

Blinded



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Eclipse Edition

Graphic by Eason Zhou using Canva

INSIDE THE ISSUE

- + OPINIONS ON PHONE POLICY, SOCIAL MEDIA, MENTAL HEALTH
- + PROM FASHION AND MUSIC
- + FASTING AND FEAST
- + SPRING SPORTS
- + MORE!

Let's disconnect from our phones and reconnect with each other

“You can pick up your phone in the front office.” Sound familiar? For many, these words and similar reassurances are given to students who get their phones taken during school. No matter if they send a text, or search the internet, if they're caught with a phone, they're forced to give it up. When we walk into the office and see this “phone jail,” we notice around three to five phones each day. This number might not sound too alarming, but the truth is that many of us use our phones but don't get caught.

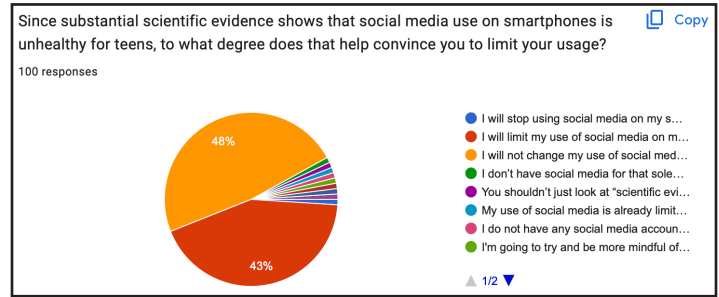
This should not come as a surprise to anyone. In fact, if we ask ourselves right now, honestly, when's the last time we used our phones? Was it a minute ago, an hour, a second? We might not even realize the amount of time we spend on our phones. It's almost become like second nature to us. Whether we are taking a photo, scrolling through social media, or checking the time, we live in an age surrounded by screen time and technology.

In a survey sent out by the Herald regarding opinions on the cell phone policy, one student wrote “The world is changing and revolving around cell phones, why try to stop it?”

Studies have shown how social media and phones can negatively impact mental health and overall wellbeing. Depression, anxiety, sleep deprivation: these are just a few of the many negative effects caused by that small, little rectangle we fit in our pockets. But with the bad side of phones, there's also the positives. Phones can offer outlets of communication, connectivity, and convenience.

So what do we do about this? In the responses to the survey, the general consensus is that phones should be put away during class to allow for full attention and respect, but during break and lunch, students should have the freedom to use their phones.

Others have expressed their frustration regarding wanting a sense of freedom of trust regarding the phone policy. As students, faculty and administrators express their concerns about the phone policy, it opens the door for the possibility of a joint discussion, where students and faculty can discuss and come to a fair agreement. Until then, we should continue to live and enjoy our lives. We should balance our technology with the world around us and not waste too much time blinded by a screen.



Google Forms survey conducted by email on April 11-12.

Survey Response - see more responses on pages 12-13.

Trust students with phones

We are not children; we are capable of balancing the freedom to use our cellphones with paying attention in class and keeping in touch with our surroundings. The narrative that we are all “addicted to our phones” is just not true; it's only those of us who are chronically online. The vast majority of the students at this school, I believe, deserve the respect to be allowed to decide for themselves when the best time to use their phones is. The small portion of our student population that is so irresponsible with their cell phones, missing out on class time to scroll on TikTok, should be dealt with individually. The rest of us would like the freedom to respond to a text message, Google something, take a picture, jot down a note with our phones whenever it is convenient for us, or indulge in a little digital entertainment in our free time, as that's how we do things outside of this school. I don't doubt anyone on the school board or administration is unaware of this logic; I know you are just obsessed with saying “North Cross is a CELL PHONE FREE SCHOOL” as if that makes this school special. It doesn't. It's not even true, and it never will be. What would make this school special is being able to say “North Cross is a community of students who can be trusted to use their phones freely, while simultaneously achieving academic excellence and maintaining strong social circles.”

--- Anne Marie Sloane '24

Errata:
 The Herald advisor claims full responsibility for the same error in two captions in the February issue. In the robotics and “table tennis” photos, Umair Rasul '24 was identified as Uzair Mirza '24. Additionally, the game the seniors play uses the rules of four square, not table tennis. The advisor apologizes to Umair Rasul and Uzair Mirza for these mistakes.

Founded in 2010 and based in the Journalism elective, The Willis Hall Herald is the official student-led publication of the Upper School at North Cross School. The Herald may be published in magazine form three or more times per year. Founded in 2017 and produced by the Herald staff, GeoPrism: A Global Studies Journal may be published in magazine form once or twice per year. The Herald welcomes letters, commentary and submissions of original content that adhere to the Herald's dedication to factual journalism. Letters and other content must be signed and may be edited for length and Herald style. The Herald does not guarantee publication of outside submissions. Submit letters to willishallherald@northcross.org. The Herald won Gold Medals from Columbia Scholastic Press Association in 2012 and 2015.

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 North Cross School 4254 Colonial Ave. Roanoke, VA 24018
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Herald staff interviews Dr. Andrews about smartphone policy and mental health

Dean of Students explains school's concerns about social media addiction

Dean of Students Dr. Britton Andrews '02 met with the Journalism class on March 22 in a press conference format to discuss the administration's renewed effort to enforce the cell phone policy in the context of research on the effects of smartphone use on teenagers. He also discussed the what may be called the myth of multitasking. This is an edited set of highlights from the press conference including some questions and answers. A longer version of the transcript will appear online at www.willishallherald.com.

Dr. Andrews:

"There is a direct correlation between smartphone use and decrease in mental health. It is a huge issue, alright . . . The more you use your phone, the more harm you are doing to your mental health. Your generation does deal with mental health issues on a level never seen before. Again, is directly related to having those phones in your hand from a young age, in addition to other factors, stuff sort of surrounding COVID. But there's so so much data that says smartphone use is bad for your mental health. We care about your mental health, alright. So [that is] one of the biggest reasons we are trying to keep you off the phones. It's one reason why every time I have to check my phone, I feel not great about it. So we're anxious about it, and I to try to stay off of it as much as I can.

Here's a conversation that I've had with students throughout the year where they say, 'You know what? When I'm not feeling great, being on my phone makes me feel better. So that is actually positive for my mental health, right?' Wrong. What do you call it if there's something that in order for you to feel good? You have to be on? What is another word we have for that? Addiction? Right? So the same way you know what, some people, they say, I don't feel good, but if I can get some heroin in me, I'm going to feel a lot better way and is that a good argument? To do heroin? No. So when you make that argument about your phone, that's actually a great argument for saying you need to spend time away from your phone. If you are dependent on your phone to make you feel better, then your phone has an unhealthy relationship with your phone and is actually having a negative impact on your mental health, and your ability to process uncomfortable situations in your life. Right so the same way, we're not going to let you drink alcohol on campus. We're not going to let you smoke tobacco and marijuana on campus, even though, in their way, they might make you feel better in the moment or forget about problems that you're having in the moment. Would we all agree that's actually pretty bad for you in the long run? So the relationship with the phone is very, very similar. Yes, it might help you forget about your problems in that moment. But



it is creating a dependency that is unhealthy and is going to have really negative long lasting effects on your mental health and your ability to be happy just with yourself. Does that make sense? So as I said when all these administrators are coming back from this conference [to share findings with] the faculty on Wednesday, we were all given big reminders about this stuff, you will probably see people a little more invested in keeping you off from the phones even more than usual. But that's a big part of the reason why. It was sort of the reason why we'll continue with that policy and why it's not just a, 'Oh, we want kids to be doing we're telling them in the classroom.' Well that's part of it. But your health and truly safety are also are much bigger parts of where we're coming from. Alright? So I mean when you're talking about phones, you gotta understand. I'm coming from this from the standpoint of thinking about phones, very similar to how we think about drugs or alcohol on campus. It is a very similar kind of relationship that a lot of people have with their phones."

Liam Rippel: Do you think we should be able to use our phones during lunch and stuff like breaks, since that's like our free time? And if you don't, why?

Dr. A: I think going through the school day apart from your phone it is one entirely . . . healthy practice. Right. And again, I'm coming from the standpoint the same way. I wouldn't let you drink alcohol during lunch, right? Is that what you'd say, that's a fair ask Liam? So I'm thinking about it the same way in terms of your your health and in terms of being able to be present and focusing on what is happening on campus.

Aadeetri Pandey: I understand what you're saying about the addiction to your phone? But do you really think drugs and your phone is like a good comparison? Because both of them like kind of ruin your mental health . . . [but] what also we wonder [does it affect your] health health, not just your mental health?

Dr. A: I'm not crazy about the separation of those two things, because I do think mental health is just straight up health, but I totally understand what you're saying. So let me also say, Do phones have . . . utility? Absolutely. Right? There are definitely positive ways of using your phone. Same way, when it is legal for you, using legal substances in moderation

is not bad. . . These things that make us feel better or help us in certain social situations can be okay, same way using our phone as a tool. We all are recording me right now. Right? That's great. You have a tool, you can use it. You have permission to use it, because it's being used in a positive and functional way.

Transcription by Otter.ai edited by Herald staff. Find more at willishallherald.com.

"There's so so much data that says smartphone use is bad for your mental health.

We care about your mental health,"

- Dr. Andrews

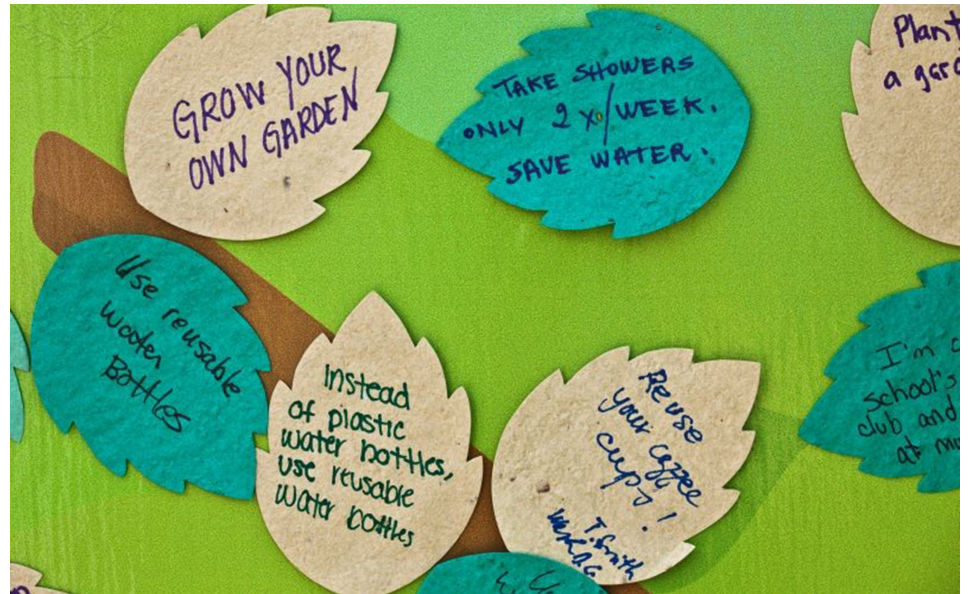
Earth Day . . . not Mars or Moon Day

We should care more about our home, not assume we will move to the Moon

By Caroline Welfare

On Earth Day there are 24 hours each spring when everybody is reminded to keep good habits and conserve energy. But our leaders don't do a good enough job of telling us why we should care or what we should do. How are all animals important in the great circle of life? How will the scars we leave now come back to bite us later? Yes, it's important to turn off the lights when we leave the house because it saves energy, and overuse of resources is interfering with the planet's natural patterns, but with more and more of our lives spent online, it becomes easier to question why we need to do this. Beyond that, the lack of communicating and spreading environmental awareness is making people unaware of what to do when the unwanted side effects of woodland creatures are thrust into their faces. The lack of information can also lead people into potentially dangerous situations.

Who hasn't heard their parents complain about the raccoons getting into the trash? Or pigeons (and seagulls... and crows...) trying to steal their food? More and more wild animals are getting pushed into the cities, and are adapting to survive. And while it's great to see more of them surviving (coyotes have been seen looking both ways before crossing the street), it also means



that we are being confronted with new problems, namely, aggressive animals, pests carrying diseases, gardens getting eaten, raccoons that can open trash cans, and predators capable of injuring our pets.

However, there are some other considerably worse side effects of being in close quarters with wild animals. Sometimes the consequences of not respecting them has something to do with eating something or being eaten.

CBS news recently released an article about

people getting sick and dying from eating a delicacy in Zanzibar: sea turtle meat. Not only is this sad for the sea turtles, it's also a miserable thing to go through as the consumer, as the list of symptoms is "all of them". People being unaware of these sorts of dangers can get hurt, as shown in the more extreme example of the early 1900s Maneater of Champawat; an injured tigress that claimed an estimated 436 human lives. It was finally stopped in India in 1907 by famed tiger hunter and conservationist Jim Corbett, the India Times said. In the book *No Beast So Fierce*, it is explained that the tigress had been maimed by a poacher's bullet early in life, and was left unable to hunt its usual prey. As the East India Company pushed farther into the forests, its encounters with humans became more frequent, with us becoming its main food source. What stings the most is that both of these sufferings were entirely avoidable, if people had been responsible in their resource use and not tested their luck with a questionable delicacy.

While those are somewhat (actually, they are) very unpleasant examples, their message rings true: People need to know and respect the boundaries of nature, for our safety, and everyone else's. Earth Day is a prime opportunity to remind ourselves of what we can do to help, but what we do on Earth Day should carry over into every other day of the year. There is a reason that the image of a quiet mountaintop with a cool breeze and a warm sun nurturing blooming flowers is an idyllic image in our minds, and the day that we forget that, we have to protect that for ourselves and our future is a dark, scary day indeed.



A ladybug crawls across a finger of my mother. This photo was taken originally for the bio exam project with a phone, showing one of their many uses -- phones, not ladybugs. Photo by Caroline Welfare

Banning TikTok might be right, but ineffective

By Aadeetri Pandey

Like many kids in the Upper School, Valeria Dancea '25 is a part of the TikTok community. She posts semi-regularly on the app and has gained 45.7k followers and has 3.3 million likes. While she does enjoy using the app she sometimes feels pressure to post regularly and make content that her followers like.

TikTok is a significant part of numerous Americans' lives. Approximately 170 million people who live in the United States have the app according to The National Constitution Center. People use the app to get their ideas across to an immense group of people. It has been an outlet for creativity and a job for many people. However, there is a chance of it being banned in roughly six months due to the allegations of the app's parent company, ByteDance, having connections to the Chinese Communist Party or the CCP. Naturally, people have begun to wonder why the United States Congress wants to ban the app as well as what this means for the people who use TikTok as their source of income.

"I believe that Congress rarely has our best interests at heart and is primarily focused on promoting their own interests and the interests of the people that fund them," Valeria said. "Notably like the top 1% wealthiest people and wealthiest corporations, meta. So I think it's not a special case of them not having our best interests at heart."



TikTok

On March 13 the House of Representatives approved the ban of TikTok in a 352 to 63 vote. (Newsweek found that 12 Congressmen still use TikTok despite voting to ban it.) The fate of the app rested in the hands of the Senate. They looked over the bill to make sure it's not unconstitutional and voted 79-18 on April 23 to ban the app. According to Newsweek, nine senators who use TikTok voted to ban it. Now that they passed the bill banning TikTok, also known as the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act, this means app stores and other assisting services will no longer have the app to download or update. If the app is already downloaded on your mobile device you will still have the app. Regardless, due to no longer being able to update the app, it may become unusable according to the New York Times. Not all hope is lost though, because if ByteDance sells TikTok to an American company, the app will still be available in the United States with some modifications to its policies and settings.

The United States Congress wants to ban the app due to the possibility that TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, had conspired with the Chinese Communist Party and gave them U.S. users data, however, there is no concrete evidence that they are working together. Some people argue that some U.S. owned apps sell our data so if we want to ban TikTok we should also check and modify our own apps as well. "It sounds like there's no firm evidence provided to me that it's difficult to justify a ban of one app or one company and that way." Dean of Students Dr. Andrews said. "What I can say is that I generally think what should be banned is the collection of user data by anyone. I do not think, especially since the permission that we give those apps to collect that data is almost always very passive in the sense that by downloading this app, you give consent rather than actually giving consent actively."

While some people question whether the government really has our best interest at heart, there is no denying that if the app is banned,

it will affect most people's mental health for better or for worse. According to the New Yorker, this generation of teens and children have the most mental health problems and have trouble socializing with their peers. However, it's important to note, while TikTok may be a big social media app, it isn't the only one.

"I know a lot of people find a sense of community on social media and I definitely did, especially when I was younger," Valeria said. "I learned a lot and I learned that there were other people like me out there. But I think on the whole, banning TikTok would make things better for people's mental health."

"I don't think it's gonna help people's mental health," Nhi Le '26 said. "Like it might improve some people's mental health, because it's still social media. But there are always other apps like Instagram, Snapchat. There's still like a bunch. So I don't think that's really helped."

If Congress banned TikTok, or if a United States company bought the app, would anything change? The thing with apps these days is that they die over some time and stop being as influential as more and more people stop using them. People would eventually flock over to a new app and the cycle would repeat itself. If the Chinese government really wanted United States citizens' data, they would have other ways to do it. Banning TikTok is a waste of time because nothing would change.

"I know a lot of people find a sense of community on social media and I definitely did, especially when I was younger," Valeria said. "I learned a lot, and I learned that there were other people like me out there. But I think on the whole, banning TikTok would make things better for people's mental health."

Herald staff and Willis Hall students reflect on a New Yorker article and NCS cellphone policy

The Herald staff read Jessica Winter’s March 28 New Yorker article entitled ‘Can We Get Kids Off Smartphones?’ The timing coincided with a renewed push by NCS administrators to enforce a policy of no cellphone use by students during the school day after many members of the senior staff returned from a conference in San Francisco that revealed significant evidence of harm to the mental health of young people from social media.



The New Yorker article talked about what can be done about the mental health issues concerning social media. And I have to agree with her. I’m never happier than when I’m carting blueberries (or beeswax... or mushrooms... or crabapples... or glass bottles) back

and forth between my grandparent’s rural house, the horse gate, somewhere in the woods (I’ve never been lost-lost), or to the chicken coop, all of which usually take anywhere from six minutes to an hour round trip, depending on the amount of detours my cousins and I take. I never have my phone in my pocket (I’ve lost it in the house up there more times than I am proud of). My cousins don’t have theirs, and we don’t usually have to tell our parents where we are going, either. They know that we will come back when we are hungry. That mountain top is my favorite place, and the only time I really look at a screen is on movie nights.

In the article, the same thing was stated about the Yard, an adults-free park for kids. It was the writer’s son’s favorite place, because of the privacy he was given. The freedom to roam is amazing.

I can tell I am less happy at home in comparison, too. My backyard is unwelcoming, and surrounded on all sides by places I cannot go. It is steep and slippery, which has led to my spending my outdoors time elsewhere, or simply not going outside. Almost consequently, it has divided my time between four distinct things: reading, doing chores, listening to music, or watching whatever TV show I am currently watching and then researching it off Google. While I still enjoy my down-time, it is still nowhere near the joy I feel in the mountains, or at the marginally empty beaches of Bald Head Island.

I imagine it would be so much worse if I actually had any media platforms. I can look things up off of Google, but other than that, my parents have not given me permission, nor have I asked.

I can definitely agree with the article, and I’m happy I have the outdoors places I do.

Because this response began as an in-class writing exercise, the author does not want a byline, but agreed to its inclusion. Likewise, the other responses do not have bylines, only photos with their phones partially eclipsing their faces. In Roanoke, we only saw an 85% eclipse of the sun.

Google Forms survey conducted by email on April 11-12.



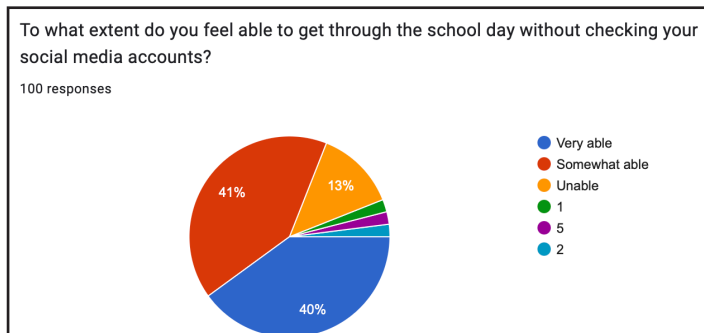
It is so funny because recently I feel like cell phone use has been a large point of discussion wherever I have been. Just today I was talking to Mr. DeMarco about cell phone usage, as well as the impact it has on students. We are talking about China right now, which would make sense as to why TikTok became a talking point. Mr. DeMarco says that he can actually tell the difference between his students vs. kids that didn’t have TikTok just eight years ago. He says that he hopes that TikTok is banned in the USA, as he thinks that it really only has negative effects on the attention span of students.

I hate to say it, but I agree. I think it would be better if we just got rid of TikTok.

As for this article, I really do think that parents should wait longer on giving their kids internet access and just handing them devices. For most families, they just use technology as a pacifier instead of actually speaking to their kids and teaching them social skills. The quote I picked out from the story was “psychological immune system: the ability of a child to handle, process, and get past frustrations, minor accidents, teasing, exclusion, perceived injustices, and normal conflicts without falling prey to hours or days of inner turmoil.” I think that this quote sums up my opinion on this really well. I see no point in giving anyone below the age of 8 a device. Let them play with toys and go outside. They would be much better off and would toughen them up, make them more healthy, and overall just set them up better in the long term.

“The effect of these tools, Haidt writes, was to attach kids to “a firehose of social comparison” that pummelled their self-esteem at a critical moment of cognitive and psychological development.”

I agree with this article because although I, like many other people, love my phone, I definitely think my life would be better without it. The article specifically mentioned how social media has changed our perception of the world and increased mental health issues in teens, which is specifically what I agree with. I don’t think that it is possible to get rid of phones as a whole, but I definitely think some things about them could be changed.



Many students find merit in limiting smartphone use



To me this is a very relevant topic in my household, because more often than not, my mom has my phone, because I got in trouble and she decided to take it. I have very strong opinions on this topic because it is something that comes up a lot in my life.

First of all, I would start off by saying that I know phones are bad in some ways for our mental health, and if we lack restraint, then our physical health too. Because we spend more and more time inside, we get trapped in the cycle of scrolling on social media. We waste countless hours looking at videos we won't remember even a few hours later. Especially for teenagers,

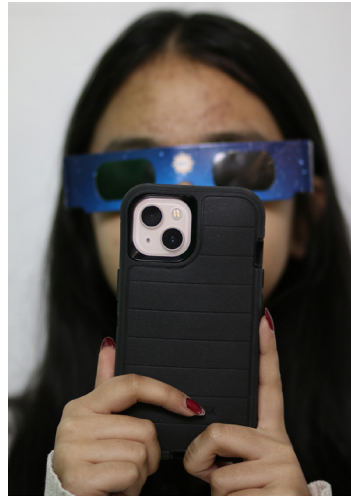
growing up in the generation near the time that cell phones became popular made it harder for us to get away from them. During COVID, people couldn't go out, and a lot of them turned to phones to provide entertainment and a connection to the outside world that we weren't allowed to experience for our own safety.

But, smartphones also come with a lot of positives. Because Roanoke is a relatively big area, me and my friends live pretty far away from each other. Because I don't go to school with them anymore, I almost never get to see them, and since we all have different schedules and have trouble making plans to hang out we usually just talk on the phone so we don't drift apart. Of course, the big concern is real social media like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, etc. People waste so much of their time on short-attention-span videos, which are in almost no ways good for them. However, these platforms are popular for a reason. Many people keep up with their interests or discover new ones, and for a lot of people, social media is how they keep up with world news or current events. Most good things are only beneficial in moderation, and I think that applies to social media too. I think it's a good reward to use if you have completed your day and are ready to relax and decompress after all the hard work, as long as it's just for a few hours.

I don't have Instagram or TikTok, so thankfully I didn't experience much of this, but a lot of people I know had their self esteem and self image severely affected by videos or body trends that are very unhealthy and dangerous but were considered something that was beautiful. The rate that these trends go up and down is so fast that it's hard to keep up with them, but it's just sad that these videos that are usually filters can affect people so much because they can't see how unhealthy and fake it really is.

"Many teens are aware that smartphones disrupt their sleep, their moods, and their self-image, but they believe, as several parents told me, that giving up their phones would kill their social lives." Out of the whole article, this is the line that is the most relatable for me. I would one hundred percent give up my phone and social media if it meant that all the interaction I got with my friends could be face to face, but unfortunately, that could never be an option. As I said earlier, we all have very different schedules and live a little too far apart, so texting is the best interaction we can have.

I think that even though phones are proven by multiple studies to be bad for us, we still need them for day to day life for communication, staying connected, to be aware of schedule changes, taking pictures/notes, etc.



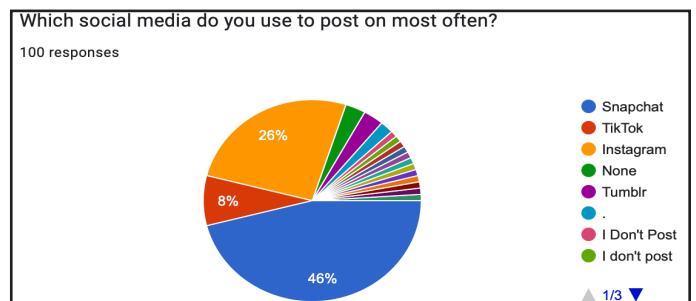
Just like how a knife isn't inherently bad, Smartphones are not dangerous for teens because they are not inherently bad. It depends on what the owner decides to do with it. There is no denying that teens who grew up with phones and use them regularly have various mental health problems and struggle to function properly with their peers and the rest of society. "Studies show that the more kids use social media, the more likely they are to experience anxiety and depression; girls, Black children, and L.G.B.T.Q. youth are hit hardest. (Boys over all, hypnotized by

porn and video games, don't fare hugely better than girls.)" I think that we need to be more aware of the dangers and start enforcing screen time more, especially with younger kids., It's not the smartphone that is dangerous, it is our ignorance and lack of cautiousness that is.



I wouldn't say smartphones are dangerous, but I would say depending on the uses, they can be harmful in ways. I say this because if used for just connection and necessities, phones are not a dangerous or harmful thing. On the other hand, if you use your phone for entertainment, which I must confess I am guilty of, it can be harmful. Like the article said, "By the time that smartphones and social media were becoming omnipresent, in the late two thousands and early twenty-tens, children were also spending less and less time engaged in unstructured, largely unsupervised play with their peers." I believe less

engagement with peers in the real world actually doing things can lead to a decrease in physical and mental health and even social skills. A decrease in social skills can cause an increase in anxiety when in a social environment. I say this from experience., I get anxious in big crowds especially aroundof people I don't know. So to circle back to the question depending on the use, phones could possibly be harmful to kids, young adults and even adults.



Many students find merit in limiting smartphone use



Smartphones are a very controversial topic. Kids who were gifted smartphones by their parents love the devices. It is usually the parents that have a pretty big problem with the device that they bought.

The article discusses all of the problems with smartphones. I agree.

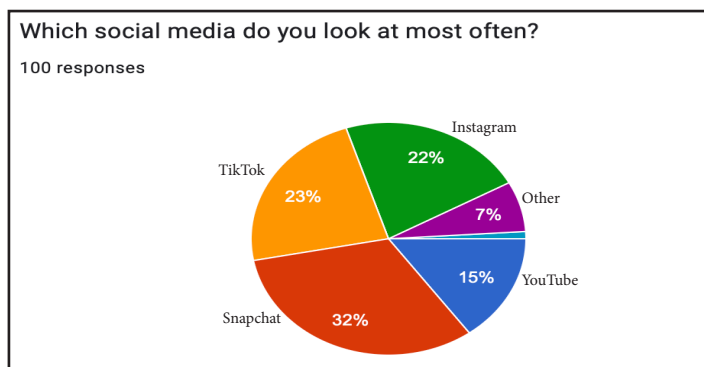
But to some extent, I think that smartphones can be helpful. According to the article, social media is dangerous as well as “brain-rotting.” It messes with young teens as well as even kids and makes them

think they need to look impossible. All of the pictures are edited so kids and teens are having unrealistic standards to live up to, whether it’s how they look, their home life, or even just how they should be living.

In this generation, many new and improved devices, like smartphones have been installed. Because of this, it is inevitable that kids and teens will constantly be looking at a screen. The people who are extremely mad at young girls and boys for being on their phones grew up in a different generation than us. Because of this, it is unfair to judge kids and teenagers for constantly being on phones when there wasn’t a time in our lives where barely any technology existed, like in our parents or our teachers lives. A lot of the time, parents and teachers will say something like “Oh well, if I didn’t even have a phone at your age, you can go without.” This expression does not make any sense, because the grownups right now didn’t have access to the same things that we do now. Therefore, they can’t properly blame us or judge us for constantly wanting to have the luxury of having a phone or a TV nearby.

Although there are many dangers and unfortunate events that can occur to people who are constantly on their phone, there are also advantages that our smartphone can bring us. For an example of how the phone is helpful, some TikTokers help people who are struggling with self image, body dysmorphia, or confidence. The article even states “Many teens are aware that smartphones disrupt their sleep, their moods, and their self-image, but they believe, as several parents told me, that giving up their phones would kill their social lives.” Influencers like this can seriously help people when they are at their lowest. The problem is that it is probably social media that made the individual feel that way about themselves.

Google Forms survey conducted by email on April 11-12.



I believe that smartphones can be dangerous for teens if they don’t maintain balance. I see both sides of the story about smartphones and whether or not they are bad. Phones can be used as tools to help in everyday life, connect with friends and family, and of course, cure boredom. But, if the teen does not maintain real life with their phone real big problems can ensue. For example, a teen could lose sense of direction and the world around them when looking at their phone, they could stop taking

care of themselves, they could stop doing things that they used to find fun without their phone. They could start to experience things like depression, suicidal thoughts, insomnia, self-harm, self-hatred, low-self esteem, and body Dysmorphia. The author wrote, “interpreting low levels of anxiety as symptomatic of an anxiety disorder might lead to behavioral avoidance, which can further exacerbate anxiety symptoms.”

I do believe that smartphones are dangerous to teenagers. I feel that they can take away critical moments and time away from younger kids. Smartphones are also good for kids so they can communicate and be more in touch with the world. But I do think these devices can set up a bad mindset for the younger generation. I also believe that smartphones are bad for kids because they lower our attention span. Many people watch these 10- to 15-second videos for hours upon hours. It is pretty much useless other than it is an easy escape. Most kids also lose sleep because they mindlessly scroll on their phones to find something to do. “Many teens are aware that smartphones



disrupt their sleep, their moods, and their self image.” This quote proves my point that smartphones are a disruption of early life.

By the time that smartphones and social media were becoming omnipresent, in the late two-thousands and early twenty-tens, children were also spending less and less time engaged in unstructured, largely unsupervised play with their peers.” This quote shows how smartphones are becoming dangerous to teens because they are causing less in-person and social interaction. They are also causing kids to become less engaged.



Many students find merit in limiting smartphone use



I strongly agree with the article’s findings that smartphones are dangerous for teens.

N.Y.U professor Jonathan Haidt wrote “People born in and after 1996 were different, psychologically, from those who had been born just a few years earlier.” From childhood, Haidt suggests, they suffer from a weak “psychological immune system—the ability of a child to handle, process, and get past frustrations, minor accidents, teasing, exclusion, perceived injustices, and normal conflicts without falling prey to hours or days of inner turmoil.” This is only the introduction of the text.

By the late 2000s and early 2010s,

people began to notice that children were gradually spending less time engaged in outdoor or unstructured activities. Parents have found new concerns for their children’s safety, which can be referred to as “safetyism.” Parents have been led to protect their children, maybe more than needed. Those who have childhoods insufficient of free play are proven to take less risks, are worse at reading social cues, resolving conflicts, and making friends. Free play that is unmonitored or improvisational serves as exposure therapy for every child.

“The suburban or small-town nine-year-old who, a generation before, would have been running around outside with the other neighborhood kids all afternoon is now indoors, staring at her phone.”

The generation that grew up with access to smartphones is now called the “Anxious Generation.” The immunosuppression caused by the use of them has increased proportions of teens and young adults who are more avoidant and nervous. There are studies that show the use of social media may influence both anxiety and depression, especially among girls, people of color, and LGBTQ+. “Prevalence inflation,” two University of Oxford researchers describe, is when people mistake normal discomfort and stress as signs of a serious disorder. Through the use of social media, children interpret their levels of anxiousness as a symptom of mental illness. What most of these adolescents are experiencing, which comes natural, is exacerbated much further. These children have become behaviorally avoidant.

The list could go on. The early access to smartphones and social media has been proven to lead children to suffer from a weaker psychological immune system. Children are spending too much time indoors on their cellphones and their parents have begun to guard them exceedingly. Exposure therapy is becoming absent in the younger generation. It is a fact that smartphones are destructively changing our generation and those to come.



It is no surprise that smartphones are dangerous for teens. Along with the article’s research and stance on phones, I completely believe that it is negative. On the other hand, as much as I wish we could get rid of phone usage and lower depression rates and other issues, It is nearly impossible. “Despite the general consensus about kids and phones, the increasing

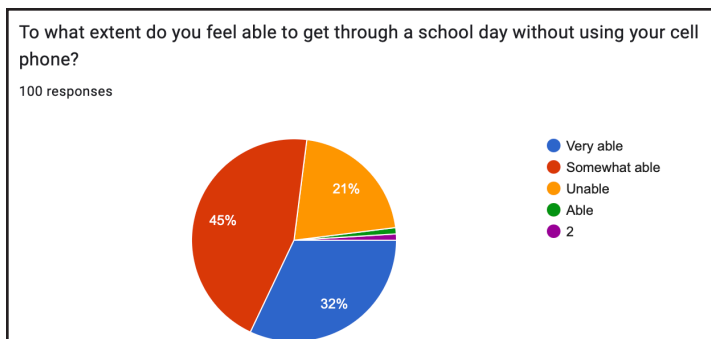
reliance of schools on tablets and laptops means that most students are simply trading one screen for another, with many remaining glued to some permutation of social media.” I think this point is very important to consider, because as much as phones may be damaging towards us, other devices are just as bad. In a world filled with technology, I don’t think it is logical to completely rid teens of phones because they will be able to do similar activities on other devices. Laptops, iPads, and other devices pose the same threat as phones, and I don’t think it’s possible to just get rid of all these devices, when we use them everyday. I think there should be a balance, however, and I think we truly need to help teens who are addicted.

“Although online forums can provide some of the togetherness that young people crave, ideally, Haidt writes, most of their interactions should unfold in person, unmediated by screens, which requires emotional effort and investment.” That’s a good point. of tTeenagers’ social life should happen moremore happen in person instead of online. “Many teens are aware that smartphones disrupt their sleep, their moods, and their self-image, but they believe, as several parents told me, that giving up their phones would kill their social lives. Research has shown that,



when adolescents abstain from social media for a while, their mental health improves even as their isolation from their friends who are still on the platforms increases; a smart, emotionally intelligent kid can recognize the merits of this trade-off and still choose to keep their TikTok and Snapchat

accounts.” I think the problem is not from the phones, it’s from the users, which are nowadays teenagers. If the problem is the phone itself, all the users will have mental health problems. No one will escape from it. But in the real world there are some successful students who have social media and also use their phone a lot. It’s about how you manage your screen time and how you treat your social life in the media. A good time management and mindetal set will not make smart phones a problem.



NCS MUN team walks all over Manhattan in addition to riding Amtrak, subways, Staten Island Ferry

By Maeve Parker

With the wind blowing in her hair, Indira Weed '25 looks at the sky as she snaps a picture of the sights around her on the Staten Island ferry.

This was Indira's second year on our school's annual Model UN trip in New York City, and she went with 33 other students.

"It felt like there were a lot more people at the conference this year than last," Indira said, "but there were around 2,500 of us in all so it is kind of hard to tell."

The trip began with a 10-hour train ride to New York, which the students got on at 6 in the morning on the first day. "My favorite part of the train ride was sleeping and listening to music," Indira said. "We were really tired".

Although the train ride was pretty tiring, once the students got to NYC, their spirits were changed with a week of excitement to look forward to. For Indira this year's experience was a lot different than her time last year.

"Last year I was in the smallest committee, but this year I was in the biggest one, so the experience in general was a lot different"

This year Indira was in UN-HABITAT as the country of Japan, which focused the topic on planning urban spaces for women's safety. This topic is just one example of the many unique topics that the students in Model UN get to encounter and come up with ways to solve it.

However, while students had lots of fun in the conference, they also got plenty of time to explore the city outside going to iconic NYC places like, Central Park, Chelsea Market, and the Statue of Liberty. Indira's favorite place to go was Chelsea Market, but she also went to see unique places such as the Taylor Swift Exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Design.

"The exhibit was really cool, it was one room and it had all of the outfits from all of Taylor Swift's eras"

One of the best things about New York that nobody can deny is the incredible and unique food in the city. You can get anything from Halal food to burgers with each restaurant serving something different. Indira specifically mentioned her love of New York city food, as she visited many great restaurants and tried new things. "My favorite places were 99 Cent Pizza, the french bakery down our block, and Liberty Bagels...they were soooo good"

After a week of good meals and adventure, the



TOURIST MODE: Indira Weed '25 takes a photo of me on the Staten Island Ferry. Photo by Maeve Parker

conference ended with the delegate dance that I attended with my friends on the trip and the friends we made along the way. The dance was so much fun, and you could tell that everyone there

was having a great time, especially based on how many NCS students decided to attend.

After going to New York twice now, I have learned so much about the world through our committees, meeting new people, and just going to New York in general. This year however, was the first time we were able to go on the New York subway. The subway was an experience in itself, and we got to go on it on the last day of the trip. We went to the subway to get back to the train station because there was a huge marathon going on throughout the city because it was St. Patrick's Day. Going on the subway in general is a pretty fun experience, but because we were traveling on a holiday it was that much better. The hardest part was having to lug our suitcases through the station, worrying that we were going to lose something. Once we got everyone on the subway, it was so crowded that none of us could even see each other through all of the people.

Still, the subway was a nice ending to the trip because once we got off we headed straight to the huge Penn Station to go back home, and we were all really sad.

All of these factors made the trip to New York special for anyone who went, and it is obvious that they had a great time. New York is such a fun city to go to especially when you are spending your time meeting new people and having a good time with your friends



A huge group of NCS students roam the streets of New York's infamous Soho looking for a place to shop. This area of New York features a number of stores and art surrounding the area. The students saw everything from an amazing band playing music to a huge Sephora that drew many people in. For many, Soho was a highlight of the trip. "Soho was so cool," Millie Chopski '26 said, "and I loved being able to walk around the area and shop." Photo by Maeve Parker

Is drinking the problem? Are people the problem?

What makes United States' legal drinking age so unique among MDCs?



Graphic by Eason Zhou using Adobe Illustrator's ai prompt using the phrase "Driving accident after drinking."

By Eason Zhou

When was the first time you ever had a drink? Not soda, not juice, an actual alcohol drink. Was it a glass of beer? Or red wine? Maybe a shot of tequila. Did you think you were supposed to drink it at that time? I believe every person will have a different answer for it, just as everyone has a different opinion on the drinking age even if you never had a drink before.

Across all the states in the U.S., the legal drinking age is enforced to be 21 years old. But it was not this age for the whole time. According to the National Library of Medicine, between 1970-1975, there were 29 states that lowered the drinking age to 18, 19 or 20. But there is evidence to suggest that a lower legal drinking age is associated with more traffic accidents among teenagers, and civic groups launched campaigns to restore the drinking age to 21 in all states. The Federal Government passed the Uniform Drinking Age Act in 1984. The act provided for a decrease in Federal highway funding to states that did not establish a drinking age of 21. So all

the states returned their lowest drinking to age 21 by 1988.

But is the problem actually the drinking age, which is set by the government? Or could it be from something else? People worry about drinking problems, mainly because of the consequences coming after getting drunk. Such as driving after having alcohol and getting into a car crash. Nowadays society is always blaming this kind of accident on the actual responsible person. But people never try to solve the problem itself to stop themselves or teenagers from getting drunk.

In the United States and Indonesia, the legal drinking age is 21. In Iceland and Japan the legal drinking age is 20. Most developed countries in the world are setting the legal drinking age at 18. If 18-21 people in most of the world could handle alcohol, why can't the U.S? The problem is not with alcohol. It is not in the law. It is on the teenagers who don't know they should not touch alcohol if they can't control themselves and not do stupid stuff after having it. We need every single parent in the country to tell their kid not to get drunk. Drinking isn't a good thing. And never drive after drinking, don't even think about

risking it. When the younger generation realizes how they should protect themselves and properly treat alcohol, that's the right time to bring down the legal drinking age to 18.

Legal drinking and driving ages in some countries:

- Australia: 18 and 17 (18 in Victoria)
- Argentina: 18 and 18 (17 with parental approval)
- Canada: 19 in most provinces; 18 in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec (driving varies)
- China: 18 and 18
- France: 18 and 17 (15 if supervised)
- Germany: 16 if low alcohol, 18 otherwise and 18 (17 if supervised)
- Ireland: 18 and 17
- Italy: 18 and 17
- Japan: 20 and 18 (16 for motorcycles under 400 cc)
- Mexico: 18 and 18 (16 with parental approval or 15 with parental supervision)
- South Africa: 18 and 17
- Spain: 18 and 18, (16 for motorcycles under 125 cc and 15 for mopeds)
- United Kingdom: 18 and 17 (16 for mopeds and tractors)

Distinguished alumna shows images of stars taken from the camera she helped design and build



STARGAZER: Dr. Allison Nordt '88 shares with students the "secrets of the stars" and tells us how this beautiful nebula, a gaseous mountain, got its color. The recipient of the NCS Alumni Award who is the director of space science and instrumentation at Lockheed Martin's Advanced Technology Center, explained how the photo was taken and said that a spectrum and number is decided, and then every pixel adjusts as such. "It takes a huge team of people to build one camera," she said as she pointed to a large crowd beside a scale model of their work. Caption by Caroline Welfare. Photo by Blake Shaner

More student responses from the April 11 survey:

Since substantial scientific evidence shows that social media use on smartphones is unhealthy for teens, to what degree does that help convince you to limit your usage?

"I'm going to try and be more mindful of how/when I use social media, i.e. if I'm just scrolling to scroll I'm going to try and stop and find something else to do. Otherwise I'll likely keep it the same."

How do you feel about the cell phone policy?

"I feel that the policy is a little strict but I also understand why it is in place."

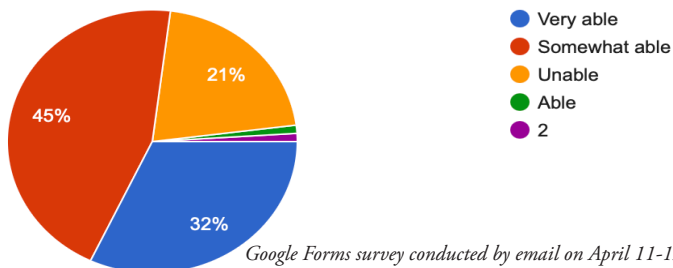
"I understand the intent and motives behind it. However I don't believe it is a good policy because it really just creates more of a 'want' to go on your phone when you get home (which is when you're supposed to do homework)."

"I think it's disrespectful to use cell phones in class and that's a given. If a student is using their phone without permission in class its right to take it away from them. But otherwise, when we have free time, I think we should be able to use our phone or even glance at it without being punished. . . . I don't think it's reasonable to expect students to spend the entire school day not using their phones. It causes students to be sneaky and want to use their phone more. But if we have those designated times where we're allowed to use our phones, it makes us less likely to feel the need to use it."

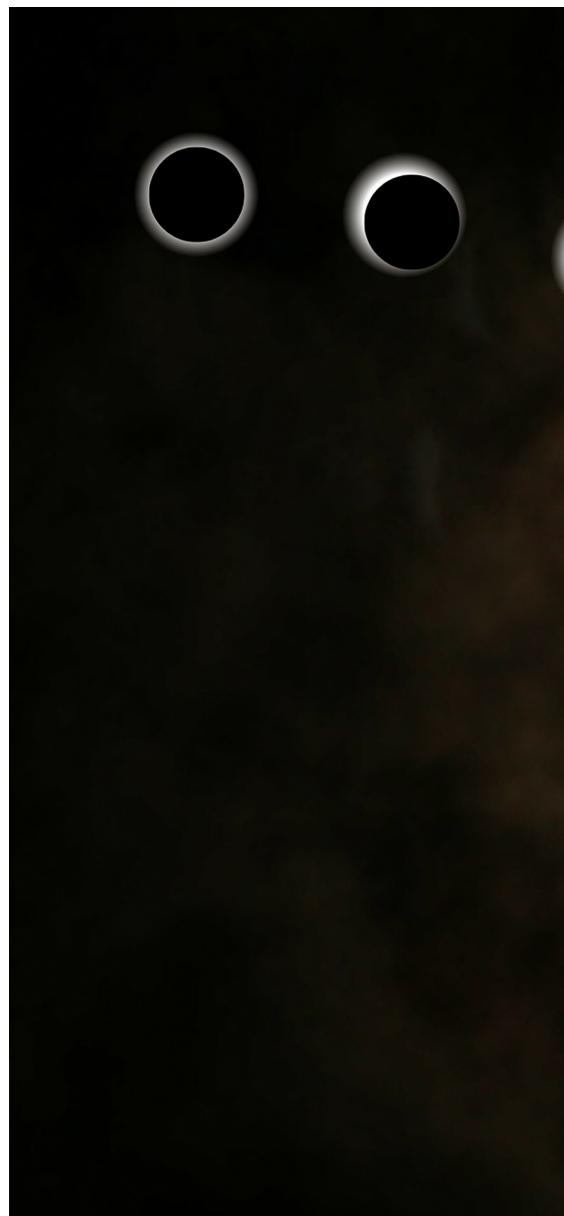
"It is sporadically enforced, so it is largely ineffective."

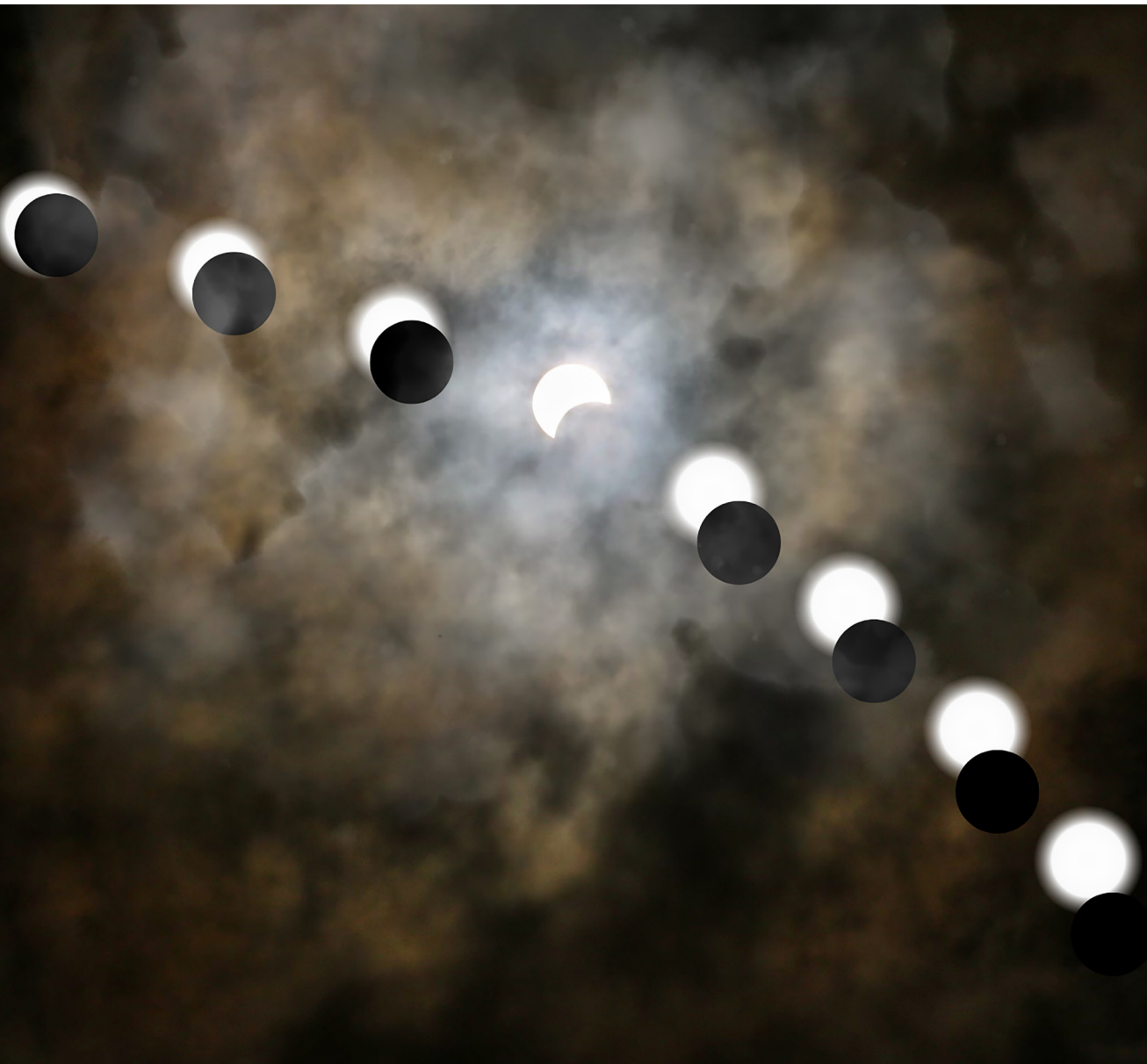
"I feel annoyed by it. Trying to limit our phone time during all school hours is unrealistic and unhelpful. We are going to go into the workplace with these devices when we become adults so we need to learn to manage our time with them properly instead of playing a game of hidey phone with the faculty because of this rule. Simply telling people to not use it at all, even during breaks or lunch, has not been working nor is it going to work in the future unless widespread phone usage is drastically changed for everyone, not just this school. Not only is it unhelpful but the reasoning given and the times it is restricted are inconsistent. The primary reason I have been given is that we need to not use our phones so that we can stay connected with other students. But even in situations where you cannot connect with other students, i.e. finishing a test early and having literally no other work to do, phones are still moderated as if we gain any benefit from staring listlessly at a wall. Overall it is an inefficient rule which I believe will only harm students ability to balance social media and their work in future settings."

100 responses
To what extent do you feel able to get through as school day without using your cell phone?



Google Forms survey conducted by email on April 11-12.





Graphic by Eason Zhou based on an image taken around 2:30, 45 minutes before peak, when the eclipse was more visible through the clouds.

"I'm alright with it. It doesn't really affect me, and I feel like others are on their phones WAY too much throughout the day."

"I think it is good because I would be distracted in class if I was using my phone."

"I think it's up to the teachers in class. Outside the class I don't think it's too big of a deal."

"I think its good to stop us being on our phones because we have too much screen time."

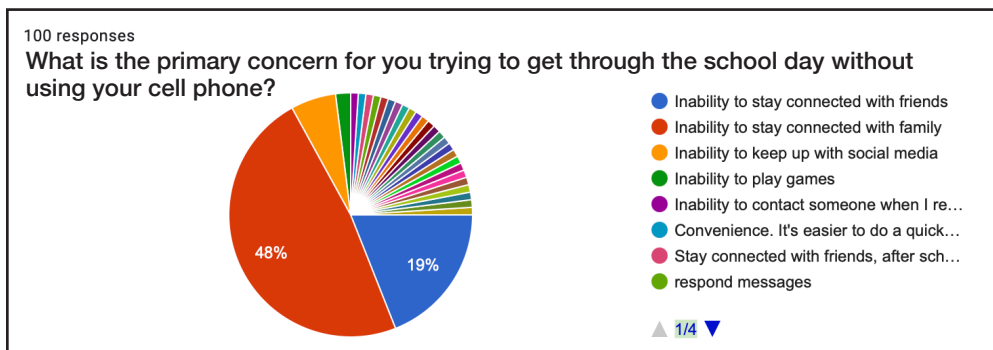
"I think it's wrong to think that limiting phones will allow us to be together more. I use my phone for other things than ignoring people."

"I feel like it is definitely not working. The only teacher I have ever had that enforces the policy is Dr. Andrews."

"Personally I don't like it. During classes phones should not be out in any way however when it's break or lunch, I don't think phones should get taken away. Part of the reason they take away our phones is to make us connect with others. However you could use this argument for someone reading a book at break or doing homework. They are avoiding social contact which is what you are trying to avoid with phones. I think in class it definitely makes sense to not have phones out, but change your reason why you don't want phones out during break and lunch. It is selective hearing pretty much when you are prohibiting phones but not books and homework. Thank you."

"It is fine because I am never on my phone during school, unless I have to turn in an assignment digitally."

"Despite my academic success and responsibility, I'm denied freedom and respect due to the unfounded assumption that I'm incapable of using my phone at an appropriate time, for appropriate reasons."



Former Herald editor Helen Hertz devotes senior speech to illustrating media bias in reporting on the war in Gaza

In an ideal world, all of the news coverage and reporting we consume would be a fair account of the events that occur. Journalists would inform the reader of the conflict at hand, provide ample context, and then provide perspectives from both sides of said conflict. Unfortunately, we live in a world where media bias is, more often than not, present in the media we consume. In times of global conflict and massive loss of life it is the responsibility of the press to report from an angle that presents both sides, that provides context to these issues, and that does not use grammar as a weapon against any group of people. This has not been the case for the Israel-Palestine conflict.



Photo by Eason Zhou

The United States' media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict since the state of Israel declared war on Palestinian militant group Hamas, has not been presenting readers with a fair view of the Palestinian civilian's side, instead showing a bias towards the state of Israel. The U.S. media has shown its bias through the diction chosen to inform readers of events that have taken place, the consistent usage of the passive voice to remove Israel from its atrocities committed in Palestine, and the disproportionate coverage of Palestinian death as compared to Israeli death. The presence of this bias in reporting inhibits the reader's ability to make informed decisions, or to consume media in which factual information is the main focus.

Media bias is defined by All Sides as "The tendency of news media to report in a way that reinforces a viewpoint, worldview, preference, political ideology, corporate or financial interests, moral framework, or policy inclination, instead of reporting in an objective way." The responsibility of the press is to provide us with information, not to feed us a narrative that we then instill in our minds. Despite this, media bias is present in the majority of the media we consume. Think Fox News, which gives biased reporting in favor of the right side of the American political spectrum, or MSNBC, which is biased to the left side of the American political spectrum. Media bias cannot be fully avoided since humans often process information and report from our own standpoints and partialities, and it's important to remember that media bias is not always a strictly bad thing. What is more dangerous than clear bias, is hidden bias, defined by All Sides as a type of bias that "misleads, manipulates, and divides us."

Our ability to make informed decisions directly relates to how much context we receive on the topic at hand.

See www.willishallherald.org for the full text of Helen's speech including the section on the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Now, let's discuss the media that much of the American public and residents consume and the ways in which it shows bias towards Israel in its reporting.

Language rules the world of news. Journalists are well versed on which words evoke what emotion in readers, they know that diction plays a large part in what their audience takes from the reporting.

In the month after Hamas' October 7 attack, The Column, a media criticism and political analysis substack, published "Massacred" vs. 'Left to Die', a quantitative analysis which documented media bias against Palestinians. The researcher who collected this analysis has remained anonymous, so going forward, I will be referring to the researcher as "Otto" as that is the pseudonym he published his findings under.

The portion of this research that I'd like to discuss is Otto's third finding: That the word "massacre" was used by CNN, FOXNEWS, and MSNBC in 30 second segments more to refer to the 1,200 Israelis killed by Hamas on October 7, than the 11,000 Palestinians killed by the Israeli army between October 7 and November 7. FOX NEWS used "massacre" as committed on Israelis 770 times, and committed on Palestinians nine times. CNN used the term 503 times for Israelis, and 53 times for Palestinians. Finally,

MSNBC used "massacre" 382 times as committed on Israelis, and 16 times as committed on Palestinians. Interestingly enough, the analysis shows that the term "massacred" was only used to describe Palestinian killings when 1) A Palestinian was directly interviewed, 2) When an advocate for Palestine was interviewed, or 3) It was prefaced by the statement by the reporter, commentator, or news station as "... what is being called a massacre."

In an opinion article in The Washington Post entitled "A silent desperation on the slow march out of Gaza City," David Ignatious, writes: "This war has produced deeply horrifying images: Israeli children assaulted in barbaric ways by Hamas terrorists; Palestinian children left to die under Israeli bombardment." The choice of wording here is interesting. While Israeli child victims are "assaulted in barbaric ways by Hamas terrorists," Palestinian children are simply "left to die"? Who are we to assume "left them to die"? Their parents? Based on the fact of the events, it would appear that Palestinian children too are being assaulted in barbaric ways. Israel is air striking their homes daily, causing them to be buried under the rumble of explosions, they are starving to death because Israel is not allowing shipments to come through Palestinian borders, and IDF soldiers continue to kill and fatally injure Palestinian children with every ground invasion they conduct.

It's not that Palestinian children are not being "massacred" or that they are being "left to die" it's that these media outlets are able to choose specific words to present whatever information or opinion they wish to present, skewing our own view of the topic. According to Otto's research, the U.S. media is using the English language to change our view of this conflict in favor of Israel. Media outlets should be using words like "massacre" for atrocities involving both the IDF and Hamas, and that when media outlets choose to utilize different words for different parties, we should be able to recognize that and identify that these media outlets are biased.

Now, let's dive into the usage of the passive voice during reporting on the Israeli-Hamas War. See www.willishallherald.org for the full text of speech.

The U.S. media has been utilizing the passive voice to remove Israel as the perpetrator of violent actions against Palestinian civilians. For the Israel-Hamas War, headlines have looked like this one from NBC News: "A group of Palestinian men waving a white flag is shot at, killing 1." This headline is misleading, because the headline implies that NBC News does not know who shot at the Palestinian man, and who shot and killed one Palestinian man. A witness to the shooting, Ahmed Hijazi, told NBC News that the bullets came from the nearby Israeli tanks "lining the road," Another recording angle of the shooting corroborates Hijazi's statement, however NBC News has not changed the headline, and the question of "Who's the men?" remains unanswered at first glance.

See www.willishallherald.org for the full text of speech.

A day of fasting and then feasting for Ramadan

By Anna Ciccozzi

As the Model United Nations students waited at the train station to return home from New York, the start of an interesting conversation began to form. "It's Ramadan, so I need to fast once we return home," said Zuhair Mirza '26. Previously, my knowledge of Ramadan was limited, so when Zuhair and I started this conversation, the only things I knew were that it involved fasting and Islam. After discussing more and learning more from Zuhair, my curiosity grew and led me towards an idea. Let me try? If billions of Muslims can do it, can't I? Regardless of my underestimate of what this actually meant, I was eager to start.

One thing to note before I tell you about my experience, is that religiously, I have grown up in a Catholic household. I observe the month of lent by giving up something and not eating meat on Fridays, but I have not done anything more extreme than that. "But you aren't Muslim!" said a variety of people when I told them about my decision to try fasting during Ramadan. In their defense, I could see why they were confused and skeptical, but I assured them the reasoning behind it. I think one of the most important things in life is having strong beliefs and opinions, so I find it very admirable when people are part of a shared community where they are proud of their identity. With this respect to our own personal lives and values, I also believe in being able to respect and try to understand the world and people around you. Whether discussing religion, culture, or even politics, I think it's crucial to not only consider other sides and perspectives, but try to learn and become educated about them. Even though I may not be Muslim, by trying Ramadan, I hoped to gain a sense of appreciation and understanding towards the month and the Muslim Community.

To start my journey, not only did Zuhair help teach me, but Ameer Albishaw '26, Maida Ahmad '27, and Maria Albishaw '27 were extremely supportive towards me and offered helpful advice and encouragement. Ameer even sent me a chart he simplified to help me know when to fast and when to stop. He also provided helpful tips on how to stay hydrated in the morning and eat something small before the fasting began. It was also from them that I learned that you aren't supposed to fast when you are traveling, menstruating, or sick. I unfortunately did not know this, so in my experience, my fasting was a little rough.

Since I technically did not start fasting at the start of Ramadan, my experience only starts on March 17. If you miss days in Ramadan for reasons that I mentioned earlier, you are allowed to make them up some later time.



FEAST FINISHED: *As the sun begins to set, students, faculty, and family alike all gather in the cafeteria for a special dinner. March 29 marked the first ever Fast-a-Thon. Organized by students in the Muslim Student Association, members got together to run a school wide fasting event. They encouraged everyone to try fasting for a day in honor of the month of Ramadan. "We wanted to run this event because we wanted our voices to be more out there," said Rabia Ferron '26. "A lot of people think of Ramadan as like something that's miserable or that people are suffering, so we wanted to show the fun side of it and how we gather and eat all together." Before everyone could eat at 7:40, the students had the opportunity to share their experiences and thoughts on how their fasting went. "I felt good," said Suvi Hansen '26, "I think the biggest thing was not drinking water, but I still didn't feel that bad and I would absolutely do it again." When it finally came time to eat, the club provided a variety of different dishes and desserts to try. "I really liked the knafeh," said Izzy Snyder '26, "I liked the texture and how it was crispy but also sweet." The Kanafeh was made by Ameer Albishaw's mom and it's one of his favorite things to eat everyday back in the Middle East. This year's event went extremely well, but the club hopes to run the event again with even more participants next year. Above, from front left clockwise: Nhi Le '25, Maida Ahmad '27, Madison Renick '27, Bridgette Finch '27, Savannah Ratliff '27, Maria Albishaw '27, Rabia Ferron '26, Isabel Moraga '26 sit together after the feast. Photo by Anna Ciccozzi*

I unfortunately did not do this, but I hope that if I try it next year again I will do the entire month. To discuss my actual experience, I won't break down every single day, but I'll tell you a general overview. Firstly, for me, the first three days of fasting were not bad. Usually, I don't eat breakfast because I'm late in the morning, so I wasn't too hungry. At lunch my stomach occasionally growled, but I just kept telling myself to wait for dinner. At my house, the pantry and kitchen tempted me a lot, but I just kept reminding myself that if I just waited a couple more hours, I would be able to eat. It wasn't until after those days that I ended up getting the flu, most likely from the Model UN trip catching up to me and my immune system. During the next couple days, I stayed home in bed most of the time. I felt awful, but surprisingly I continued to fast. I told myself to be strong and the fact that I was nauseous most of the day helped with not eating. Once I finally returned to school and my sickness passed, that's when I learned that I wasn't supposed to have fasted during that time. Oh well. Towards the end of my experience, I ended up needing to stop my fast. As much as I wanted to keep pushing, I had a lot of lacrosse games in the coming days, and my energy levels dropped significantly at each practice. In the games I definitely needed water, so I ended up

cheating on some days. On the days in between, I did my best to continue, but ultimately I failed to make it to April 9th, the end of Ramadan.

By the end, I managed to fast 23 out of the 30 days of Ramadan. Although some of the last days weren't consecutive days, I'm still proud of myself and glad about the experience. Along my own personal journey, I got to connect more with the Muslim community at our school and learn to appreciate and understand their religion and culture. I didn't pray or engage in the actual religious aspect of Ramadan, but I have come to admire the reason behind fasting. After fasting, I've gained a heavy sense of appreciation as this experience has reminded me to be grateful for everything I have. Next year, I hope to repeat this journey and strive to make it the full month. Overall, I couldn't be more thankful about my experience and I would 100% encourage others to step out of their comfort zone. Although it might seem scary or different, these opportunities could have a positive impact on your life as it did mine, and will allow you to become a more educated and open minded individual.

*I have come to admire the reason behind fasting
... to be grateful for everything I have.*

Addams Family musical offers dark humor



ENCORE! *The Addams Family* brought North Cross macabre humor, various historical references, broken promises, and the assured notion that they're crazier than you. Acted out by four upper schoolers, (three of them, Jamey Davis (Mal), Kaeleigh Howlett (Alice) and Kenzie Raub (an ancestor and the moon) are graduating this year), a host of middle schoolers, (Margaret Bass as Morticia, Hadyen Saunders as Gomez, Belle McNamara as Wednesday, Higgins Harlowas Lucas) and one lower schooler (Hollins, who played Little Wednesday). Via *Dancea '25* brought on an amazing incarnation of Uncle Fester, Akali Koeda and Samantha Belderes made us cry with laughter as Pugsley and Grandma, and James Austin as Lurch (it's not over 'til the zombie butler sings!) "Kudos to Thomas Costello, the cast and crew, for a joyful and talented musical production. Thomas has a way of bringing out the talent in our students and assembling them to create magic on stage, and this was once again true with our spring musical." Armistead Lemon said in an email. Photo by E. Zhou

English classes see performance of *Pride and Prejudice*



PROM: Just three days into April, American and British Literature classes packed onto two buses and made their way to the American Shakespeare center in Staunton. The performance was the play adaptation of the well loved novel *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen. The theater itself, given its name, is supposed to be a recreation of Shakespeare's Blackfriars theater. "The play was cool," said Oliver Lacy '26, "but the bench you were sitting on sucked and basically destroyed your back." Along with its uncomfortable seating, the theater had other unique qualities. One exciting part about the theater is that the play is interactive and the lights in the audience remain on throughout the entire play to allow the actors and audience members to see one another. Some students even got the chance to sit right on the stage, sometimes being only a foot away from the actors. "It was a little awkward because pretty much everyone in the audience was looking at you sometimes," said Kaylee Johnson '26. Kaylee along with other classmates had to shake hands with the actors in one scene, and were even forced to stand up and bow at one of the characters in another. "It was a little embarrassing, but I still enjoyed the play," said Johnson. Cast of

What are the fashion trends for prom this spring?

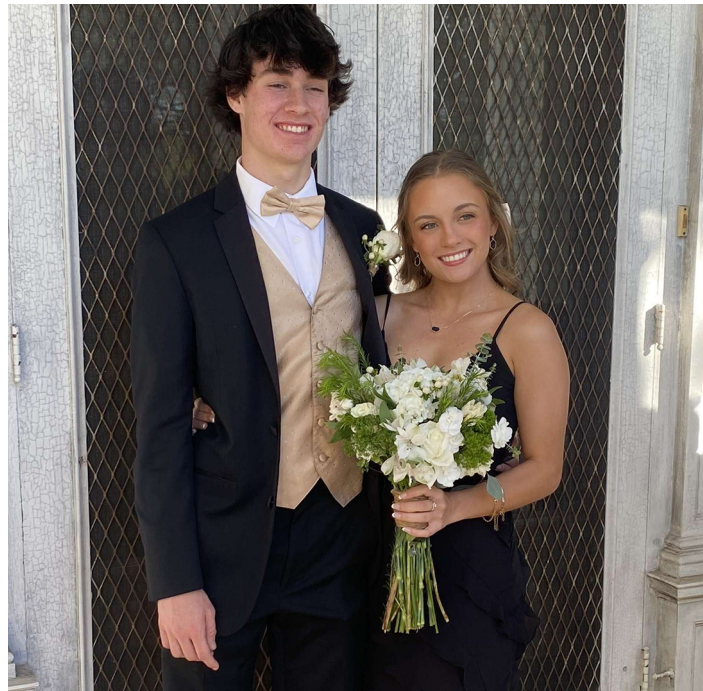
By Lauren Boone

There is never a trend that is completely followed. For prom, I notice both girls wearing poofy and straight dresses. Some wear ruffy, statement and vibrant dresses. Some wear monochrome colors, such as black, gray, nude, silver or gold. Seniors wear white dresses. Guys traditionally wear suits, which are different colors or shades. Their suits are also accompanied by either colorful or monochromatic bowties or ties.

This year, Sander Frogner '25 is wearing a Pac-Man blazer with black pants. His date, Ava Dalaski, '25 is wearing a black dress.

Paul Scheuler '24 is wearing "a suit from Davidson's, a shirt from Jos. A. Bank, and accessories from various family members."

According to itsmilla.com, vibrant colors and hues, floral patterns, sheer styles and soft pastels are in style. Elegant, sheer styles of white and black are timeless. Same with satin, which has always been a trend for every school dance. Some dresses have designs, some are backless



IN SYNC: Brandon Carey is pictured with Holly Griffen at Hidden Valley's prom on April 13. "This year I went to Hidden Valley prom in a black suit, but with a gold vest and bowtie," said Brandon Carey '26. "I looked at what my girlfriend was wearing, and since she was wearing a black dress, I decided to go with a black suit and matched my highlights to hers. She wore a gold bow, so I matched my bow tie and vest to that. Everything looked put together."

and some strapless.

"I'm going to wear a colorful Easter dress with gold jewelry and heels," said Sophia Brown '24.

"I'm getting my nails done pink at Luxury Nails."

Dainty and strappy heels are in style, especially in gold, silver, black

and nude. Glitter, prints and gems have been popular. Throughout the years, platforms and heels have become higher.

"I'm wearing my sister's prom dress from a few years ago, which is green, with green eyeshadow," said Valeria Dancea '25, "I have a black velvet bag too, with a gold chain."

"My prom outfit is all coordinated," said Mallory Kern '25, who is wearing "white heels covered in rhinestones and pearls." Her dress is also white covered in pearl designs.

While shopping online, I have been seeing a pattern of dresses that are colorful; color is more popular in the springtime.

Emma Votta '26 is wearing a blue dress with pearl accents from ohPolly and her date Tyler Bloomfield '25 is wearing a black suit from Jos. A Bank with a blue tie.

The dress really depends on the person. Personally, I like classics, and this year I'm going in black. My nails are black french tips. I'm wearing heels, a bag and jewelry that are gold. I'm going in a group with Mia Rueda '26, who is wearing a gold bedazzled dress and accessories.

What will we listen to at Prom this year? Survey says . . .

By Mia Rueda

Although this is a stressful time, you can always wind down and listen to music you like at the end of the day to get your ears ready for prom.

Students like to relax to



Viki Gimenez Isgro, Gracie Munro and Agos Taragano pose for a photo during Journalism class after discussing the music they might hear at Prom. They would love to hear Rompe by Daddy Yankee. Viki stays with Munro's family while they are here. Photo by Eason Zhou

their own music. We asked a few students what they would like to hear at prom and most said "hype music," which refers to mostly rap including

The most popular song is Fein by Travis Scott, which was played about six times. While a few students took more of a classical take, naming songs such as Love Story by Taylor Swift, wanting to slow dance to the music.

Prom may be one of the most stressful times of year, whether it's getting your nails done, getting a fresh suit, or finding the perfect dress for your special date.

Whether we listen to rap or we take a mellow approach, prom will be good with the Casino theme this year.

In a survey of juniors and seniors on April 26, here is a list of the songs that students want to hear at Prom:

- Hey Driver by Zach Bryan
- Fire Burning by Sean Kingston
- Headlines by Drake
- Young and Beautiful by Lana del Ray
- Trap Queen by Fetty Wap
- Freestyle by Rod Wave
- Hot Tea by Goose
- Poker Face by Lady Gaga
- So What by Pink
- Love Story by Pink
- Wagon Wheel by Darius Rucker
- 505 by Arctic Monkeys
- Fein by Travis Scott

The most popular song is "Fein" by Travis Scott.

Reflections on March Madness (not just the men) . . .

By Liam Rippl

March tends to sneak up on me every year. I come back from Christmas Break and in early January, March feels so far away, but before I know it, spring is here, and the climax of college basketball has arrived.

Sports fanatics, college students, and casual fans alike come together to watch what many regard as the most exciting tournament of the year, a bracket-styled, 68-team tournament, featuring four play-in games and 63 open-play single elimination games. It is a thrilling 67-game tournament that entertains millions.

For many, they aspire for a perfect bracket, in hopes to win the \$1 Billion dollar grand prize that is promised by Warren Buffet and Dan Gilbert, not to mention the "smaller" payouts of multi millions from ESPN and USA Today Sports. So, it is no surprise that people get so excited about making brackets and creating the first ever perfect bracket, and winning the cash sum. But then again, there is a reason that nobody has ever made a perfect bracket, or even really come close for that matter. The best bracket ever created was made by a man from Ohio, who had kept a perfect bracket in 2019 all the way into the sweet 16, which was correctly picking 48 games, which numerically speaking is a one in around 281 Trillion chance, and that was still 19 games short of a perfect bracket, which just shows how improbable it is of making the coveted perfect bracket.

This year's bracket features a variety of interesting matchups and potential upsets, as some lower seeds such as New Mexico State and Grand Canyon are two lower seeds that look like they could make a Cinderella run in this year's tournament. There is also #1 seeded UConn, who were last year's champions that look like they could be very dangerous and make a real run at the national title. As of right now, UConn is the fan favorite, as around 30% of contestants have selected them as their champions. You also have conference champions Illinois and a well rounded Creighton team that split games with UConn this year going 1-1 against the highly ranked powerhouse. But with upsets comes giants that have to lose, and for me there are multiple highly ranked teams that I think will have an early offseason this year, and one of those teams for me is Purdue. I do not see them making it anywhere past the Sweet 16, and quite honestly, I would bet that they win their first game, and lose in the round of 32, regardless of whether Utah State or TCU win the game prior. I also do not see #4 Seed Duke, or #5 seeded Gonzaga making deep runs in the tournament, and I would not be surprised if there were upsets in both of those games.

Story Update March 27th:

We are now into the Sweet 16 of the 2024 Tournament, and it's an understatement to say that it has been a thriller so far. For me, I was incredibly pleased with the results of the first round, as I was in the 99.9th percentile of brackets in the world going into the round of 32, and I was in the top 13 thousand out of 24 million brackets. Unfortunately, my round of 32 selections were not up to par, as I fell down to around 70th percentile. However, my champions, which are Illinois, are still going strong, and have a very tough matchup with Iowa State. Also, another favorite of mine, which is Creighton, are still in as well, and they have a game against #2 seed Tennes-



see on March 29. Unfortunately, my Cinderella team, New Mexico State, had a first round exit which was gifted to them by a solid Clemson team, who boast an 11-2 record against non-conference opponents. For me, the most exciting team this year has been NC State, who has defeated Texas Tech, and #14 seed Oakland, who upset

Kentucky with an avalanche of three-pointers by Jack Gohlke, that once future accountant who balls out on future NBA players in March Madness. I wouldn't be surprised if NC State makes the Final 4, as they have great size, and they play solid defense.

However, with all of that being said, the only thing that really matters now is who is still in the tournament, and who is going to win it all, and this years Sweet 16 looks like it is going to be filled with thrilling contests. The Sweet 16 Matchups are as follows:

- (#1 UConn vs. #5 San Diego State) (#3 Illinois vs. #2 Iowa State) (#1 Houston vs. #4 Duke)
- (#11 NC State vs. #2 Marquette) (#1 Purdue vs. #5 Gonzaga) (#2 Tennessee vs. #3 Creighton)
- (#1 UNC vs. #4 Alabama) (#2 Arizona vs. #6 Clemson)

Now these look like some great matchups, particularly the Houston and Iowa State Games. I think that any of these teams, apart from Clemson, who are the weak link of the bunch, are all championship contenders and have a real shot at winning the title. I only disclude Clemson because I think that they lack the firepower and depth to compete with the best teams in the country, not to mention they would have to beat Arizona, and play either UNC or Alabama just to make the Final Four. Out of all these teams, I would take UConn, Illinois, Houston, NC State, Gonzaga, Creighton, UNC, and Arizona as my teams in the Elite 8, and as of right now if I had to pick, I would take either Arizona or UConn as my national champions.

Story Update April 5th:

We are now into the final four, and to say that the last few games were so exciting would be an understatement, and my prediction of the Iowa State



ending with another UConn championship in April

was right, as they both were decided by just three points. But for me, the only thing disappointing is that Purdue is still in the tournament. All I want to see is Zach Edey be eliminated from the tournament, and I feel like that should not be that big of an ask. In my opinion the Purdue basketball games are so boring, all it is just watching a 7-foot dude score 40 points every game by just shooting the same shot over and over again over a college center that he is like six inches taller than. It is just not entertaining, and I am tired of watching it.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if NC State makes the Final 4”

But moving on from the negatives, how about NC State? An 11 seed making a run all the way to the final four, and it definitely doesn’t hurt that they have the rest of the country supporting

them. Also, where did this DJ Burns guy come from? This dude is so fun to watch. I watched the game against Duke and it was almost like every shot that he took went in. As of right now, I am a NC State fan, Let’s Go Pack....

As for my predictions, some were accurate, some were not. I picked UConn, Illinois, and NC State, unfortunately I missed the rest. Although, going into final four weekend, I still have an opportunity to redeem myself, so for the next matchups, I am going to take UConn and NC State as the winners of the next matchups, I think that DJ Burns will give Purdue some trouble, and the size that NC State has in the frontcourt may match up well with Purdue’s size. As for UConn, I think they are the best team in college basketball, so I think that Bama’s run will end here. So for me, as of right now, my national champion would be UConn.

Story Update April 10th:

Here we are in April again, looking back on the March Madness Tournament, and what a year it was. There were some super exciting matchups this year, fun upsets, and I got to watch one of the best college basketball teams of all time in UConn. UConn this year was something special, and they were super fun to watch. I saw a statistic that they won every game by like 14 points on average, which is one of the highest average margins of victory in the tournament of all time. They were so good, and they only trailed for like five minutes the entire tournament. However the most satisfying thing for me was watching Purdue and Zach Edey lose. Purdue is an absolute snooze fest offensively, watching Edey, the proclaimed “best” college basketball player, shoot the exact same shot three feet from the hoop 30 times a game is quite possibly the most boring basketball I have ever watched. I can say with certainty, that there is nothing anyone can say to change my mind, Zach Edey is not a good basketball player. Every single guy that guarded him all year was eight inches shorter than him, so no wonder he scored a lot of points. If I had a 7th grade kid guarding me, you bet I’m

scoring on him every time, especially if I am two feet from the rim. The thing about basketball is that there are certain characteristics that a player should possess to be considered a good player, like playmaking, shooting, dribbling, athleticism, IQ, as well as the eye test, and what the player bring to the sport. For me, Zach Edey possesses none of these traits, and he brings nothing exciting or new to basketball. I feel like I’m going back in time to the ‘60s and watching old school hoops. So for me, Purdue losing to UConn was a satisfying way to end the tournament.

Not to mention, how about the women’s tournament? The women’s games are just as fun to watch as the guy’s games, and watching Caitlin Clark nail threes from 30 feet makes for a good watch. I was rooting for Iowa in their game against the undefeated Gamecocks, who went 38-0 and won the national championship. But you have to still give Clark her credit, she scored the most points in college basketball ever and scored the most points in a single tournament in history. She is paving the way for women’s basketball, and she really has drawn so much attention to the sport, I will definitely keep an eye on her as she makes her way to the WNBA.

Now on to my predictions, overall, my predictions were okay, but looking back on all the tough matchup decisions, and all the upsets, it really is so hard to make a great bracket. My team of the tournament is definitely NC State, making it to the final four and shocking the world as an 11th seed was very entertaining. My most disappointing team this year is obviously Kentucky, for a “blue-blood” basketball school to make yet another first round exit in March is so disappointing. They were a clear and easy choice for disappointment of the tournament. A few other teams that were super disappointing for me this year were Utah State, New Mexico State, and Auburn. I had high hopes for all of these teams, and they just didn’t get it done. There were also a few teams who were really surprising and exceeded my expectations, these teams being Clemson, Duke and Purdue, as I was expecting some very early exits for all three of these teams.

As for my picks post Elite 8 results, they were pretty good, I picked the right national champion, and even though it was an easy choice, that was definitely a plus. I once again bet against Purdue and paid for it. However, Purdue lost in the end, so all’s well that ends well. I hope that all your predictions and brackets did well, and I wish you luck on your brackets next year.



Athletes get back on track after rehab

By Jacob Johnson

The road back from an injury is like a dance, two steps forward one step back. You have to play the slow game, and even when you're done with rehab you're not all the way healed. To treat an injury it's a must to slowly work back to full 100 or ending with the injury being brought back 10 fold.

This was no different for Chris Carter '25, who suffered a tibia fracture in the St. James football game in the early point of the season.

"The rehab was hard when I first started going in. I couldn't even bend my leg," Carter said. "I was getting it forcefully bent and after all that I was walking really hard." This shows the come back, having to get your body back into the action of moving and walking. It's not just hoping back into full on running, jumping, or whatever. Rehab is like chess, not checkers.

After a while Carter slowly began to walk confidently, when he got off the crutch of course, but this is due to the consistency of his rehab according to Carter.

The beginning of a rehab program can be the most difficult. Not only because the injuries are fresh but because the mindset you have can either make you work harder or it can make you give up. For Chris, his mentality drove him to get better. With this type of mindset it's no wonder he made the incredible comeback he did. According to Carter himself he is still having pain when doing some activities, but he is still getting out and trying to do them.

"My mindset was to get through rehab as fast as possible," Carter said, "so I can get back to practicing and working out for indoor track and football."

As his rehab continued so did Carter's growth – from barely being able to walk to starting to run again, showing rehab isn't deserving of the negative feelings it has connected to it.

Many believe that rehab won't work and some people are hesitant to go to rehab because they either believe they are fine or it won't help. But others go in full force. The latter was the way to describe Carter's attitude towards taking the measures needed to see health once again.

The frustration behind getting back healthy can either motivate and drive people to get better or make them crash and burn.

"After the bending was down [he could bend his leg], getting back to jogging, then weights," Carter said, explaining the progression of his rehab. These, otherwise small steps are huge for people when coming off the mountain climb of an injury.

Having to show patience through this long and



Chris Carter uses the weight room to get strong. Photo by Jacob Johnson

drawn-out process is one of the hardest parts of rehab, but one of the most important.

"You want to go back to how you used to lift, but you can't," Carter said, "The rehab took a long time and patience and just constant work."

Harping back to the aspect of consistency during rehab, it is incredibly important. This is so you can get whatever part is injured back to health

by giving the muscle memory back to somewhat normalcy.

"I think the consistency I had with rehab helped me get back to running faster, cause while I was rehabbing, I was ahead of schedule," Carter said, "I went everyday."

Carter is now running and lifting almost back to his max potential at a fantastic pace. Especially since, when I first met him he was in a brace and on crutches. Originally, his crutches were to keep his foot off the ground completely, but later on it was to slowly put more and more weight on his leg as time and rehab progressed.

"After I finished rehab, I was feeling happy cause I was ready to get back," Carter said. Being able to come back to something a person cares about must be an incredible feeling. Also seeing the progress made from the point of the injury will give anyone a sense of pride. Carter is challenging everyone on the team with no second thoughts and is trying to get back to racing them out of the blocks, but Coach Booker always brings him back down to reality and makes sure he doesn't hurt himself again. But soon he'll be back coming out the blocks like he never left.

"Oh yeah I'm going to be dusting people when I get back right," Carter said.



REHAB LAB: Mortiz Mittendorf '24, DeShannon Reed '27 and Nate Bonds '25 prepare to get treatment from NCS' beloved Athletic Trainer, Holly Marshall. With many injuries plaguing athletes, they limit the team from having a fully healthy season. Many of these injuries are either hamstring pulls or just tweaks. According to Marshall there have been three hamstring injuries in just the spring alone to runners such as Bonds, Reed, and most recently newcomer, Jiale Qin '26. Some such as Bonds and Reed have carried these burdened hamstrings since the indoor season. "It delayed me a little bit," said Bonds. "It set me back but taught me to stretch more." To truly show how much injuries affected the track team, runners are the first ones in Marshall's room before and sometimes the last ones to leave after practice. "Before practice I probably see about six and after about four," Marshall said. Most people in the room are getting ice, helping stretching, or just even checking in with her about past injuries that may still need to be shown attention. Which is more than needed while going through an injury. "Holly checks my progress and where I am compared to where I was," Reed said, "and then she evaluates what stretches I can do and how hard I should go in practice." Photo by Jacob Johnson

Girls LAX is No. 10 in VISAA

Next match is against Salem and then Jefferson Forest

- Senior day v. Covenant celebrated Lydia Horner



Fiona Parnell '26 saves a shot on goal from Chatham Hall early in the season. "I think we've been doing a lot better this year," she said, "and we've worked on communication. And I think we're working as a team more and we're all really supportive of each other and that shows on the field." Photo by Sarah Sledd

Baseball wins Senior Day 18-1

Team plays for chance at state tourney



Ashton Shannon gets honored as the only senior on the baseball team this year. He helped the Raiders beat Roanoke Catholic 18-1 that day, when he scored four runs on two walks and two hits before the mercy rule. Committed to play baseball at Hamden-Sydney, the first baseman leads the team in RBIs and doubles through 14 games. Photo by Sarah Sledd

Track and Field athletes work to qualify for state meet

After only three meets, many Raiders have qualified for the VISAA meet already. At the Northside Meet on April 20, the Raiders placed No. 3 overall among mostly public schools.

VISAA DII 800 girls qualifying time: 2:42.50

- Kerrigan Chaney 2:26.66

VISAA DII 1600 girls qualifying time: 5:59.50

- Kerrigan Chaney 5:15.12
- Ainsley Myles 5:59.76

VISAA DII 800 boys qualifying time: 2:11.50

- Alex Dickenson 2:07.02

VISAA DII 1600 boys qualifying time: 4:56.23

- Alex Dickenson 4:34.03
- Dylan White 4:39.25

VISAA DII 3200 boys qualifying time: 11:09.63

- Dylan White 10:57.54
- Finn Chaney 10:51.08

VISAA DII 3200 girls qualifying time: 14:05.27

- Kerrigan Chaney 11:11.28

VISAA DII 100 boys qualifying time: 12.00

- Moritz Mittendorfer 11.80
- Jase Rhodes 11.50
- Jerel Rhodes 11.95
- DeShannon Reed 11.85
- Sander Frogner 11.85

VISAA DII 100 girls qualifying time: 14.10

- Faith Johnson 13.85

VISAA DII 200 boys qualifying time: 24.02

- Moritz Mittendorfer 23.45
- Ja'ziel Hart 23.93
- Jase Rhodes 23.93

VISAA DII 4x100 qualifying time is 52.55

North Cross A Boys 4x100 45.66

- 1. Jase 2. Jerel 3. Ja'ziel 4. Moritz

VISAA DII 4x400 qualifying time is 4:08.49

- North Cross A Boys 4x100 3:37.48
- 1. Hunter 2. Dickenson 3. Jase 4. Dylan

VISAA DII 400 boys qualifying time is 55.59

- Hunter Basile 55.05
- Dylan White 54.93

VISAA DII Discus girls qualifying distance: 67-00

- Brooklyn YueHan Chen 73-08
- Maggie Bibby 67-01

VISAA DII Discus boys qualifying distance: 95-00

- Jerel Rhodes 124-00
- Nate Bonds 99-04

VISAA DII Shotput girls qualifying distance: 25-5

- Brooklyn YueHan Chen 33-08

VISAA DII Shotput boys qualifying distance: 38-0

- Nathan Hayes 41-01.25
- Nate Bonds 39-00.00

VISAA DII Triple Jump girls qualifying distance: 28-6

- Jadyne Rhodes 30-04.25

VISAA DII Triple Jump qualifying distance: 35-2

- Jase Rhodes 45-10.75

VISAA DII Long Jump qualifying distance: 18-6

- Jase Rhodes 20-02.50
- Nate Bonds 19-06
- Jacob Johnson 19-02

No. 1 golf gets 4 scores under 40, twice

By William Hendrickson

On March 25, the golf team played at Mariners Landing and scored a 152 from the top four players' scores. This was one of the best team scores North Cross has had in a while.

Coach Scott Wilde was very surprised by our score.

"This is the best score we have scored since I have been here."

Uzair and Zuhair Mirza '26 both shot a 37 to tie for first. Turner Faires '26 shot a 39, tied for second place with me. These were the best scores out of the entire match. The team won the match by 40 strokes. This was a big win for North Cross early in the season to start off well and hopefully a sign that the golf program will be successful this year.

"We need to keep this going," Wilde said.

NCS has not been seen as a golf school since the early 2000s, but this team is looking strong in reviving a tradition that has won 21 league titles. If the team has a successful season, it might get more people interested in playing golf.

Often, Faires is the No. 4 scorer,



which is one of the most important spots on the team. The Raiders have six players who can shoot 40 or lower, which will make NCS the team to beat going into the conference and state tournaments.

Golf is a game of patience and being quiet. But Turner's teammates say he can be quite the opposite. This is something that makes Turner unique among the players on the team. I asked Turner why he likes golf so much, and he said, "I enjoy the mental challenge of golf the most."

I also asked Faires how he thought the season would go and he said, "I think we will have the rest of the season without a loss."

He also thinks we can win conference and states. This would be very impressive and quite possible.

Above: Next off the tee is Turner Faires. Claps all around from the small high school crowd surrounding Turner as he prepares to hit his first shot of the day. Turner starts his pre-routine before he hits his shot. He breathes in then out and walks up next to the ball. Tensing up, he looks down the fairway, picturing his tee shot and where it is going to go. The club goes back and whack! Down goes the ball right into the fairway setting up for a great next shot. This is the extracurricular activity Turner Faires '26 takes part in every week for North Cross School. Photo by Tilden Ayers Left, Tilden Ayers prepares to tee off.

More recently, the team scored 150 based on two cards of 36 by Uzair and myself, and two scores of 39 by Faires and Tilden Ayers '26. The Raiders needed that low score to beat Carlisle by one stroke on April 17. Carlisle is the No. 1 team in VISAA Div. III.

On April 24, the team got revenge against VES, who beat the Raiders by three strokes to win the state championship last year. This time, the Raiders won 152-181. Uzair Mirza shot 36, Turner Faires shot 37, Uzair Mirza '26 shot 39 and Will Nolan Jackson '26 shot 40.

Senior Day will be May 2, when Uzair, Maddox Haskins and Umair Rasul will be honored at Roanoke Country Club.

"We need to keep this going," Wilde said.



No. 1: First singles Henry Lugar '25 returns a forehand against the No. 1 for St. Anne's Belfield (STAB). Henry also plays No. 1 doubles with Jacob Juneau. The sunny start to the match turned cloudy and then rain stopped play with the Raiders winning 4-3 to avenge a loss to STAB earlier in the season. Photo by Eason Zhou

By Anne Bradley Cullen

After losing to Div. I STAB, the Raiders beat top-ranked Covenant 7-2 to become the No. 1 team in the next VISAA Div. II poll.

They have a strong singles lineup with many returning players, as well as eighth grader, George Lugar. Henry Lugar '25, plays at the No. 1 spot in both singles and doubles with Jacob Juneau '26.

"I would say the season is going well so far," Henry said. "We had a tough loss at STAB (4-5) to start the season but it has been super uplifting to see how hard everyone has worked since then to get better."

The team strategy is to focus on being positive emotionally and lifting each other up as teammates. They have a 9-1-1 record as of April 25.

"The season has been great," Assistant Coach Ryan Schlachter said. "I think without a doubt the team can win the state championship. The boys have been dominant so far, and as long as we can stay away from injuries, we are on a great path. We need to improve on the most important shots in tennis, the serve and the return. As a tennis player, you can win a lot of matches just being good at those two things."

"To prepare and have strategies for matches, we teach the boys a

continued on page 23

No. 1 tennis defend state title



2 GOOD: Jacob Juneau '26 hits a forehand to his opponent during his singles match against STAB on April 5. Juneau won 8-4. Juneau usually plays No. 2 singles and No. 1 doubles. He will be an important part of the team's chance of winning their third state championship in a row. As of April 25, he has a singles record of 7-2. Photo by Eason

continued from page 22

couple of things to greatly increase their chances of winning," Schlachter said. "As they warm up with their opponent, they need to watch for weaknesses. Do they have a good backhand? Are they good at volleys? Do they have issues taking the ball low or high? These weaknesses can be assessed before a point is even played. The other thing to look at is yourself. What is working today?

What is not working? We need to be able to adjust on the fly. As a coach, I try to find these advantages and remind them throughout their match. It's also very important to stay positive and not give up no matter what the score says."

Senior Day is April 26 against Eastern Mennonite. The team will honor Atilio Ciccozzi, Jamey Davis, Paul Schueler and Abram Sherman.

Scout Kappes helps girls soccer stand tall



With teammate number 16 Kathryn Hancock '25 on her way in support, Scout Kappes '26, moves toward the goal against Southwest Virginia Home School on Cook Field April 5. Scout, who typically plays midfield, scored two goals the previous game against Altavista, and was the leading scorer on the team with four goals after the first four games this season. "I think as a team mostly we do well together," said Coach Ezra Zigarwi, "and then there are a few who put a little extra., I think Mercedes, Sophia Brown, Cate Cook, Scout, and Nadia." Scout does very well at practice and plays well with her teammates on the field including Nadia Hosny '24, who has four goals and five assists as of April 25. The 7-3 team will take a four-game winning to VES on April 30 to improve their chances of competing in the state tournament. Caption by Gracie Munro. Photo by Blake Shaner



Thomas Greer '25 handles the ball at the top of the box, preparing to dodge to goal against New Covenant. Photo by Tilden Ayers

Greer helps LAX win on both ends of field

By Liam Rippel

Thomas Greer '25 has been a crucial part of the lacrosse team, playing both offense and defense for the Raiders this year. Greer is fast and fearless, he never backs down when going for a ground ball, and is the heartbeat of the team. Greer said that his physicality was something that he relied on and an irreplaceable part of his game. He has scored six goals, assisted twice, but best of all won 15 ground balls.

When you ask someone to think about a sport at North Cross, many people might think about the lacrosse team first, as it has been our most successful program recently, winning the last three state championships. Unfortunately, the Raiders lost a ton of crucial players last year, but with that comes new spots that have opened up.

"Rising players need to step up and find their role in the team," Greer said, "and we will be successful."

It is important that young players get reps and learn the game of lacrosse, because real improvement is only possible when you are put in

game situations. This year is a prime example of this. Many seniors this year are playing 30-plus minutes a game prior to this year, had not even touched the field in an important game before. It has shown. The Raiders have gotten out to a rough start this year, with just a 3-5 record through an early Senior Day on April 18 including rare losses to crosstown rivals Salem and Catholic. However, this doesn't mean the season should just be scrapped, as last year the Raiders started 2-5 and won the championship. The Raiders got out to a rough start this year, but things are now looking up as they have won three straight games, with two big wins coming against EC Glass and Greensboro Day. There have been some signs of success through the hardship this year. Eason Zhou '24 has taken on the goalie position and done well with a .447 save rate. The important thing is getting the veteran players up to speed and getting the team to really gel.

"We need to communicate on both sides of the ball," Greer said, and "capitalize on the mistakes the other team makes."

Team of one: Henry Schumm represents NCS in VHSL and wins the varsity race at Miller School



NO. 1 in VHSL: Henry Schumm gets air over a jump on the course at Miller School on April 13. Schumm said that he felt good on the second lap, so he broke away and rode away from the pack. According to the official report on Instagram, "He rode the final laps of the race solo and finished with a very comfortable 31 second margin over the second place rider. This was Henry's 19th interscholastic race win, and his first race officially representing North Cross. . . . The next race of the VAHS series will be on Saturday, April 20th at the Stokesville Campground in Mount Solon, VA. Henry will be wearing the blue jersey of the VAHS Series Leader." Racing photo by Jack Looney. Team tent photo by Chris Berry.



GET HYPE: Nate Hayes '26 spots for 'Ziel Hart '26 after school while listening to "hype music" like "Fein" by Travis Scott. Hayes has qualified for the VISAA state meet with a shotput mark of 41-01.25. Hart has qualified for the 200 and 4x100 races. Photo by Mia Rueda

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