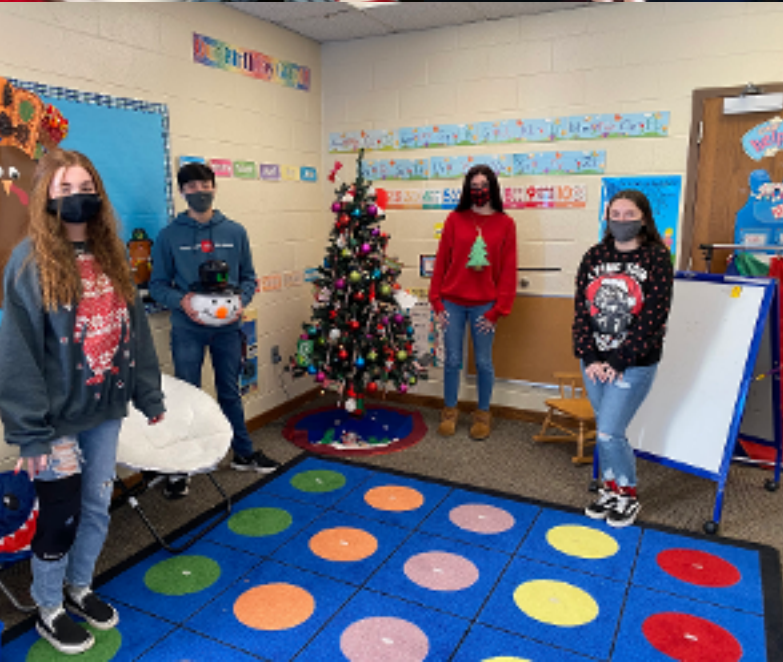


Colonial COURIER

December 2020



Colonial COURIER

Faculty Adviser:

Mrs. Terri Miles Moody

Editor-in-Chief:

Brookelyn Martinez

Deputy Editor:

Madison Marchant

Features Editor:

Meghan Thomas

News Editor:

Jenna Mason



Staff Writers

Ryan Bell

Riley Bridgman

Heather Claytor

Kayla Dougherty

Gracie Griffin

Ryleigh Hedge

Jessie Higgins

Whitnie Hoyle

Gavin Jarvis

Hakeem Johnson

A'Shya Malone

Makenzie Mathis

Chloe Russell

Tyrese Seabron

Ariana Smith

Christopher Thomas

Tamiya Waller

Caroline Woodward

Opinion: Drinking, driving lead to disaster

by Caroline Woodward

The holiday season is now upon us. This time is very exciting for most of us, but for others, it's a time they dread. Some people who are apprehensive about this time of year can become easily depressed, which can lead to risky behaviors. These behaviors can consist of binge drinking, drug usage and suicidal acts.

The month of December is known as National Impaired Driving Awareness Month, an important month because many people lose their lives to drunk driving every year, especially during the month of December.

According to Ascensionrs.com, there are 29 deaths in the United States that involve alcohol-related crashes every day. 10,585 people per year lose their lives to a drunk driving-related accident.

This awareness month is so important because it can influence the young minds of teens and educate them

about the dangers of driving under the influence.

Many teenagers in high school are all about fitting in. Fitting into a crowd that has the same interests as you can be an advantage to your years in high school; however, sometimes you can end up in the wrong group of people. Peer pressure, which often involves alcohol, can influence others to do dangerous acts that can hurt themselves and people around them.

When peer pressure is a factor in drinking alcohol, young people can be easily impacted. Driving a vehicle after consuming alcohol is tempting, especially when someone is telling you to because it will make you "cool" or "fun to be around."

After all, being "cool" or "fun to be around" isn't going to matter after someone has died in an accident that you have caused. You can ruin your life in seconds because of an idiotic choice that you made, whether that be killing or harming someone or yourself.

"I do not think teens take it very seriously," said Mr. Ray Sells, driver's education teacher. "I think teens think it is all fun and games until they are involved in a crash that injures or takes the life of a friend [or] family member."

Make the right choice: do not drink and drive. It won't be worth the risk. Put others' sake before your own, and think before you drive intoxicated.



Photo courtesy of brmsonline.com

Green: 'willing to go the extra mile'

by Riley Bridgman

"I love interacting with the students at CHHS," said Mrs. Clestelle Green, main office secretary.

Photo courtesy of Clestelle Green



Mrs. Green has been married to her husband for 39 years.

Mrs. Green had been substituting at CHHS since 2012. Before substituting and taking her current job in 2018, she worked at Bank of America for 32 years in a wide variety of departments and positions.

After attending Matoaca High School in her teenage years, Mrs. Green continued her academic career at Brigham Young University, where she majored in Business Administration.

"Mrs. Green is willing to go the extra mile to help anyone in the main office and any of our staff members," said Mr. James Burnett, assistant principal. "She is considerate of others and looks out for

her co-workers' best interests."

Mr. Burnett has worked with Mrs. Green for three years with her main office

secretary job and five for her substituting job before.

Mrs. Green feels blessed to have an amazing family.

"Mrs. Green is a very proud wife and mother of three adult daughters," said Mrs. Kay Rowe, bookkeeper.

Along with being a wife and having three daughters, she has two son-in-laws, one grandson, four granddaughters and another granddaughter due in February.

Her daughters all graduated from CHHS and all work in education.

Mrs. Green has many hobbies outside of school that she enjoys.

"I enjoy doing large jigsaw puzzles, crocheting, watching Jeopardy, shopping at yard sales and thrift stores and sewing," said Mrs. Green.

Mrs. Green also manages Colonial Heights Swim & Yacht Club and its summer swim team outside of school.

Mrs. Green is someone people can count on to do something correctly.

"I never know, each day I come to work, what I am going to deal with, who I am going to see and what is going to happen," said Mrs. Green. "I do know, however, that I am going to have a great day, and I look forward to coming to work each morning."

Photo courtesy of Clestelle Green



Mrs. Green has a grandson and four granddaughters from her three daughters Beth, Emily and Mollie. A fifth granddaughter is expected in February.

Gennese Springs awarded November SOM

by Ari Smith

When Gennese Springs, 12, was notified that she is the November Senior of the Month, she was excited. She was also very proud of herself for her hard work and dedication. Springs hopes to continue her hard work after high school.

Photo courtesy of Gennese Springs



Springs plans to do something in the medical field in her future.

"After I graduate, I want to go to a four-year college and major in either chemistry or cognitive sciences on a pre-med track," said Springs. "I plan to do something in the medical field in the future."

Since she spends most of her time studying, doing school work, or

procrastinating, Springs looks forward to gaining some freedom. She is also looking forward to developing new hobbies and passions. On the other hand, there are going to be some aspects of high school that she is going to miss.

"I will miss my teachers, club sponsors, and all of the underclassmen I will leave behind in color guard and marching band," said Springs.

In her free time, Springs enjoys listening to music, playing guitar, singing, journaling, reading and hanging out with friends. In addition to serving as SCA president, she is a part of multiple clubs, which include National Honor Society, National Beta Club, National Science Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, Colonial Players and Superintendent's Advisory Council. She also takes part in Marching Colonials and color guard. She is a former member of Interact Club.

"My favorite club is the

Colonial Players Drama Club because we always have a lot of fun at meetings," said Springs. "I also really like being on the Superintendent's Advisory Council because we always have interesting and fun talks with Dr. Sroufe. My favorite 'sport' has been marching band/color guard."

Springs did not always attend CHPS. She moved to Colonial Heights in the beginning of eighth grade from Ann Mullen Middle School in Sickleville, New Jersey.

Her favorite classes are math and science. She doesn't enjoy English; however, she likes and respects all of her teachers.

"Every single one of my teachers has helped me throughout high school," said Springs. "Each one of them has taught me something special that is not just curriculum and has helped me become a better person."

"Ever since I was a kid, I

have loved teachers," said Springs. "My mom would call me a sponge because I would always start to act like whoever my favorite teacher was. If I had to say only one teacher who has helped me the most, I would say Mrs. Johnson. She helped me make sense of a lot of thoughts in my head and has helped me figure out who I want to be in the future, and I really appreciate her."

In turn, Mrs. Betsy Johnson, counselor, appreciates Springs.

"Gennese is an awesome

young woman who is going to be successful in any endeavor she chooses," said Mrs. Johnson. "She is smart, kind, personable and goal oriented. It has been my privilege to serve as her school counselor. She is a delight!"

Springs's favorite high school memory is a collection of every color guard competition. The most memorable competition for her was the Parade of Champions marching band competition at JMU last year. She enjoyed having fun with

her friends despite the cold temperatures.

As she wraps up her high school experience, Springs offers some advice to underclassmen.

"I would tell the freshmen to surround themselves with good people," said Springs. "The people you have around you can make your high school experience so much better, or they could make your high school experience so much harder. Try and make friends that will support you and encourage you in everything you want to do."

Lauren Anderson selected as December SOM

by Chloe Russell

Photo courtesy of Lauren Anderson



Anderson will miss the relationships she has formed with staff members.

Lauren Anderson, 12, first found out she was senior of

the month for December when Mrs. Kristin Janssen, principal, pulled her out of her Power Research class and told her the good news.

"It was really special because she had me call my dad and tell him," said Anderson. "I loved that she was also able to hear his reaction!"

After finding out, Anderson was very honored and humbled. She appreciates the staff recognizing all the

accomplishments she's made since being part of CHHS.

Once she leaves high school, she plans on attending Randolph-Macon, James Madison or Penn State. She plans to study psychology.

Anderson is active in volunteering and has participated in activities such as Brunswick stew fund-raising, bingo and Volunteer-a-thon. She also has been involved with sports

throughout her years, including tennis, volleyball, golf and basketball.

Mrs. Kristin Crowder, gifted resource teacher, is one of Anderson's inspirations. Anderson finds herself chatting with Mrs. Crowder any chance she can get and notes that Mrs Crowder has helped her with some of her most difficult moments.

"No matter the time or place, she is always willing to lend an ear and give me advice," said Anderson.

Mrs. Dana Barefoot, chemistry teacher, has also played a significant role in Anderson's life. Mrs. Barefoot helps Anderson not only in school, but also outside of school. If Anderson isn't talking to Mrs. Crowder, she's chatting it up with Mrs. Barefoot. As a bonus for Anderson, Ms. Crowder and Mrs. Barefoot coached the tennis team during her junior year.

"Both of these women have shaped me into the person I am today, and I am so glad that they are in my life," said Anderson.

Out of everything, the relationships are what Anderson will miss most after leaving high school. As she leaves for college, she will not have access to her teachers easily, and she will miss that.

"I feel so comfortable talking to them, and their positive energy and love for the students is so special and irreplaceable," said Anderson.

Mrs. Barefoot describes Anderson as a genuine young lady who is considerate, responsible and motivated. Mrs. Barefoot believes that Anderson's integrity, honesty and character are reflected in everything she does.

When Mrs. Barefoot found out about Anderson being chosen for Senior of the Month, she was extremely happy, and she feels Anderson fully deserved this award.

"Her positive influence has been instrumental within our school and in our community," said Mrs. Barefoot. "She brings positivity and enthusiasm for learning each day she enters your classroom."

Mrs. Barefoot is excited for Anderson to start the next chapter of her life and reminds her that her CHHS community will always support her.

After these four years, Anderson finds herself a lot more independent with much better leadership skills. Starting off as a shy student, Anderson is grateful that high school has pulled her out of her shell and allowed her to be more vulnerable.

"Like most people, I definitely feel like I've matured and grown as a person and student," said Anderson.

Photo courtesy of Chris Anderson



Anderson is considering attending Penn State University, one of several colleges to which she has been accepted. She plans to study psychology.

NHS members volunteer at the Potato Drop

by Meghan Thomas

Members of the National Honor Society volunteered for the Potato Drop at Wesley United Methodist Church on the morning of Saturday, Nov. 21.

The main goal of this activity was moving sacks of potatoes from one tractor-trailer onto the back of other trucks and trailers

Photo courtesy of Emmanuel Sampson



From left to right: Taiseer Salem, Tyrique Payne, Akuabata Ezenekwe, Devotha Temu, Emmanuel Sampson, Ava Galyen, and Mikki Macklin volunteer together with Wesley United Methodist Church.

that then take the potatoes to local food pantries.

“A couple of other students and I had to transfer 50-pound sacks of potatoes onto the back of trucks and trailers for about an hour,” said Mikki Macklin, 11.

Ms. Kristin Crowder, NHS sponsor, opened the volunteer opportunity to NHS members.

“The Potato Drop is an annual event at my church,” said Ms. Crowder. “This year, they were in desperate need of volunteers.”

When the NHS put the notice out, Heather Colletti, 11, volunteered for the 7:30

a.m. shift.

“I love to help out whenever I can,” said Colletti.

Finding volunteer opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging, so many jumped on this opportunity.

Photo courtesy of Emmanuel Sampson



NHS students help transfer sacks of potatoes to be sent to local food banks.

“It is hard to get volunteer hours during the pandemic, yet I feel that it is necessary to volunteer during this time,” said Taiseer Salem, 11.

Tyrique Payne, 11, said the most challenging part of this activity was receiving the 50-pound bags, counting them and then having to put them in rows on the trucks.

“After a little bit that took a toll on my lower back,” said Payne.

While helping their community, many of the volunteers liked being able to be with their friends.

“My favorite part was that I got to see some of my virtual friends that I haven’t seen since last year,” said Salem.

Vincent says 'goodbye' to students, staff

by Jenna Mason

Over the past 23 years, Mrs. Dorothy Vincent, ALC coordinator and paraprofessional, has worked in the Colonial Heights school system. Starting at the middle school in 1997 and then transferring to the high school in 2000, Mrs. Vincent is now preparing to say “goodbye” to the students and staff of CHHS.

Photo courtesy of Dorothy Vincent



Mrs. Vincent believes that her time at CHHS has been “amazing” and she wouldn't change a thing.

As Mrs. Vincent goes into retirement, she not only leaves everyone with memories of herself, but she also takes some memories she has made along this journey with her.

“As part of CADRE, I worked

with After Prom for eight years, and those are great memories,” said Mrs. Vincent. “The greatest honor was to be chosen twice by two different seniors to go to the Senior of the Month Banquet at the end of the year.”

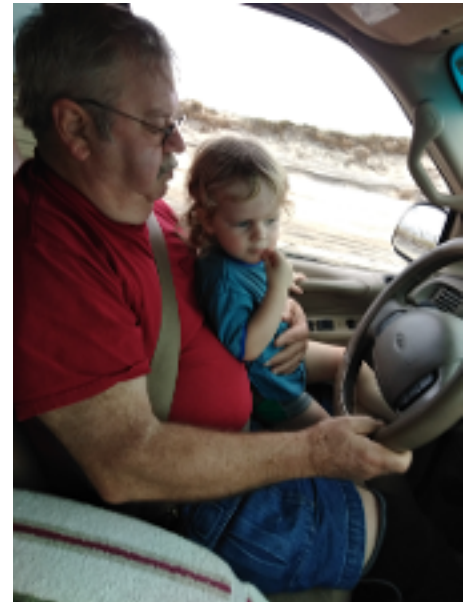
Working with students has not only given Mrs. Vincent unforgettable memories, but has also presented her challenges. While working in ALC, she has experienced one of the biggest challenges of her career in education.

“I am the most convenient person, so they want to be mad at me, and we have to work that out,” said Mrs. Vincent. “Most of the time, after a little reflection time, they realize it is not me who put them in ALC but themselves.”

Once Mrs. Vincent is finally retired, she hopes to travel the rest of the United States with her husband. She also wants to spend more time with her two-year-old grandson William and watch him grow.

Ms. Melissa Lewis, behavioral specialist and

Photo courtesy of Dorothy Vincent



Mrs. Vincent is ready to travel the United States in her RV with her husband.

paraprofessional, has worked with Mrs. Vincent for 11 years. One of her favorite memories of Mrs. Vincent was whenever Mrs. Vincent would walk around the school giving people gifts, no matter the occasion.

Ms. Martina Smith, paraprofessional, has been working with Mrs. Vincent for over 10 years. Over the years they have become great friends, and now that Mrs. Vincent is starting a new chapter, Ms. Smith has some kind words to share.

“Mrs. Vincent, thank you for

Photo courtesy of Martina Smith



Mrs. Vincent appreciates the relationships that she has built with her colleagues during 23 years. Ms. Smith and Ms. Kristina Adams are among the many people she will miss.

your tireless work. You will definitely be missed," said Ms. Smith. "I want to wish you a happy and healthy retirement. Enjoy more time with your family and new adventures in your RV."

Mr. James Burnett, assistant

principal, has some kind words he would like to share, as well, as Mrs. Vincent heads off into retirement.

"You have left a mark on so many students and staff at CHHS," said Mr. Burnett.

"Your legacy will shine

through the compassion, wisdom and servant-like attitude you have shown to our students and staff."

As Mrs. Vincent's career of helping and teaching young adults through their lives comes to its end, she leaves everyone with some words of wisdom.

"My faith has helped me to do things I never would have dreamed were possible," said Mrs. Vincent. "Remember, you will graduate from high school, and some will get a college degree, but you will never stop learning or growing."

Being thankful during challenging times

by Kayla Dougherty

The holiday season is coming soon, but, with how tough 2020 has been, people might have to dig deep to find reasons to be thankful.

"You will not always be in the position of struggle," said Ms. Melissa Lewis, behavioral specialist. "Be thankful even in the struggle because it takes the position of struggling to put you in the

position of being thankful."

According to psychologytoday.com, "gratitude can make our best days brighter, and it is the one thing that can help us make it through the tough times. It is not frivolous. Not a luxury. It is a coping strategy. And it works."

The site suggests three simple ways to show gratitude: stop to appreciate

any little thing that is working in your life; help someone who is in need; and complete one task that you're good at.

"There are those who will reach out to me and will say your morning motivation really touches my heart," said Ms. Lewis. "I have had others that have surprised me with gifts. What really touches my heart is knowing that I made someone's day."

Local organizations need items, cash donations

by Jessie Higgins

Yet another casualty of COVID-19 Christmas is the sound of Salvation Army volunteers ringing bells outside of grocery stores. The Salvation Army, along with many other charitable organizations, hopes people will shift their generosity into online giving this year.

According to their website, Salvation Army “will continue to open their arms, hearts, and doors to the people in need.” You can donate using this site: <https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/>.

The Salvation Army is also accepting in-person donations. When donating, be sure to keep sanitary, wipe down your products and wear a mask when going to The Salvation Army.

They are also still doing the Angel tree, at many area Walmart stores and some other retailers. Go to this link for more information: [salvationarmyusa.org](https://www.salvationarmyusa.org).

The Colonial Heights Food

Pantry is still accepting in-person donations. Go to this link for more information: [chfoodpantry.org](http://www.chfoodpantry.org).

The Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Christmas Mother Program is only accepting online donations through GiveButter or PayPal. You can also help them out through Amazon. Go to [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and search for Christmas Mother Wish List.

CCHASM (Chesterfield Colonial Heights Alliance for Society Ministry) is accepting in-person donations, or checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 1741, Chesterfield, VA 23832. To donate clothing, call them at (804) 796-3715 to make an appointment. You can also help out by buying from Amazon through The Amazon Smile Program. Go to this link for more information: [cchasm.org](https://www.cchasm.org).

Animals shelters also need donations for animals. The Colonial Heights Animal Shelter is accepting online and in-person donations. Go to this site for more

information: <http://www.colonialheightsva.gov/295/Animal-Control-Shelter>.

Ms. Kristin Crowder, gifted resource teacher and NHS sponsor, is usually involved with many volunteer opportunities during the holidays, but this year is difficult.

“With the pandemic, we have to get creative in order to keep everyone safe,” said Ms. Crowder.

Senior Lauren Anderson understands that people need help more than ever this year.

“I believe it's important to give back to your community because everyone deserves to enjoy the holiday season,” said Anderson. “No one should have to worry about money, having food on the table, and making sure their kids are warm while staying busy with work, school, and anything else going on.”

Mrs. Betsy Johnson hopes many people will channel their holiday spirit into

helping others.

“I think the holidays can be especially hard on individuals

or families who are experiencing hardships,” said Mrs. Johnson, counselor and JOI Club sponsor. “I think it is

the perfect time of the year to help others in their time of need. The holidays should be special to everyone.”

Steps to improve low grades

by A'Shya Malone

Are your grades rather low? There is still time to make improvements before the end of the semester.

Step 1: Talk to your teacher(s) about your grade. Ask if there is anything missing or anything else you can do to improve it. Get on the computer and check your grades. If you do not have your PowerSchool log-in information, contact your counselor for help.

Step 2: If your teacher says there isn't much, or anything, you can do, then you must work harder on your assignments, study for tests, take any extra credit opportunities, and be sure to hand everything in on time.

Also, participate more in class.

Step 3: If your teacher gives you an extra credit assignment, do it, and maybe even do a little extra. This goes for regular assignments, as well. If you must write at least eight-sentence paragraphs, try writing 9 or 10. If you can add color to an assignment (this often goes for science assignments), do so.

Step 4: Do not be distracted. Focus on improving your grade. This is not to say that you cannot hang out with your friends or go out anywhere until your grade improves, but make sure to focus. This means, if you have a paper to write for Friday,

maybe get it all done on Monday or at least by Wednesday. If you have homework, do not go anywhere until it is finished. Work first; play later.

Step 5: Be responsible. This often means cleaning out your binders, throwing away what you don't need and organizing. Try making a folder for each class that you can put your assignments in, or make a homework folder that you carry with you to each class. This way, you can easily keep track of your homework.

Low grades do not magically rise because you want them to, but, if you put in the time and effort, you should be able to make improvements.

Counselors

Darby Wheeler: A-F

Deona Guy: G-O

Betsy Johnson: P-Z

Kristin Crowder: all gifted students

Students are assigned to counselors alphabetically by last names.

Staff members celebrate Winter Solstice

by Ryan Bell

When people think of December holidays, Christmas is usually the first holiday to come to mind; however, some people celebrate a lesser-known holiday called Winter Solstice or Yule.

According to Rd.com, "The word 'solstice' is derived from two Latin words: 'sol,' which means 'sun,' and 'sistere,' which means 'to stand still.'"

"One of the most popular

Rd.com. "The historic site is a great spot to witness the sunrise on the shortest day of the year."

Mr. Matthew Gelven, Latin teacher, celebrates the Winter Solstice with his family.

"The Winter Solstice, or Yule as it was called by the pre-Christians of the British Isles, is the longest night (shortest day) of the year," said Mr. Gelven. "Christmas was originally scheduled to coincide with Yule back in

centuries, and Yule now occurs four or five days before Christmas."

Ms. Natalie Fehlner, drama teacher, also participates in the Winter Solstice celebration.

"The Winter Solstice is an astronomical point in the year when the sun is at the lowest point in the sky," said Ms. Fehlner. "It is also when the pole of the earth is aligned with the sun on the Axis Mundi. It is called Yule. Usually, the sun moves slightly each day, but for the three days leading up to the Solstice, it appears to stay still and hang on the constellation Crux, which is in the shape of a cross."

"The Solstice is the day of the shortest sunlight in the northern hemisphere," said Ms. Fehlner. "December 25 marks the rebirth of light because this is when the sun begins to move again, and each day after gains more and more sunlight."

Photo courtesy of Matthew Gelvin



Mr. Gelvin celebrates the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year, with his family.

celebrations of the winter solstice takes place at Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England," according to

medieval times, but the precession of the solstices has drifted backward through the calendar over the

"Experiencing Solstice celebrations have been extremely informative for me and really interesting and fun," said Ms. Fehlner. "I have

learned that these celebrations are actually deeply spiritual and complex, just like every other religious holiday! It is all about letting

go of the dark and celebrating the eternal light, given by the sun, but also found within yourself."

CHHS makes holidays happy with food

by Hakeem Johnson

'Tis the season of love, sharing, family and FOOD.

The holiday season is a very busy season for some people; however, it's the best season for some homemade holiday cooking.

Photo courtesy of Laurie Melis



Baking on a budget during the holidays can be stressful but is not impossible.

For some cooking can bring people together even if it's the small things, like helping crack an egg.

"Making mashed potatoes is

definitely the easiest thing to make," said John Sun, 12. "You definitely can't mess that up."

Chef Shane Logan, Culinary Arts teacher, believes in getting the entire family involved.

"Some people like to take over and be in charge," said Chef Logan. "That's okay, but give some responsibility to everyone in the family. It's not only a great way for kids to learn to cook, but it's also a rewarding experience for the whole family."

Because of COVID there may not be as much family time this holiday season.

"We're still trying to figure that out," said Mrs. Laurie Melis, Spanish teacher. "We obviously won't have the big party that we usually do, but hopefully we'll be able to see family in smaller groups."

You might be thinking this: "I have never cooked before. What if I mess up?"

Mrs. Melis recommends starting with Christmas cookies. "You can make them as simple or fancy as you want them to be!" said Mrs. Melis.

Chef Logan suggests pies for new bakers. "Making pies is fun around the holidays," said Chef Logan. "There are so many to choose from, and you can make something simple like pumpkin pie. If you're using a store-bought pie crust, it makes it that much easier."

Make this the year that you learn to cook some traditional or adventurous holiday foods. The rewards may be savory or sweet, but the family time will be priceless.

Ways to understand, cope with holiday stress

by Heather Claytor

Everyone tends to love Christmas and Thanksgiving, but along with these holidays comes stress. Stress can be hard to deal with around the holidays, but that doesn't mean there's no way to prevent it.

According to mayoclinic.com, medical specialists suggest taking 15 minutes alone, without anything to distract you, to refresh you enough to be able to handle everything you need to do before the holidays.

You may think that you don't have enough time to take a break, but it is always well needed. Taking a break from events even for a couple minutes can help you restore inner calm.

Parents and young adults are used to the normal routine of Christmas and Thanksgiving, but this year may be a little different due to the pandemic.

Students also feel holiday stress. Lauren Anderson, 12,

understands the stress people have on their shoulders.

"I have learned that it is okay to ask for help," said Anderson. "Not one person is meant to hold all of the holiday stress on their shoulders; therefore, asking someone to pick up a few gifts or assist you in wrapping up some gifts will take off so much stress."

The holidays contain so many different things: shopping, baking, cleaning, entertaining and cooking meals, to name a few. Addition to that, if there's a peak of COVID-19 in the community that may add more stress. Simple tips can help minimize your stress level.

Mrs. Laurie Melis, Spanish teacher, makes lists and crosses tasks off as she gets them done. Planning ahead can also relieve a bunch of stress that may happen as the holidays get closer.

"It's important to not get caught up in all of the chaos of the holidays and to take

time and enjoy the magic," said Mrs. Melis.

The holidays can be so fun, but you can't abandon your healthy habits. Taking a breath and focusing on yourself can ease your stress. Some people like to take walks and look at the stars at night, while others like to make hot chocolate and sit next to a warm, cozy fireplace.

Traveling is also a big obstacle around the holidays because families aren't always in the same community or state. Ms. Taylor Embrey, English teacher, understands the difficulties of the travel stress.

"My family and my fiance's family both live far away, so it is hard to make enough time to see everyone for every holiday," said Ms. Embrey.

The holidays are coming with big obstacles, but there will always be an outlet to soften your stress. Don't let the holidays take control of you: take control of the holidays.

Holidays aren't cheerful for everyone

by Ryleigh Hedge

The holiday blues are a real phenomenon, and many people suffer from it.

“Feeling like you have to be cheerful and high spirited during this time and then not meeting your own presuppositions can be extremely difficult to understand, especially if others around you seem to be doing just fine,” said Olivia Harrison, 10.

Photo by Brookelyn Martinez



People who have lost loved ones may not view the holidays as a cheerful time.

A common myth is that suicide rates rise during the holidays, but many websites state that this theory is not substantiated. Balancing the demands of shopping, parties, family obligations and house guests may contribute to feelings of being

overwhelmed and increased tension.

However, low suicides rates don't necessarily mean that the holidays blues aren't a real occurrence. Some people feel more stress, anxiety and depression in the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

“I think it's real,” said Mrs. Darby Wheeler, counselor. “Some people don't have family to celebrate with or

have lost someone close to them during this time. I think this year will be hard for families where they have lost jobs and finances during the pandemic.”

Many agree holiday depression is very real and

understand that feeling sad around this time is completely normal.

“Don't let the sadness of the holidays get to you for you can treat it as if it's any other day,” said Aiden Hardy, 9.

Others may experience post-holiday sadness after New Year's Day. This can result from built-up expectations and disappointments from the previous year, coupled with stress and fatigue.

Some tips for staying happy during this time are to make realistic expectations, live and enjoy in the moment. Don't try to rush through the holidays but enjoy the beautiful, cheerful time.

Also, make some time for yourself. The holidays are all about family and friends, but don't forget about your alone time.

Anyone who feels overwhelmed, depressed or suicidal during the holidays or at any time should call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Best ways to buy holiday gifts on a budget

by Gavin Jarvis

Even with a set budget, holiday gifts can be hard to shop for without spending mass amounts of money. Sometimes people think getting a more expensive gift will bring more joy to a person. What if you can buy cheap gifts, stay in your budget, and satisfy the person you want to give a present to?

"Our boys get four gifts: something they WANT, something they NEED, something to WEAR and something to READ," said Mrs. Darby Wheeler, counselor. "Of course, Santa always brings a few gifts for them, too!"

Mrs. Wheeler has sons who look forward to Christmas every year because of her creative gift ideas.

"I think making a list before you start shopping is the best way to stay within a budget. I also think that less is more," said Mrs. Wheeler. "Buy the top item that the kids really want, and then stay away from the little stuff that they don't care about!"

Less expensive gifts can easily be just as valued as an expensive gift.

"The hardest part for us isn't staying in our budget, but helping the grandparents understand that we don't want our kids swimming in a sea of toys," said Mrs. Jamie

Wulfekuhle-Zaweski, French teacher.

Mrs. Zaweski leans towards getting thoughtful and useful gifts, so they don't go to waste in the future.

Another less expensive gift idea is a DIY/homemade gift.

"Sometimes making a homemade gift is the cheapest option," said Jennifer Hersee, 10.

Just because you didn't pay for the gift doesn't mean it won't be valued the same as a gift that costs money.

"I try to get useful gifts and thoughtful gifts," said Mrs. Zaweski. "I'm very leery of consumerism."

Budget Gift Ideas

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| Food/candy | Scarf |
| Gift card | Gloves |
| Socks | Magnet |
| Cup | Sticker |
| Book | Earrings |
| Candle | Mask |



Places to Shop on a Budget

- Target
- Walmart
- Five Below
- Marshall's
- Bath and Body Works
- Dollar Tree

Be S.M.A.R.T when making your resolutions

by Whitnie Hoyle

All of us have tried a New Year's resolution before, am I right? The only problem with that is that most of us don't go through with it. We create these huge expectations of ourselves thinking that we will automatically go from 0 to 100.

For example, if you're eating fast food every day, don't make your resolution to eat healthy every single day. Instead you can try to eat healthy some of the time with a cheat day here and there. Think realistically: start small and build up from there.

According to healthyway.com, people often set huge goals for themselves that are unrealistic for them to reach, which results in them getting overwhelmed and abandoning their efforts. This is one of the biggest reasons why people fail to stick with their resolutions. Everyone has their strategies for maintaining their goals, but many people slip up and give up on them.

"I know for me, life gets in

the way sometimes," said Mrs. Elizabeth Roberts, math teacher, who recently achieved a significant weight loss. "I get stressed and don't make the time to exercise one day, and then the next, and then the next...and then I don't feel like doing it anymore."

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Roberts



Mrs. Roberts has been sticking to her New Year's resolutions throughout 2020.

Don't beat yourself up when you steer off track a couple times.

"If you fall off the wagon for a while, that's okay," said Mrs. Roberts. "Just get up and start again. You don't have to wait for the New Year to start over."

The New York Times states that your goals should be smart. The acronym SMART stands for Specific,

Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound.

"A good way that I stay motivated is writing down most of the tasks I have to do that day," said Natalie Jackson, 11. "Another way is to make the tasks seem more exciting so that I will have fun doing them."

Prioritizing your goals for your New Year's resolutions will help with motivation to follow through.

"It is hard to keep your resolution because it is easier to give up and sometimes," said Ms. Deona Guy, counselor. "People honestly forget about what goals they have set for themselves if it is not important."

Will power and endurance are the keys to making resolutions happen.

"Keeping a New Year's resolution isn't always easy," according to healthyway.com. "But if you genuinely want to make a change and follow these tips, you might just find that success is not as elusive as you once thought."



Teachers deserve higher salaries, more respect

by Brookelyn Martinez

I am a senior in high school; I started my school journey with pre-school. A number of different teachers have been in my life. Some made a larger difference than others, but each teacher has changed my outlook on life. I realized how important each teacher's position was, whether I was a fan of the teacher or not. I always wondered why people so important were being paid like they weren't.

According to [businessinsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com), the average teacher salary during 2018-2019 in Virginia was \$52,466. Mind you, they work only 10.5 months out of 12 (and only get paid for working for 10.5 months); however, many teachers work hours way past their contract times. Every time I enter class, my teachers have a number of assignments prepared for that day. There is rarely ever a moment I am not doing

something in class unless there is an issue. Therefore, it wouldn't be shocking to find out that a teacher puts in more time than just in class and during planning blocks.

Not only do teachers put in a lot of time for teaching, but also some teachers have second jobs. These teachers juggle their school responsibilities and whatever responsibilities they have at their second job just so they can make the amount they deserve.

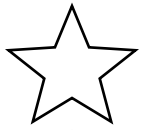
Now teachers have to put in more work than they normally do because of the pandemic and virtual learning. Not only do they have to put in more work, but also the work that they are putting in is being undermined.

Suzanne Jenkins of the Richmond Times-Dispatch wrote about how she read comments from parents saying they should be paid the teacher's salary because

the parents are "teaching" their children. As a student who chose to do in-person, this statement frustrates me.

When this pandemic first hit, everyone was worried about the students, which is a fair reaction; however, I do not think people considered how the teachers felt. I would wake up to emails from teachers laying out our plans for the day, and they would end each email with an "I miss seeing you guys." Yes, as students we lost a lot, but the teachers lost just as much.

When we finally got back in-person, the teachers were so happy, but they were also nervous. This year looks nothing like previous years. Nothing could prepare anyone for what we would have to do this year. I have watched as teachers realized they forgot to post an assignment to Canvas. I have watched as the class



O

P

I

N

I

O

N



realized at the same time that our assignment was locked. I have watched my teachers rush to fix technical issues after technical issues. I have watched as teachers moved classrooms. I have watched classes shrink from 20 to 13. I have watched as students sat and did nothing because the internet went out and we couldn't use paper.

Teachers have not quit, and they are not slacking off. It is quite the opposite. Teachers put in work that would make a normal person go mad and somehow still do it with a smile on their faces.

A lot was lost due to COVID; there is not a single person who has not been affected by COVID. During this time, those who are

essential still have to work; school did not just stop.

Teachers are essential. If during a pandemic we say that teachers are essential, then they should be paid like they are. Do I believe teachers should be paid millions? No, but I wholeheartedly believe teachers need to be paid more and their pay needs to be protected.

Survey: If you had to choose one food to eat for the rest of your life what would it be and why?

Emma Moody, 10: "chicken because it's good protein."

Crystal McCall, 11: "probably Chick-Fil-A nuggets because I could eat them every day and never get tired of them."

Timothy Freeman, 9: "tacos because I like them."

Emily Harwood, 12: "I would definitely eat mac and cheese for the rest of my life because it has been one of my favorites since I was a little kid, and it is a classic."

Miss Taylor Embrey, English teacher: "I think I am going to have to say fettuccine alfredo, because it is one of my favorite foods and can be mixed up with add-ins (veggies , chicken, shrimp) so it does not get too boring."

★ Students should take advantage of the free meals

by Riley Bridgman

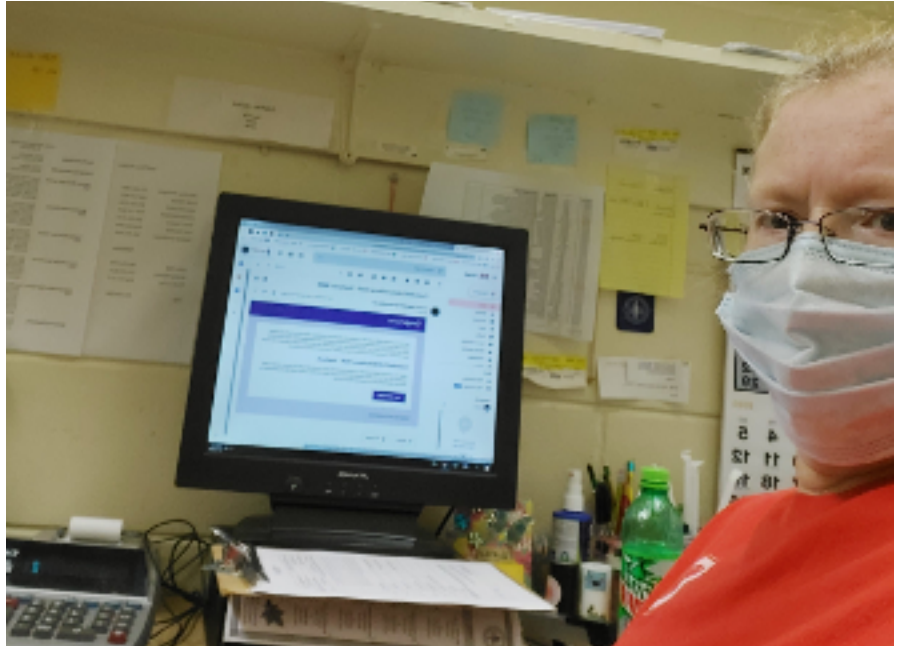
★ Students should take advantage of the free breakfasts and lunches provided by the cafeteria staff.

O During this unusual school year, Colonial Heights Public Schools is providing free school breakfasts and lunches to all children from 2-18 years old, regardless of their households' incomes. These meals are all well balanced and nutritious.

P According to doe.virginia.com, school breakfasts have to provide one-fourth of the recommended amount of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron and calories for the day. For lunches, schools have to meet the federal nutrition standards.

★ The National School Lunch Program is a program that works in public and private schools and provides low-cost or no-cost lunches to students every day. This program helps millions of students all over the

Photo courtesy of Laura Ross



Mrs. Ross thinks that the best part about the free breakfasts and lunches is that they are already prepared and ready to be eaten.

country, according to fns.usda.gov.

“As a former coach and current Anatomy and Physiology teacher, I realize the importance of nutrients,” said Mr. Tracy Boyd. “Unfortunately, some students don't get a proper meal at home, so the only real meal some students get is from school.”

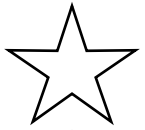
Students need to get their nutrients from somewhere, and it's easy and free to get them from school.

Free meals at school are helpful to not only those

who need them, but also those who just want them.

“In this time of uncertainty, providing our community families and children with meals and a smile shows that there is still good in the world,” said Mrs. Laura Ross, food service manager.

All over the world there are families that struggle in many ways because of the pandemic. Having free breakfasts and lunches at schools is just one way to help keep families safe and healthy during this time of pandemic crisis.



Winning gives a better lesson



by Madison Marchant



"I believe that competing is better than participating because there is a heightened sense of passion and motivation amongst the teammates and usually a crowd if there is one," said Maria Elena Smith, 12, who is a swimmer, competition and sideline cheerleader, soccer player and basketball player.

an individual basis, but competition is more about a collective basis. With competition, you do not always have to just compete with others, but you can also cooperate with some if you are on a team."

Tanner Gates, 12. "Last year when we beat Petersburg at home for basketball, it was such a good feeling since we hadn't beat them in a very long time, but there's always a loser, and it's better to be on the winning end."

Winning seems to make people feel accomplished and get excited more than just participating does.

Not only does competition make people work together and feel accomplished when they win, but also winning is a teacher.

Some people believe that competing is more important than just participating, but competing is, in fact, better. Not only can winning be fun, but also it can force people to work together.

"Working together and winning is sort of a morale-booster, and it gives a prideful feeling I can't really describe," said Smith. "It's like all of the hard work paid off, and when we win, it's not only visible to ourselves, but others in the crowd."

"Competition is the ultimate teacher," said Kyle Krupp, weight training teacher and head varsity football coach. "It forces you to give maximum effort and allows you to learn what you excel in and what you need to improve."

"Competing allows you to be pushed by others to succeed and to push others to succeed," said Mr. Ryan Davis, World History 1 teacher and Academic Challenge Team coach. "Participation is more about

People tend to feel more accomplished when they win rather than when they just participate.

"Personally I think winning has a lot better feeling at the end of the day than participating does," said

O

P

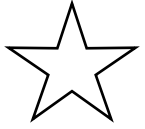
I

N

I

O

N



Participation should be appreciated

by Caroline Woodward

Many people love the idea of competition, whether it be an athletic competition, running for a student council position or being placed at the top of your class. In a competition, there will always be a winner and a loser, but is winning really all that matters?

Photo by Madison Marchant



Without participation there would be no game to play.

People presume that winning is what is important, but the concept of trying should be enough. When you are competing to win, you have a goal that you want to achieve: that goal is set on success and victory.

When winners lose, the losses can be damaging to their self-esteem. Their self-esteem is triggered because they are so acclimated to being undefeated that the loss may make them feel worthless.

According to eaglesnesttownship.com, simply participating is more important than winning because it is more rewarding to try your best. If you are not victorious, that does not mean you are a failure. All that means is that you should continue to try until you are successful.

Grayson Burchard, 10, agrees that participation is more beneficial than winning.

“I have competed in many gymnastics competitions, and while I always strive for victory, I have always valued participation,” said Burchard.

When Burchard was 14 years old, he competed in an intense competition. He

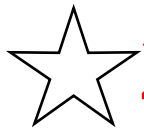
was chosen to do the parallel bars at a competition in Maryland and was extremely nervous. Although he didn’t win, the thought that he participated still lingered.

“I placed third, but I was still very happy that I participated because it gave me a valuable experience for later competitions,” said Burchard.

Burchard competed in a difficult competition and did not feel defeated because he knew he tried his best.

Winning a game, tournament, or competition is a huge bonus to doing what is actually important: participating. Without participation, there would be no game to play.

Participation is what truly matters in sportsmanship. As Albert Einstein once said, “You never fail, unless you stop trying.”



2020: Some light in the darkness

by Jenna Mason



In all honesty, the year 2020 has not been the best.



We have collectively endured a pandemic, celebrity deaths, political tension and much more.

O

2020 truly could be called one of the worst years, but,

P

in reality, there has been some light finding its way through this darkness.

I

Something great that has happened this year is quality family time. People got tired of being on their phones and computers and craved human interaction.

N

With the limited ability to go out in public, many turned toward their families.

I

O

N

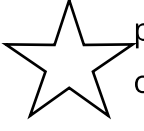
Take Mrs. Rachel Whitehurst,



paraprofessional, for example. Mrs. Whitehurst



spent most of quarantine with her son and two grandchildren. Together



they watched movies, played board games and overall became a lot closer.

Not only did people get to spend time with their family, but also they learned how to do activities on their own. During the shutdown, places like restaurants, salons and personal services weren't allowing people in.

Instead of going out and paying for a haircut or pedicure, people taught themselves how to do these activities. Now that stores are open again, the routine pedicures shouldn't be needed as frequently, which will save these do-it-yourself-ers money.

People also found new hobbies. When people got bored, they turned to trying new activities. People tried activities, such as baking, sewing, painting and crocheting.

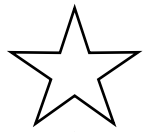
Another positive is that 2020 allowed people to take some time off from either work or school. Granted, 2020 did cause many cancellations, but people weren't as stressed out as

they would've been while those activities were going on.

Without having to worry about the small things like being late to work, turning in a paper late or having a test due at a certain time, 2020 made life a little less stressful for a while.

2020 has taught many people something about themselves. Some people had to develop some perseverance. No matter what the circumstances are, people will always find a way to handle it, and 2020 has proved that.

Thinking back to 2019, the events of 2020 were definitely not expected. No one could've guessed what 2020 would bring. All in all, we need to let go of all of the negatives and be grateful for all of the happiness, funny moments and shared memories that 2020 has given everyone.



2020: Negatives weighed heavily



by Chloe Russell



This year has been a year like no other; we have faced hardships, losses, and changes in school, all while in a pandemic. This year has taken a drastic toll on everything; our whole way of life has changed in this year, and dealing with it has not been easy.

of people throughout the world. People thrive on going outside, seeing people and doing activities to keep their minds active.

of loved ones.

Social distancing has played a very important role since the outbreak. It is needed for everyone's safety, but can be hard to follow. People can't gather with more than 10; this means normal things that we are used to doing won't be allowed anymore. Events such football games and Prom have been postponed and may still get completely canceled.

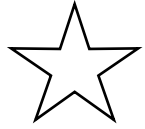
The main problem plaguing this year is the COVID-19 outbreak. With quarantine starting in March of this year, we all figured it would last two weeks, and we would go on about our lives. Sadly, the world has not gone back to normal yet.

People being sent to their homes because of a virus is not only a let down, but also a frightening situation for people who are facing illness alone. With the world being shut down, a lot of places and businesses have closed. Since the start of this pandemic this year, lots of people have lost their jobs and business owners are struggling.

2020 has been filled with lots of events that we had no clue were coming. Honestly, this has probably been the hardest year for many people, but 2021 is almost here, and, hopefully, it is full of happiness and success.

Quarantine has majorly impacted the mental health

Because of this pandemic, many people have passed away, ranging from young ages to older adults. We are not only dealing with a shutdown, but also the loss





Underclassmen, get involved early in activities

by Meghan Thomas

The high school experience should be about so much more than academics. Getting involved in activities and sports will help you gain leadership skills and responsibility and can lead to many meaningful relationships and opportunities.

“Getting involved in high school can help your mental health by providing a support system and friends,” said Jules Benninghoff, 12.

Joining a club or sport at the beginning of high school can lead to a better knowledge of the organization. Furthermore, starting in an organization early in high school can possibly lead to a future leadership position.

“I’ve learned some social skills from clubs, and I have also learned how to play volleyball and tennis,” said Mason Bennett, 11. “I

learned true leadership from my former teammates.”

Many believe extracurricular activities can help develop important life skills.

“I have learned time management, good communication skills, and the importance of kindness and friendship from my extracurricular activities,” said Benninghoff.

Getting involved within your school can lead to involvement in your community.

“Since joining the JOI Club my freshman year, I have really involved myself with the Colonial Heights Optimist Club, allowing me to connect with my community,” said Caroline Kinder, 12.

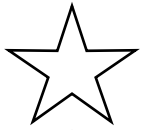
Extracurricular involvement starting at the beginning of high school can also help you grow a solid resume. Continuing

with an extracurricular activity throughout high school shows colleges and future employers determination and persistence.

According to Arizona State University, extracurricular activities can also help prepare college-bound students for college life. According to the university’s website, balancing school work along with other obligations is a great way to prepare for the college workload.

Although it is important to be involved, it is also important to not overextend oneself, which could lead to lack of dedication to an organization.

“The quality of the activities should be the most important aspect of being involved,” said Mrs. Betsy Johnson, guidance counselor. “Students shouldn’t spread



themselves too thin and then not be able to be an active, contributing member.”



Some students don't understand the importance of getting involved in high school until it is too late.



“I made up for my lack of

involvement in school by being involved in my community,” said Tyler Myers, 12, “but colleges like to see involvement both in school and in your community.”

Involvement in extracurricular activities is

necessary for a fulfilling high school experience. Long after the Chromebook is shut down and the last bell rings, graduates benefit from the life and leadership skills that these activities teach.

O

P

I

N

I

O

N



Important Dates in January

**January 14: asynchronous learning day
Reading SOL test**

January 18: Student/Staff Holiday

**January 20: asynchronous learning day
Math SOL tests**

January 21: Science SOL tests

January 28: end of semester

January 29: Student Holiday/Teacher Workday

Happy Holidays