterrestrial craze in recent years has been Area 51, a U.S. Air Force testing facility in Nevada, which some have rumored to house alien life. The base was built in 1955 but the U.S. government did not acknowledge its existence until 2013. Theories about otherworldly beings have swirled around for decades, now we have

an official report on the subject and even one foreign former government official claiming that extraterrestrials have been in contact with some governments.

The 2020 crazies just kept coming in through an Israeli news interview with Haim Eshed, a former Israel Defense Ministry chief and head of the Israeli space program for 30 years. The December interview claimed that Israel and the United States have been in contact with a "galactic federation" which wants to understand the fabric of the universe. He claimed that the U.S. and the federation has signed an agreement to do experiments on Earth. President Trump reportedly knows about the extraterrestrials and was close to revealing the information but was asked not to due to the hysteria it would cause. Eshed says he revealed the information now because he feels it is the closest that humanity has been for this type of information.

Some believe his claims are false and that he is merely trying to catch attention to help his new book release. "It's really weird because it doesn't feel real, it sounds fake and very hard to believe," Algreem (11) commented. Former British Defense Ministry member, Nick Pope believes "either this is some sort of practical joke or publicity stunt to help sell his book, perhaps with something having been lost in translation, or someone in the know is breaking ranks."

It is easy to disregard many comments that claim the existence of alien contact,

however some are less skeptical. Former Senate majority leader Harry Reid says "the federal government all these years has covered up [important information about UFOs]." Other former US officials such as John Bannan, head of the CIA during the Obama administration, seem to be more open to the idea of there being an alien federation out there. Yet Haim Eshed is the only one to claim the existence and contact of alien life forms so we are left wondering about it for ourselves. UFOs and alien reports were not the only 2020 weirdness that we got in the realm of paranormal. In November, odd monoliths began appearing in nature. The first in a canyon in Utah, then later another in Romania. Later more similar looking monoliths began to pop up in even more places around the world. Questions about these darted from unnamed artists to aliens. A few days after the appearance of the Utah monolith, witnesses say that four people dismantled it and left. Then later a few men came forward taking responsibility for one of the monoliths found. According to Insider, they say that after two had been found they took inspiration from the film "2001: A Space Odyssey," where in the film three monoliths appear. The men, including artists Travis Kenny and Wade McKenzie, said "you know there is gonna be a third. It's gonna happen. So why don't we build it?" So it turns out that aliens were not responsible, but it was 2020 so just about anything like that really would not have been that shocking.



Footage released by the Pentagon of "unidentified aerial phenomena."

Photo Credit: NBC News

College Enrollment Declines During COVID-19

Seniors have been thrown into a somersault of college decisions and future planning.

By Allison Rau

With coronavirus cases still on the rise across the United States, many high school seniors are unsure of what their future will look like. Wisconsin in particular has been experiencing a significant rise in cases, as COVID-19 continued to spread rapidly nationwide. During this time, while high school seniors are in the process of applying to college, the uncertainties of the virus are making the future of the upcoming school year more challenging to navigate.

Many colleges across the country have observed enrollment declines, including UW-Madison. UW-Madison admitted more students for the 2020 school year than they have in the past few years. In return, according to the Wisconsin State Journal, more students turned down UW-Madison offers compared to the past three decades, largely due to the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming school year. With that being said, UW-Madison is doing their best to ensure that they meet the needs of incoming students and their families. "This virtual world we have found ourselves in has opened our doors to many more opportunities to meet the needs of students, families and schools," Ashanti Rogers, an employee for the admissions office at UW-Madison, said. "Admissions Counselors have been able to host virtual high school visits around schools' schedules, we've participated in weekend and late night conventions, and we've collaborated with school counselors and college-readiness programs." The admissions office is working extremely hard to support, inform and communicate with all incoming freshmen. When students enrolled in college for the 2020-21 school year, COVID-19 didn't play a major role in where they

chose to go, as the severity of the pandemic was not as prominent. "The Office of Admission and Recruitment's top commitment is to our Wisconsin residents," Rogers said. "Meaning that out of the 7000+ freshman we admit every year, over half of those students are from Wisconsin, and two out every three Wisconsin applicants get admitted." Students coming from different parts of the country, such as the east or west coast, may unenroll and decide not to go UW-Madison, as it may not be the safest option to travel far.

Many colleges went online after only a few weeks of the school year and currently don't have plans of returning to in-person learning. When students are forced to pay large amounts of money, they are less willing to pay to learn online, causing more students to attend a community college or decide to pursue a gap year. "We are seeing students taking more time making college decisions, deferring their admission, or taking a gap year, but whatever the student chooses we know it is best for them and their family so we try and support as best we can," Rogers said. More students are taking longer to make a college decision, to ensure that they are making the best decision for themselves.

Many four year universities are struggling with enrollment, and so are community colleges.

A majority of community colleges typically serve lower income students and those looking for more career skills. Many of those enrolled may be unable to pay for classes or are unemployed due to the economic impacts of COVID-19. This puts more financial strain on college students, potentially leading to rising dropout rates or a decline in enrollment. Along with not having enough money to pay for college, students may not have access to quality internet or a quiet space to do school work while taking online classes.

With so much unpredictability in the coming school year, more and more students are considering taking a gap year. During senior planning week at

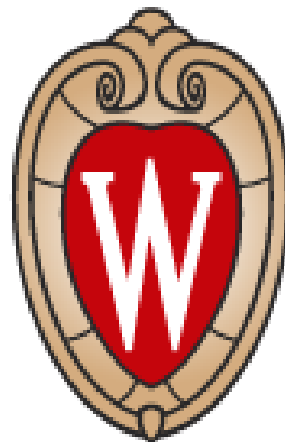


Photo Credit: brand.wisc.edu

La Follette, information was collected during a senior survey. Out of the 211 seniors that completed the survey, "we had about 23 percent indicate they were looking into working or taking a gap year upon graduation," Mackenzie Swanson, LHS College and Career Coordinator, said. Some students may have decided to work to save up for school or help their family financially. In many cases, students choose a college based on its social and academic environment, as well as the types of students that attend. While being online during a pandemic, students are unable to experience the same type of community and interaction with other students. The college attendees would miss out on many different opportunities and life experiences. Going to college is an investment financially and a career catalyst, but some students and families are struggling to see the benefit and worth of online college during this time.

"Struggle is the reality, but I believe through building relationships, being transparent, accepting flexibility, offering real-life solutions, giving grace, and holistically viewing and reviewing outreach, recruitment and admissions efforts, we as a collective will ultimately persevere and offer students the education and experiences they deserve," Rogers stated. Even with COVID-19 cases still going up everyday and so many unknowns of the future, all we can do is hope that life as we once knew will start going back to normalcy.

2020 Movie Reviews: What to Stream Next

What to watch, what not to watch, and which documentary will absolutely blow your mind. All available on Netflix.

By Ben Blazel

I'm Thinking of Ending Things

Confusion has never been more captivating in film than it is in Charlie Kaufman's masterpiece, *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*. Kaufman has never been afraid to thrust himself into absurd works, which he has shown through his 1999 piece, *Being John Malkovich* and the 2004 Academy Award Best Picture *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind*, but *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* truly takes the cake. If you are someone who appreciates the unknown and oddity, this is the film for you. This movie is the pinnacle for which "trippy" movies should follow from here on out. This movie has just about everything, and not just in terms of the plot. While the plot of the film is exceedingly creative, the cinematic styles used only further display Kaufman's brilliance. Based on the book "I'm Thinking of Ending Things" by Iain Reid, this psychological thriller explores the inner mechanisms of a high school janitor's mind, but the outcome is far from what you would expect. The results from this unique viewpoint are riddled with childhood delusions, imaginary counterparts, and a plethora of musical scenes from the Broadway production, *Oklahoma!* The beginning of the movie starts with a young couple attending a family dinner and ends with a stark naked man walking the halls of an empty high school alongside a cartoon pig, while the alleged main character recites John Nash's Nobel Prize winning speech from the 2001 movie, *A Beautiful Mind*. Everything in between those two points is brilliantly confusing, yet all connects. Without compromising the integrity of the movie, there isn't much more that can be said about the plot of the film, but be rest assured that it is definitely



worth the two hours. Kaufman recommends that everyone who screens the film does so at least twice, and that is the best advice one can receive before viewing. Definitely watch *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* during your next movie night.

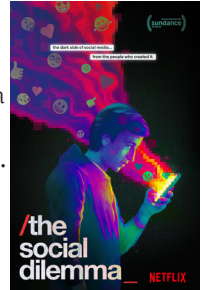
Hillbilly Elegy

For many in Madison, the book "Hillbilly Elegy" by J.D. Vance is a throwback to 2017, as it was the 2017-2018 "Go Big Read" book at UW-Madison. This book received high praises around the literary world, but the movie adaptation of J.D. Vance's story has been met with mixed reviews. The main criticism of the movie has not stemmed from a lack of talent, which stars Amy Adams, Haley Bennett, Glenn Close, and was directed by two time Academy Award winner Ron Howard, but from a lack of connection to the book. Per usual, film adaptations rarely live up to the success of the book, and *Hillbilly Elegy* is no exception to that. The plot of the movie follows a young boy from Appalachia who overcomes family struggles from addiction, to mental illness, and later becomes a Yale law student. The book truly encapsulated what it meant to be a proud Appalachian, without omitting the struggles and poverty that populate much of the area. That is where this movie truly missed with viewers. Many perceived the film as portraying the people of Appalachia in a negative light, and this perception is definitely understandable. The British publication, New Musical Express, described the movie as "betraying the very people it's trying to celebrate" by "failing to acknowledge the legitimate problems they face." Aside from this backlash, it is hard to ignore the inspiration that is J.D. Vance. J.D.'s story and perseverance is one that deserves recognition. While the movie does a good job glorifying J.D., it does a poor one staying true to the book. Given the choice between the two, definitely read the book, the message is far more prevalent.

The Social Dilemma

Who would've thought that the best documentary of the year would've circulated around calling out one of the tools that

helped promote it? *The Social Dilemma* is a documentary that calls out the societal disease that is social media. While it is semi-ironic that the documentary was released on Netflix, one of the largest media giants in the world, its message is still extremely clear. *The Social Dilemma* does a great job of uncovering the faults of social media giants, and attacks the problem from the inside. American Filmmaker Jeff Orlowski takes a major creative leap in this documentary



by abandoning his usual craft of nature films, and jumping straight into the heart of some of the world's most powerful industries. The main contributors to the documentary are former tech titans such as Tristan Harris (former Google designer), Tim Kendall (former Facebook/Pinterest executive), Roger McNamee (early Facebook investor), Aza Raskin (former Firefox employee), Justin Rosenstein (former Facebook/Google engineer), Jeff Seibert (former Twitter executive), Chamath Palihapitiya (former Facebook President), and many other tech moguls. The power of the film truly does stem from the fact that many of those who are calling out these social media giants, are the ones who created them. Getting this insider look at the world of social media is fascinating and also simultaneously terrifying. Their goal is clear, start making consumers question their social media use and addiction. They achieve this quite easily and even reveal industry secrets in regards to social media algorithms. While this documentary may appear to be boring, it is far from such. Given that almost every single person who reads this article has social media of some kind, it is imperative that you watch this to understand the ways in which you have been exploited. "*The Social Dilemma* is a horrifyingly good documentary about how social media will kill us all" writes indieWire.com, and that to me is the perfect summary of this hard hitting documentary. The next time you want to watch a film that will make you question it all, watch *The Social Dilemma*.

What's Hot What's Not

By: The Lance Class

What's Hot: TikTok

What's Not: Scrolling for 3 hours straight

What's Hot: Trump getting banned from TikTok

What's Not: Trump banning TikTok

What's Hot: Naps during class

What's Not: Accidentally turning on your mic so everyone hears you snoring

What's Hot: Staying safe from covid

What's Not: More virtual school

What's Hot: Harry Potter

What's Not: J.K. Rowling

What's Hot: New semester, new classes

What's Not: AP tests approaching

What's Hot: Sledding

What's Not: Crashing into a five-year-old

What's Hot: Getting accepted into college

What's Not: Being \$100,000,000 in debt

What's Hot: Social justice activism

What's Not: Rubber bullets

What's Hot: La Follette's great teachers

What's Not: Not getting to connect with them in-person

Random Facts

By Lance Class

- Copper doorknobs are self-disinfecting.
- The dot over the "j" and "i" is called a tittle.
- Head to Setenil de Las Bodegas in Spain to actually live under a rock.
- Shaquille O'Neal has only made one three pointer in his entire career.
- The Twitter bird's official name is Larry.
- Ever wonder why airplane food tastes so bland? You lose 30% of your taste buds while in the air.

What Grinds Your Gears?

Grammy's or Scam-my's?

By Tziah McNair

Last January, when Grammy voters bestowed on 18-year-old Billie Eilish the first total sweep of the four biggest award categories (Song, Record, Album of the Year, and Best New Artist) since 1981, it proved what many had long believed: the Grammy's are corrupt. This is not to undermine Eilish's incredible talent - I myself enjoy her whispery, electro-saturated dark pop tunes. However, when you examine the other categorical nominees - the commercial breakthrough that is the singer-rapper-songwriter-flautist named Lizzo; and the one-of-kind rapper, Lil Nas X, who released the very definition of Record of the Year with "Old Town Road" (the longest running Number 1 single in Billboard chart history) - the win generates some serious debate. This award cycle was no different: the Academy was quick to applaud its cookie-cutter, white artists over the left-field, brash black innovators; such as The Weeknd and Nicki Minaj who received no nominations. "Never forget the Grammys didn't give me my best new artist award when I had 7 songs simultaneously charting on billboard & bigger first week than any female rapper in the last decade- went on to inspire a generation. They gave it to the white man Bon Iver. #PinkFriday," Minaj tweeted, reminding us that these seemingly racially biased snubs are nothing new. Shockers like Carlos Santana and Rob Thomas's "Smooth" beating the Backstreet Boys' "I Want It That Way", TLC's "Unpretty" and Ricky Martin's "Livin la Vida Loca," (2000) and Esperanza Spalding triumphing over Drake and Justin Bieber as Best New Artist (2011) argue that it isn't exclu-

sively a race issue more than an outright disgrace (much like Harry Styles being shut out of major categories this year). The pattern, nevertheless, is clear: Black artists are either ignored, pigeonholed into a specific category, or robbed.

Rapper GoldLink pointed out in 2020: "Burna Boy deserves more, Koffee deserves more. DaBaby couldn't 'qualify' for best new artist apparently because he had 'mixtapes' in the past. No nod to Solange for taking a risk pushing the boundaries when nobody else was brave enough to do so. There's not even a category for internationally black artists at all. [What] do you think these kids learn when you tell them their black art isn't good enough? Or isn't noticed at all?"

Other times, unquestionably legendary albums by black artists aren't part of the nomination process either. Michael Jackson's *Off the Wall* wasn't nominated, Prince's *1999* wasn't nominated and Janet Jackson's *Rhythm Nation* wasn't nominated. When they are nominated, they lose to albums from Mumford & Sons (Frank Ocean's "Channel Orange"), The Police's "Every Breath You Take" (Michael Jackson's "Beat It" and "Billie Jean"), and Taylor Swift's "1989" (Kendrick Lamar's "To Pimp a Butterfly"). It's not merely that the Grammys diminish black artists at the top of their game, they often trivialize albums that are huge cultural moments for those that are not only barely relevant today, but were hardly relevant when they were released.

In a bombshell interview, the recently-ousted head of the Recording Academy, Deborah Dugan, claimed on Good Morning America to have proof there are "conflicts of interest" that "taint the results" of the Grammy Awards.

Please see Grammys, pg. 10

Grammys

Continued from pg. 9

She further alleged members of the nomination committee “push forward artists with whom they have relationships” and it’s “not unusual for artists who have relationships with board members and who ranked at the bottom of the initial 20-artist list to end up receiving nominations,” Billboard reported.

In 2013, the virtually unknown artist Al Walser earned a nomination for Best Dance Single against Avicii, Calvin Harris, and Skrillex (all of whom had appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 that year) after marketing himself on “Grammy 365, a private social networking website for voting members of the Recording Academy,” NPR writes. Campaigning for awards is nothing unusual, but “[Walser’s] song’s clunky rock/trance fusion and low-budget video make Rebecca Black’s ‘Friday’ sound and look cutting-edge in comparison,” wrote Spin. Walser’s effort had basically revealed the Recording Academy could be hijacked by anyone with an understanding of social media optimization, regardless of their musical quality.

When Macklemore and Ryan Lewis beat out Kendrick Lamar for Best New Artist in 2014, the mistake was immediately obvious. As WBUR recounts, “it was the difference between a talented-but-blandly-agreeable emcee rapping over sugary earworms (Macklemore) and a virtuosic visionary precipitating the revival of story-oriented hip-hop with an ode to a childhood growing up tough in Compton (Lamar).” Even Macklemore knew it was wrong. He later texted Lamar: “You got robbed. I wanted you to win. You should have. It’s weird and sucks that I robbed you. I was gonna say that during the speech. Then the music started playing during my speech and I froze. Anyway, you know what it is. Congrats on this year and your music. Appreciate you as an artist and as a friend. Much love.”

The Grammys’ problem is so pernicious that some winners have chosen



Billie Eilish sweeping the top four Grammy Awards in 2020.

Photo Credit: AP News/Chris Pizzello

contrition over exuberance - Eilish said in her acceptance speech that she thought Ariana Grande’s *Thank U, Next* should have taken the album prize. Before that award was announced, some observers even thought they caught her mouthing, “Please, don’t be me,” from her seat in the crowd. In 2017 when Beyoncé’s groundbreaking album *Lemonade* was beat by Adele’s *25*, the English singer made a point to acknowledge it in her speech, demonstrating a greater understanding of the fundamental imbalance of the Grammys system than the Grammys themselves. Categories like “Best Urban Contemporary Album” award were “seemingly designed to compartmentalize black artists” (The Establishment). The prime example being that in 2015, all of the nominees in this category were black, including

Chris Brown, Pharrell Williams, and Beyoncé, despite the fact that these artists were making pop music at the time. Unsurprisingly, the top nominees for Best Pop Vocal Album were all white. GoldLink and Tyler the Creator spoke out about “IGOR” (Tyler’s album) winning in a category it didn’t even fit into. “The awards themselves - which, long having been a joke, now feel more like an insult to the intelligence of fans and the hard work of the artists it supposedly honors,” said Jasmine Simpson (11). “The legitimacy and respectability is now being questioned, and I don’t blame the people that are questioning it. It feels almost like a charade.” Hopefully soon the Grammys will turn it around before the constant disenfranchisement of some of its most iconic artists turns away its viewers for good.



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COVID-19 on TV: Plots and Precautions

How Hollywood is handling the coronavirus, both on and off screen.

By Brigid Mullen

As the coronavirus continues to course through the United States, the entertainment industry barrels forward with new releases. Mere months after COVID-19 first hit, with numbers only rising, production resumed on a number of TV shows and movies. Cast and crew of these productions have been working under vigorous safety precautions, with some TV shows even incorporating COVID-19 into their episodic plotlines.

Every single show filming right now has had to comply with social distancing, stay-at-home, and mask mandates, as well as more detailed guidelines for safety protocols during film and television production in order to return to the small screen. *The Bachelorette* returned to ABC in the fall after its production halted back in March, opting now to rent out a Palm Springs resort for the cast and crew to live in during filming instead of the show's usual jet-setting to extravagant locations. Regular COVID-19 testing took place on set, N95 masks were required for the crew, and social distancing was employed at all times. NBC's long-running sketch show *Saturday Night Live* has welcomed back its live studio audience this fall -- at 25% capacity. Each audience member must wear a face covering at all times, have their temperature checked, and pass a COVID-19 test upon arrival to filming.

The creativity of COVID-19 adaptations extends on to the screen as well -- many TV shows have incorporated the coronavirus into their plotlines. For example, season 5 of NBC's *This Is Us* began airing last fall, and follows its characters through the summer of 2020, masks and all. The premiere sees the Pearson family spend time together six feet apart, attend multiple therapy sessions over zoom, and quarantine



Chris Rock and Megan Thee Stallion on the set of *Saturday Night Live*.

Photo Credit: Getty Images

for two weeks before meeting up for a big birthday party. ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* depicted the medical side of COVID-19, dedicating the first few episodes of season 17 to showing how the coronavirus was hitting the show's hospital, and how the exhausted, overworked medical staff was handling it. Reactions to each of these shows, and how they have handled the coronavirus, have been mixed. Many use TV as a form of escapism, and don't want to watch stories about a pandemic after we've all been living through one for nine months. Others feel gratified by these stories, and appreciate that these shows aren't glossing over pivotal issues.

But Hollywood isn't the only place where people are being forced to get creative in the name of the arts -- this fall, La Follette put on a production of its own. It seems that not even the coronavirus could stop the tenacity of the LHS theater department, as rehearsals for this year's play, "What I Want To Say But Never Will", began in mid-November. This production looked a little different than normal, though. The play was made up of a series of monologues from high schoolers, a form which lends itself nicely to a Zoom-confined setting. Rehearsals occurred completely over Zoom, and performances were entirely digital,

streaming in mid-December. While plans for a spring musical remain up in the air, those involved with the play have cited it as a gratifying experience, and appreciate that they are being kept safe in this tumultuous time. "I think LHS theater is doing really well considering how much time we were given, and considering we have been online," stated Cecelia Ridgeway, a La Follette sophomore participating in the play this year.

It's nearly impossible to say what the future of the entertainment industry is going to look like. Based on what we have seen over the past few months, it's probably safe to assume that as long as the precautions put in place keep working, TV shows and movies will continue being made. Additionally, we can expect to see a number of shows and movies detailing characters' experiences during the coronavirus being put into production long after this is all over. As for La Follette, the chances of having a spring musical are looking slim. "I think in order to have an in-person show the world is going to have to get a lot better," Ridgeway continued. "I don't know if I would feel safe and comfortable being by lots of students." For now, we are grateful that the theater department has been able to put on a play, while keeping everyone safe.

Artists of the Term:

Two Lancers Who Display Talent, Tenacity & Tempo

The Voice and The Strings of LHS.

By Tziah McNair

It's the time of year when we recognize outstanding Lancers for their incredible artistic talents. With a whole new batch of seniors to choose from, picking just two is never easy. However, it was clear that two Lancers in particular were especially deserving, and their names are Zaydrian and Luc Fuller.

Zaydrian, who many of you may know by his given moniker Isaiah Valdes, has been developing his musical gift since he could read. It was at the age of six or seven when, by his aunt, he was first introduced to secular music and inspired to create his own. Although his songwriting followed immediately, his shy demeanor prohibited him from sharing it until a few summers later when a group of girls overheard him humming at camp. They encouraged him to sing at the talent show, where he realized his potential and inextinguishable desire for stardom.

Today, Zaydrian has performed at a multitude of events and locations, most of which include, but are far from limited to, MMSD schools and clubs. His repertoire of original songs chronicle concepts of romance and momentous life experiences, as he recognizes the importance of "keeping it real" in the booth. "I feel like the audience feels that authenticity. If [the lyrics/ideas] are fake - the audience isn't stupid - they're going to notice," Zaydrian explains. His relatable lyrics are often presented in English, but the young entertainer much prefers recording in Spanish. "Growing up, I never really had a crowd to fit in with. I went to a [Dual Language Immersion] School so I grew up around Mexican [kids] and I was the only Latino that looked the way that I do (brown skin, curly hair). I would always try to emulate Mexican culture," Zaydrian admitted, "but when I heard of Prince Royce and Romeo Santos (Dominican artists), I began to feel pride in my culture. I'm proud of my roots and I'm proud to be Dominican."



Senior Isaiah "Zaydrian" Valdes

It is Dominican legends like Romeo Santos that not only ignited self-acceptance, but the way the senior star approaches the making of his music. In addition to writing and singing, Zaydrian plays piano and guitar, which he uses to mimic standard Spanish chord progressions. At the same time, as Zaydrian himself likes to say, he does "todo un poco" (a little bit of everything) and "there's no limit." Looking over what he's already accomplished in such a small amount of time, this is clear. With a plan to leave Madison after graduation in pursuit of a full-time career in music, Zaydrian is on a trajectory to meet his goal of leaving "a legendary stamp in music." In the meantime, you can listen to his work on Soundcloud, Spotify and Apple Music. Our next artist, while rejecting the glamorous route and embracing a more lowkey approach to music, is equally as talented and destined for greatness. Luc Fuller is the ultimate instrumentalist, as he is skilled with approximately seven different instruments. Beginning in the fifth grade, Fuller learned to play the viola for the school orchestra and found himself enjoying it - so much so that he would wake up hours before necessary in an effort to master pieces from Lord of the Rings, his obsession at the time. Two years following, fueled by the desire



Senior Luc Fuller

to "be cool", Fuller attempted the guitar and, to his surprise, fell in love with it. The musician began to exercise his gifts in groups such as Pit, the orchestra for the LHS Spring Musical, and Madison Music Foundry, a local organization that allows students to "learn, rehearse and record music" (MadisonMusicFoundry.com). A particular session during his freshman year of high school allowed Fuller the opportunity to try his hand at music composition and songwriting, but better served as a deterrent for the craft. Instead, the guitarist favors times in which the music of others is to be played. In Black Music Ensemble (BME), Fuller is able to do this. "We mostly play old jazz standards which is really nice because it moved me out of my comfort zone," Fuller shared. "Memorizing weird scales and using that in a very fluid manner where you always have to be on [point] is a fun challenge." Conversely, he appreciates spaces in which improvisation is required, such as street performance.

Before COVID had taken the driver's wheel of society, Fuller, alongside a partner, would venture to downtown Madison and give impromptu performances to bypassers.

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Arstists

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"We'd always have to get [to State Street] early on the days when there was a farmer's market because there's so many performers," Fuller spoke to the intensity of a day in the life of a street performer. Since COVID however, the young performer has had time to add another instrument to his already extensive list of capabilities. Now, in addition to bass/acoustic guitar, violin, viola, banjo, and mandolin, Fuller has mastered the piano/keyboard. "I learned to play the guitar to look cool, but I learned these other instruments out of curiosity, especially the piano," Fuller disclosed. "[To learn the] keyboard, I listened to a lot of session musicians and blues pianists to imitate their movements

and styles and what I heard. Players like Richard Emmanuel, Paul Griffin, Al Cooper: they didn't have a whole lot of range, but... they were super expressive and had a lot of power and I really liked that." When it comes to the guitar, Fuller cites Robby Robinson and Delta Blues as his inspirations, as well as his friends - many of whom are into music as well. Still, as talented as he may be, Fuller intends to go a different career route, hoping to major in Political Science at the University of Minnesota. "I don't really do it for anyone; it's just a way for me to alleviate stress in my day-to-day life," Fuller explained. "I hope I still get to play music in college or in a dad band when I'm 60," he said only half jokingly. We too hope that Fuller, and Zaydrian, continue to share their special gifts with the world, as they are truly one of a kind.



Fuller (12) performing in downtown Madison.

LHS Students Navigate Distanced Theatre

Even virtually, LHS theatre created something magical.

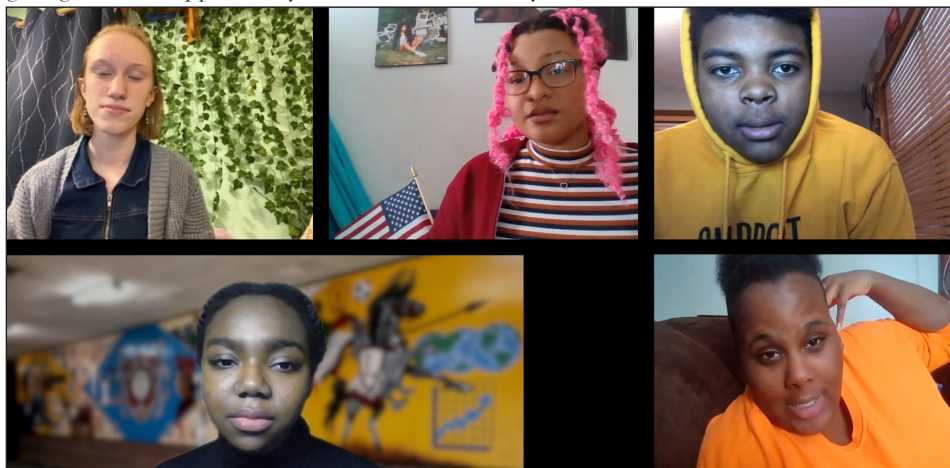
By Annabelle Reynolds

While this year has made in-person performances virtually impossible, La Follette theatre has found a way to still give students the opportunity to participate in the dramatic arts. In the past, the La Follette theatre program has put on a play in the fall and a musical in the spring. With the coronavirus looming, the only way for a fall play to be possible is over Zoom. What I Want to Say But Never Will, by Alan Haehnel, is a series of monologues submitted by real teenagers all over the United States -- all things they would like to be able to tell someone but don't have the courage to. Guided by the two narrators, T'ziah McNair (12) and Annabelle Reynolds (12), other actors were able to portray the thoughts and feelings of teenagers everywhere. The list of topics included mental health struggles, drug abuse, parental neglect, loss, and other extremely difficult issues. In addition to the monologues from the actors, La Follette music and arts students recorded music to be played during the production. With the play taking place over Zoom, the cast had mostly small group and one-on-one rehearsals with the director, Sam White. The cast and crew had to troubleshoot problems they never even had to think about before. They worked on figuring out how to navigate acting

through a screen, without having that physical contact and chemistry with their fellow actors. They struggled with WIFI connectivity, audio, and video quality that came with everyone's devices. Nonetheless, they were able to work through their problems and put together a cohesive show.

Behind the scenes, the stage crew was busy as ever. "Their [crew's] main focus was to liven things up for the play," stage manager McKenna Howard (12) said. "Sound effects, lighting placement, visual backgrounds... basically bringing ideas to the table." While the crew wasn't able to be quite as hands-on as they have been in the past, they were still a big part of the show. "It was their job to think it and get it done, which showed the crew responsibility we've never seen before, and also giving them an opportunity to have it be

their show," Howard continued. While there was an excellent amount of student contribution, the production wouldn't have been possible without the adults involved. Samuel White, the director, worked tirelessly to mentor and oversee the production that brought joy to everyone involved. Mark Penisten, the technical producer, worked to make sure we had a cohesive video; he recorded the whole show and put the audio and video together. Finally, the technical director, Kelly Clobes, worked with the stage crew and delivered materials to actors such as microphones and green screens. What I Want to Say But Never Will gave students the opportunity to make something that matters, that will bring people together, and maybe even encourage the audience to say something they thought they never could.



Screenshot taken from La Follette's virtual fall play, featuring some of our high school's stellar actors.

Student Activists Use Art to Demand Change

LHS students paint Black Lives Matter mural titled “Beautiful Anger.”

By Zella Milfred

The artwork of four La Follette High School students continues to capture people’s attention and make them think about the racial injustice in our society. Shantiana McNeal (10), Brielle Heine (10), Elyse Whitmore (10) and Poetry Evans (12) collectively painted a mural last June in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, following the police killing of George Floyd.

At the time, BLM protests surged in Madison, and plywood sheets were placed over many businesses along State Street. The city commissioned local artists to paint on the plywood, and many volunteers participated as well. It wasn’t long before our shuttered downtown blossomed with artwork expressing the power, beauty, pain and demands of people of color in our community.

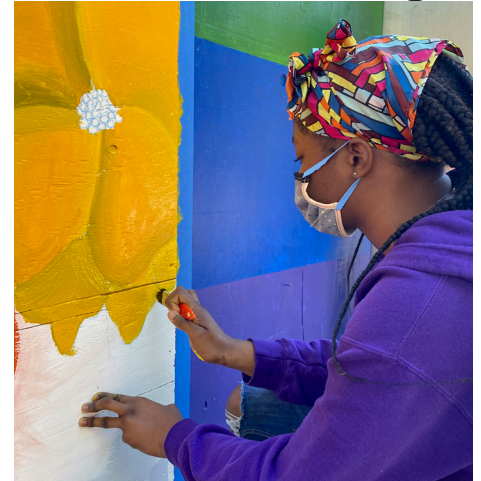
“This was part of a movement about social justice and addressing the racism that has been pervasive for many years in our society and that directly affected many of the young artists that were out there painting,” La Follette art teacher Monique Karlen said. After learning about the artwork being created on Madison’s most prominent street, Karlen brought La Follette and Middleton High School students together to paint over the span of three days. Their piece was completed on the side of the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMOCA) facing Henry Street, and remains there today.

The mural is titled “Beautiful Anger” and was designed by McNeal (10), who knew she wanted the piece to be bold and open to interpretation. “The woman in the piece is surrounded by all this beauty, the flowers, the blue sky, and the rainbow. But in her face, you see a more angry or fed up expression,” McNeal explained. “This shows the audience that anger can create beautiful things when it is used for the right reasons, like with all the protests.” Though she didn’t have lots of

previous art experience, she was inspired to take this action after participating in one of the local BLM protests and feeling the overwhelming passion in the crowd. Creating art further connected these young artists to the movement, and the collaborative energy that flowed through State Street was impactful. “The students got to see and meet artists that looked like them, making art for a living, and fighting for what they are fighting for,” Karlen recalled. Witnessing the activism of older artists made it an educational experience, as well.

Advocating for the BLM movement is important to McNeal because it directly impacts her and everyone she loves. “This is a fight that should not even be a fight. We should not have to fight to be treated fairly and as equals. We should not have to protest against the killings of our brothers and sisters because their justice should be served right away,” she shared. “It isn’t just a fight for me but it’s a fight for all people of color who struggle with racism, oppression, and discrimination in their everyday lives.” McNeal believes that change must first occur in our school system where students should be learning Black history and gaining a comprehensive look at the ways in which Black people have helped build our country. She hopes for an increase in diverse educational spaces where all student’s voices are heard and recognized.

The mural will stay up for as long as MMOCA remains closed. It is not yet clear where the artwork will go when local



McNeal (10) painting. Credit: Monique Karlen

businesses reopen their storefronts. In making this decision, the city is currently communicating with artists while collecting input from the public through an online survey. Some considerations include exhibitions, galleries, auctions or donating the works, according to the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. Karlen and the students involved have interest in bringing the mural to La Follette, though the possibility of this remains uncertain.

Art is a crucial piece in any social movement, as it carries the power to change cultural narratives, shift imagery, and spark deep-rooted emotions in its viewers. It has been used throughout history in fights for equity and unity, and continues to spark change. And in this case, it gave young people a voice. Both Karlen and McNeal are eager to engage La Follette students in similar projects in the future!



Black Lives Matter mural painted by LHS students on Henry Street.

Photo Credit: Monique Karlen

Successful Student Business: A World of Bamboo

Senior Nabil Hamdan uses his entrepreneurial stylings to make the earth a cleaner place.

By Ben Blazel

In a society in which consumerism and the economy are such prevalent themes, Nabil Hamdan truly embodies what it means to be a young entrepreneur. The La Follette high school Senior is the founder of “The World of Bamboo,” a company that sells a plethora of bamboo products with the goal of creating a more eco-friendly earth. While many have dreams of creating and running a successful business, Nabil has already done that at just the age of 18. The World of Bamboo sells toothbrushes, straws (the company’s original product), chopsticks, utensil sets (containing forks, knives, spoons, and straws), and soap dishes. Nabil’s mission statement is simple, yet inspiring. The youngest-ever Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County member wants to “fight plastic pollution” and “make our planet a healthier place” (theworldofbamboo.org mission statement). Nabil describes his products as both biodegradable and fashionable, which in the eyes of the modern consumer is extremely appealing. Nabil came up with his idea for the World of Bamboo in the summer of 2017 upon a visit to “Lake Monona, in which (he) was shocked with all the plastic straws and plastic pollution” that existed in a place he loved so much. The continued proposal of the Green New Deal, a Congressional proposal that outlined a strong plan to combat climate change and economic inequality in America, also sparked Nabil’s interest, and he decided to try to help in any way possible. He hit the ground running from that point on and has never looked back. The World of Bamboo has grown into a global company since then and has even won local awards such as: the first place winner of CEOs of Tomorrow Teen Pitch & Launch event and funding from Project Pitch It, a local “Shark Tank” style show.

Cultivating such a successful business took a lot of hard work, but Nabil is an individual who never has given up on his dream of financial success. Throughout middle school and his early high school years, Nabil always had some gambit about his latest business venture. Whether he was selling stickers, chains, or bracelets, money was always at the forefront of Nabil’s mind. All of those minor successes are what helped make Nabil the triumphant business man he is today. Many of the readers at home may be asking themselves: “Why Bamboo?” and “How is this any different than paper straws?” These are questions that the World of Bamboo is asked frequently. The answer is simple: “bamboo is the perfect mix of functionality and after life purpose. It’s not just a straw, it is a fully biodegradable, eco friendly, reusable bamboo straw. Even after you throw it away, it fully biodegrades and gives nutrients back into our planet, making our ecosystem as a whole, a little bit healthier.” Also, bamboo withholds liquids far more effectively than paper does. The average paper straw is only good for about one use. Bamboo on the other hand is reusable and one straw should be able to endure “good use for 2-3 weeks.”

While monetary success has been produced by the World of Bamboo, the most beneficial output of Nabil’s business are the lessons he has learned along the way. “Business made me financially independent and showed me that through hard work and dedication a lot can be accomplished, no matter how crazy the dream is,” Hamdan (12) said. This drive and tenacity for success is extremely apparent throughout all of Nabil’s life as well. Outside of his business, he is a member of the Eastside Lakers hockey team and attends classes through the prestigious STEM program at Madison College. Throughout Nabil’s high school career he has played football and soccer as well, which shows that if you are determined, there truly is a way to find balance.

Nabil’s ambition has not halted due to his success either. When asked what Nabil believes the future holds for his company, he said “I see myself maxing out all my production and consumer needs as much



Nabil Hamdan (12)

as I can. Once I have the ability to upscale, I want to open up a legitimate store” in which he will be able to increase his supply and continue to serve the people of the world.

The pride that comes with owning a thriving company at such a young age would spike the ego of many, but throughout the last three years Nabil had continued to remain humble and poised through the success. Nabil has learned a lot throughout his entrepreneurial journey, and while reflecting back on the wild ride that has been his high school experience, he states that what he is most proud of is “starting (his) business at just the age of 15 and building it to what it has become today. He is also proud of what this whole experience has shown him and that he has started to surround (himself) with people with similar drives for success.”

It is apparent that this is just the start of something amazing for Hamdan. Whether Nabil continues his endeavors in the world of conservation with the World of Bamboo, or ventures off into other entrepreneurial pursuits, we here at the Lance have no doubt that Nabil will continue to be successful. Nabil’s story should be an inspiration to those everywhere, it doesn’t matter if your dream is creating business or not. The La Follette High School community is extremely proud of Nabil for all he has done so far, and what he is yet to do in the future. We wish Nabil and the World of Bamboo all the luck in the world, and we know that he will continue to inspire.

Lancers Who Influenced the 2020 Election

As the importance of youth voting continues to grow, Lancers encouraged their peers to learn about voting and create change.

By Annabelle Reynolds

The 2020 presidential election is definitely one for the books. Americans from all over the country showed up in record numbers to vote, including young people. With the country so divided, La Follette students stepped up to do their part within their community, and encouraged their classmates to vote.

A club at La Follette called “La Follette Votes” was started by La Follette seniors Ava Kaminski and Melina Nguyen at the beginning of September. This club’s purpose was to teach student voters about the importance of voting and answer any questions they may have during the process. “At the age we’re at, we can’t do much to change policy. We can’t run for office and many can’t vote, but we can make sure that those who do vote speak for us,” Kaminski (12) said. Some members of this club also made phone calls to registered voters in the community for WisDems, the Democratic party of Wisconsin.

In addition to participating in this club, some Lancers were involved in the election on the city level, as poll workers and speakers at Democratic events. Lydia Burke (12) worked her polling place on the morning of the election. “Working on November 3rd was exciting and nerve wracking at the same time... [but] it’s really easy. Pretty much everyone could figure it out and even during a pandemic people wanted to vote,” Burke said.

As President of the La Follette Votes club, senior Ava Kaminski worked relentlessly in their internship with WisDems to get voters registered and increase outreach to community members who have not voted before and may need help. “Youth voter turnout has histor-

ically been extremely low, and while they’re most affected by the policies, they don’t show up and make sure they’re represented in government,” Kaminski said. They also had the opportunity to speak about the importance of voting at a press conference with Senator Tammy Baldwin and State Representative Sheila Stubbs, and even cast their ballot with Senator Baldwin herself. “If you don’t do your part and vote, your government can’t do its job and work for you,” Kaminski explained. Another La Follette senior who made a splash in the 2020 presidential election was Tziah McNair. McNair took every opportunity she could to get involved in the election, such as joining the La Follette Votes club and speaking at Dr. Jill Biden’s event right here in Madison. McNair also published a compelling article for The Progressive Magazine headlined: *I’m an 18-Year-Old Black Girl from Wisconsin. I Want My First Vote to Mean Something*. In her article, McNair emphasized the importance of fighting against the racial injustices that are so prevalent in our society, and how influential even just your vote can be. “What if we voted on behalf of Ahmaud Arbery? Or Breonna Taylor? Or George Floyd? And for every single life taken at the hands of racism and injustice? What if we decided to vote



Kaminski (12) with Senator Tammy Baldwin.

because they can’t?” Tziah McNair (12) wrote. McNair encouraged everyone to get out and vote for women, families separated at the border, the LGBTQ+ community, and people of color who are facing injustices every day. “This type of voting tugs at the moral fiber of our being, not as Americans, but as human beings. It’s not always easy, but I wholly believe that if we all voted for our neighbors, our co-workers, and our fellow Americans on the opposite coast, we could end the endless cycle of division,” McNair explained. This fall, Lancers volunteered, phone-banked, gave speeches, and published written work, all to encourage our community to have their voice heard at the polls. They had a direct impact on the next four years of our country, and we know their civic engagement won’t stop here.



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Confronting The Billionaire Epidemic

Society has no need for the destructive billionaires that have profited off of a global pandemic.

By Brigid Mullen

Before reading this article I want you to come to an understanding of two very important things. First off, the difference between a millionaire and a billionaire. The two terms are often used interchangeably, which is a dangerous practice that erases just how much money a billionaire actually has. A million is 1,000,000. A billion is one thousand million, or 1,000,000,000. A million milligrams is 2.2 pounds; a billion milligrams is 2,204 pounds. A million seconds is about 12 days; a billion seconds is about 31 years. These numbers are too often thrown together with no regard for how vastly different they actually are. Secondly, though it pains me to say it, there is an extremely small chance that you, or anyone you know, will ever be a billionaire. The myth of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps and earning your fortune is an outdated fairytale. La Follette senior Kristen Menge stated, "Even if it was theoretically possible, I would hope me or anyone I know would start putting our money to better use, by helping communities, before we got to the ridiculous amount of a million dollars." With those two things established, we can proceed.

The concept of a billionaire, of a person hoarding an obscene amount of wealth while so many others live in poverty, is disgusting and offensive. And frankly, real life billionaires have done very little, if anything at all, to prove otherwise. Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon, and the richest man in the world, is infamous for the mistreatment of Amazon employees. A quick Google search will give you countless reports from Amazon warehouses employees describing their dangerous working conditions. Employees' days are excruciating, as they're overworked at a breakneck pace and woefully underpaid. A 60 hour workweek or 12 hour day is not uncommon in an Amazon warehouse, especially during the holidays. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Admin-

istration (OSHA), these warehouses also boast injury rates three times that of the national average. That Amazon mistreats its employees has been widely known for some time now, and yet Jeff Bezos continues his pattern of belligerent inaction, as he gets richer and richer.

Another billionaire who has come under fire for his mistreatment of employees and misuse of his wealth is Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk. Often touted as "the real life Tony Stark," Musk has attempted to create the persona of a "cool billionaire" -- Internet stars like David Dobrik promote his cars, he live streamed sending a Tesla to Mars, and he's married to synth pop superstar Grimes. For a while, this public idea of Musk held. It is objectively cooler to be known for shooting a car into space than for exploiting your employees, after all. However, in recent years, cracks in Musk's cool guy persona have started to show as more information is revealed about his company and business practices. This leaves him with a reputation similar to, or even worse than, Jeff Bezos. The beginnings of SpaceX and Tesla were rife with instances of Musk pushing his employees too far, with less than ideal working conditions and little regard for their wellbeing, which sounds all too familiar. Additionally, SpaceX has recently come under fire for reckless safety procedures. In 2018, NASA critiqued Musk's company for its use of the "load-and-go" fuel maneuver, which makes a rocket more powerful but also poses a fatal risk to any astronaut on board. Elon Musk has displayed a pattern of apathy towards those working for him, showing time and time again he is more than happy to put his employees in danger in the name of the bottom line, and he keeps getting richer for it.

Arguably, the most egregious crime committed by these billionaires is the amount of wealth they have amassed during the coronavirus pandemic. Ever since mid-March, everyone has been trying their best to shelter in place, making sacrifices, canceling sports and graduations and weddings, many losing their jobs, all the while supplemented by a one-time stimulus check of \$1200. But while the rest struggle and sacrifice, the rich continue to get richer. Back in September, it was reported that in the first six months

of the pandemic, the 643 wealthiest people in the United States became \$845 billion dollars richer, according to the Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness. Jeff Bezos' net worth grew by 68%, Mark Zuckerberg's by 75%, and Elon Musk's by 246%. These men are drowning in their own wealth, while at the same time, a record 56 million Americans file for unemployment benefits.

The American peoples' comfort with billionaires is indicative of a much larger societal issue that can be traced back to Charles Darwin. Since its birth, the concept of "survival of the fittest" when applied socially has almost always meant "disregard poor people, because poorness equates to laziness." The same voice inside of us that tells us the poor deserve their status is the same one that tells us the rich have earned theirs fairly, which is simply not true. Billionaires are parasites leeching off the working class, giving nothing back to those who've built them. "Today's billionaires should use their money to help other people, make job opportunities and cheap housing for people who are homeless or struggling. They should also donate their money to impoverished countries," Menge continued.

Billionaires have faced some opposition for as long as they've been around. For instance, Senator Bernie Sanders recently co-sponsored the "Make Billionaires Pay Act" that would tax 60% of these billionaires' net worth increase that occurred between March 18th and December 31st of 2020, and then use that revenue to guarantee healthcare for every American for the next 12 months. Propositions like this are a good starting point to what is going to be hard and tiresome work of tearing down billionaires, who have for too long disregarded the needs of the less fortunate who made them rich in the first place. To quote Senator Sanders, "It is time for the Senate to act on behalf of the working class who are hurting like they have never hurt before, not the billionaire class who are doing phenomenally well." Billionaires are a plague on the American people. They serve no purpose outside of hoarding nauseating amounts of wealth for themselves as everyone else suffers, and it's well past time for them to be held accountable.

Athletes of the Term:

Evelyn and Demetrius Are La Follette's Star Players

These twins share leadership, excellence and devotion to their sports.

By Mikey Rottier

For four years, seniors Demetrius and Evelyn Walker have been the embodiment of the Lancer Pride we preach here at La Follette. The twins have not only set goals, faced challenges, and persevered through their four years, but they have also excelled in their respective sports while doing so. As they trudge through a unique and adverse senior year due to the coronavirus, it is important for us to highlight and recognize their success and growth as Lancer Athletes.

Walking through the front doors of La Follette high school as starry eyed freshmen, both Evelyn and Demetrius held high expectations for themselves to make an impact through athletics. Evelyn had goals to make varsity and be a high impact player for the basketball team which she quickly accomplished in just her freshman year. She established herself as a key part of Coach Will Green's Lancer squad and maintained a starting role as center her entire high school career. During her junior year she achieved Big 8 honorable mention and pulled down the second most rebounds in the entire conference. Evelyn also competes in Track and Field, although she did not have as much previous experience as she did with basketball; she was still able to push herself and make a positive impact towards the team's success. "Since I was new, I just wanted to learn it, get better at it, and just be the best that I was capable of, eventually as the years went on I got more and more competitive," Evelyn said. Her height and strength that made her such a successful Basketball Center carried over to her success as a thrower on the La Follette Track and Field team. Despite her athletic accomplishments,



Senior Evelyn Walker

Evelyn understands that there is more to a sport than simply the sport itself. Through high school athletics she has learned the importance of camaraderie, leadership, and responsibility. "There's nobody to blame but yourself, you have to push yourself harder, and you have to do what you have to do to get things done and accomplished," Walker said.

Like his twin sister, Demetrius has not only participated in athletics at La Follette, but excelled. His lifelong love of football has served him well during his time participating on Coach Scott Swanson's Lancer team. "I've played football since I was in third grade and I've always loved it," Demetrius explained, "The La Follette experience has been a great fit for me, I love Coach Swanny and all the other coaches that have helped me through my years on the team." Demetrius had high aspirations for himself as a member of the Lancer football team. He wanted to make it onto the varsity team, and go to the state championship at Camp Randall where he has always dreamed of playing. Above anything else he wanted to gain recognition from college recruiters and be valued as a top prospect in football, so he could one day fulfill his dream and



Senior Demetrius Walker

play in college. After his junior year, Demetrius was recognized as a member of the second team all conference in the Big 8, which remains one of the most illustrious conferences in the state. This recognition certainly helped Demetrius in receiving the recruiter attention he desired and the offers started to roll in. Something Demetrius has gained through playing football here at La Follette is the realization that anything can happen, "what being a Lancer athlete has taught me is that it's okay to be an underdog, it's actually fun to be an underdog. People don't really expect much from La Follette, so it's fun to do big things, surprise everyone, and shock the conference," he said.

For some student athletes the first three years of high school athletics can feel just like a build up to the highly anticipated senior season. For seniors, this is their last chance to showcase the skills they have developed throughout high school and to be the most experienced players on the court or the field. The Covid-19 outbreak has left many in the class of 2021 without that last chance.

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The hopes and opportunities to still have that senior season seem to be dwindling more and more as the coronavirus continue to rise. For both Evelyn and Demetrius, this has been one of the biggest challenges they have faced throughout their high school sports careers. They were both eager for the competitions that this year would bring. For Demetrius, his fall football season has been canceled and for Evelyn, the winter basketball season has been momentarily postponed and will be reevaluated on January 22nd. It has proved to be difficult for both of them not being able to see and practice with their teammates and coaches and not knowing whether or not they will get a chance to compete again. “Us seniors have to realize there’s nothing we can do this year. We have to look to the future and focus on the positives,” Evelyn said. “To all the freshman, if you don’t get a chance to play your sports this year don’t give up, because it is a great experience that everyone should give a try,” and there is



Evelyn Walker (12) playing on La Follette's basketball team.

Photo Credit: Scott Schmitt

no doubt that sports have helped propel Evelyn and Demetrius through their high school experience. Demetrius will be continuing his athletic and academic career at the University of Upper Iowa where he hopes to play four years of college football. Evelyn is not yet sure where she wants to go, but she also hopes to continue her athletic career and

play four years of college basketball. It is important for her to attend a university that makes her dream of becoming a doctor possible as well. The possibilities are endless for the talented Walker twins and the lessons they’ve learned through sports here at La Follette will no doubt help to guide them in their future endeavors.

DON'T GET YOUR MONEY STOLEN

Scams You Should Know About Now

A Summit account can be a great tool to help you save and spend, but it's also important to keep some things in mind.



This friend I know always asks me to cash checks for him. Yes or no go?

That's a really common scam – and a lot of people have fallen for it. That friend will get the cash and you could be stuck paying off a bad check.



I saw this post on TikTok from someone I kind of knew that if I gave them \$40, I'd get back two or three times that, fast. Could this really be legit?

The answer is N-O. This is called “flipping,” as in flipping a small amount of money into a big payoff. Usually, the person asks you to buy a prepaid debit card (which is just like cash), share information about your account or something like that. Once they get your money or account info, they're out of there – with your money. Trust your gut! If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



My friend got takeout and wanted me to give her my debit card (and PIN) so she could pick up my order. It felt kind of weird, so I didn't do it. Okay or bad friend?

Smart move! Giving someone your card number and PIN is like handing over all the cash in your account. Keep your PIN, account number, user IDs and passwords to yourself!



I got an email that looked like it came from Summit. It said someone tried to hack my account and wanted me to send my user ID and password to check things out. Okay to respond?

Summit will never ask you for confidential information through email, website, online chat or an unsolicited phone call. If someone asks for this information, it's likely a scam.

Worried you shared account info you shouldn't have? Or that you cashed a bad check? Call Summit right away at 800-236-5560.



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A Statement Much Bigger Than Sports

Athletes nationwide take a stand for racial equality.

By Parker Olsen

The global pandemic has provided time for us to focus on social injustices and racial inequalities that plague our nation. Events such as the Jacob Blake shooting in Kenosha and the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis have brought the Black Lives Matter movement to the forefront of issues our nation is facing. The fight against racial injustice has been taken to sports, where countless players and organizations have made statements, including our own Wisconsin Badgers.

Student athletes at UW-Madison decided to use their uniforms as a form of protest to symbolize unity. The Black W Crest, a modification of the university's white W logo, represents the university's commitment to inclusion and solidarity. Wisconsin is not the only one that is showing its support for BLM in this fashion; turn on nearly any college football game and it is almost a guarantee that at least one team will have a helmet decal or jersey patch showing solidarity with Black Americans. Although teams at all levels are showing support, many are left to wonder if words of support are all that are being given. "At times I wonder if they do it just for publicity, and I think it's important that we as the public let them know it's about more than just wearing a patch," says Natalie McDonald (12), co-president of La Follette's Black Student Union. She hopes that teams who are made up of a majority of Black players are being held accountable to do more than the bare minimum and that Black athletes are seen as more than just a dollar sign. Critics of teams wearing patches say they aren't doing enough, McDonald says she wants teams to "use their platform to bring influence and

change." She added that "we should expect more from teams, people, companies, etc, who have great influence and resources, to never settle for the bare minimum when we're talking about equal rights."

Displays of support and solidarity are also happening at the professional level. This season, NFL players were given the option to wear a decal on the back of their helmets with the names of people who lost their life to police brutality. This is a huge step for the NFL in acknowledging the issues Black Americans face, as this is the league that fought against kneeling during the national anthem and ended Colin Kaepernick's career over it. Along with the national anthem, the league played the Black National Anthem: "Lift Every Voice and Sing", along with the Star Spangled Banner, prior to each game in week one. These acts of solidarity have been seen throughout the sports world in 2020, however they do not end at just stickers and patches. In August, as protests erupted in Kenosha after Jacob Blake was shot by police, the Milwaukee Bucks were preparing to play in the NBA playoffs. The team made a decision that would put a pause on basketball, boycotting a playoff game for days and threatening to end the season. The WNBA followed suit, and additionally protested on court during the national anthem. Tennis star Naomi Osaka boycotted her semifinal match at the Western & Southern Open, pushing the match back two days. MLS matches were postponed for the day. The NHL however had a very different approach, a 35 second moment of reflection prior to a single game. MLB teams held their own boycotts, the Milwaukee Brewers and Cincinnati Reds boycotted their game the same day as the Bucks had. Overall, eleven MLB games were boycotted. The phrase EQUALITY JUSTICE NOW became prominent for the rest of the Brewers season. The year 2020 was not only a year for

showing that we are willing to make change, there was some actual change. The NFL football team in Washington DC threw away its logo and name after pressure from team shareholders and partners who threatened the organization financially. The team had been using a Native American slur as a name for 87 years, and had been facing backlash due to the name since the 1990's. Another professional sports team has taken a different approach when dealing with its controversial name. The Chicago Blackhawks announced that a land acknowledgment would be read prior to their events. This is part of the team's effort to educate about Native Americans and their often forgotten and unrecognized history. The Blackhawks also announced that fans wearing Native American style headdresses would not be allowed into the area, citing it as insensitive to a sacred tradition and honor. Many high schools across the country have reevaluated their use of Native American names and images, many have decided on changing mascots.

Sports not only took a stance against racial injustice in 2020, they also were a platform for voting campaigns. The Big Ten Conference wore vote decals prior to the election. The NFL ran advertisements to encourage more Americans to vote in the presidential election. Even the NBA and MLB did work to encourage more to vote, despite being out of season while the election was nearing. Stadiums opened as new polling places to provide greater opportunity for all Americans to vote.

The 2020 sports year has shown that teams are willing to take action and spread awareness about the issues facing the nation. We can hope that their example has inspired others to follow their lead in fighting racial injustice.

Please read the full story online at thelancene newspaper.com