



Copeland and his lasting legacy

Michelle Kelly '23
Copy Editor

Superintendent Robert Copeland has spent the past six years working to uphold the standards of LMSD. Under his leadership, students, faculty, and families have prospered. While facing the challenges of building an entirely new middle school, he continued to support the ten nationally recognized institutions that make LMSD so successful. However, his tenure in the district is officially coming to a close, as Copeland recently announced his plan to retire this fall.

Copeland had strong support from many faculty members within the district. School Board Secretary and Copeland's Executive Assistant Denise LaPera shared the pleasures of working with Copeland through complications and challenges: "He deeply cares about public education and it shows in the many difficult decisions he has had to make, especially this past year." During the pandemic, Copeland adapted quickly and handled unprecedented situations with grace. School board Vice President Melissa Gilbert describes his leadership as "extraordinary," naming his countless efforts during his tenure. "He has demonstrated transformational leadership," Gilbert explains, "implementing our progressive strategic plan, introducing program evaluation to guide changes, and [showing] budgeting and facilities expertise during a time of rapid enrollment growth, budget constraints, and attacks on public education." The emphasis he places on the cruciality of education demonstrates his devotion to the position. Teachers and students grew to know him due to his frequent visits and personal relationships established throughout his tenure. Social studies teacher Charles Henneberry appreci-

ated Copeland's open mind, describing him as "passionate about exploring new ideas to improve academic outcomes for the students of the district." Gilbert noticed Copeland's emphasis on interpersonal connections, and how he generally "maintained a focus on the holistic and academic needs of our students." Henneberry also acknowledged how Copeland "encouraged 'out of the box' teaching if it engaged students," allowing him more independence and opportunities in the classroom. This example of his care for the student body was one of the many ways in which he excelled in his role to advance student achievement and success.

In addition, many community members note that his role as the first African American superintendent of LMSD strengthened the meaning of racial equity initiatives he spearheaded in response to current events. These included "restorative justice practices, universal screening for the gifted program, and the creation of the Achievement Imperative Task Force," said Gilbert. His vast achievements will be recognized by the LMSD community for decades to come.

Originally, Copeland had planned to retire as soon as the new middle school was completed and open for students. He described this initial decision, stating, "My daughter graduated from college last year ...originally, she and I were going to 'graduate' together. And when the school was getting discussed, the board leadership knew that I would stay until the school was built and then I was going to retire." Due to the fact that the timing of the middle school's finalization and his daughter's graduation lined up, it seemed a logical time to step back from the position.

Please see COPELAND AND HIS LASTING LEGACY on page 19



Photo courtesy of Amy Buckman

Copeland reflects on his accomplishments and the obstacles he faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Playback: reviewing LM's COVID-19 response

Davis Giangiuilio '21, Jackie Munis '21, and Rebecca Altman '21

The 2020-21 school year was one of the most difficult to date for everyone. In conversations with more than forty students, teachers, administrators, and parents, taking a look back on this year, it was revealed why certain decisions were made, what people thought of them, and the ramifications they had on the entire community in this uncertain time. At the end of last year, there was hope that this year would start with some model of in-person instruction. This sentiment collapsed when the School Board voted 8-1 to start the year virtually.

Superintendent Robert Copeland said the choice was not because the school was unprepared for in-person instruction: "By the end of August, the concern was Labor Day... people were going to go away, they weren't going to socially distance." Shawn Mooring, a School Board Director, described his reasoning for voting to keep schools closed. "I personally was not completely satisfied with the Health and Safety Plan based on what I understood the risks for spread to be... It was the possibility of exposing our students to a deadly disease that could take out a whole family if things went wrong."

The vote to keep schools virtual had a lone dissenter, Laurie Actman. "To me, the costs of keeping schools closed were always high because some students cannot learn at all virtually...I thought the decision should be the last resort." She felt like the proposal was more of a shutdown, as there was no plan presented at that time on when the return to in-person instruction would be.

Overall, teachers, staff members, and students alike were united in their belief that the decision was smart and necessary. "At the time, I definitely was not upset because cases were still bad over the summer," said Grace McNally '21. Teachers had to essentialize their learning to meet these new schedule standards. "I had already clarified my thinking about what was important," said English teacher Meredith Dyson. "There is a little bit of stress of 'are they going to learn enough?'" But she says the fact that everyone was going through this situation comforted her.

With Labor Day in the rear view mirror, eager students slowly began returning to the classroom in the hybrid model. "I think one of the primary reasons I went back was because I knew online school was not working for me," said Jada Goonewardene '21.

Please see PLAYBACK: REVIEWING LM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE on page 19

NEWS
CALM before the storm
Take a look at Climate Activists LM's (CALM) recent protest outside the administration building. **page 3**



OPINIONS
Student free speech
Should the school be able to punish student social media usage? Find out what LM thinks. **page 5**



SPECIAL FEATURE
The Dolphin
Take a look at the creative writing and art that LM's literary magazine The Dolphin has developed this year. **pages 12 and 13**

FEATURES
Mother's Day activities
Learn about the importance of Mother's Day and how to show appreciation to your maternal figures. **page 15**

A&E
...and the show goes on
Julia Dubnoff '23 recaps the Players-Fest performance and describes the behind the scenes action. **page 14**

SPORTS
The ever-changing sports situation
Luke Shepard '24 takes a closer look at how sports have adapted their seasons to accomodate the pandemic. **page 24**

The Merionite

Vaccine rollout

Lila Schwartzberg '24

After an entire year of waiting in limbo for some progress in the COVID-19 pandemic, the vaccine has finally become available to many people throughout the country. The distribution of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to people ages sixteen and older has led many teens to schedule times to receive their shot. At LM in particular, many students have already received one or both of their doses. Many found that the second shot had more side effects than the first. Many felt sore, had a headache, were drowsy, among effects from the shot are normal

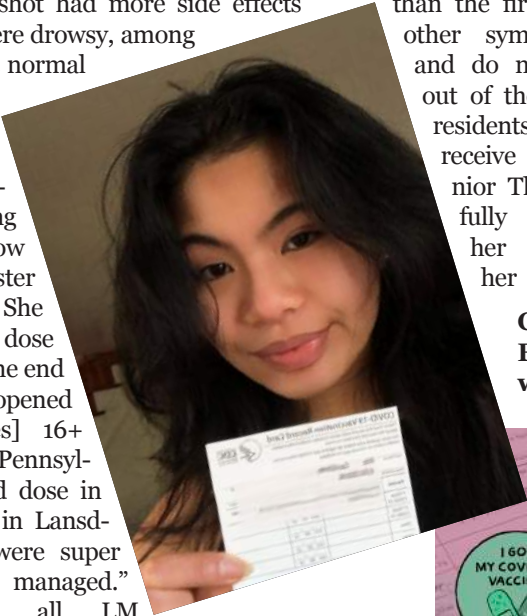
Due to the roll-
Montgomery County
of sixteen are eligible to
Entire families, like se-
family, are becoming
Kerekes explains how
up at 4:00 a.m. to register
appointment online. She
advised, "I got my first dose
in Utah at a hospital at the end
of March because they opened
[the vaccine] to [ages] 16+
much earlier than in [Pennsyl-
vania]. I got my second dose in
Pennsylvania at a CVS in Lansd-
owne. Both locations were super
quick, easy and well managed."

Unfortunately, not all LM students were able to receive the vaccine in the same seamless manner. Senior Faye Berry's experience was much more disorganized. Berry's dad was scheduled for an appointment and luckily there were extra doses left over for her. Berry explains how, "employees as young as me were writing down the names of people registering for the vaccine on printer paper. They could not find my name when I came in for the second vaccine and had to write me down again." Like Berry, several other students have driven to local pharmacies or vaccination sites in hopes of there being leftover vaccines from the day. Since the vaccines expire after a certain amount of time, healthcare providers usually offer these extra doses to those who show up at the last minute so that they will not be wasted. Other students have taken more non traditional routes to receive a vaccine.

Jason Castello '21 had a similar occurrence when a family friend of his was at a local Rite Aid and asked the pharmacist if they gave extra doses to people. The employee was kind enough to agree to call the Castello family after the family friend gave the worker their number. In a matter of hours the Castelllos received a call telling them that if they came down to Rite Aid they could all get leftover shots.

While a considerable number of LM students have received the vaccine, some may be hesitant to get it. However, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine, getting the shot will not only protect you from getting sick, but it will also help prevent the spread of the virus to others in your community. Underscore the importance of receiving the vaccine. Many believe that the vaccine was created so fast that it might not be as effective as others. The Hill Golden, M.D., M.H.S. disputes this claim, saying, "The vaccines were made using processes that have been developed and tested over many years, and which are designed to make—and thoroughly test—vaccines quickly in case of an infectious disease pandemic like we are seeing with COVID-19." Additionally, people should aim to get the vaccine as soon as they can. As Johns Hopkins Medicine states, "Waiting too long to be vaccinated allows the coronavirus to continue spreading in the community, with new variants emerging."

If you are sixteen or older, you are currently eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine and if you are eighteen or older you may receive the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine. To schedule a vaccine appointment you may go to the CVS or Rite Aid websites at cvs.com or riteaid.com. Due to the high demand for vaccines, the process may be difficult: involving lots of clicking, refreshing, changing zip codes, and trying multiple times. Students may also use the PA Department of Health website and their map on health.pa.gov which indicates sites that had the vaccine available. Now that the vaccine is available to anyone over the age of sixteen, it is important that all those who are eligible get vaccinated to protect themselves and their community.



Caroline Vo '22 (left) and Emmi Wu '23 (right) pose with their vaccination cards.



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

New year, new changes

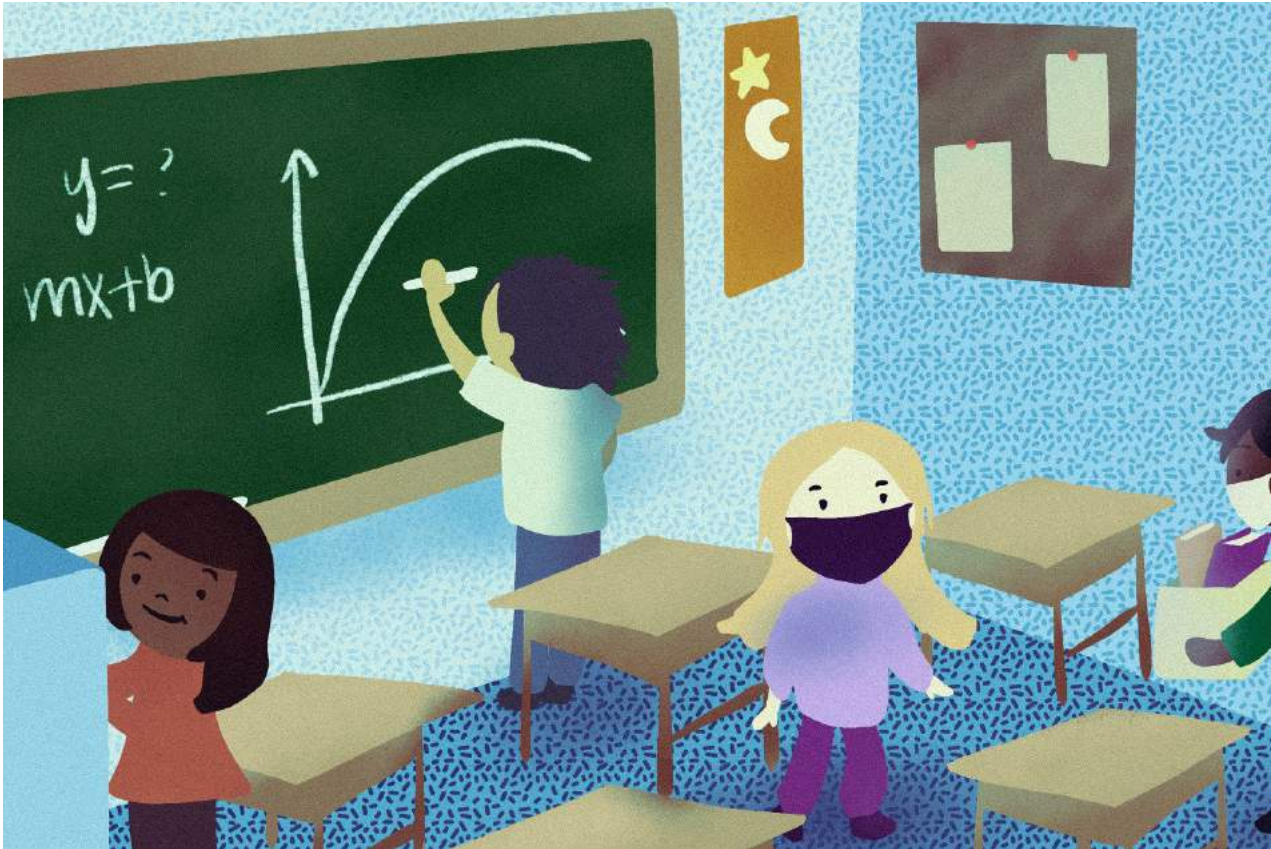
Zoe Hassett '23

As the end of the 2020-2021 school year approaches, LM students and faculty members have begun to reflect on the last atypical school year. Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, LM transitioned between completely virtual and hybrid schedules for most of the year. The month of March ushered in the introduction of a more traditional, fully in-person schedule, even though some students chose to remain completely virtual through the LMSD@HOME program. Regardless, the past school year has presented new challenges for all LM community members. Luckily, with the proliferation of several new COVID-19 vaccines and the current, consistent school schedule, the future looks much brighter. However, now a new question arises: What will LM look like next year?

When asked about future plans, LM Principal Sean Hughes explained that there are still no definite answers. He details, "We are calling these discussions, 'What stays and what will we no longer need!' Teachers and curriculum supervisors will be thinking about curriculum and assessments through this lens for next year. At the same time, the district offices will be thinking about all of the options offered this year and their future like LMSD@HOME." While there are yet to be plans set in stone, current discussions provide an idea of what the new school year may entail. For instance, it is likely that traditional teaching methods and assessments will make a comeback as school returns to its normal environment and scheduling. Additionally, the question of LMSD@HOME, as stated by Hughes, is still in the air as COVID-19 continues to play a serious role in preventing several LM students from returning to the in-person classroom. Choosing to stay virtual through LMSD@HOME was an inevitable decision for students living with high-risk family members. Others felt uneasy returning to school amidst the ongoing global pandemic, while some simply preferred the benefits of learning in the comfort of their own home. Moreover, one of the most controversial and essential questions among LM students about the upcoming year is whether there will be a return of Lunch and Learn or a continuation of asynchronous Fridays. While some students prefer relaxing at home and catching up on homework at the end of the week during asynchronous Fridays, others enjoy spending extra time with friends and seeing teachers during the hour of daily Lunch and Learn in a normal sched-

ule. Most, however, agree with Myra Woerdman '23, who comments, "I hope to keep asynchronous Fridays and I would prefer longer lunches." She also acknowledges that one of the most popular advantages of asynchronous Fridays—should students not require world language or social studies assistance—is getting time to sleep in past the usual 7:30 a.m. school start time. Conversations about whether LM will resume its normal five day schedule are still transpiring, but Hughes expresses that he hopes Lunch and Learn will return since he was one of its creators. Kaelin Edge '23 similarly notes, "I hope that LM creates a schedule for this upcoming school year that is accommodating to all students, parents, faculty, and staff." General scheduling plans are still in deliberation, however, LM staff and faculty expect the school day to provide for everyone's different educational needs and ambitions. Another topic looming over the heads of students about the 2021-2022 school year is how athletics and activities will operate. Activities and Athletics Director Jason Stroup states, "As of right now we are planning on starting fall sports on schedule, and I anticipate a pretty regular start as far as timing goes." In terms of

school clubs, he elaborates, "I anticipate more clubs and activities will be able to meet in person next fall." Ordinary sport seasons and club meetings returning are great news for students, especially for fall athletes who missed out on games and practices due to COVID-19 regulations, and clubs such as BuildOn and the Debate team that met over Zoom for the entirety of the past year. Athlete Ava Altman '23 comments, "To stay safe during the pandemic I would get a COVID-19 test every week which was easy but the line long took forever." Altman also hopes that sports will one day be played without masks again to improve endurance during competitions. Overall, many are hopeful that the new school year will bring positive changes so students and staff can teach, learn, and enjoy LM as similarly as possible to when living in a pre-COVID-19 environment. Aniah Gagliano '23 mentions, "I also hope we can move toward a full return as more people get vaccinated and COVID-19 cases decrease." In a school year full of the unpredictable, there is still a lot of uncertainty about what the future holds for LM. Nonetheless, the LM community is optimistic and confident that the new school year will be a success no matter the circumstances.



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

CALM before the storm

Maggie Monahan '21

LMSD is currently planning to build a new middle school that will open for the 2022-2023 school year. This is thought to be a necessary solution to the overcrowded classrooms in LMSD due to the rapid increase in students enrolled in the district over the past few years; this phenomenon has resulted in Merion Elementary School, Penn Wynne Elementary School, and Bala Cynwyd Middle School installing temporary modular classrooms on their respective fields and parking lots to accommodate the increased amount of students. Despite the demand for the district to fix the overcrowding problem, local activist groups are bothered by the loss of trees at the intended site of the middle school. This upset in the LM community led to a protest outside the Administration building on April 16.

Since 2018, there has been a plan in place for LMSD to begin constructing a new middle school, with the school being constructed on 1860 Montgomery Avenue. While the logistics surrounding construction of the school are not definite yet, administrators have planned the introduction of the new middle school to coincide with transitioning into a new fifth through eighth grade middle school model. Although there has been some controversy over the inevitable demolition of the historical Clairemont Farm/Morris Clothier Estate located at 1860 Montgomery Avenue, the sites that the community has really taken issue with are 1800 Montgomery and 1835 County Line. This area is currently heavily wooded, and the school district plans to remove 502 trees to clear field space for students. "An environmental tragedy is unfolding," reads the text of a petition on change.org to save these woods. The text goes on to plead with the township and school district to "work together to exhaustively and completely



Photo by Charles Henneberry

Helen O'Grady '23 and other members of Climate Activists LM (CALM) gathered outside the administration building to oppose the proposal to clear 502 trees across from the Stoneleigh site.

explore all other options," and asks that concerned citizens email LM School Board Directors to express their fears. The protest is sponsored by Climate Action LM (CALM), the same activist group responsible for organizing the April 16 protests.

A flyer posted both on the Facebook page of the Wynnewood Civic Association and as an update to the aforementioned petition on change.org asked residents to join CALM in protest at the LM Administration building

on April 16 to "stop the LMSD plan to clearcut 500 trees." According to Noa Forher '23, who attended the protest,

about forty people answered the call and the protest lasted for about two hours. "I personally wanted to go because people have already torn down so much wildlife, and it would be horrible if they tore down hundreds of trees that have been around for a hundred years," claims Forher. She also cites potential habitat destruction and increased global warming as the result of the removal of these trees as reasons she was motivated to attend the protest. Forher reports that while there, the people gathered "played music, voiced our opinions, and talked about the importance of these trees" before marching to the police station.

Despite its small size, the protest was somewhat effective. According to CALM's website, LMSD withdrew its proposal to cut down 502 trees on April 19, three days after the protest. However, in the same post, CALM urged community members not to stop fighting, stating that "although a short pause has been achieved, we do not yet consider this irreplaceable habitat to be 'safe.'" CALM believes that the next step is for community members to continue writing to the School Board and the LM Commissioners to ensure that the new proposal, which is set to be presented in June, will have less of an effect on the environment.

Seniors survive stressful application season

Caryl Shepard '22
News Editor

Among the most stressful times of high school, and arguably, of one's life, is embarking on the journey of the college admissions process. From taking standardized tests (often more than once), visiting scores of colleges across the country, pouring time and stress into an essay, and patiently waiting to hear back, the entire process hinders what would be a care-free senior year. As each new batch of students enters its senior year, thousands of applications flood universities throughout the country, ensuing in a wave of fear and excitement, acceptance and rejection, for those students.

However, seniors this year faced unique struggles while going through this same process. Due to last year's lockdown, many seniors were unable to visit the very institutions that they were applying to, leaving them in doubt of what environment they would truly thrive in. According to MJ Pennington '21, the only way to get a good look inside colleges was to do so through unorthodox methods: "I did a lot of sneaking onto campus to try and get a sense of the place without doing an official tour." Universities also opted to waive requirements for standardized testing, resulting in many more students applying to schools they otherwise would have chalked up to a mere dream. Additionally, seniors this year had to compete with students from the class of 2020 who chose to defer or reapply to avoid experiencing college in a compromised setting during the early stages of the pandemic. Dean of undergraduate admissions at Duke University, Christoph Guttentag, emphasized the effects of deferrals from the class of 2020 stating, "Ten percent of the class entering this fall were admitted a year ago, and decided to take a gap year [leaving] fewer places than normal." Pandemic-related college admissions posed new stressors to an already compromised senior year.

All of these factors contributed to one of the most competitive application cycles

in history. Likely due to the test optional policy, competitive institutions received a notable uptick in applications. Schools such as New York University and the University of California at Los Angeles received 95,000 and 139,000 applications respectively.

Additionally, the Ivy League schools released decisions a week later than they typically do, simply due to the sheer number of applications they received. According to Kelly Walter, dean of undergraduate admissions at Boston University, schools were flooded with applications but were unable to admit more students: "As more and more students apply, of course the admit rate goes down. We're not in a position to admit additional students."

The substantial increase in applications, led to many surprising decisions from countless institutions for LM seniors, making an already stressful process even more worrisome. While some students opted to apply Early Decision to their top choice, others submitted numerous applications to await the Regular Decision deadline. Many were surprised after receiving rejections from schools they previously thought they would get into. Jamie Eldridge '21 emphasizes that she did not

anticipate the extent of competitiveness during this admissions cycle, recalling, "Although I knew the pandemic would change the applicant process, I was honestly so shocked by the drop of acceptance rates." Students also reported that they had to wait longer to hear back from the colleges they applied to. As said by Tara Gabor '21, "Many schools took a while to get back with decisions, which was definitely stressful."

While some LM seniors may not have received a decision they were entirely content

with, they are happy that their senior year is coming to a somewhat normal end. After months of variation between all virtual and hybrid instruction, returning to school fully in-person, if only for a few weeks, leaves them more optimistic.



Seniors commemorate their final week at school by representing the colleges they plan to attend this fall.



Photos by Aiko Palaypayon '23/Staff

After an especially tough college admissions season, seniors were finally able to celebrate their commitments after Decision Day.

April showers bring May...floods?

Shaine Davison '23



Photo by Aiko Palaypayon '23/Staff

Increased rainfall will impact outdoor sports, such as lacrosse, at LM.

The popular elementary rhyme “April showers bring May flowers” may not be as applicable this spring as it usually has in past years. People’s expectations for May include warm weather, sun, and a preview to summer. There will still be some beautiful days, but climate change has altered usual weather patterns. Flowers are blooming earlier, glaciers are shrinking, and the behavior among animals is shifting. While these are just a few of the detrimental effects of climate change, there are specific ones that apply to the LM community. This May, more rainfall and higher temperatures are predicted in LM Township.

Rainfall levels in Pennsylvania are expected to surge compared to previous years. In the last fifty years, the frequency of heavy rain in the Northeast has grown by nearly 75 percent. This is not a normal cycle of the earth, but a drastic effect of the world’s climate change crisis. These levels lead to flooding and a large risk of mudslides that can threaten homes. Flooding is one of the most common natural disasters in Pennsylvania, destroying thousands of homes and costing a fortune each year. Homes near water or in low-lying areas are at an increased risk of flooding. The rising rainfall will cancel school practices, sports, and other outdoor activities. Within the first week of

May, four of the seven days have a solid chance of rain. This does not ring in the usual “turning the corner” feeling at school. Sophomore Emma Burke is a player on the LM girls’ soccer team and plays for the LM Soccer Club. Her athletics require a lot of time outdoors on different types of fields, which are compromised by rain. Burke voiced, “It definitely rains quite a bit. It’s annoying because if we ever have anything scheduled on grass and there’s rain or it’s recently rained, our games and practices get cancelled because we would ruin the fields. Luckily I really only play on turf so that doesn’t affect me too much but it definitely has a negative impact on teams who are maybe less fortunate and can’t afford to play on turf fields. With rain during practice we may not be as productive because the quality of play is not as good. Rain can interfere with games because it can create unfair situations that would not happen in normal weather conditions. It’s also hard to maintain focus and stay mentally strong when it’s downpouring.” This weather change that may seem minor has greater impacts than at first glance.

Warmer-than-normal temperatures are also expected to hit LM this spring on top of the increased rainfall. According to the Pennsylvania department of Environmental Protection, temperatures in Pennsylvania rose 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit in the last century. This growth is not part of earth’s natural heating and cooling phases. Pennsylvania is expected to warm another 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050, tripling the current number in only 29 years. These higher temperatures have led to higher concentrations of ground-level ozone, which can lead to greater asthma rates come springtime. Brynn Adler '23 expressed, “My asthma gets worse in the spring and times of generally warm weather, because of the large amount of pollen floating around.” She is one of the many people at LM who have asthma and/or pollen allergies. Warmer temperatures allow for pollen to be produced quicker and earlier, making 2021 one of the longest pollen seasons recorded. This past winter, the temperatures ranged from the high teens to the mid-fifties. Although many of LM’s students opted for a virtual schedule at home, there were only one or two instances where classes were cancelled for winter weather. Compared to the raging snowstorms Pennsylvania is notorious for, this year was very underwhelming in the snow department due to this heating.

Temperatures in Philadelphia are projected to be similar to those in Richmond, Virginia. It is not natural for a city in the northeast to share temperatures with a city in the south. These new weather conditions are far from normal and disturb the LM community. LM students know the frustration of receiving an email that practice was cancelled because of rain. The grass fields across the streets absorb so much water that they take days to dry. This warmer and wetter weather cuts winter short and leads to a long, pollen-infested spring. As the school year begins to wrap up and the LM community adapts to spring, the effects of this rainy, humid season rub off on LM students.

Programming through the pandemic

Phillip Gao '22
News Editor

Every year, programmers from LM and neighboring schools anticipate competing in the coding competition, CodeLM. However, just as the pandemic has done with many other events, it could not be hosted in-person like in previous years. Therefore, the competition had to be adapted to fit an online setting, with students competing from the comfort of their homes. Despite the virtual format, the LM Computer Science Club was able to organize yet another memorable event for many to enjoy.

The brains of the operation was the combination of a hardworking student team, a dedicated LM alumnus, and two driven advisors. The question development, solution testing, and sample data creation was managed by an eight person team consisting of seniors Keene Brogan, Sam Hecht, Alex Zhang, Ben Warren, and juniors Jonathan Xu, Phillip Gao, Simon Roling and Chris Jarocha. Alumnus Noah Rubin '17 also played a major role, as he personally designed the dashboard in which the participants competed. Finally, Computer Science teachers Tom Swope and Justin Mansor oversaw the team and facilitated the planning of LM.

The objective of the CodeLM competition is to score the most points by completing as many of the twelve programming problems that are presented. Students had the choice of working individually or in a team to complete these problems, and would receive a prize should they place in the top three of the intermediate, advanced, or expert division. Furthermore, to make the questions more interesting and engaging, the problems each incorporated a Casino Night theme. The questions ranged from calculating the best poker hand to sorting a deck of cards.

When the results came out, the Aces proved that they were dominant in programming. LM had a strong show, with placements in every division of difficulty. Freshman Joseph Cicalese, along with Harriton sophomores Thaddeus Kiker and Harold Mack, placed second in the intermediate division. In the advanced division, LM sophomores Ari Steinfeld, Andy Sun, and Mark Lancaster finished second. Finally, junior Jonathan Zhang and sophomore Sasha Murray topped off this spectacular LM run with a third place finish in the expert division.

Planning and running the event had both its challenges and highlights. Xu describes some of the difficulties the team faced, recalling that “with the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to meet as a team in person for the most part, which added a new challenge in scheduling meeting times that worked for everyone and really keeping everyone on the same page.” The team also found that getting new club members was a challenging task, as it was difficult to engage everyone through Zoom meetings. Swope notes that, “A main goal of CodeLM is to help build community among students that are taking Computer Science courses here at LM. It was difficult to maintain this piece when much of our planning was done through Zoom.” Nonetheless, LM’s Computer Science Club was able to persevere through these challenges and



Photo courtesy of Noah Rubin '17

Alumnus Noah Rubin '17 prepares himself to host CodeLM nationally over Zoom.

create a groundbreaking event. “Ultimately, we were able to overcome the hurdles the pandemic presented with collective team effort and collaboration,” says Xu.

As for what the participants thought, most of the feedback was extremely positive. Some found the challenging aspect of the competition inviting and entertaining. One student responded by saying, “This was a very different and more difficult type of coding than what I’m used to, so I had lots of fun!” Many simply liked being able to work with their friends. A participant from all the way from Utah reflected on the event, stating, “I thought it was a very fun competition! Even putting all the prizes and stuff away, it was really fun to work with my friends to solve problems.” In general, the consensus for the event was that there should be another: ninety percent of the participants who responded to the feedback survey said they would compete in CodeLM again.

Although they saw a lot of success with CodeLM already, the team hopes to expand its reach even further next year. Swope expresses his enthusiasm by saying, “I’m excited about being in person again and to get more students involved in the planning process.” CodeLM has attracted students from many schools, counties, and states. With the positive feedback, the word about CodeLM will continue to reach more and more people. Needless to say, the future of this competition looks very promising.

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Editorial: Free but fair student speech

Should schools have the right to punish student behavior on social media that happens outside of school? This question has persisted as one of the most equivocal dilemmas about the schooling system for the past half century. Yet in a matter of weeks, it may finally be unanswered no longer.

In a case that appears as amusing as it is unsurprisingly in character for high school drama, a freshman girl named Brandi Levy fuming for being passed over for her school's varsity cheerleading team posted a Snapchat message from an off-campus setting, raising her middle finger and captioning "F--- school f--- softball f--- cheer f--- everything." The cheerleading coaches, arguing that Levy had violated the team's code of ethics, provisionally suspended Levy from the team. Following Levy's initiation of a suit against the district, the Supreme Court is now considering the question of whether students can be punished for what they say beyond the walls of school.

As declared under prior Supreme Court precedent, schools do have the power to

regulate student behavior in general at school. However, as of yet, no Supreme Court decision has definitively split the difference on arguments regarding school regulation of speech outside of school. With the additional dimension of social media to navigate, this novel case presents stiff new complications for the Supreme Court to untangle in order to establish a new precedent for off-campus regulation of speech.

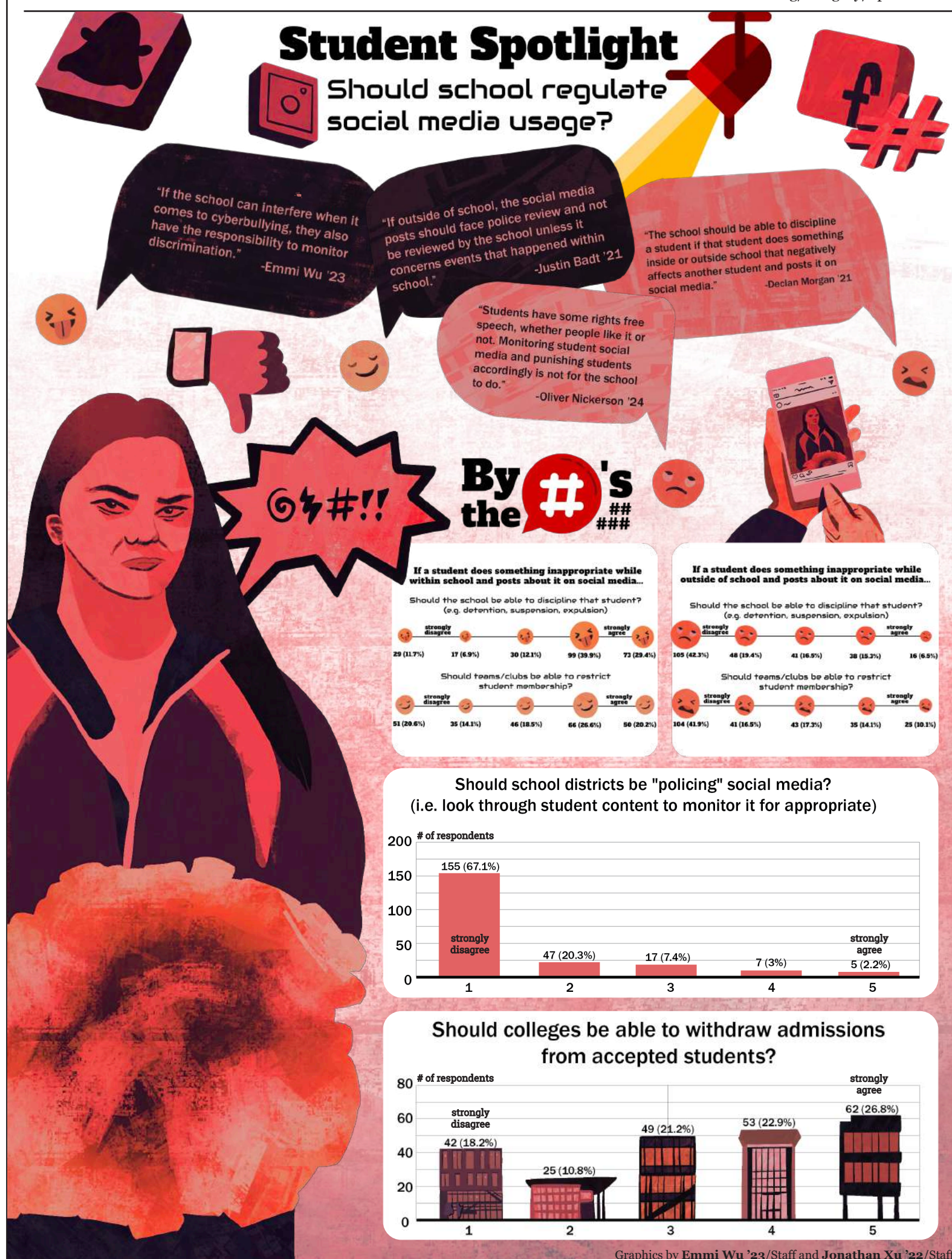
The key question in this case stands: does the school have the right to punish a student for behavior outside of school, even if it constitutes harmful or illegal action? Under official Supreme Court doctrine, the answer is likely "no." The strict definition of "school speech" precludes most scenarios involving outside actions from even reaching the bench—and most of the justices seem to stand in unison behind this belief. Yet this standard is completely oblivious of the primary duty a school has to its students: the preservation of their safety.

Whereas at the time when the SCOTUS precedent on school regulation was first laid

down, threats like cyberbullying and online harassment seemed to be conjurations of an unrealistic future, today these hazards come a dime a dozen and pose serious dangers to student health and educational success. It's shocking that sixty percent of teenagers have experienced some form of cyberbullying in today's digital world, a peril that school administrators are technically unable to deter according to past Supreme Court rulings. The Levy case, although not dealing directly with this matter, could present the opportunity for the Court to clarify this murky terrain for good. If the justices establish a ruling that enables schools to protect students from digital dangers beyond school walls, it could mean untold more lives saved or ameliorated and an impact far exceeding what you might expect from a lone incident of teenage indignation.

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Zooming into a new year



Amanda Donahoe '23

How many hours a day do you spend on your computer? For students who have opted to complete their school year online due to the coronavirus pandemic, the amount of time spent in front of a laptop screen has increased significantly. This raises many questions and concerns about mental and physical health, as well as the ability to retain the school experience over video conference calls. During the 2020-21 school year, LMSD has operated on hybrid, virtual, and, most recently, in-person four day learn-

with more breaks in between classes and, for students still outside the building, less class time spent on Zoom. The school system “is not built” to accommodate for a situation such as this, according to a report by the Economic Policy Institute, and therefore has resulted in an inadequate learning experience for those who remain at home during the hybrid and four-day in-person schedules. To combat the fatigue, excessive screen time, and heightened stress that virtual learning brings, students should be allowed and encouraged to take breaks from their computers, and a lighter workload should be assigned. If students are not required to be in front of their laptop to complete as many assignments and attend class for such longevity, the mental and physical consequences would not be as adverse. Even young children have been affected by this issue. For some elementary and pre-elementary school students, spending seven hours a day in front of a screen can contribute to “thinning of the brain’s cortex, the area related to criti-



Graphic by Emma Liu '22/Staff

ing. The varying schedules all contain pros and cons; however, learning completely remotely has proven to be challenging both physically and mentally for students. In order to address negative physical and mental health effects of remote learning, LMSD should reduce the amount of assignments per class and introduce more breaks in the schedule due to lack of student motivation and excessive stationary screen time. This issue is currently negatively affecting students’ motivation and energy levels. When a student is learning in front of a screen, the experience is inferior to that of a classroom setting. Virtual learning fatigue, or “Zoom fatigue,” has swept through the school district, leaving behind excessive tiredness and decreased motivation. According to High Focus Centers, when interacting face-to-face with friends and teachers, the brain uses social cues such as “facial expressions, eye contact, and body language when processing conversation.” When these indicators are removed, it becomes difficult for students to stay alert and attentive. As a result, those who attend class on Zoom are experiencing difficulties retaining information and understanding concepts. A lighter student workload would succor this issue because the less assignments that virtual learners need to complete, the less time they spend on Zoom meetings and in front of their screen. Even as classes have been shifting back to in-person, they should be reimagined

cal thinking and reasoning,” according to a key National Institutes of Health study in 2018. The interruption of brain development is scary for parents, teachers, and students alike; thus, taking extended breaks from the computer is crucial. Additionally, aside from physical health concerns, too much screen time is detrimental to students’ mental health. Some parents have expressed concerns over the virtual learning schedule carrying into future endeavors, dreading that “children will start foregoing physical and social activities for digital pursuits. Some also fear that too much screen time may suck the joy out of the educational experience,” according to an EdSource article. We should make taking a break from the computer a priority to preserve the mental and physical health of students, even if that means thinning the workload and introducing longer, screen-free gaps in the school day, even for those who are still making the transition back to in-person learning. In order to address negative physical and mental health effects of remote learning, LMSD should reduce the amount of assignments per class because of lack of student motivation and introduce more breaks in the schedule due to lack of student motivation and excessive stationary screen time, which can cause a variety of adverse effects on student health and in turn decrease learning efficiency. As we navigate back in person, we should make sure we keep students first and content second.

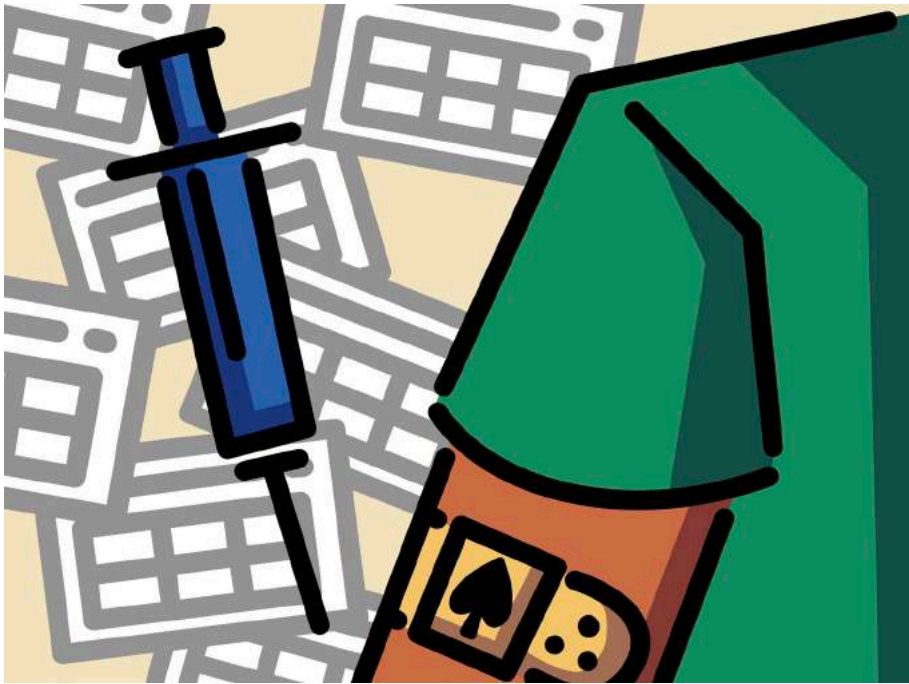
Be prepared



Liam Shack '22

While we have over the past year seen several changes to the school schedule, one of the most notable changes has been the addition of LMSD@Home, which provides students with the option of being able to participate in school from home. Even if all students at school are able to get vaccinated by the fall of 2021, the school should still keep the LMSD@Home option. If a fully vaccinated student gets COVID-19, the school needs to be able to give the student the option to do school from home since quarantine is recommended to last two weeks. Getting yourself caught up after two weeks of missing school is not a simple task. In addition, chances are that not everyone in the school will get vaccinated by the fall of 2021, whether it is due to religious reasons, a fear factor, or because people under sixteen might not be able to get vaccinated by the fall. Furthermore, even with the vaccine available, new variants of COVID-19 can come into existence that might be resistant to the now-available vaccine. The school must keep the LMSD@Home option for the

school need to feel safe while learning. Otherwise their anxiety about being in the building could act as a distraction and impede their academic pursuits. In addition, the possibility that not everyone will be vaccinated by the fall could become a factor for the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak and thus should be taken into consideration by the district. Especially if students under 16 cannot get vaccinated by the fall, we could see potential infections among the freshman and sophomore class. This potential outbreak could then spread to everyone despite who did and did not get vaccinated, and possibly even outside of LM because students can go home and unintentionally spread the virus within their community. This could cause Lower Merion Township to see a resurgence in COVID-19, an outcome the school district has a duty to prevent. While efforts on both a communal and national level have certainly made a difference in bringing the pandemic closer to an end, now is most definitely not a time to underestimate the deadliness and potency of this pandemic. In addition to averting the unnecessary dangers of further transmission if students are not vaccinated, LMSD@Home also serves as a viable working model to turn students’ homes into miniature learning environments. Whereas in a normal school year, a student who is absent from school would miss all the lessons and classes of the day, LMSD@Home has the benefit of providing a safety net for students who may be absent from school on a given day, allowing them



Graphic by Nina Aagaard '22

safety of both students and teachers. Even if you get fully vaccinated, you still run the risk of contracting COVID-19 that you then might be able to spread (as the majority of COVID-19 cases that involve fully vaccinated people tend to go undiagnosed because these cases are typically asymptomatic). Therefore, the school needs to do two things. Firstly, they must continue testing students and teachers for COVID-19, which, according to Vice Principal Tyrone Ross, the district is already planning on continuing. Secondly, the school district should provide an at-home option for students who either do not feel safe going into the building, do not get vaccinated, or who get tested positive for COVID-19. If the school does not provide the option of LMSD@Home this fall, there could be a major outbreak of COVID-19 that would go temporarily unseen. Students who test positive, cannot or do not want to get vaccinated, or are scared to go into

to still attend classes online and not miss any of the content during those classes, as well as provisioning another educational venue for students to thrive in during ever-changing times. As seen, it is crucial that the school keeps the option of LMSD@Home. The COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet, and it could possibly last for longer than we expect. If the school gets rid of LMSD@Home, there is a greater possibility that the duration of the pandemic will increase. Whether that would cause a little backlash or a dramatic change, families and individuals would likely be hit even harder by the pandemic than previously. The school needs to be prepared for any possible scenario in order to keep everyone safe. No one wants to be forced to walk through the front doors of the school building wondering if they will unknowingly bring the virus home to their family or give the virus to one or more of their teachers.

Racism revealed



Noah Barkan '24

The height of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in May have undoubtedly changed the world we live in. From entertainment to political policy to the way race is discussed in America, the murder of George Floyd and the outrage it caused has clearly had a lasting impact on us all. The areas of this country that have been impacted the most by slavery, segregation, and systematic oppression have received the most changes. In fact, the current Congress is the most racially diverse in history. However, one part of American society still needs much more work. The education system in the U.S. has many racial problems: it's no secret that this system is one of the most citable instances of racial oppression. A simple comparison of an inner-city public school and a high school like LM should show this. On a less broad level, the racial problems still exist. LM has a reputation for being progressive and liberal through its classes and programs, but the dark truth is that there still remains malignant traces of racism within our school as well as an insensitivity towards it seen in the faculty and students alike.

Prior to the BLM protests last year, racism in LM was blatantly obvious. Students have voiced concerns over the problems. Rissa Howard '22 stated, "Microaggressions happen to me all the time and have over past years at LM. One time this kid found out I was Black and was like 'wow she's Black and she actually gets good grades.'" Howard recalls teachers being within earshot and not taking any action. She is far from being alone. I remember hearing a white history teacher telling us that the European colonists we studied in class were "our ancestors," completely ignoring the many students whose history wasn't that of the white, European, Christian conquistador. In past years, I also remembered white students stealing durags from Black students and wearing them while making jokes about playing basketball better. Spreading stereotypes about commu-

nities and appropriating cultures is never something that should be tolerated yet is commonplace at LM.

Since the death of George Floyd last May, the school district appears to be putting on an educated, progressive façade. The school district began sending out emails and releasing public statements concerning their support for Black students and apologies for the racist actions of several students. However, many students feel that there is no action behind those words. Simone Reece '24 states, "the school district can apologize as much as it wants but there's a point where they just aren't doing anything." Instead of working on these problems and actively trying to reduce racism at LM, the school district and administration appears to be more comfortable apologizing in a broad, evasive way for the actions of their students. They are not accountable to the students who they influence. One more problem these emails and statements highlight is the power white parents have over Black parents. The district was never concerned with supporting students of color until the BLM protests raised the awareness of white people who have never had to experience oppression. It was only once those parents

ing diversity, inclusivity, and equity in all aspects of LM culture. The faults of the district have fallen on the backs of the students it is supposed to protect.

Though administration holds great power in the district, perhaps an even more important factor in our school's culture is the teachers. Several teachers have done an exemplary job educating themselves and holding conversations in classrooms. That being said, a vast majority of the educators at LM have not held themselves responsible in the past nor in reaction to the BLM awareness. Not a single one of my teachers mentioned the Derek Chauvin case while almost every teacher covered white-led protests such as the insurrection at the Capitol. Though many teachers do not have the authority to change the curriculum they are given, there are numerous instances where current issues can be added to their lessons. Most teachers simply are not taking the responsibility to do so. The damage done in the classroom doesn't end with negligence. When teachers do talk about racial issues, they have been pushing Black students to give their personal input on topics they may not feel comfortable talking about. Munis notes, "I constantly feel pressure as a Black student to add

in how I feel about race related issues which is a lot of pressure to put on one student." Reece even recalls a teacher asking her specifically how she felt about a video portraying the lynching of Black people. Reece was one of two Black students in the class. Teachers should be allowing Black students to discuss racial issues, not ignoring or forcing discussion whenever it feels convenient.

Racism and oppression are not far off things at all and are experienced every day in our own high school. The protests in May were intended to be a catalyst for change in our community and LM needed it. However, we are still far from perfect. Administrators continue to give little to no concern towards the systemic racism that plagues our school and it shows. Sending out emails apologizing for student and teacher behavior is not enough. Many teachers continue to be insensitive or negligent of the larger issue at play and no one is holding them accountable to do so. Our school district continues to ignore the oppression even after huge national protests. This lack of acknowledgement fails the students of color they are supposed to be educating. It's time for LM to have a more inclusive and equal culture. Our school should take a more proactive approach to these problems rather than sitting on the sidelines and letting racism infect the school. The school should fight racism, and not let it be an example of it. It's time for change, LM.



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

became aware and took issue with LM's racist culture that the school then began releasing these emails.

The administration and state legislation alike has neglected to confront the experience of Black students at LM. At one meeting, a Black student sharing her stories of being oppressed and discriminated against was interrupted by multiple high-level administration workers and told that her experiences were "implausible" and "didn't make sense." This constant disregard for the Black experience at LM hasn't gone away. Students like Jackie Munis '21 have begun stepping up to compensate for the lack of action by the administration. Munis founded the Council for Racial Equity and Inclusivity, or CREI, an organization dedicated to foster-

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Militarism’s cost



Leo Solga '22

America is the world’s dominant power. With a celebrated culture, an excellent economy, and a mighty military, America reaches every corner of the globe. After World War II, America was left with no alternative but to assume the role of a world superpower. Over the last seven decades, she has solidified her position, partly by becoming more and more involved militarily on an international scale. Dubbed “The Long Peace,” the last seventy years have been some of the most peaceful in modern history, with fewer major conflicts and bloodshed even as other empires rose and fell around the United States. Yet, amidst this enduring period of tranquility, America has not faltered in maintaining its global militarism, with more than 100,000 American military personnel currently stationed overseas, according to the Defense Manpower Data Center. It makes no sense. It makes no sense for America to have more than 20,000 military personnel in England and Italy — peaceful, stable democracies whose treaties with the United States go back decades. It makes no sense for America to have more than 30,000 military personnel in Germany — a conflict-free, economic powerhouse that has been one of our most steadfast global partners since the end of World War II. It makes no sense for America to have more than 50,000 military personnel in Japan — a harmonious, industrial island and staunch ally of ours whose own democracy today is a product of our inclination to instill other countries with self-governance. Just think about the 70,000 American military personnel who participated in D-Day, the largest amphibious invasion in history. That figure pales in comparison to the military manpower the United States operates on its allies’ own soil in the world today. Yes, there are advantages in keeping some sort of military presence in almost every developed country; it keeps American interests in mind when policy is discussed and in the event of a war we’d be ready to rumble. These are both valid arguments, but they’re coming to matter less and less. Regardless of the size of her military, American interests will always be kept in mind. Our diplomatic resources, international significance on the world stage, and robust economic output guarantee this. What’s more is that with the modern transportation technology we have at our disposal, the American military could deploy a force almost anywhere within hours regardless of who our allies are or where our bases are. But stationing tens of thousands of troops in terrain that is both self-governed and friendly to the United States is not only nonsensical, but also increasingly wasteful. The growth of sizable supranational organizations, general worldwide peace, and military transport technology has decreased the importance of large units of internationally stationed troops. One thing that hasn’t decreased is the cost. Defense spending in the United States currently weighs in at \$700 billion, as reported by *The New York Times*, which amounts to the largest discretionary budget category for the U.S.



Graphic by Emma Liu '22/Staff

gover ment by far, and that only includes the numbers on paper. While some of this capital is undoubtedly spent on investing in valuable American infrastructure, such as developing new technologies, huge portions of cash flow out of the homeland to support military bastions on foreign territory that yield little benefit in return. Moreover, these raw figures do not even begin to address other major issues, such as exactly how much funding is being directed to support shadow operations involving military personnel in nations not on the best of terms with the United States. America must reconsider military spending and a big part of that will be re-evaluating how many troops are deployed where. I don’t advocate for America to completely withdraw all internationally stationed military personnel, but we can and should seriously decrease the number of internationally deployed soldiers. Shrinking the amount of unnecessary overseas military personnel is a job for here and now. Not only is this excessive military accumulation clearly unnecessary, but it is also shadowed by the hundreds of billions spent to secure territory that is already part of a global coalition led by the United States. A country with more than 28 trillion dollars of debt should not spend close to a trillion of those dollars on its military alone. It’s simple math. Unless we do something about it, the debt will outlast our lives and the lives of our children. Reducing the military budget by bringing home soldiers from peaceful, stable countries is a step in the right direction.

An athlete’s affliction



Krzysztof Jarocho '22

High school gym class: a graduation requirement, or as some student athletes call it, “cruel and unusual punishment.” What could be so bad about a class that aims to “achieve proficient levels in health, safety, and physical education?” Perhaps it’s the mandatory participation in risky, inefficient, fruitless activities. Maybe it’s the fact that all students, regardless of whether they participate in several hours of sports every day, are compelled to participate in eight full semesters of gym class throughout their time in high school, which equates to hundreds of hours spent doing unnecessary and purposeless activities. Or maybe it’s because athletes that are already prone to injury through the myriad high-intensity exercises they perform on a daily basis are further exposed with the chance of getting injured in gym class and thus taken out of play for the rest of the season. Call it what you want, but gym class is a clear impediment to students who are already physically active outside of school and becomes a detriment when it poses additional risks for those students. Therefore, students who partake in athletic activities in school should have the option to opt out of Physical Education classes.



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

Though seemingly well-intentioned, gym classes end up having adverse effects on an athlete’s physical and mental well-being. The nature of big gym classes leads to time wasted on taking attendance, deciding the day’s activity, and time-consuming explanations of basic sports knowledge. The result: most of the class time is not even dedicated towards the purpose of the class but rather on boring and futile instructions. An MSNBC investigation concluded that across the country, on average, students only spend sixteen out of 45 minutes physically exercising. Students are aware of this harsh reality and that’s why the majority of their responses to a Cornell study claim that gym class is an “ineffective” use of school time. As a fellow student athlete, I can confidently say that the rigorous six-days-a-week training schedule already provides us with sufficient exercise time for the week. Furthermore, student athletes have an especially packed schedule as we try to juggle academic rigor with our passion for sports. This results in extreme pressure mounting on our shoulders. The overcrowded schedule causes the majority of high school athletes to suffer from mild or severe forms of depression and anxiety. Instead of a class where we idly sit on the gymnasium floor waiting for the class activity to commence, student-athletes could instead stand to benefit from the freedom of an extra study period. Student athletes could productively use this time for schoolwork, stretching, or meditation. All of these activities would undoubtedly be more beneficial for the mental and physical health of the student athlete for whom gym class is a redundancy. Unfortunately, gym class is not only ineffective but, as research suggests, it also creates more harm than good. When students participate in activities like basketball or football during gym class, injuries are bound to happen. In some cases, students may throw caution to the wind and play too physically, especially if they are experienced athletes themselves. Other times students participate in activities without the proper equipment such as helmets or shin-guards. Regardless of which factor you look at, there’s no denying the fact that gym poses an additional risk of hurting student athletes, which can have drastic consequences on those athletes’ performance in the sports they love. In fact, injuries are now more common inside school gymnasiums than during afterschool activities, which means more student athletes are at risk of being crippled or injured for the redundant physical activity they perform inside of school than outside. And it doesn’t take much for a teenage athlete who already bears the strain of hours of practice every day to be taken out for the rest of the season with one careless mistake. A sprained ankle could mean the end of what would have been a spectacular track and field season. It makes very little sense for students to put their athletic health on the line in activities as frivolous as physical education when the real physical application waiting for them at the end of the day requires them to be free of injury and is hardly possible if that condition is not met. If gym class doesn’t offer any evident benefits for student athletes and in turn increases the risk for injuries that could end their seasons, does it deliver on its promise to promote health and physical education? I think we can all agree that it doesn’t, regardless of what the curriculum pretends to prove. Let’s give student athletes the opportunity to shine on the court, the grass, and in the fields and stay clear of gym class.

So what now? An appeal to white “allies”



Joy Donovan '23

The trial of the decade is over. Derek Chauvin has been convicted of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. The riotous Antifa has seemingly been satiated as demonstrated by a decline in the size and scale of protests as compared to last summer. Life, by most metrics, is appearing to go back to normal—right?

Our hard work of putting BLM in our bios and posting graphic videos of Black men being brutalized by police has paid off. The murderer, whose crime was documented on video and corroborated by medical experts, retired police, ex-military, and the president, faced a highly contentious trial. George Floyd was afforded so much justice the National Guard prepped for weeks in anticipation of the verdict and the potential blowback against it. Just days after, establishment Dems continue weaponizing his death to push lukewarm reformist policy to satisfy white liberals. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in a statement to the Congressional Black Caucus, thanked Floyd for “sacrificing your life for justice.” He didn’t sacrifice his life, Nancy, it was taken.

The more important question to ask, however, is did he get justice? With that I pose another question: doesn’t it feel like we’ve forgotten someone? You posted her name in Instagram captions for your vacation photos. We commodified her in every possible sense: her name, her face, her hopes and dreams, her words. Breonna Taylor, the 26 year old EMT killed by police over a year ago, has yet to receive the “justice” Mr. Floyd purportedly did. Bills have been proposed in her name, such as the Justice for Breonna Taylor Act and the Breonna Taylor Law in Kentucky, but as of right now, not a single one of her killers or their complicit co-workers face criminal charges. A quick Amazon search leads to Breonna Taylor t-shirts, mugs, stickers, Croc charms, baby onesies, and phone cases. Surprising no one, we as a society have once again found ourselves capitalizing off of Black pain. What’s new? Though she was just as vulnerable and human as you and me, even in death, Black lives are treated as expendable.

Most recently, as the Minneapolis community faced Chauvin’s verdict, another young man was killed. Daunte Wright, a twenty-year-old, died at the hands of police on April 11. Nine days later, it was Ma’Khia Bryant who was shot at nearly point blank range in the street; she was only a couple months older than me.

Now you may be wondering about why I’m bothering to put this forward in the first place anyway. I’m just a kid. I can’t vote in elections, let alone donate large sums of money to support venerable causes. Signing petitions and posting infographics is about the extent of my influence right now. And that’s where I tell you: no. This pervasive and continuous feeling of helplessness, the one that resurfaces every time another instance of brutality and injustice occurs, is intentional. It is what

composed by Black artists about the Black experience. Look into critical race theory and anti-racist text. These actions are far from being enough, as nothing ever will be; but it is something to start. Volunteer with mutual aid organizations like Mutual Aid Philly and Philly Socialists. Put in the work and commit yourself to anti-racism, or get out of the way. Black liberation movements don’t need any more self-proclaimed “allies” who refuse to put in the serious work required. Secondly, utilize your privilege to make white people uncomfortable. No movement has ever gotten anywhere by being palatable. Stop watering down terminology like “ACAB” and “defund the police” — they mean exactly as they sound. Cut off friends who espouse racist beliefs, not just slurs and hate speech. Talk to your



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

makes adults dread youthful ambition for notions of a more equitable future. It is behind every recycled grievance of “cancel culture” strawmanned by conservative pundits. And above all, it is what keeps us complacent in the systems that cyclically and perpetually ostracize and oppress Black people in America. Until we are able to confront the economic institutions that fuel this apathy and performativity-to-burnout pipeline, we cannot even begin to understand anti-Black racism in America.

So what can we do? The first step is pretty straightforward: listen. Listen to whoever and whatever you can about the historical causes and modern-day implications of racism in America. Listen to music written and

family members: your siblings, your cousins, your grandparents. We as white people carry a certain level of undeserved entitlement to take up space in our classrooms, so when you can, use it. And most importantly, recognize that in the end, no matter how much work you do, you are not the center of these movements. If you are truly invested in the cause of promoting racial justice, you should understand that it isn’t your interests or life at stake. You cannot call yourself an ally and simply will it into existence; this isn’t gentrified Tiktok spirituality. Your actions speak infinitely louder than your IG bio. It is with this, with valuable contributions that actually have impacts, that white people can help.

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Sum(mer) clothing trends

Jessica Dubin '23

As winter has come to an end and warm weather is quickly approaching, there are many branches of apparel that have developed their own new styles and unique trends that are a necessity for your spring and summer wardrobe. One of the most important items of clothing for when warm weather arrives is a good pair of denim shorts. They can be easily dressed up or down with belts and accessories, and are perfect for school and other occasions. Along with jean shorts, tennis skirts have begun to make a comeback. Tennis skirts paired with sweatshirts have become increasingly popular, along with other pieces such as corset tops. Graphic t-shirts are something that go perfectly cropped, but can be styled by layering them with polo shirts. Band shirts can be accessorized with pearl or diamond jewelry to juxtapose the theme of the shirt. They are perfect for school and are definitely a necessity for your closet. In addition, various color themes are popular during the summer season. During this time of the year, bright, colorful, pastel clothes can give your wardrobe a light tone. An additional staple piece for the summer are tennis skirts. Skirts are great for the warm weather and can be dressed down with sneakers and a t-shirt or dressed up with heels and a fancier top.

A summer accessory you must have is sunglasses. With the bright summer sun, everyone needs a good pair of sunglasses to wear. Sunglasses come in many different shapes, styles, and colors, and you will always be able to find a pair that looks good on you. Smaller, rectangular sunglasses are very trendy right now and are perfect for just walking around or laying on the beach. Sunglasses can help complete nearly any outfit and make it all come together. Sophomore Gabby Tepper-Waterman



Graphic by Emma Liu '22/Staff

says, “I love wearing sunglasses in summer. They are the perfect accessory in every outfit!”

Another summer accessory everyone needs is gold jewelry. Gold jewelry is perfect for layering and can easily dress up an outfit. Gold hoops, rings, and necklaces are very in style and can be worn for any occasion. Guys wearing jewelry is also something I have seen becoming more normalized. Guys wearing chains and rings is becoming a trend not only at LM but all over, and I expect it to become even more popular over the summer. Shell necklaces for both guys and girls are also very popular items to wear during beach season.

Hats are another popular summer accessory. They are perfect to complete an outfit, as well as keep you safe from the sun. From baseball hats to bucket hats, there are so many cute styles to choose from. Sophomore Nolan Shanley mentioned, “I love bucket hats because they give off a beachy, summer look and can help to complete an outfit.”

To complete any outfit, you need a good pair of shoes. White sneakers are a simple way to complete any summer outfit. White sneakers keep you comfortable while still being very cute. Some of the best white sneakers are Nike Air Forces and Converse. These shoes are extremely versatile and match with nearly everything. Sandals are another shoe that are a necessity for spring and summer. They are perfect for going out to dinner or any other dressier occasion. Steve Madden’s Kimmie sandals are a great pair that come in many different colors and are very popular. Look out for these trends this summer!

Spring into gardening

Gabby Tepper-Waterman '23

It’s been a long, cold winter, but spring is finally here. Nothing says spring more than gardening! Whether you’re an experienced gardener or a novice, below are some tips to get your gardens growing and your flowers blooming.

First, choose the right plants. Select plants that match your growing conditions: put sun-loving plants in a sunny spot and heat-tolerant plants in warm climates. Pick varieties that will grow well where you live and in the space you have. Knowing your “hardiness zone” and learning frost dates is extremely important. A “hardiness zone” describes the coldest place a plant can grow, and can help you choose the best plants for your area. The higher the zone number, the warmer the climate. To learn your frost dates, find out the last average spring frost date and first average fall frost date for your area. This ensures you won’t kill your plants by planting them prematurely, and allows you to harvest and move your plants inside before the cold damages them. Planting too early or too late in the season can be a disaster!

Next, choose the right place to plant your garden. The most important things to consider are sunlight and water. Pay attention to how sunlight plays through your yard before planting. Plants get the energy they need from sunlight, and without it do not grow well. Most edible plants—like herbs, fruits, and vegetables—need six or more hours of sunlight per day. Plants need well-draining nutrient-rich soil and won’t grow in soil that is too soggy, hard, rocky, or lacking in nutrients. A good option is Miracle-Gro All Purpose Gardening Soil. Mix three inches of it with the top six to eight inches of existing soil for the best results. Be sure to also plant your garden near a water source, and make sure you can run a hose to your gar-

den site. That will help you avoid multiple trips with a watering can! Finally, when choosing the right location for your garden, remember that plants need space to grow and should not have to fight for sunlight, water, or nutrients. Plants will get bigger over time, so you should follow spacing guidelines for each specific plant.

Once your garden is planted, add two to three inches of mulch on top. Mulch will reduce weeds by blocking the sun. It will also reduce moisture loss through evaporation, thus allowing you to water your plants less. Straw, shredded leaves, and pine straw are also great options if you don’t have mulch. And, of course, do not forget to water your plants properly. Over-watering causes the roots to rot and under-watering results in the plant not getting the nutrients it needs. Always check the soil before watering. A smart tip is to stick your finger into the soil about an inch (one knuckle down) and if the soil feels dry, your plants likely need water. Just like humans, plants also need to eat! Plants need a diet of plant food in addition to water and sunlight. They remove nutrients from the soil as they grow, and the nutrients need to be replaced in order to get the best harvest. A month after planting, feed your plants with an all purpose plant food or fertilizer.

Lastly, stock up on some basic gardening tools. This will make gardening much easier and more enjoyable. Pay attention to each of your plants, since some need different amounts of sunlight and need to be planted at different times. Follow these tips and your thumb will turn green in no time!

Spring wordsearch

Amy Huang '23

U X B P L H D B E E S N F H B T F Z Y D
W H I R N O T Y S H E K B L J Y N V Q C
E B A J N N F R S P L N O L G D W X B Q
C U R X G X Y S A A Z O W P R C X T T J
M I O I M T R L R E M A W T N R S P E V
O I I D G E L D G I N A P I S E Y N Q Q
E T U D W H Z P W U R U W R N H L F Y V
H C K O S K T Q S M A Y J T I H W R M K
G C L E A N I N G B Z A O C W L N I I N
C F H C R P N E L L O P I E Y N N U B I

APRIL BEES BLOOM BRIGHT BUNNY CLEANING EARTH
FLOWERS GRASS JUNE POLLEN MAY NEST SUN WARM



Photos by Aiko Palaypayon '23/Staff

The Merionite

Reviving local restaurants

Benjamin Cromer '24

Things are starting to warm up and hopefully with warmer weather comes lighter COVID-19 mandates. In the latest batch of restrictions, Governor Tom Wolf significantly decreased the limitations on the community. Self-certified restaurants can now have up to 75 percent indoor capacity while those who aren't certified can have up to fifty percent indoor capacity. Wolf has also allowed for the purchase of alcoholic beverages without the purchase of food. This allows for restaurants to make a similar amount of money off of alcoholic beverages as they did before the pandemic started which helps them out greatly.

Restaurants were forced to come up with creative seating plans to continue to make a profit off of sit down customers in conjunction with a consistent flow of takeout orders. Local restaurants have been doing a good job of getting customers to come in by using heaters, tents, and pod-like structures. These have been effective and some restaurants will be able to keep this system in place. Others will have to come up with creative ways to have more in-person customers outside for those who aren't comfortable with dining inside. There are more available seats inside now due to the new mandate which helps with the less cautious individuals.

Many local restaurants have done a good job with both indoor and outdoor seating. One such restaurant is Royal Cafe in Narberth. Over the winter, they converted a portion of their parking lot into a large, heated tent that provided plenty of seating for customers. They also have great indoor space to incorporate as much of the 75 percent capacity as they want, and have had numerous live performances to

attract crowds over the weekends. Another restaurant that has done a very good job with its limited indoor and outdoor seating is Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza in Wynnewood. They have a porch that has heat lamps and fans as well as wind barriers that help keep a breeze out on a colder night. They have great spacing inside the restaurant that can make anyone feel comfortable. They also have takeout and very effective delivery methods through multiple sites including DoorDash. This allows for them to still have a consistent flow of money from their takeout orders that they established in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. A third local restaurant that is taking an angle similar to those of restaurants located in cities is Taqueria Amor. Taqueria Amor in Manayunk has created small cabanas in which there are picnic tables that can hold up to six people. These cabanas safely reach out into the street due to the limited space on the sidewalk. Each cabana has its own heater and plexiglass between its neighboring space. This restaurant also has multiple windows that will be opened up inside to allow for more people to be safely seated inside the restaurant.

There are so many other restaurants that are employing similar practices to the ones above. Thankfully for these businesses, the Pennsylvania restaurant restrictions have been lightened and now they can get back to a similar revenue flow to that of which they had before the pandemic hit. By implementing all of these strategies, restaurants have also been able to make more people feel comfortable with going out to eat instead of staying home, and in doing so they make everything feel like it is trending back to normal, especially now with the distribution of vaccines.



Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza is making efforts to socially distance indoors amid the pandemic.

Photos by Aiko Palaypayon '23/Staff

AP testing tips

Michelle Kelly '23
Copy Editor

College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) exams are beginning in schools across the world, and LM students are busy preparing for these rigorous tests. Due to the pandemic, tests are being distributed in three sessions, called "Administrations," the first of which began on May 3. LM opted to offer AP exams during Administration 2 this year, from May 18 through May 28. Although it may be too late to begin these practices, many of these strategies can be utilized for alternative tests or future AP exams.

Start studying well ahead of time. Create a schedule to break up review into manageable portions across a longer period of time to prevent last-minute cramming. Begin by reviewing key concepts and utilize practice materials to assist you.

Take advantage of the past. Use official AP study materials and tests from previous years to get a sense for the type of questions you will be asked.

Study the format. Learn about the structure, content, and order of the specific exam(s) you are taking. For example, there may be a document-based question, multiple choice, short answer, and/or long essay section. Utilize practice exams to make sure you are familiar and comfortable with the timing, question types, and structure.

Study with others. Recognize that your peers have strengths that can help you address your weak points, and vice versa. Also, teaching others is one of the best ways to make sure you fully understand the material yourself.

Ask for help. Your instructor, a tutor at school, or an outside tutoring company are often trained to teach you in ways that make topics easier to understand. They are also likely to be familiar with the test and help you prepare in specific ways that could be personalized for you.

Install the 2021 Digital AP Exams application on your school computer. This can be found in Self Service, which requires you to be connected to LMSD wifi at any of the ten district schools. Log in with your College Board account to access information for the AP courses you're registered for.

Complete Digital Practice on the 2021 Digital AP Exams app. This program simulates AP exam questions and previews the format. It also helps you under-

stand the platform and ensure that the technology functions on your computer.

Set up the exam on your computer one to three days before the exam. You can use the "Exam Setup" feature in the app to complete this step.

Use the app to check in for the exam thirty minutes before it begins. According to College Board, "If students don't start check-in before the start time of the exam, they won't be allowed to test and will have to request a makeup exam."

Stay hydrated. Drinking water to stay alert and comfortable during the test so you can focus on the test itself is also critical for positive performance.

Bring a snack. High-protein foods and complex carbs will keep you energized and sustained through the entire exam.

Read questions carefully and thoroughly. Make sure you identify what the prompt is asking when responding to longer questions so you ensure that you stay on topic.

Maximize your timing. Complete the easy questions that come more naturally and quickly, then circle back to the more difficult questions. If you feel yourself struggling or confused on a particular question, leave it for later because your brain will continue working through it subconsciously. Later, you may have more clarity to address it.

Answer all questions. AP tests do not penalize wrong answers, so you can only benefit from filling out questions, even if you don't know the answer. Eliminate as many answers as you can before guessing to increase your chances.

Watch the clock. You are allowed to bring a personal watch if it is silent. Doing so can make sure you manage your time across questions to have time to finish.

Plan your answers. When facing longer free response questions, organizing your thoughts before starting to write can help you connect ideas better, make a stronger argument, and keep your points coherent.

Stay positive. Even if you hit an obstacle or a frustrating patch, don't lose faith. Tell yourself that you are doing great and focus on what went well.

You've worked hard for this exam so be proud of what you accomplished. It has certainly been a difficult year and this is quite an achievement. Good luck!



Graphic by Ilana Zahavy '24

The Dolp

Under t
Emera

In theory, the flight from the U.S. to Taiwan takes 16 hours. In practice, however, there are three additional hours on the shuttle from Dunkin Donuts in downtown Philadelphia to JFK airport in Queens, New York.

I am currently stuck on the third hour.

Under the night, the shuttle glides through the twinkling city. The lights are off inside the bus. The night falls through the windows and chases the gliding headlights, blocks of pale light and shadow appearing and disappearing across the seats. Passengers, vague silhouettes in the dark, sway with the traffic. The muddy window panes block the shuttle from the world outside, and silence settles between the patterned seats, warm and dull.

I lean my head against the cool window. In my ears, the same song has been playing for the past three hours, a soft undertone.

The shuttle climbs onto a bridge that arches across a wide river, inches forward, and stops in the thick traffic. Beneath us, wide expanses of water collect from Upper Bay and gush into Lower Bay, into the New Jersey Bight—rising and dipping with each push forward, glimmering under the night.

Then, suddenly—like a camera shifting into focus—I see.

The moon, bright and round and yellow, hangs low above the river. The whole night sky had silenced itself for her, her silhouette clear in the dark. The river catches her warm glow with every ripple and echoes it, reverberates it, sends it forth like the tender tunes of a lullaby—her reflection breaking and merging into pieces on the surface of the water so that the river, too, shimmers

Beneath

Olivia

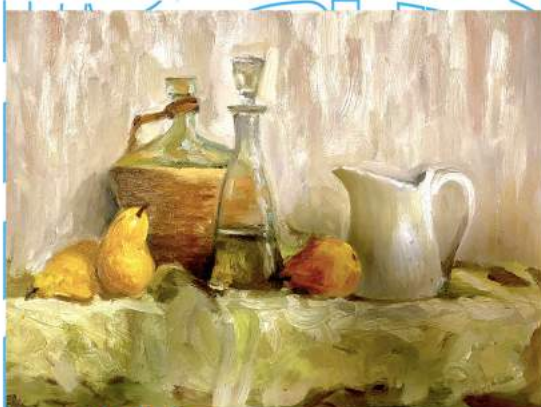
Humans are intriguing. They are brought into a world of unknowns, yet are capable of learning what seems to be an endless amount. People say, “you get wiser as you grow older” through life lessons and experiences, but no one speaks about the inevitable challenges we face. It is true that people indeed lose and fail; however, by overcoming these hardships with resilience, we can achieve our fullest potential.

On February 1, 2005, a cry emerged from hospital room 238. A beautiful mother had just given birth to a chocolate brown-eyed girl with a soft round belly. The precious baby looked perfect, sounded perfect, even smelled perfect. After a couple of days had passed, the mom dressed herself in her thick winter jacket and placed the doll-like baby in a swaddle. The young mother could not wait to bring the bundle of joy home. She left the hospital with a glowing smile because everything was perfect. At least that's what she thought.

The parents stared at the red, inflamed skin - they knew it was eczema. The doctor prescribed a common ointment to soothe her itchy skin, which soon became useless chemicals. Nothing worked. The fragile, thin baby skin ripped and rebuilt constantly. The severe eczema took over all of their lives and as the girl developed, so did the eczema. Her skin had a mind of its own. Some days the scratches bled; other days they would be perfectly healed - each day was a mystery. She had been to hundreds of doctor appointments, countless hospitals, and dealt with an unbearable amount of needles. Seeing the young girl with clear skin was a rare sight.



Organic Coffee by Emmi Wu '23



Glass, Porcelain, and Pears by Emma Liu '22



Side Profile 2 by Sadie Liebo '23

The Prince and the Princess

James Korin '24

A prince and a princess met and fell into love so pure
Perfectly, their kingdoms sat side by side
But the princess had done something to allure
About her nobility she had lied

The two had become the perfect match
But the woman couldn't dismiss her feeling of shame
What would happen if the prince discovered the catch
Would he still think of the woman the same

Anxious and guilty, she visited less and less
Fearful the prince would discover her lie
But rather than praying for the best and just confess
The woman hid behind her kingdom's walls so high

Months passed, not a single conversation was shared
The prince yearned to figure out what was wrong
Their love was already broken, unable to be repaired
Yet the prince knew she wasn't a princess all along

The Moon

Id Lin '21

golden, like catching in its arms hundreds of fallen stars.

I cannot breathe. The music is suddenly too loud; I take the earbuds out of my ears and am embraced in quietness. Other people, too, are beginning to notice the moon, are beginning to murmur to one another. They push themselves up, squeeze themselves across the seats, lean forward, trying to get a better view, raise their phones in attempts to snap a photo.

Suddenly, the world shifts into acute focus around me: the void of the night sky, the warm glow of the bright moon, the river rippling ever-gently; the warm, dusty air in the shuttle, the silence—but not dull, not anymore, instead charged with breathlessness. People around me speak Cantonese and Vietnamese and languages I cannot decipher, but we are all travelers, and we are all heading home. I am heading home. From the thousand possible routes we all booked this flight, took this shuttle, swayed with the traffic for three hours, just to get closer to the land that knew us as its children, the land that awaits all of us now. We are all under the bright, warm moon—who has looked over us, on home or foreign land—impossibly present in this moment, breathless in its loveliness.

The shuttle inches forward. People twist and angle their bodies, trying to get one more photo, one more glance.

The shuttle inches further forward—and the lights snap on. We whip our heads around. Slowly, the bus slides into smooth traffic, and we settle back into our seats. Everything is bright now. Still, the silence lingers; still, the moon hangs low above the river, warm and golden. I clutch my earbuds in my hand. Just to keep the silence for one more second.

the Skin

Lee '23

Eyes followed everywhere the girl and her family went. Other kids stared, criticized, and excluded her. It was not hard for her to see how she was different, but it was hard for her to accept that difference. When she was not smiling or laughing, she was imagining what it would be like to be “normal” - to not feel like she had all the worst kinds of attention (on her.) She felt as though everyone avoided her; they were scared to make eye contact. As time went on and she became a teenager, she believed every part of her was ugly. One cut ruined her night. One stare ruined her day. One scar ruined her year. This thought process dominated her mind until she realized why she was chosen to have this life. She began to tell herself that the staring kids were just curious, the scars were her battle wounds, and she was lucky to be alive. She overcame hatred and the terrible thoughts.

The girl is me, Olivia Lee. After years of different treatments, doctors, needles, and hospital visits, I sit here writing my story with the best skin I've had since I was born. I often wonder to myself after all the pain and tears, “Why haven't I given up? There is no cure for this condition. What am I waiting for?” You see, even after all the difficulties and heartbreaking events that take place in life, we continue to long for another day. Our day may not have been perfect, or even close to alright, but we still fight. We recognize the differences between a bad day and a bad life. With my chronic eczema, I have been beaten down, ridiculed, and pushed to my limits, but every time I have gotten back up to live for another sunrise. Through sorrow and pain, we push to become the best version of ourselves, and that, that is resilience.

Free to Fly

Lucy Zheng '24

I returned to the backyard and sat down on the grass, placing a jar of fireflies beside me. There were seven fireflies that I had caught earlier crawling along the sides of the jar. They were like tiny, little light bulbs glowing on and off. I brought them to help guide me. I've heard that fireflies represent hope and inspiration. Some say that they can even bring good luck and grant wishes. All I was looking for was inner peace.

In the past few days, my head had been jumbled with all kinds of thoughts and worries. I didn't know what was bothering me or the source of my worries. And I didn't need to know them. I just wanted to feel better. All I could do was sit here and wait. Wait for my thoughts to settle down.

I picked up the jar of fireflies and tightly cupped it in my hands. My eyes were glued to the fireflies and I waited for the easing of my worries. With wide-opened eyes, I waited. But nothing changed; actually, they worsened. And my eyebrows immediately dropped in disappointment. I set the jar aside after realizing the futility of my efforts. Maybe there were other things that could fulfill my desire.

I took a deep breath and looked around, searching for what nature had to offer. Below me was the soft, green grass swaying along with the cool summer breezes. Above me hung the pitch-black sky, painted with glimmering stars and a silver, crescent moon. And around me were the fireflies. Some were flying in the air, some were crawling on the wooden fence, and some were hiding under the leaves of plants. Their intermittent flashes added liveliness to the serenity. And in the background, crickets chirping. All the conditions seemed ideal, yet I remained anxious. A pretty landscape simply wasn't enough to overcome my worries.

I took another look at the fireflies surrounding me, another look at the blinking lights that zoomed past me and poked through the dark. Then, I peeped down at the jar beside me. There was little movement. There was no starting point for their wings to take off from, nor was there any room to fly. All my eyes could see were the fireflies crawling around the jar, checking every nook and cranny, searching for a way to escape. Instead of bright flashlights, they were more like dimmed light bulbs. A sense of regret hit me hard when I realized my mistake.

The fireflies didn't belong in a jar. They didn't belong to me. They belonged outside with other fireflies, where they could fly, explore, and be free. They were meant to enjoy the boundless space around me, not confined in a jar. Their lives only lasted so long, and it would be best for them to enjoy their time in freedom. I grabbed the jar and twisted the cap off. With a gentle shake of the jar, the seven fireflies all reached the tip of the jar and took off. As each firefly took off, I felt the burdens I carried being removed one by one. It was the moment of relief I had been searching for all along. The fireflies' wings fluttered gracefully as they dashed towards the sky, and their vivid glow returned. I stayed seated there for a long time with a dazzled gaze. The night was astonishingly beautiful as it was adorned with enchanting, twinkling lights. Indeed, the fireflies possessed their own special powers. They had rescued me out of my anxious state. By freeing those seven fireflies, I had also freed myself. At last, I had found my inner peace.



Turbulent Times by Emmi Wu '23



Mwah by Amy Huang '23

... and the show goes on

Julia Dubnoff '21
Arts & Entertainment Editor

For one of the largest student clubs within the LM community, there has been an air of mystery regarding how Players might adapt to the challenging circumstances of this school year. After all, the Shakespearean comedy that was in production last spring was forced to be scrapped, leaving countless members and theatre-lovers dismayed. This year, though, club members came together and assembled a production like none other in Players' history: PlayersFest.

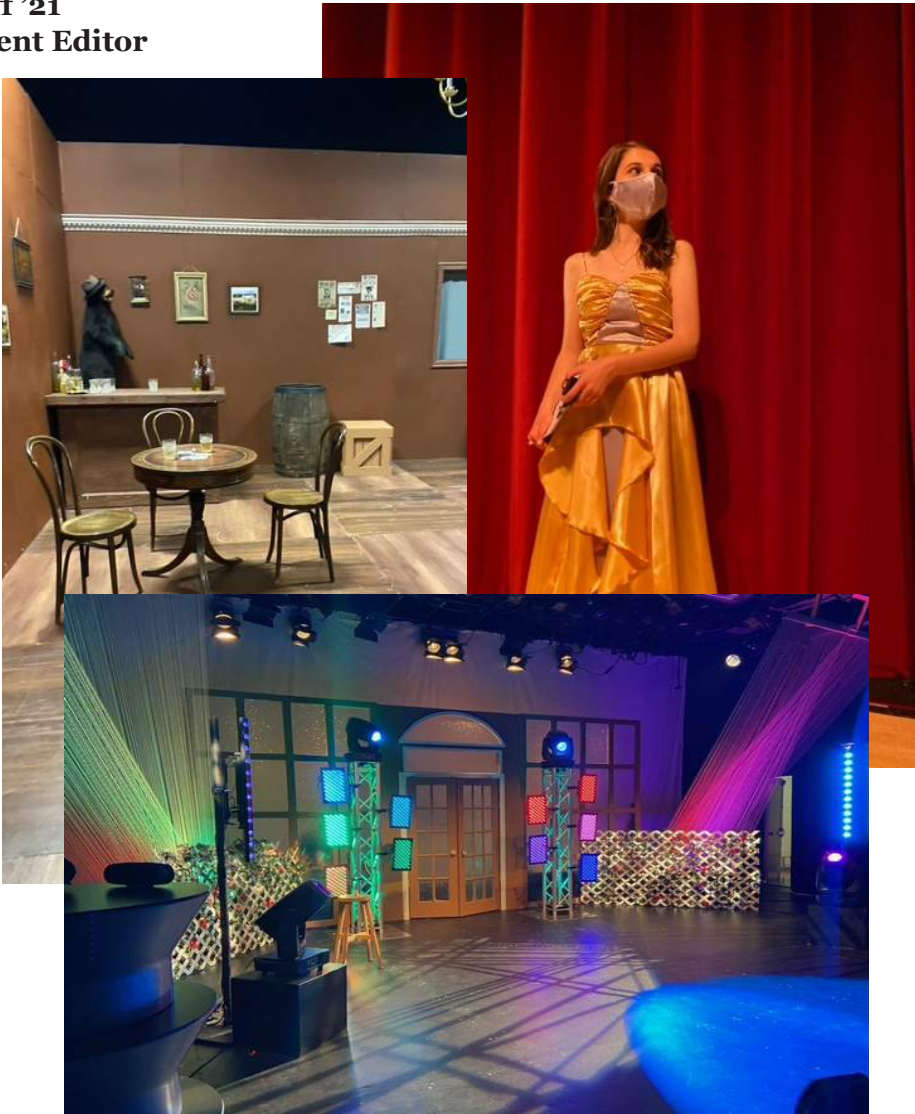
PlayersFest sought to encompass all of the elements that the usual three productions included: the musical, the drama, and the comedy. This was a large endeavor, as they had decided to produce, direct, and eventually film seven one-acts, some of them scenes from plays, others from musicals, all showcasing the different aspects that make up a typical Players year.

Club president Anne Hamilton '21 has spearheaded the production, dedicating her senior year to ensuring that she experienced one last hurrah, one final show. She recounted, "as president I began planning this production and then when I picked up stage managing I continued that by making sure that the pieces I was working on went as smooth as possible." Of course, it wasn't just smooth sailing, especially with such unusual conditions. "Trying to figure out something that would be fun to do and still put out the incredibly beautiful work that Players is used to was a rather difficult challenge, but it was definitely worth all of the hard work," Hamilton added.



Graphics courtesy of Emmi Wu '23/Staff

PlayersFest included many different acts, encompassing a broad range of theater. Included here are *Hard to be The Bard*, from *Something Rotten*, *Rainbow Connection*, from *The Muppet Movie*, and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*, an excerpt from the play.



Photos courtesy of Anne Hamilton '21

PlayersFest had elaborate sets and costumes. Featured here is a dress for *Invocations and Instructions to the Audience*, and sets for *Rainbow Connection* and *Romeo vs Tybalt*.

As with all Players productions, many groups behind the scenes are responsible for the success of the show as well. Costumes Crew, for example, had the responsibility of assembling the wardrobe for all of the segments. They had to design, plan, and sew custom garments to be used. Co-Head of Wardrobe Rose Solga '23 described the accomplishments of the group: "My favorite piece is something that I didn't make personally but something a designer, Tamar Galvin, made. She designed and sewed a beautiful golden dress for Mandy Donahoe." Solga stated that they aspire to create something like that dress on their own in the future.

So how does one conduct a live theatre show in the age of social distancing? Well, flexibility turned out to be essential. According to Hope Wahrman '22, director of three of the segments (*Rainbow Connection*, *Two Player Game*, & *7x13=28*), they had to adjust sometimes. She stated, "We've had to have a few rehearsals virtually, and with musical segments it can be challenging. However, it makes it all the more special being in-person." Once filming was completed, the only task left was for final editing, ensuring the success of the show's streaming.

Club members have contributed hours upon hours to the success of PlayersFest, truly showing that their dedication and determination will forever endure, despite the truly daunting odds and challenges this year presented.

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Mother's Day activities

Sydney Harman '23

This past year definitely hasn't been easy for anyone, so it's especially important that this year's Mother's Day is spent showing gratitude to the mother figures in your life. Whether they are your mother, grandmother, aunt, or any maternal figure, they will definitely appreciate the recognition and extra attention. Even though there won't be as many activities available compared to other years, there are still many to choose from which will guarantee your family has fun and is safe.

Even the smallest gesture is greatly appreciated when there is thought put into it. One simple, but definitely appreciated, activity is to surprise your loved ones with breakfast in bed! A homemade meal is always thoughtful and special, and there is nothing better than enjoying it in the comfort of your own bed. Simple things like toast, eggs, or cereal are all easy to make and delicious.

As the weather gets warmer, spending the day outside and in nature is a great way to escape the realities and hardships of the pandemic, as well as providing the perfect environment to enjoy your favorite activities.

There are many parks close to LM that make great walking and picnic spots: Merion Botanical Park, Belmont Plateau, Wayne's Woods picnic area, Flat Rock Park, and many others. There are also a lot of beautiful hiking trails, including Rolling Hill Park, Wissahickon Valley Trail, and Haverford Reserve Trails. This time of year is also perfect for biking with your loved ones. There are various routes to explore such as the Cynwyd Trail, Spring Mill Trail Head, and the Schuylkill River West Trail.

Going out to brunch is also a great way to spend the morning and have a stress-free get together with family and friends. Many restaurants have outdoor seating to provide a safe and relaxing meal, alleviating some of the stress of eating in public. It is a nice way to let your loved ones take the day off from taking care of others and enjoy

a pleasant meal. If you are uncomfortable with dining at a restaurant, you can still prepare a nice brunch in the comfort of your home.

Dedicating the evening to activities your loved ones enjoy is a great way to show your gratitude while brightening their day. Whether you decide to gather together to watch their favorite movie, play their favorite games, or anything else they enjoy, your mother will appreciate spending time with you. Activities such as creating your own pizzas, ice cream sundaes, and baking are nice ways to spend quality time with one another while making a delicious treat.

Overall, your loved ones will have a great day as long as they spend time with family and friends. Making sure that they know how much they are appreciated and that their selfless acts don't go unnoticed will mean a lot to them. Gifting them a day full of relaxation and love is a perfect way to thank them for all that they have done. Something as little as giving them a few extra hours of sleep or cleaning up around the house will make their Mother's Day even better. Happy Mother's Day to all LM families!



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

Mother's Day memorabilia

Ruby Romano-Lehr '24

Filled with love,
Filled with fun,
Mother's Day is here
And has only begun.

Show that you care
And appreciate.
Show that you cherish
And think she's great!

Do something nice,
Like helping to do her
chores.
Do something kind,
Like giving her flowers.

Give her a card,
Or a piece of art.
Write her a poem,
Or make her a tart.

Make her a lovely dinner.
Make something very sweet.
Make a playlist of her favorite
songs,
Then dance to the beat!

Get her some flowers;
Get her a nice outfit;
Make her some jewelry,
And just really commit to it.

Watch a movie,
Put on a play,
Plan it beforehand,
And don't delay.
Just make sure
To have a happy Mother's
Day!



Graphic by Emma Liu '22/Staff

The bands are back

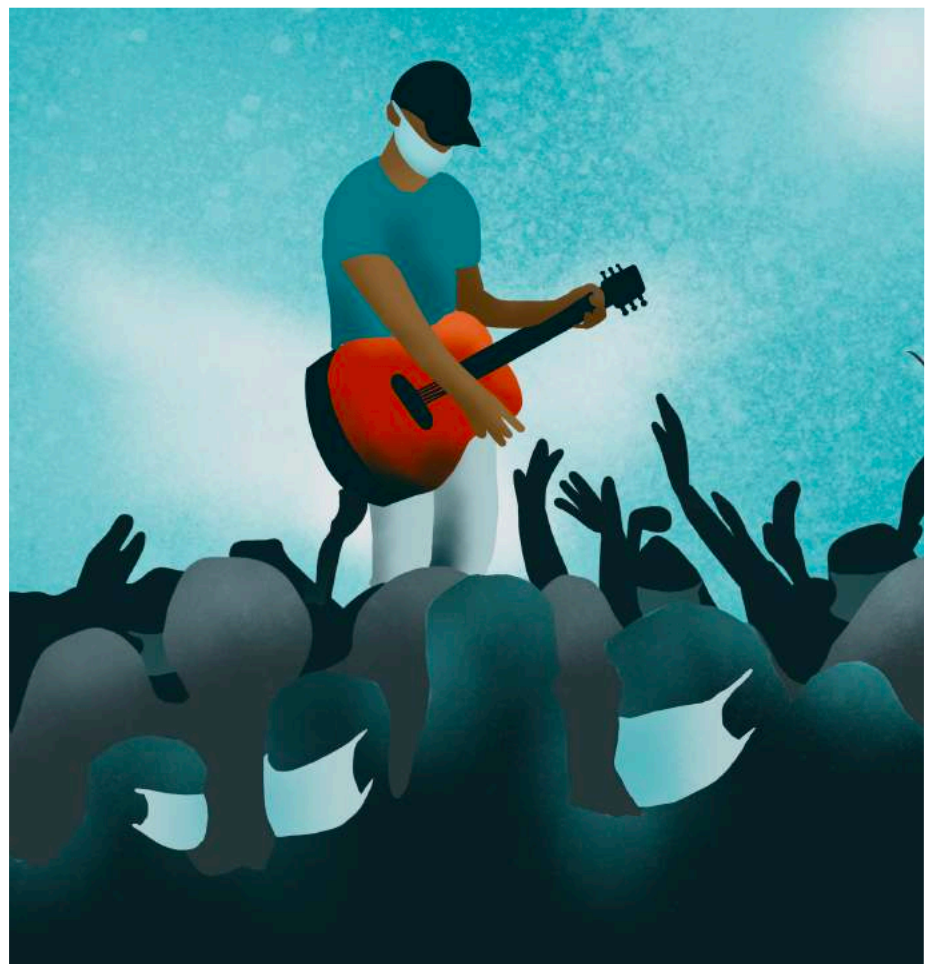
Madeleine Fiks '23

With the light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel becoming brighter and brighter everyday as more people get vaccinated, you might be starting to wonder what life will look like going forward. One of the most debated topics is the live entertainment scene, especially live concerts, as they were one of the first casualties of the global shutdown. Since then, the global music industry has lost approximately 9.7 billion dollars in ticket sales alone and another thirty billion in sponsorships, concessions, merchandise, etc. This tremendous loss contributed to the financial duress of musicians and concert venues throughout the country. Now, amid discussion of slowly easing back into “normal” life, what will concerts look like?

Optimists speculate that normal touring and shows will return by the fall, but medical experts say otherwise. Dr. Dean Winslow, an infectious diseases expert at Stanford, told *Rolling Stone* that at some point from late spring to early fall full outdoor concerts will most likely be an option, but he doesn't see there being full indoor concerts until early 2022. Indoor activities, in general, come with a much higher risk of transmission than outdoor activities, so Winslow's prediction airs on the cautious side.

Additionally, some musicians might not want to play indoor concerts anyways, for fear of endangering their fans. Henry Cárdenas, the CEO of Cárdenas Marketing Network which works with Bad Bunny and Marc Anthony explained many of his client's feelings. He said that, “If they know five, seven thousand people [in the audience] could be without the vaccine, they're not gonna go on stage.” Hopefully, there will be live entertainment opportunities in the near future as vaccination rates continue to increase. At least for now feeling safe at concerts is of the utmost importance, and if that can't be achieved, most artists will refuse to perform.

When asked if she would go to a concert with COVID-19 restrictions in place like social distancing and reduced capacity, Elizabeth Esan '22 said “yes” and explained, “I definitely would still be excited because a concert is a concert, so I'd still be able to see my favorite artist live.” Additionally, Esan brought up a good point when she added, “If you think about it [concerts] will be less crowded so you can see more too.” Maybe a smaller, more intimate concert wouldn't be so bad after all. LM Vocal Music and Music Theory teacher Joshua Hunnex, gave his thoughts on music education and performances returning back to normal. He remarked, “It's so complicated. We crave being able to make music together and for a long time that was just completely out of the question. Now it seems like the time when we can make music together safely is tantalizingly close, so it's hard to resist the urge to rush into things. Regardless of when that day comes, we'll be overjoyed to be doing it again.” It is important to not rush



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23/Staff

back into normalcy and keep in mind the safety of the student body, but as Hunnex stated, the craving for everything to return to normal is undeniable.

Although some of this information may seem disheartening, it is simply another reason to keep practicing social distancing, wear a mask, and get vaccinated if you are eligible. If we put in the work to stop the spread of COVID-19 now, we will have the opportunity to dance, sing, and have the time of our lives at a concert sooner than later.

Head first, fearless

Nolan Shanley '23

As many have realized, pop superstar Taylor Swift has re-recorded and re-released her sophomore album, *Fearless*. It was the album that put Swift on the map with hit singles like “Love Story” and “You Belong With Me,” and earned her the Album of the Year award at the 2010 Grammys. But why is Taylor Swift re-recording her albums? What does “Taylor's Version” even mean?

These are two of many questions most people are wondering since the release of *Fearless* (Taylor's Version). Swift is re-recording all of her albums, from her first self-titled debut to her last one under her previous label Big Machine Records, *Reputation*. In June of 2019, powerhouse music manager Scooter Braun, who is famously known for managing stars like Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, and Kanye West, purchased Big Machine Records for 300 million dollars. This record deal included all of the rights to

Swift's first six studio albums, meaning anyone who plays Swift's music will be benefiting the bank account of Scooter Braun. Swift was not made aware of this deal, which caused her to be frustrated when it was released to the press. Not only that, she was not in favor of this deal due to her past history with Scooter Braun. Swift claimed that throughout her career, he constantly bullied her from privately behind the scenes to public social media posts. Therefore, Swift believes no one else besides herself should be profiting off her discography, Braun especially. Swift had to do something to fix this situation. So she came up with a solution: re-record albums number one through six of her discography. And no need to worry about any legal issues she'd be causing with her plan, as her contract with Big Machine Records allows her to do just this. “Artists should own their own work for so many reasons,” she wrote in her *Fearless* (Taylor's Version) announcement Instagram post. What differentiates this album from her late teenage years' original is the label “Taylor's Version.” She is portraying that she now has control over her re-recorded music and can now do whatever she wants with it since it's now her version of it, with no middle man who could claim control.

Fearless (Taylor's Version) has a new and matured sound to it, representing Swift's growth as an artist since it's original release. Yet, it also sounds almost identical to the original version as fans were taken back year and re-lived what it felt like to hear these songs for the first time all over again.

Swift wanted *Fearless* to be the first re-recorded album due to the amount of connections and fans she gained during this era of her career. “This was the musical era in which so many inside jokes were created between us, so many hugs exchanged and hands touched, so many unbreakable bonds formed,” she preached in her Instagram post. The re-recorded album consists of 26 songs, six of which are completely new tracks. These tracks are labeled “From the Vault,” meaning they were tracks that were originally supposed to be on the *Fearless* album, but never made it the final cut. “I've decided I wanted you to have the whole story, see the entire vivid picture, and let you into the entire dreamscape that is my *Fearless* album,” she added. Songs like “Mr. Perfectly Fine (From The Vault)” and “That's When (From The Vault)” are bound to be breakup anthems for newer generations, just as the original classics provided for previous ones. *Fearless* (Taylor's Version) has broken numerous records since its release. It held the Number 1 spot on the Billboard 200 and sold over a million copies world wide in its first week. Taylor Swift has built an empire by writing every single song she sings, which makes her artistry so special and unique. Through her song writing, she creates personal connections with her fans. Swift deserves all of the benefits from her music, which is why the re-recordings are exciting for not only her, but for her fans as well. The conclusion is simple: stream *Fearless*, but Taylor's Version, of course.



Graphic by Emmi Wu '23 /Staff

The Merionite

Back by unpopular demand

Mia Hail '23
Copy Editor

Netflix, the world's most popular and well-known streaming service, has a knack for creating addictive and original coming-of-age TV shows that center around characters with complex backstories and immense relatability for large fan bases. However, Netflix also creates original content that is arguably filled with flat characters and predictable, repetitive storylines. While it is inevitable that not every original TV show or movie will draw the same amount of attention and success, Netflix has an alarming pattern of canceling popular and critically acclaimed TV shows while expanding their less-favorably reviewed features into multi-movie franchises.

This past year, COVID-19 forced Netflix to halt production on TV shows and movies, but as restrictions have loosened, many casts have returned to filming. Yet, some TV shows aren't as lucky. Despite the popularity of previous seasons, Netflix has cited pandemic precautions as the reason for canceling some of its popular teen TV shows earlier this year. These include, but are not limited to, *The Society*, *I am Not Okay With This*, *Atypical*, and *One Day at a Time*. Despite the mass cancellation of some popular shows, Netflix has renewed and filmed another season of *Outer Banks*, and approved sequels to *The Kissing Booth* and *Tall Girl*. While it may seem like the cancelled shows and movies didn't generate as much success, all these TV shows had raving reviews and dedicated fans. They also had another major component in common: a diverse group of characters, filled with queer representation—something that *Outer Banks*, *The Kissing Booth*, and *Tall Girl* lack. In fact, of the 23 shows Netflix canceled earlier this year, seven-

teen featured leads that were female, a person of color, or a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

Netflix faced tremendous backlash when fans noticed that the shows they were canceling were those with queer and POC main characters at the front and center. While fans understood that con-

many viewers of the show sought after in other programming. Though Netflix does have a number of shows that feature queer characters, many are often underdeveloped side characters that don't receive much screentime. In creating original shows featuring queer main characters, Netflix took seemingly progressive steps to include diversity. However, they did this only to go on and cancel these shows, whilst continuing to create content that has holes when it comes to representation. Netflix did not make any comments on the backlash it received for the cancellations other than continuing to cite COVID-19 precautions as the leading factor, but due to the continuation of production on other films and shows, fans are skeptical of the real reasons behind the cancellations.

In recent years, many streaming services, including Netflix, undoubtedly have made strides to provide diverse, high-quality original content. Yet creating a plethora of queer-focused shows and then canceling them after one or two seasons defeats the purpose of creating a space for people to finally get the representation they deserve. All streaming services must make a conscious effort to include diversity and representation in the content they produce, including listening to their fans. Instead of catering to what fans want, Netflix canceled shows that made members of the LGBTQ+ community feel seen; they moved to create sequels to basic teen rom-coms where another movie was simply unnecessary, and as the world's most used streaming service, this could set a precedent in which the media continues to lack valuable representation.



Graphic by Ilana Zahavy '24

cessions needed to be made due to the pandemic, they were left wondering why Netflix first moved to cancel popular shows with representation and continued to make sequels for movies that completely lack diversity and substance. *I am Not Okay With This*, *Atypical*, and *One Day at a Time* all feature a lesbian lead character, a rare find in TV shows and movies, which provided representation that

Ace of the arts

Izzy Coopersmith '21



A recent piece from Coopersmith's sketchbook.

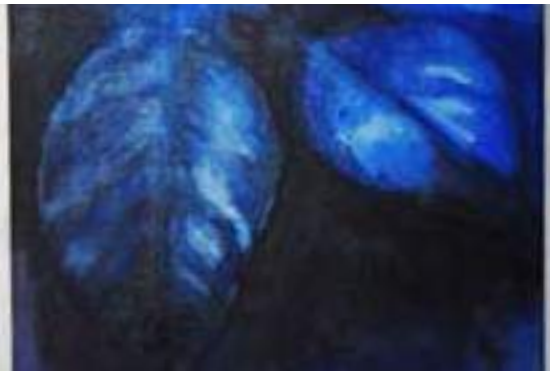
The Merionite: In what ways are you involved in the arts here at school?
Izzy Coopersmith: I have taken at least one art class every year of high school: ninth grade Art, Art 1 and 2 and now AP, and I've also taken Metal Arts. I was pretty involved in the art and fashion club InsideOut but not so much this year with COVID. I try to spend most of my frees painting too or doing other art things.
TM: When was the first time you can

remember being interested in art?
IC: I think I've always been pretty crafty and I went to Main Line Art Center camp I think in middle school for a summer, but I didn't start getting really comfortable in my art until the end of freshman year. I think seeing my own progress only made me more interested in improving.
TM: How has that interest developed and changed over the years?
IC: I learned that it's not about doing as much as possible. For example, at the end of the year when we had to display an art board in the hallway for the art show, I felt like I didn't have enough so I drew something really fast and Mr. Hazel was like, "that looks bad." I give him a lot of the credit because he was not going to waste anyone's time lying and saying something was good when it wasn't (He did say good things too, just about other stuff). This was my first time in a real art class setting and I learned about being critiqued which is really important in the art world. The first thing you put down on paper is not going to be a Monet but it's about learning the technique and how to interpret your own art and others so you can improve. And since art is so personal, the only person you can compare yourself to is yourself and the only way you can get better is by putting pencil to paper. So that motivated me to keep going and I wanted to look back at my freshman year and watch my hard work pay off.
TM: How did your time in clubs like Inside-Out impact your work and feeling of art?
IC: I was most involved with photography as an underclassmen. I learned a lot from the upperclassmen who were running the club. For me, it was more of a place to collaborate and create ideas. I think it's really important to be surrounded by other artists because it's really helpful and interesting



In her AP portfolio, Coopersmith explores how light and perspective can influence a still life.

to see how others think. I grew as an artist but more so in attitude than ability I guess.
TM: What are your goals for art in college?
IC: I really want to improve on my own personal style, find more time to sketch, and create full pieces that have some more meaning to me.



Detail of another portfolio piece. Coopersmith has taken art for all four of her years at LMHS.

Photos courtesy of Izzy Coopersmith '21

Playback: reviewing LM's COVID-19 response

Continued from PLAYBACK: REVIEWING LM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE on page 1

For teachers, it meant they had to combine their traditional and newly acquired knowledge to teach students. “I personally worked a lot to integrate technology as seamlessly as possible,” said Spanish teacher Nicolas Severini. That was a way to make the division between in-person and online students not seem stark.

The hybrid model eventually started to hit some roadblocks and functionality issues. An outbreak amongst the bus drivers forced bussing to pause. Despite concerns, schools remained open during this period, but Copeland described that choice as an error, “It was a mistake,” stating that it was unfair to students who couldn’t get transportation.

What this period grew to be infamous for was a rumored bus driver death. Students and teachers alike conversed with each other about the possibility that a bus driver had lost their life to COVID-19. Lead Supervisor for School Health and Student Safety Terry Quinlan said, “We had a staff member die of complications from COVID-19,” but did not confirm their occupation.

Administrators have been carefully discussing the situation, not wanting to break medical privacy laws, but Copeland detailed that once the district obtained rapid testing, bus drivers were the first to receive it. He didn’t say it was because of a possible death though, instead explaining that there wasn’t a safe way to ensconce bus drivers in their seats. “Whatever the cause of death was, the bus drivers as a whole were a major concern for the district,” Copeland added.

After that, schools went fully virtual around Thanksgiving break, returned to in-person instruction in mid-December, only to go back to completely virtual a week later. That return to in-person instruction caused an uproar amongst the student body, as case numbers at this point were the worst of the pandemic, leading more than 2,000 community members to sign a petition to stay in the remote model. said Copeland, describing how he’d react to public pushback. “At some point you have to say, ‘I’ve heard what people have to say, what medical professionals say, but I think we have to move into a particular direction.’”

The constant flip-flopping of schedules during this time was difficult for students.

“
You can’t run the school
system by opinion polls,
”

It also took a toll on teachers. “It never lets you get into a rhythm, and just when you felt like you were getting good at one thing, then it would change,” said Capkin.

During this time, the population of virtual students increased. “A lot of people were switching online,” said Ellie Ward ’21, who made the switch herself. “The teachers started gearing more towards the Zoom classes again, so it was awkward sitting in the classroom.” A week after winter break, in-person instruction returned, and students slowly began entering the building in greater numbers. “I just got sick of being virtual four days a week,” said McNally.

In March, it was announced that the school would be returning to complete in-person instruction, with virtual offerings still available, starting March 22. Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Megan Shafer, shortly after the date was announced, explained why it was time to make the move: “Everyone has evolved because we have so much evidence now. Coupled with the downward trends, weather improving in this area, and our mitigation measures, we thought this was a time to do that.”

Discussions about returning took place before the teacher vaccination plan started. For some, that was a cause of concern. “It was disheartening,” said English depart-



Graphic by **Emmi Wu '23**/Staff

ment head Brian Mays. “Knowing I could still be here with twenty students in a classroom and not be vaccinated is a little disappointing.” He did add, though, he was pleased to see the district respond quickly when vaccinations became available.

“We had been talking about [a return to full in-person] but we hadn’t yet decided when. And then [teacher vaccinations] got announced... We obviously want teachers to feel safe when they’re in the building,” said Actman.

Spring break also didn’t include a virtual period before or after like winter and Thanksgiving breaks did. Copeland justified the absence of a virtual week because there was less concern that spring break could be home to “super-spreading events.” “Our positivity and incidence rates were the lowest in the county,” he said. “CHOP was saying there was not a sense of urgency.”

The return to complete in-person instruction was an adjustment. There were more crowded hallways and packed areas for lunch. It was very different from a school that for months had a maximum of half of its capacity. But the return back at LM hasn’t led to any major outbreaks yet, and students continue to adhere to guidelines.

Following the confusion and uncertainty of last year, Principal Sean Hughes said LM administration’s focus was balance. Hughes noted that “patience, flexibility, and understanding” were the guiding principles for their decisions. Teachers and students overall agreed LM administration did accomplish this.

Teachers faced the unique challenge of having to balance teaching their students, while handling the increased parental responsibility of supporting their own children’s education from home. Over the summer, teachers across the district had the option to commit to teaching the entire year virtually through LMSD@Home, or teach through the uncertainty of changing instructional models.

PLAYBACK: REVIEWING LM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE continues on next page

Copeland and his lasting legacy

Continued from COPELAND AND HIS LASTING LEGACY on page 1

However, the pandemic caused the middle school planning to halt temporarily, pushing deadlines later until it seemed to Copeland that it was time to retire. He shared, “What I realized was I, like everyone else, lost a year,” and that, “when you get to retirement age . . . you don’t have as many years to make up for lost time.” It was a difficult decision, but he knew the most logical action was to bid the district one final farewell.

Due to the “lost year,” as he calls it, Copeland wants to dedicate more time to his friends and family. His plans include “traveling, maybe look[ing] for some places to have a winter home,” and enjoying the little things in life. In fact, some of his fondest memories of his superintendency in LMSD are some of those simple moments. He recounts, “I really enjoy strolling out to watch a game. I like to see Players and to see families’ faces light up when they see their kids out there ... Those are the things that I look back on and I enjoy.” Those joyous times will stay with him as he continues his journey of a life well-lived.

In a farewell to the district, which he has supported over the last six years, Copeland gives his thanks. He recognizes that “the community has come together in good times and in bad times, and hope[s] that that stays,” appreciating the unity of LMSD. His leadership has brought thousands of people together to face obstacles, encouraging positivity and joy. By faculty, students, and community members alike, he will truly be missed.

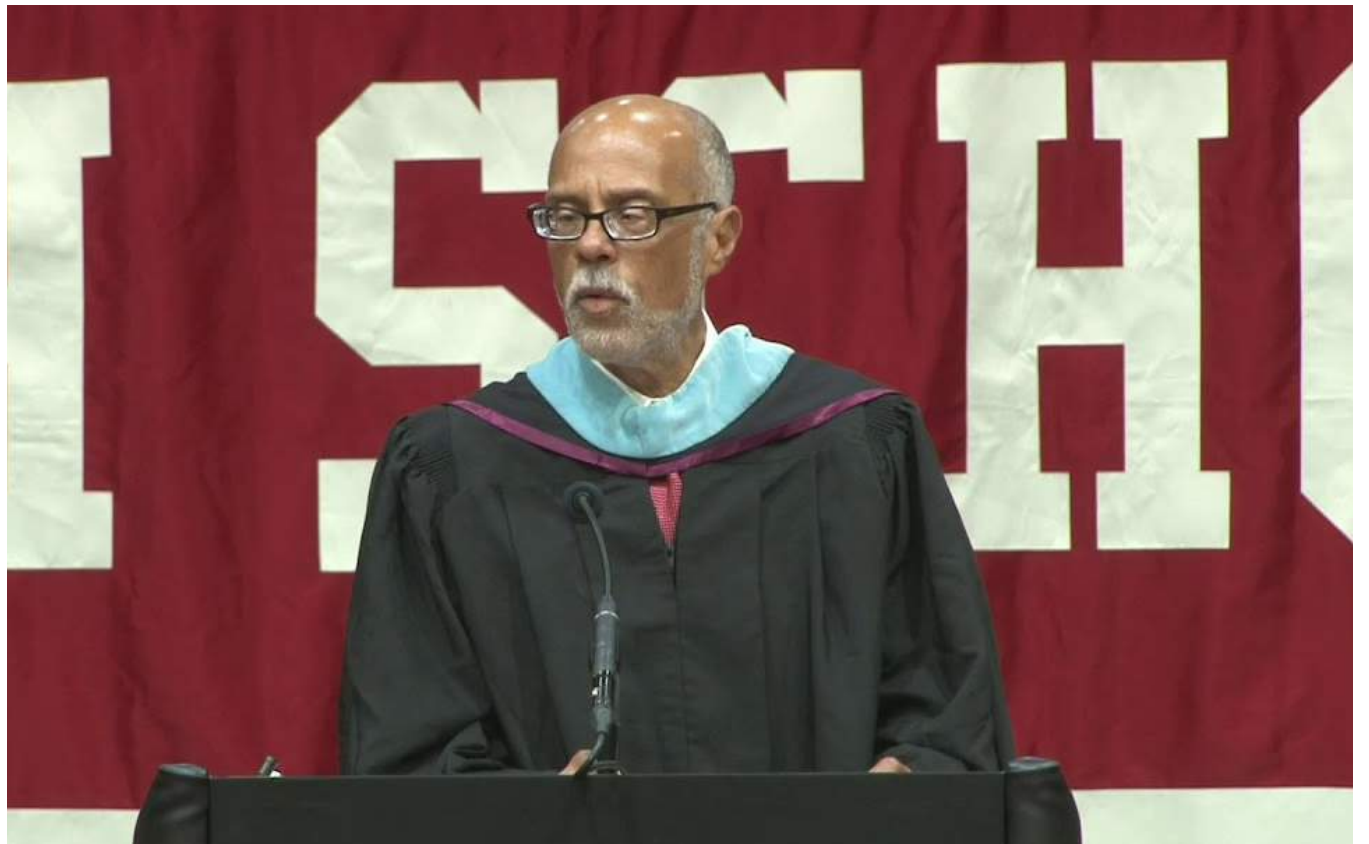


Photo courtesy of **Harriton TV**

Copeland will miss the many joyous moments of serving as superintendent. He loved engaging with the community by attending sports games or giving speeches at graduation.

Playback: reviewing LM’s COVID-19 response

Despite the initial nervous reactions to the district’s mandate that teachers begin in-person, many teachers, like Bill Hawkins, reflected that it “normalized things a bit. When students came back I didn’t feel uncomfortable.” Social Studies teacher Jeffrey Cahill added that for him, with three children under nine-years-old, it was difficult to find childcare, but the idea of working at home full-time wasn’t an option either. Nevertheless, he pointed out that LM administration has “been incredibly flexible.”

High school students were also given flexibility. With the ever-changing circumstances within Montgomery County and individual students’ preferences, the Board “voted to approve the adjustment of the attendance policy, so that students who wanted to learn virtually without... committing to staying home permanently, had that option,” said Mooring. Throughout months of changing schedules, many students felt similarly to what Ali Dunleavy ’21 put succinctly as,

“ I joke all the time that I have not learned a single thing this year, and it’s starting to scare me how true it is. ”

A point of great concern for many was how students would eat in school. Quinlan acknowledged this difficulty of balance: “We know sitting without masks on... also at a time that people have the opportunity to be social—it’s just an awful situation.” But she added that McNally, who drives to school, said “I walk through the cafeteria, and I’m absolutely horrified. I eat in my car alone every day.” Nevertheless, for many students, there were limited options, especially for underclassmen. As it started to get warmer, outdoor options became available.

Outside the regular school hustle, students also had to cope with themselves or family members contracting COVID-19, which hindered the school’s efforts to create a sense of regularity. Over fifty LM students tested positive for COVID-19 this year, as reported by the LMSD COVID-19 Dashboard. One such student recounted their experience of trying to continue school while fighting symptoms of the virus for over six weeks. They were bed-ridden for two weeks as their symptoms ranged from losing their sense of smell and taste, to chills, body aches, fatigue, and shortness of breath. After reporting their case to both the county and LMSD, they reached out to their guidance counselor for assistance. “I had to email [them] while I had COVID-19, which was difficult to muster the strength to do,” they said, and added that they asked their counselor to inform their teachers about their condition. Unfortunately for privacy reasons, the counselor was unable to inform the teachers.

Upon reflection, the student concluded that “I would say I did not receive enough support from the district... I was told there was a plan for me to come back to school, however there was none.” A teacher, however, who contracted CO-

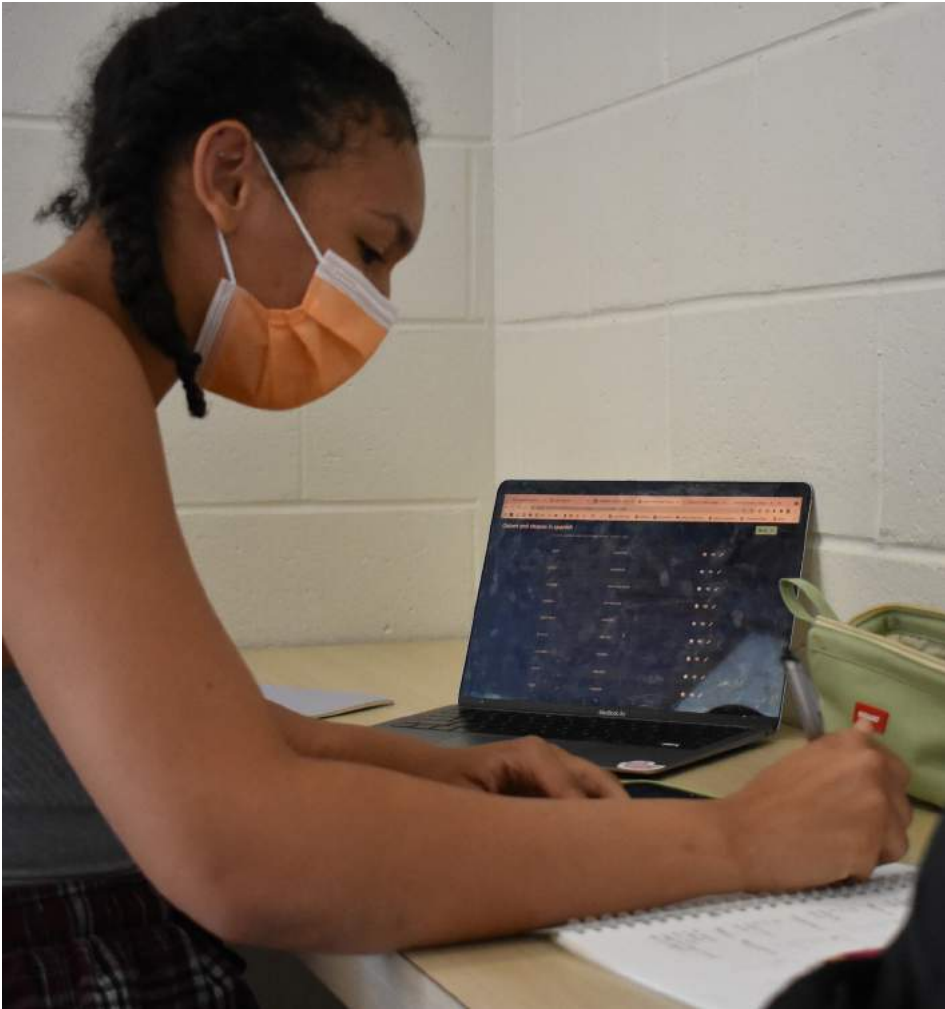


Photo by Aiko Palaypayon ’23/Staff

The constantly changing schedule has made it difficult for some students to learn. Studying in a school environment is vastly different from studying at home.

VID-19 during a school break, shared that they were in frequent contact with school nurses who helped them plan when it would be appropriate to return.

Over ten counselors and teachers from multiple departments were asked if they received concrete direction from administration about how to academically support students who were infected. Every one of them responded they did not. Teachers shared that students who felt comfortable enough told them directly that they contracted COVID-19, and crafted plans from there.

From the district administration side, safety was described as the core value guiding their decisions. LMSD struggled to figure out exactly what information and sources to follow in this novel situation. Quinlan explained that “this is the first time that we have not had a lot of direction coming from the federal government, the state department of health... schools have been tasked with becoming public health experts when that’s not their area of expertise.”

What safety actually looked like manifested itself in many ways, but perhaps the most notable example was Project: ACE-IT, run by the CHOP PolicyLab. This teacher and student testing program used self-administered, rapid tests, which have a lower sensitivity to SARS-CoV-2 than the PCR tests given at some testing centers.

The testing program received praise from participants. Testing gave teachers and students “peace of mind,” a phrase that was relayed constantly. Though, “it was completely voluntary,” Dyson added, “they did encourage, hoping that everyone would participate.” Supervisor for Safety, Security, and Custodians Dennis Witt noted that LMSD goes through 4,400 rapid tests every other week, a feat of the operations and nursing staff.

The nursing staff worked tirelessly to call parents and inform them about exposures and give them support and resources. Teachers and parents received an email every time someone in their building tested positive, but there was no way to know if there were interactions with that person. Students relied on other people to know if one of their peers tested positive, and during the hybrid model there was no notification if a student’s classmate tested positive. The average number of students quarantined for each positive case are five for elementary school and between zero and 44 for middle and high school; the highest number ever quarantined was seventy students at BCMS after three students tested positive.

In a year as complicated as this one, communication was essential. On the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend in 2020, the ISC was asked to put together a list of parents/guardians for Copeland to bounce some return-to-school scenarios off of at a meeting less than a week away. ISC leaders had little time to put this list together, which soon became “the Committee of Interested Parents,” a group given direct contact with Copeland. At that time, the leaders “didn’t realize this was the actual committee [Copeland] would reconvene over and over again,” explained ISC Co-President Caroline Manogue. “We assumed that our suggested participants would be supplemented by others in the District and would be just one community input used by the District when making its plan.” Even though providing a safe and productive environment for students was the top priority, there were no student focus groups or representative communication between students and decision-makers outside the few surveys that were sent out before school models were switched.

Despite parents’ frustrations, Karen Dunleavy said, “I don’t know if they could have done better or worse, but I think they worked really hard and did well.” An ISC leader said the community was divided, giving every decision its share of critics. “I had to unfollow Facebook groups because it was not helpful to me to read complaints... I feel like the critical voices were really loud... and not always constructive,” she shared.

As the year began to unfold after a cancelled spring sports season in 2020, the activity made its way back into the forefront of administrator’s minds. Safety was the number one priority when crafting sports’ return. “As long as we could do it safely, we wanted to provide as many activities for students as we could,” said LM Director of Athletics and Activities Jason Stroup.

PLAYBACK: REVIEWING LM’S COVID-19 RESPONSE continues on next page



Photo by Aiko Palaypayon ’23/Staff

Student athletes must complete a weekly ACE-IT rapid test to ensure that they have not contracted the COVID-19 virus. LMSD goes through 4,400 rapid tests every other week.

Playback: reviewing LM's COVID-19 response

In September, the Board agreed to the Athletics Health and Safety Plan that formally brought sports back before the end of the month. Many were ecstatic at the news of athletic activities starting up again, but there wasn't universal agreement. Most notably, players of high-contact sports, such as football, weren't allowed to begin with other fall athletes, due to county recommendations. After public pushback, the Board voted to allow their activities to resume.

Cooke, a captain of the girls' cross country team, noted that individual responsibility was key to her feeling safe. "I had the ability to control the team and our safety precautions," she said. Carmen Cheng '21, a member of the girls' volleyball team, specified that her team was "very safe about COVID-19—six feet apart, we never had our masks down," showing how an environment of taking the virus seriously could improve sentiments. From low-contact to high-contact athletes, seldom did students hear about infections on any given sports team, silencing those who believed that reintroducing athletics to LM would cause a spike in cases.

Even with major restrictions in place, there were times where athletes and coaches fell short of following guidelines. Some students were quick to note how the boys' and girls' soccer teams were inconsistent with masks and distancing. "I know that they were just

always in these tight packs without masks on," a student detailed in regards to the boys' team. "We would always get yelled at for not being six feet apart... and no one ever yelled at their team." There were photos posted on social media by members of both teams, with players and coaches alike standing side-by-side, sometimes without masks.

A member of the girls' team mentioned that the degree to which measures were followed varied from person to person. "Some people had their masks on the entire practice...others just didn't do anything." But the extent of their inconsistencies may not go too far. PIAA guidelines for fall athletics stated an important rule: "Athletes are not required to wear face coverings while actively engaged in workouts and competition that prevent the wearing of face coverings, but must wear face coverings when on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc.

Despite these rifts, communication and planning was predominantly swift, and neither hockey team had any further issues. "[Administration] did a good job limiting the damage," says Davison. But throughout all of the successes with athletics, clubs were running entirely virtually for a substantial amount of time. For clubs that heavily relied on in-person interactions, as well as materials largely found on school grounds, it was incredibly challenging to manage.

"It was so difficult, I can't even begin to describe it," said LM Players Secretary Daisy Cunningham '21. "We had two to three hour zoom meetings every day after school, and they would get nowhere. We just didn't know what we'd be able to do." Morale was generally low—especially among seniors—and trying to recruit freshmen into clubs was an arduous task.

Emily Shang '21 is a leader of a variety of clubs at LM, most of which still garner many routine members for each meeting. "[For Debate,] we get around forty to fifty people each time, which is crazy, because we didn't even get that many people to come last year." She also noted how Science Olympiad and Mock Trial have both run seamlessly.

Clubs generally had more strict guidelines than sports teams, leading to a fully virtual first semester that most, if not all, clubs had. "We did have to follow what Stroup was telling us, and he was being very accommodating...But we definitely didn't have as many privileges as the sports teams had," Cunningham noted.

“There were sports, and then everyone else.”

Shang shared a similar sentiment to Cunningham. "It was definitely less of a priority for them. They were in less of a rush to get clubs back. If you weren't actively seeking it out, they wouldn't actively want you to be in school." Players returned to the building in the second semester, eventually resuming normal rehearsals. Cunningham said members followed guidelines well. "The attitude was: 'we're not coming back unless it's going to be safe,' and that was drilled. Stroup struck down Science Olympiad in-person meetings over the summer, but restrictions slowly began to get lifted. Now, everyone is allowed to meet in-person at school. Still, all competitions against other schools are entirely virtual. While it looks like sports and other extracurricular activities are now almost on equal playing fields, it took nearly eight months for the latter to catch up. Stroup articulated that this was largely due to the ability for clubs to remain virtual, as opposed to sports, who rely on in-person practice and competition to craft cohesive teams. Even though something could be done virtually, doesn't mean that it was easy, or even enjoyable. Cunningham recalled, "We would ask ourselves, 'Do we even have to do Players right now?' The answer was yes. We needed Players because it brought us so much joy."



Photo by Aiko Palaypayon '23/Staff

Dori Olsen '22 leaps towards the sand pit in the triple jump while wearing a mask.

and anytime six feet of social distancing is not possible." These rules applied to the Central League and LM until November, when masks became required throughout practices and games. Testimonies of both teams didn't specify when exactly these supposed violations occurred. But the idea of seemingly unsafe practices—even if permissible under state guidelines—is uncomfortable to some.

Nevertheless, Severini recalled that "we followed the protocols with masks, sanitations, and spacing. Following the protocols helped for it to be a successful season." And their season was a success. There were no reported cases from the boys' team throughout the entirety of the season. More precautions were added for winter sports. After a proposed Health and Safety Plan failed to pass in November, the Board approved an updated version by a 7-2 vote. The implemented version included a new program: rapid testing for student-athletes. "The testing was huge," emphasized Hughes.

With the transition from warmer to colder temperatures, concerns grew over whether or not transmission was more prone to happen with largely indoor practices and games. But students still felt safe in enclosed settings. "My team was routinely getting tested," said girls' ice hockey captain Goonewardene. "We were getting negative tests consistently." Having a regimented testing protocol meant that students, coaches, and parents knew about cases when they arose. With tests now in place, there were cases, albeit few and far between. Students on teams were notified very quickly by school nurses—and by their teammates—about the cases, reassuring sentiments about the new system's effectiveness.

Will Treiman '21, captain of the boys' ice hockey team, said, "One of the kids [who tested positive] waited a while to tell us and to tell the coaches...By a while I mean a few hours, but a few hours can make a big difference. It pushed back our quarantine three days." The team had two cases throughout the season, and the girls' team had one. Boys' basketball had two as well, when one player and one coach contracted the virus. Davison of the boys' basketball team recounted how his team's cases almost seemed random. "The coach [had] no idea [how he got it]," he explained. "And the player, my guess, was either from his house or personal life." For boys' ice hockey, the cases spread differently, as Treiman detailed. "I think the original case was an error of responsibility. A kid told us he was sick the day before, and still showed up. He had his mask off and was close to another kid on the team, who ended up also testing positive."



Photo by Anika Xi '23/Staff

The girls' lacrosse team has adapted their season to the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring that all players wear masks during practices and games.

Joy. That's the underlying factor for so many students that participated in extracurriculars this year. "I definitely don't regret doing sports," said Cheng, who was initially going to sit out of her senior volleyball season. "In the end, none of the players got COVID-19. If I had gotten COVID-19, maybe this answer would be different." While there was always a chance of contracting COVID-19, the happiness in seeing close friends and participating in cherished activities trumped that concern. Athletes and club members alike attested that if you were truly trying to keep yourself and others around you safe, there would be no reason to not participate in activities this year. In a year like this one, the district faced a lot of critics for every decision they made. But Sarah Altman, ISC immediate-past president, noted, "Nobody took the day off." No matter what the personal opinions were over specific decisions, many noted that the district worked tirelessly to do what they thought was best. Essentializing the response, Shafer said, "it was about people first... If we could move forward thinking we did right for students, staff... then we could all walk away from the table saying we did the best to meet those objectives."

Tips for injury prevention

Ben Wolf '22
Sports Editor

All the current attention on athletes' health is rightfully focused on COVID. With that in mind, it is crucial to take measures to prevent more typical injuries from occurring and treat them properly when they take place. Here are eight ways to maximize the time you spend on the field and perform at peak physical capability.

1. Take time to recover. LM sports are required to provide athletes with at least one day off each week, and not without reason. Resist the urge to push yourself over the limit when it is unnecessary to do so. Give your body a break from the wear and tear of a grueling slate of practices and competition. That is not to say you should kick your feet back and watch TV with a bowl of popcorn, though. Instead, consider an active form of recovery like a brisk walk or jog.

2. Wear proper protective equipment. They may not give you that fashionable look you look for when you take the field, but helmets, mouthpieces, and protective padding are well worth their unattractive appearance. Hard falls, collisions, and impacts from balls or sticks are absorbed by the gear on your body.

3. Condition muscles. Coaches should allot time for both strength training during practices and stretching before and after practices and games. Increasing strength and flexibility while simultaneously getting the blood flowing to useful muscles is crucial to both performance and injury prevention.

4. Practice with proper technique. It may sound far-fetched, but freak injuries while horsing around are extremely common. Taking all your reps seriously and not experimenting with any risky forms of throwing or running is a very simple yet very wise step towards making it through the season injury-free.

5. Take breaks. As the heat of the summer begins to hang over the end of the spring

season, heat-related illness and injuries become increasingly likely to strike. Even the most important of practices is not worth attempting to overcome the heat. If you begin to feel sick, take a seat for a few minutes until you feel up to jumping back in.

6. Drink water. On a similar note, even the athletes in top shape are not immune to dehydration. Sports drinks are beneficial as well, but water is the fluid you abso-

lutely need to be drinking before, during, and after any form of intense physical activity, especially as the weather continues to warm.

7. Play safely. Do not recklessly endanger yourself or others by acting in a way the rulebook of your sport prevents. Even the most unnecessary-seeming regulations are often in place solely for your benefit. Violating rules meant to protect you is a surefire way to force yourself, a teammate, or an opponent out of commission for an extended period of time.

8. Do not play through pain. If you are completely certain that a twinge you feel in your leg is just a sore or tweaked muscle, continuing is permissible. If

a part of your body hurts or feels strange in an unfamiliar way that leads you to believe it is at risk of being hurt, let your coach know and see a trainer when you get the chance. LM's resources and facilities for injury treatment are rather useful. Even if it means missing a big game, take the day off and get the proper care instead of jeopardizing your immediate and long-term future as an athlete.

Many of these precautions align with common sense, so they should be easy to follow. Others, though, may seem difficult to follow and could cut into time typically spent doing other things or throw off a routine. In the end though, any athlete would much rather take those fifteen minutes to stretch and drink water than end up immobilized for the season and beyond, needing a long recovery to continue their athletic career.



Photo by Scott Rowan

LM girls' track and field devotes time to stretching prior to and at the conclusion of every practice and meet.

Saluting our seniors

Alex Frankel '22
Sports Editor

As the spring sports season begins to wind down, it is imperative that we remember what this year has meant to our school's senior student athletes. In every sport that LM has to offer, a strong core of seniors led each team with valiancy, and showed their true spirit in their last high school seasons of their lives. While LM is proud to be able to say that they are sending an impressive number of athletes into the collegiate level, it is impossible for them to forget how much this final season has meant for the Class of 2021.

For most senior athletes, this year is the final school year during which they will be able to call themselves a part of a competitive team for their respective sports. A senior season is the most important season for most high school athletes, and it is something that all seniors hold dear to their heart. Little things like team bus rides, fun practices, and bonding with teammates and coaches will all be remembered and missed for the rest of a high school athlete's life. Danny Dilsheimer '21, a member of the ultimate frisbee team, had a heartfelt response when asked what he would miss most about his high school athletic career. "My teammates. Growing up from freshman to senior year with everyone and seeing each other become young adults is something I'll for sure miss." It is safe to say that a senior season encapsulates all the

things that make high school sports such an important part of a student's life.

Moving on from high school teams hits hard not only for the seniors themselves, but the underclassmen who are losing some of their beloved teammates. The relationship between the senior class and a majority of underclassmen is

special. Many seniors acted as a sort of guide for new athletes as they joined the team, showing them the ropes of practice, games, and overall high school life. Luke Vaughan '22 called seniors "the cornerstone of any team, and in the Aces soccer and basketball teams they united everyone and kept us focused on our goals. They knew how to set the perfect balance between work and play within the teams and created a great environment for everyone that was a part of the team."

Senior athletes are an integral part of every team at LM. They are the glue that holds together each and every team at school. No matter the sport, every senior means something to their underclassmen teammates as well as their coaches, and every senior is irreplaceable in the eyes of the school. We would like to wish the best of luck to those of the seniors who are continuing their athletic careers at the collegiate level, as well as those who are currently living out their last moments as a student athlete. Thank you, seniors, for making every team at LM so special.

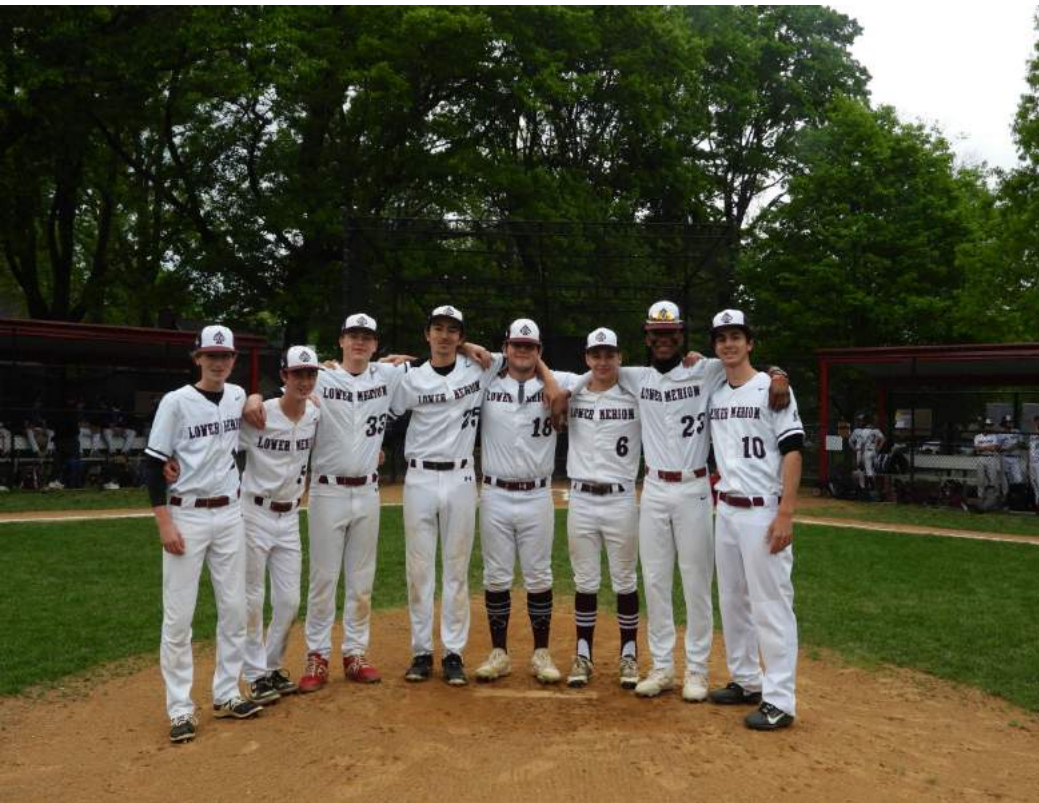


Photo courtesy of Ilan Tauber '22

The boys' baseball team's senior class celebrates an unforgettable four years of representing the Aces.

The Merionite

Making a difference on and off the field

Ellie Ward '21
Sports Editor

On April 27, the boys' lacrosse team faced off against the Ridley Green Raiders. With mere minutes left in the game and LM down seven points, the Aces knew they needed to do something exceptional in order to catch up to the Green Raiders. They initiated the "Kamari Special," named after captain Kamari Bolden '23. After receiving the ball, Bolden did a quick stutter step and slammed the ball soundly past the Ridley goalie and into the back of the net. Arnold Field erupted into cheers, with Bolden enveloped in a celebration between both teams. Bolden recalls, "It felt great. It felt real good." It was certainly a special moment for the Aces.

A video of the goal, initially posted on the LM boys' lacrosse Instagram account, has since gone viral. It has been re-posted several times all around the internet, even reaching The Lacrosse Network's Instagram. Bolden said, "It's just crazy to have fans," marveling at all the people who have texted him with congratulations and questions about the play. "I think the game was really crazy. I scored a goal—my first goal of the year—and I really hope to score again. That was the coolest thing I ever did," he shared. His special needs do not inhibit him from being a powerful leader. In fact, they only make him stronger. Bolden is the epitome of a team player, constantly providing motivation to other play-

ers when needed. During a tough practice, he told the team, "We can win these games, but y'all gotta want it! We can win, but y'all gotta want to put in that work!" He has practiced these teachings consistently this season, showing how his dedication prevails. No matter the score, he fights like there is nothing to lose.

Bolden's leadership and motivation to always work hard makes him a vital member of the team. Although it's his first time playing lacrosse, he utilizes every opportunity to be the best player possible. In his own words, "This is my first time playing lacrosse, so if I'm on the team this year, I gotta keep working." He mentions workouts, visits to the trainer, intense practices, and lots of observing. In fact, some of his favorite moments are simply hanging out with team members, watching the varsity team compete. He cherishes every moment with his teammates and can't wait for more to come.

Looking forward, Bolden's "biggest hope is to be prepared for anything that comes" and he hopes to score many more goals in the future. He wants to motivate other athletes to have a positive mindset and keep working despite obstacles. "There were times where I thought to myself, 'If I get mad at myself or disappointed, I can't let that happen because I'm on the team and I gotta stay strong for

it," Bolden recounts. It is this attitude that makes him such an incredible team member. Congratulations to Bolden on this amazing accomplishment!



Photo by Aiko Palaypayon '23/Staff

Bolden has been a source of joy and motivation all season for the boys' lacrosse team and to all who have seen the viral video of his goal.



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The ever-changing sports situation

Luke Shepard '24

In a year marked by protests from LM sports teams for their right to compete for a state championship while undergoing weekly COVID-19 testing, restrictions have varied from season to season. Prior to the school year, many discussed the implications of the pandemic on school sports and whether case counts would permit athletic seasons. Some argued that a sports season would be difficult or was unnecessary due to the potential for community spread. Although COVID-19 outbreaks forced teams such as boys' varsity basketball to "steal" members of their JV roster for several competitions, all three sports seasons have been able to continue. Arguments against sports gained even more traction as winter continued, leading to mandatory COVID-19 testing for all student-athletes. While the COVID-19-cautious have argued against a year of sports, athletics have perservered somewhat successfully.

At the beginning of the fall sports season, prior to each practice, a coach or school nurse volunteer would go and take the temperature of every student-athlete prior to each practice. They were checked for any symptoms via a questionnaire and would be sent home if any suspicious ones could point to a possible COVID-19 infection. However, following this initial screening, masks were not required during exercise when distancing could be maintained. The statement of "masks not being required" ended up leading to pervasive unmasking and higher rates of infection.

As case counts rose towards the beginning of November, masks became required for all athletes. Ever since this rule was established, masks have been required for students, with exceptions, including for wrestlers and swimmers. By far the trickiest season to work around COVID-19 infections was the winter. Athletic Director Jason Stroup describes how, at one point, "having a winter season was doubted" due to many regulations from both the school and state. Stroup notes that "a wrench was thrown" into the winter sports season as the state shut down K-12 athletics for a brief period during the winter. The dubious outlook on the season stemmed from

this break in athletic activity and semi-lockdown that all students had to abide by.

Unlike the fall season, winter and spring athletes are now required to get tested weekly. For a player to be eligible to play a spring sport, a negative test is required (barring other exculpatory reasons).

It remains to be seen what next season will hold for athletes. With most high schoolers over the age of sixteen, much of the LM population is eligible to be vaccinated. As the FDA approves vaccines for younger age groups, the entire LM community could soon be available for immunization against the COVID-19 virus, which begs the question of whether a vaccine will be required for fall athletes to participate in their respective sports when school starts up again this coming September. Many states, including Pennsylvania, already require vaccines for more common diseases in order to enroll in schools. This policy, coupled with tests already being required for spring athletes, might warrant a future requirement for COVID-19 vaccines. However, discussions have not yet commenced in regards to a mandate for students. There are other decisions that must be made first, and Stroup is still unsure whether there will be a requirement on masks this coming season, or even what some of this year's restrictions will look like as vaccination opportunities become more and more accessible for spring athletes. Stroup mentions that the Athletic Department will "monitor the information that [they] have both at the school and district level." Referring to a possible relaxation of restrictions this spring season and heading into next fall, Stroup notes, "If there's an opportunity to do that, we should

continue to look at that." A year of LM athletics marked by uncertainty will continue to the very end, as drastic weekly changes in case numbers can influence the decisions made in regard to restrictions. Encouragingly, possibilities of more normalcy in sports aren't too far-fetched for the final stretch of the spring sports season, meaning next season could restore another aspect of LM life to its pre-pandemic standards.



Photo courtesy of LM Yearbook

Pitcher Jacob Krimsky '22 loads up for a pitch against Conestoga, continuing to play despite the ever-changing situation surrounding COVID-19.

FACES OF THE ACES



Photo courtesy of Sydney Manko '24

Freshman
Sydney Manko

What sport(s) do you play?
Tennis

What is your greatest athletic achievement?
JV Rookie of the year

If you could have dinner with one person, dead or alive, who would you pick?
Paul Simon

What's your favorite animal and why?
Squids because my friends call me squid!



Photo courtesy of Alex Mendel '23

Sophomore
Alex Mendel

What sport(s) do you play?
Baseball

What is your greatest athletic achievement?
All tournament team

What is your go-to postgame restaurant after a big victory?
Chickies and Petes

What are you most looking forward to this summer?
Winning baseball games with my team



Photo courtesy of Henry Bard '22

Junior
Henry Bard

What sport(s) do you play?
Lacrosse and Basketball

What is your greatest athletic achievement?
Verbally committing to Duke

University for lacrosse

What is your favorite animal?
A rhinoceros. Definitely the coolest animal out there.

If you could have dinner with one person, dead or alive, who would you pick?
Sebastian Maniscalco



Photo courtesy of Allison Stewart '21

Senior
Allison Stewart

What sport(s) do you play?
Swimming and Lacrosse

What is your greatest athletic achievement?
Qualifying for PIAA States and USA Nationals

What are you most looking forward to this summer?
My last year competing in summer club season

What's your go-to postgame restaurant after a big victory?
Chick-fil-a