

# The Pirates' Hook

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Meet new assistant  
principal Kwame Stith  
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• PHOTO BY BRYAN VO



EDITORIAL

National election, local impact

OPINION

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Every four years adults vote to put people in power, and November's results for the presidential and state-level elections are a big deal. The results leave our community with a lot of "what ifs."

What if Donald Trump follows through on his campaign promises?

Trump got less than 19% of the vote in Durham County, but narrowly won North Carolina and the overall election by a wide margin. Education was never a main focus during Trump's first presidential term. He said he would get rid of the Department of Education as well as Common Core. The Department of Ed is still here, and Common Core, which is an Obama-era set of national learning standards designed to ensure all kids receive a quality education, is still in place, albeit with a different name, in North Carolina and many other states.

Trump wanted to give the states total control over education and expand school choice, which North Carolina's state leaders have done during the past ten years, regardless of who was president.

As for his new agenda, his promises include mass deportations, dismantling "deep state" agencies, creating new tariffs, negotiating peace in Ukraine and Gaza, implementing new health policies, and pardoning capitol riot participants.

Many of these would require congressional support. Republicans control both the House and Senate, but that doesn't mean he'll be able to do everything he wants.

What if Mo Green didn't win?

As NC superintendent, Green wants to help support traditional public schools and provide an equal education for all children in NC. He narrowly defeated Michele Morrow, who vowed to defund public schools and send

more taxpayer money to private schools.

What if Josh Stein couldn't veto? Newly elected governor Josh Stein, who handily beat Mark Robinson, is focused on giving power, resources, and opportunities to the communities of North Car-

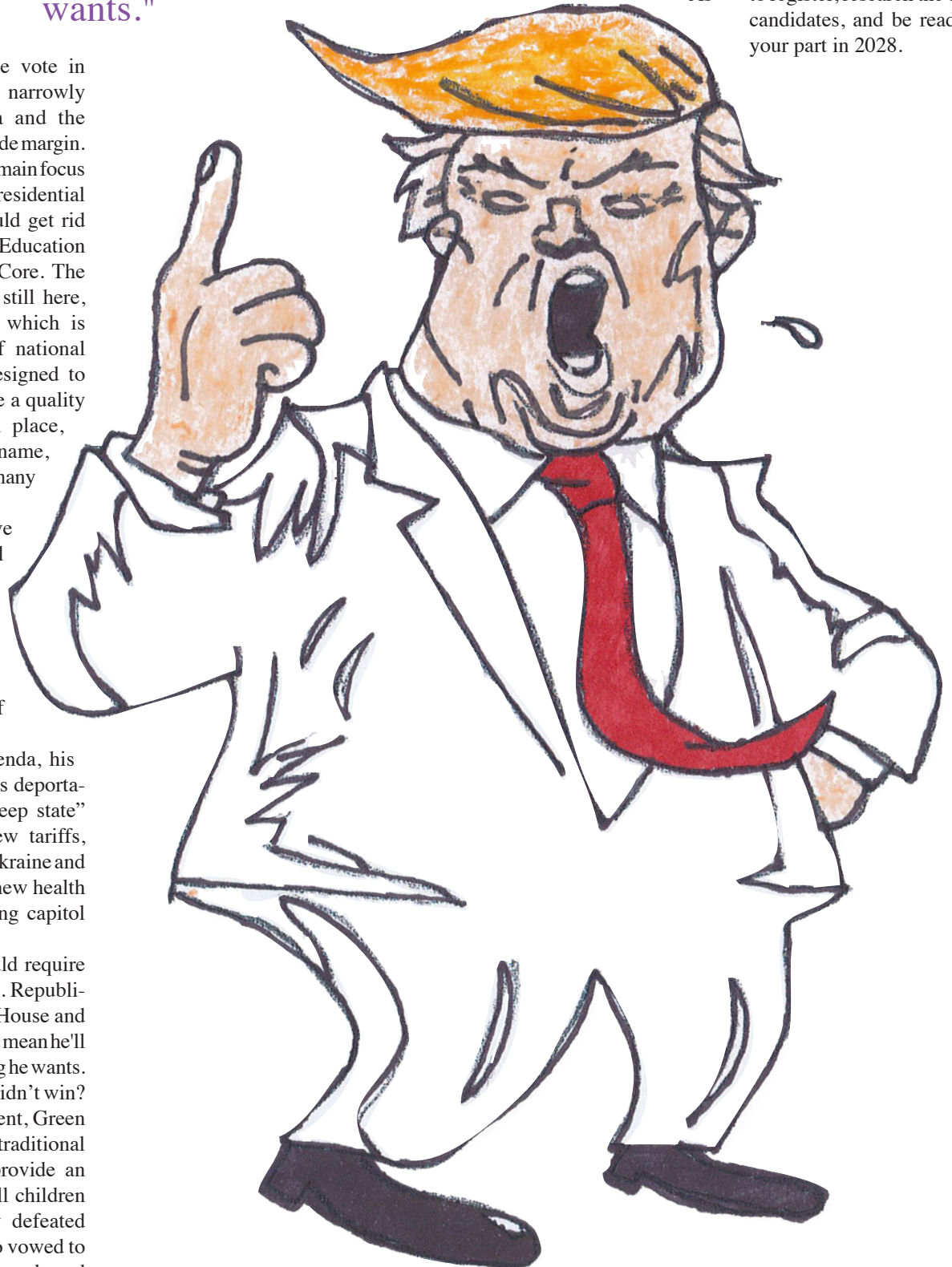
"Republicans control both the House and the Senate, but it doesn't mean he'll be able to do everything he wants."

olina. Stein's priorities include affordable housing, accessible healthcare, investing in public education and protecting rights of North Carolinians. Stein also obtained veto power thanks to key election wins by Democrats in the state house and senate. This is a big deal because Roy Cooper does not currently have veto power because the Republicans have a supermajority. Having veto power means Stein has final say when passing or halting new legislation.

What if we don't pay attention? As

we navigate our leaders' new terms, it is more important than ever to stay engaged. Each of us will continue to be impacted by our representatives' choices and elections. Follow the local, state and national news. Listen to podcasts, engage on social media and expand your worldview. Stay educated on what different policies, legislation, and political figures mean for you, your family, friends, and community.

Almost all Riverside students will be eligible to vote in the next presidential election. Learn how to register, research the different candidates, and be ready to do your part in 2028.



•GRAPHIC BY JAMARI MURPHY



## From dreams to deadlines

BY TALIIYAH COOPER

Applying to colleges is like standing on the edge of a cliff, unsure of whether you're about to fly or fall.

From the moment junior year ends, I felt the pressure kick in.

"Where are you applying?"

"Do you have a major picked out?"

It felt like I was expected to have my entire future mapped out

overnight. Before I knew it, I was drowning in college essays, deadlines, and recommendations. Is my writing good enough? Did I apply to too many schools—or not enough? What if I don't get in anywhere?

Every little thing felt like it could make or break my future. The thought crossed my mind more than once: Maybe I should just drop out and hope to marry rich.

But then, finally, I hit submit.

For a few days, life felt lighter. No more late nights scrutinizing every single line of my essay or refreshing the Common App to check if my counselor submitted my transcript. I could finally enjoy a free moment.

However, that moment didn't last long.

Applications were just the warm-up. Now that I've finished, I get to start the whole process over again for scholarships.

It's like *deja vu*. More essays. More deadlines. More competition. More stress. This time, though, it felt even heavier. Would I graduate with debt? Could I afford the schools I dream of attending?

If there's one I've learned from all the chaos and stress, it's that you learn how to handle it.

Planning for a life after high school isn't

just about where you get accepted or how much scholarship money you win. It's about figuring out how to juggle responsibilities, ask for help when you need it, and remind yourself that you're doing all of this for a reason.

Senior year is a whirlwind of emotions—excitement, nostalgia, and stress all rolled into one. But in the end, it's worth it.

Whether it's college acceptance, scholarship success, or even a backup plan (marrying rich will always be an option, right?), the clarity comes.

For now, all I can do is breathe, stay focused, and trust the process.

*"It felt like I was expected to have my entire future mapped out overnight."*



BY SADIE IRBY

As I drive to school every morning, I pass by the long stretch of empty land and construction vehicles on the corner of Guess and Latta Road. Less than a mile past the end of the construction site, I see a hidden turn into the entrance of Easley Elementary School.

It takes me back to fifth grade, when my teacher made my class write letters explaining our personal disdain about the possible new construction because of how it would affect traffic and our safety. Though this "Latta Park" development wasn't approved until 2021, talk had already begun in 2016 and Easley was not in favor, so much so that they used young voices to express that feeling.

I know that it was a harmless attempt to limit the unwanted growth around our humble school and North Durham as a whole, but it is funny to think back on how I wrote a letter to (I can only assume) elected officials in NC about my nonexistent want for preserving the woods around my school.

Coming from a high-schooler's perspective, I'm excited to get another grocery store that I can buy questionable but cheap sushi from. I moved from downtown to North Durham, close to the Hillsborough border, as a child, and even then I recognized the lack of things to do. For example, I was an avid roller-blader but the closest rink, 'Wheels Fun Park', was nearly half an hour away and

## Not another storage unit

closed when I was in sixth grade. There's now talk of it reopening, but until now, if I wanted to go to a skating rink, I would have to drive nearly an hour to a rink in Raleigh.

Though I am about to graduate and likely leave the area for college, having new stores and restaurants gives bored high schoolers like me something to do. And not only will these new developments serve for entertainment purposes, but the plan also includes having at least 5% of the residential units used for affordable housing that are financially subsidized.

I don't doubt that the new developments will lead to increased traffic around Easley, but if I could rewrite the letter I wrote eight years ago, I would.

In my revised version, I would say: Though the new developments will lead to more activity on the road, it will also bring affordable housing, a public park, restaurants, and a much needed new grocery store. According to the developer's website, it will not bring more unnecessary fast food chains, gas stations, and car washes. Their goal is to have mostly local and regional tenants within Latta Park. The drop-off lines to public schools will always be absolute chaos, no matter how rural the surrounding area is.

To sum it up, north Durham is sick of the most entertaining thing being the Starbucks on the corner of Guess, and I welcome something new.

## EDITORIAL

### *Elección nacional, repercusiones locales*

Cada cuatro años, los adultos votan para elegir a los gobernantes, y los resultados de las elecciones presidenciales y estatales de noviembre son un gran acontecimiento. Los resultados dejan a nuestra comunidad con un montón de "qué pasaría si."

¿Y si Donald Trump cumple sus promesas de campaña?

Trump obtuvo menos del 19% de los votos en el condado de Durham, pero ganó Carolina del Norte y las elecciones en general por un amplio margen. La educación nunca fue un foco principal durante el primer mandato presidencial de Trump. Dijo que se desharía del Departamento de Educación, así como de Common Core. El Departamento de Educación sigue aquí, y Common Core, que es un conjunto de normas

nacionales de aprendizaje de la era Obama diseñadas para garantizar que todos los niños reciban una educación de calidad, sigue vigente, aunque con un nombre diferente, en Carolina del Norte y muchos otros estados.

Trump quería dar a los estados el control total sobre la educación y ampliar la elección de escuela, algo que los líderes estatales de Carolina del Norte han hecho durante los últimos diez años, independientemente de quién fuera presidente.

En cuanto a su nueva agenda, sus promesas incluyen deportaciones masivas, dismantelar las agencias del «Estado profundo», crear nuevos aranceles, negociar la paz en Ucrania y Gaza, aplicar nuevas políticas sanitarias e indultar a los participantes en los disturbios del Capitolio.

Muchas de ellas requerirían el apoyo del Congreso. Los republicanos controlan tanto la Cámara de Representantes como el Senado, pero eso no significa que pueda hacer todo lo que quiera.

¿Y si Mo Green no ganara?

Como superintendente de Carolina del Norte, Green quiere ayudar a apoyar las escuelas públicas tradicionales y proporcionar una educación igualitaria para todos los niños de Carolina del Norte. Derrotó por un estrecho margen a Michele Morrow, que prometió desfinanciar las escuelas públicas y enviar más dinero de los contribuyentes a las escuelas privadas.

¿Y si Josh Stein no pudiera vetar? El recién elegido gobernador Josh Stein, que venció ampliamente a

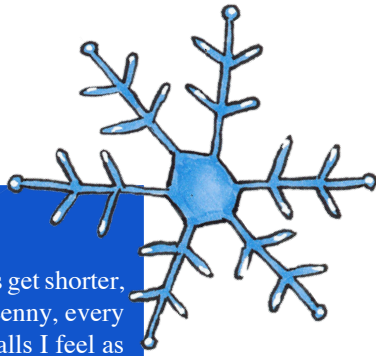
Mark Robinson, se centra en dar poder, recursos y oportunidades a las comunidades de Carolina del Norte. Entre las prioridades de Stein figuran la vivienda asequible, la asistencia sanitaria accesible, la inversión en educación pública y la protección de los derechos de los habitantes de Carolina del Norte. Stein también obtuvo poder de veto gracias a las victorias electorales clave de los demócratas en la cámara de representantes y el senado del estado. Esto es muy importante porque Roy Cooper no tiene actualmente poder de veto porque los republicanos tienen una supermayoría. Tener poder de veto significa que Stein tiene la última palabra a la hora de aprobar o detener nuevas leyes.

¿Y si no prestamos atención?

Mientras navegamos por los nuevos mandatos de nuestros líderes, es más importante que nunca mantenernos comprometidos. Cada uno de nosotros seguirá viéndose afectado por las decisiones y elecciones de nuestros representantes. Sigue las noticias locales, estatales y nacionales. Escucha podcasts, participa en las redes sociales y amplía tu visión del mundo. Mantente informado sobre lo que las diferentes políticas, legislaciones y figuras políticas significan para ti, tu familia, tus amigos y tu comunidad.

Casi todos los estudiantes de Riverside podrán votar en las próximas elecciones presidenciales. Aprende a registrarte, investiga a los diferentes candidatos y prepárate para hacer tu parte en 2028.

# Dear Lenny



Dear Lenny,

As the sun sets quicker and the days get shorter, my mood gets darker and darker. Oh Lenny, every day as I walk the fluorescent-filled halls I feel as if I have no purpose. How can I avoid this feeling of despair and loneliness?

Sincerely,  
Depression

Dear Depression,

When I'm sailing through the great big sea all alone I too can feel unhappy and blue; especially when the icy gusts of wind blast through my wispy locks. Although this seasonal sadness isn't avoidable, you're not alone in this battle. What I do to push those feelings away is by surrounding myself with my best mates. Sailing the big blue sea is no fun alone; being with my closest buccaneers always manages to boost my mood tremendously.

Sincerely,  
Lenny

Dear Lenny,

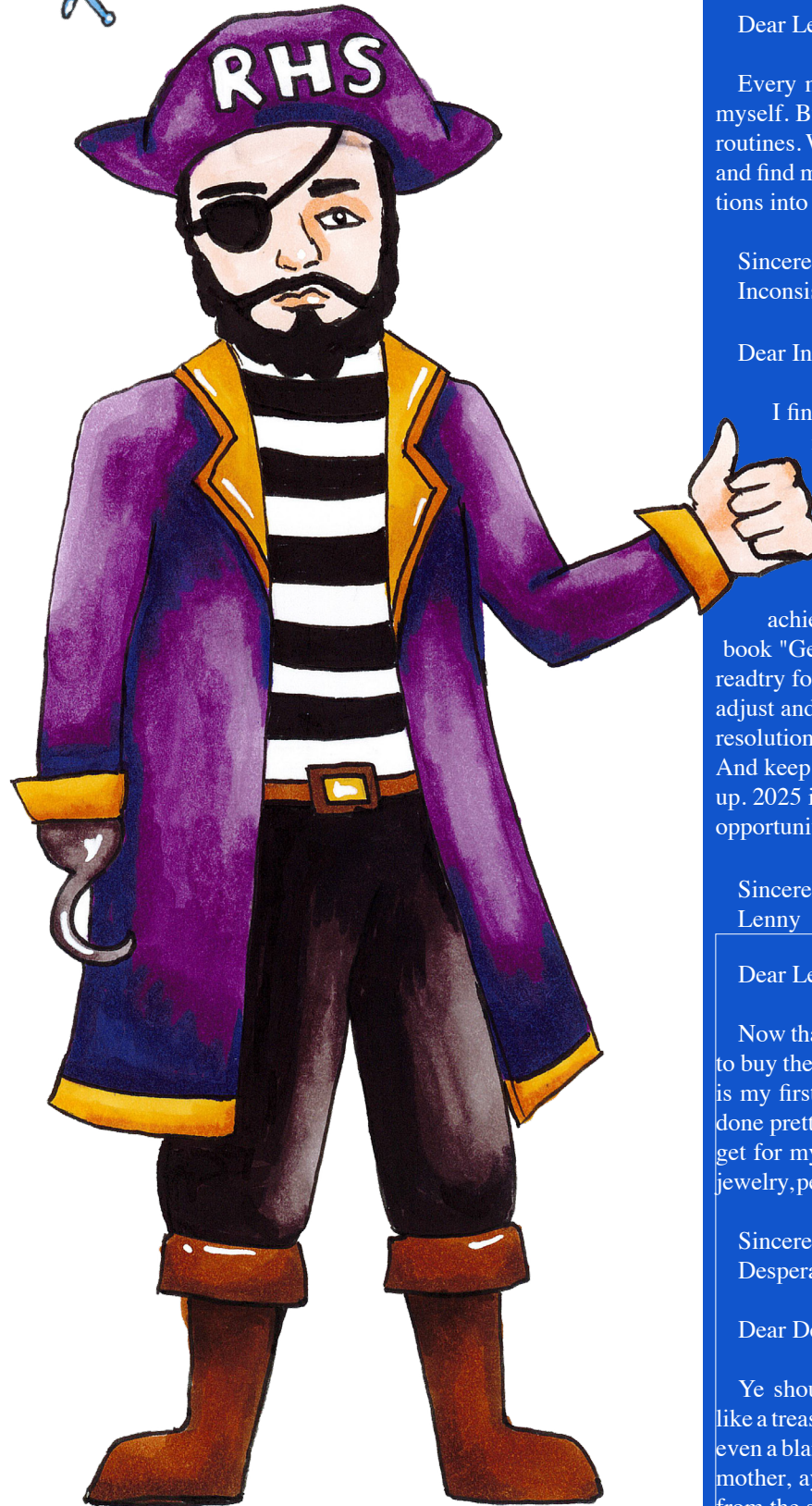
I honestly can't believe how second quarter is already here. As the semester goes on, I have lots of school work piling up from all of my classes. I try to set some time for myself, but it is nearly impossible with how busy I am and all of the senioritis creeping in. I really hope I survive the end of the semester.

Sincerely,  
Unknown

Dear Unknown,

Congrats on making it through the first quarter! As a pirate myself, I know how hard it is to make decisions. I too have trouble with finding a place to bury my treasure at times. I'm sure there are other students in the same shoes as you who procrastinate, but we can start that support group later. Senior year is like sailing through rough ocean currents. Remember, small steps go a long way!

Your friend,  
Lenny



Dear Lenny,

Every new year, I make a resolution to better myself. But I always fail at sticking to these new routines. What can I do in 2025 to work on myself and find motivation to implement my new resolutions into my daily life?

Sincerely,  
Inconsistent

Dear Inconsistent,

I find it mighty difficult to keep a steady routine on the rocky ocean. The most important thing is to take it one day at a time, it can seem daunting to have to stick with a plan that is weeks or months long. Congratulate and reassure yourself for small achievements to stay motivated. Give the book "Getting Things Done" by David Allen a read for some extra advice. Take time to re-adjust and soon enough your new resolution will become a habit. And keep your head up. 2025 is full of new opportunities for you!

Sincerely,  
Lenny

Dear Lenny,

Now that I have a job, everyone is expecting me to buy them Christmas presents. Even though this is my first time Christmas shopping, I think I've done pretty good so far. I just don't know what to get for my mom. Do I get her snacks, gift cards, jewelry, perfume, or what? Lenny, I need your help!

Sincerely,  
Desperate

Dear Desperate,

Ye should give yer mother somethin' special, like a treasure chest or a fine knitted scarf or maybe even a blanket! Every pirate's got a soft spot fer his mother, aye! A treasure chest filled with trinkets from the seven seas and a knitted scarf or blanket to keep her warm on the cold nights. Ye can't get any better than that, matey!

Sincerely,  
Lenny





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In memory of Lenny May

# Immortalizing Athletes

Riverside inaugurates first Hall of Fame class



• PHOTO BY BRYAN VO

Members of the inaugural class of the Linney Wrenn Hall of Fame pose on the track. They were recongized during halftime at a home football game on September 20, 2024.

BY NELLIE PURDY

On Friday, September 20, a collection of Riverside's greatest athletes of all time stepped onto the football field together.

The inaugural class of the Athletic Hall of Fame includes eleven athletes, two teams and three coaches who competed across thirty years of Riverside sports.

"[The Hall of Fame] recognizes our most accomplished student-athletes since the conception of Riverside, since it first opened in 1991," said assistant athletic director Brian Strickland.

Inductees walked across the football field at halftime during Riverside's home game against Graham High School.

It was the culmination of years of planning.

The Linney Wrenn Hall of Fame, named in honor of Riverside's first athletic director, is the Riverside athletic department's brainchild.

"It's been a big project for Coach Duncan and myself for a while now," said Strickland.

Duncan and Strickland have been working on creating the Hall of Fame for years. Intended to begin near Riverside's 30th anniversary (2021), COVID-19 postponed its first induction ceremony until this year.

Anyone could be nominated via a google form found on the Hall of Fame website and social media accounts. The Hall of Fame Selection Committee chose members of the class from the list of nominated alumni.

"We couldn't have done it without the board," said Strickland. "Everybody really

chipped in."

The selection committee considered more than just the athletic careers of the inductees.

"We [looked for] model citizens, people who not only represent Riverside, but the Durham community well," said Strickland.

The athletic department looks forward to continuing this tradition, but with 4-6 members of each class instead of the inaugural 16. Members of each class will be added to the Hall of Fame board in the lobby to immortalize their achievements and inspire the next generation of Riverside student-athletes.

"It will be an annual event," said Strickland. "We will induct a class every year from here on out."

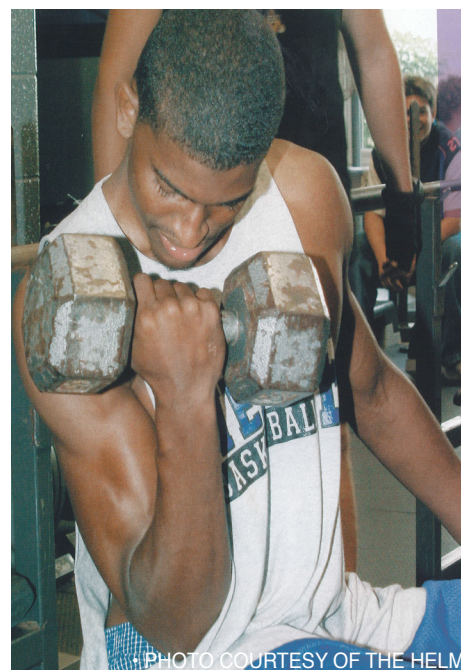
"[The Hall of Fame] recognizes our most accomplished student-athletes since the conception of Riverside."

Assistant athletic director  
Brian Strickland



• PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM

Ashley Durham attempting to get out of a sand trap. Durham won 4A women's golf state championship in 1996.



• PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM

Marshall Williams working out during weightlifting class. Willams went on to play for the Denver Broncos and Indianapolis Colts.

## Why aren't you a Canes fan yet?

BY ISABELLE ABADIE

After a disappointing exit in the second round of the playoffs last year, the Carolina Hurricanes are back and arguably better than last year.

In this season the Canes have appeared in 7 out of 8 super sixteen rankings from the National Hockey Association. They first came in at number 13 seven weeks ago, dropped to number 15 the week after and from there have shifted up and down, from seventh to two and back to seven respectively.

Many critics last year labeled the Canes as a title-or-bust team. After many years of rebuilding, Carolina was a favorite to win the Stanley Cup for only the second time in the history of the franchise.

Instead, the Canes lost in the second round to the New York Rangers, crushing fans' hopes of bringing a title back to Raleighwood.

It left fans asking a lot of questions. Were they too quick to expect a championship from the Canes? Is the team still in a rebuilding stage? Or did the loss early in the playoffs mark the beginning of the end and many years of losing ahead?

Six months later, it appears we have some answers.

Despite a recent dry spell, the Hurricanes sit third in the Metropolitan Division.

When other teams lose multiple great players the franchise usually undergoes a rebuilding period before they are even considered playoff contenders, but it seems that the Canes are breaking that tradition. During the offseason the Canes lost four valuable players; Brady Skjei, Brett Pesce, Stefan Noeson and Teuvo Teravainen. In the 2023-2024 regular season three of those players were in the top 10 goal scorers for the team.

But in place of those players they gained William Carrier, Shayne Gostisbehere, Sean Walker and Eric Robinson, who have already proven their value by being some of the statistical leaders of the season so far. Additionally, their value could be seen in the fact that the Canes aren't having a rebuilding season. So far they are performing just as well, if not better than the past few years.

So the real question isn't are the Hurricanes good this year, but why aren't you cheering them on?



# This is just the beginning...

BY JAIDA COOPER PARRISH & AURELI DOMINGUEZ

Nobody takes Powderpuff more seriously than Riverside students. Every year each team is decked out in body paint and matching t-shirts that each person participating made into their own. T-shirts would be ripped, cropped, fringed, or even have names written on the back with a sharpie. But, the game's intensity is what drew us and many girls into the game of football.

**As sisters, we lose, fight, win, and celebrate together**

After several years of only playing football once a year, this year we got the opportunity to play for a

whole season on the newly inaugurated Riverside Flag Football Team. Although most of our team was still in season with other fall sports they all still made time to come to practices and games to show up for the rest of the team and help us come together to learn a sport that was very new to a lot of us.

Flag Football is a mental game. You have to use a lot of thinking. Because of this, you have to rely on your teammates a lot. Flag Football gives us and other women a chance to play a sport that has been considered a male sport for a long time, and it gives us a way to express ourselves and create a

sisterhood. The other girls on our team aren't just our teammates, they're our sisters. As sisters, we lose, fight, win, and celebrate together.

Whether we lose a game we could've won, or we come back from being down 12-0 to win the game by one point, we're all in it together.

As we have now concluded our season we only hope that more people either join the team or get involved in the sport next year.

Start by watching, because win or lose, it's still an amazing game to spectate and you can learn just by observing. You can learn what side is offense and what side is defense, but most importantly you'll learn what a true team is because, in Flag, everyone has to play a role to get to the endzone.

## Apenas estamos...

POR JAIDA COOPER PARRISH & AURELI DOMINGUEZ

Los estudiantes de Riverside toman al juego de Powderpuff mas en serio que otras escuelas.

Cada ano, cada equipo tiene pintura en todo el cuerpo y las mismas camistas que cada persona hace a lo suyo. Las camistas son rasgadas, recortadas, con flecos, o tambien tienen nombres atras que heran escritos con un marcador permanente.

Pero, la intensidad del juego es lo que atrajo a nosotros y otras ninas al juego de futbol americano. Despues de muchos anos de solo jugar el juego no mas una vez al ano, nosotros tuvimos la oportunidad de jugar por una tempordad completa en el equipo de futbol americano de bandera inaugural de Riverside.

Apezar que mucho de nuestro equipo todavia estaban jugando con otros deportes otanales, todas hizeron tiempo para llegar a toda las practicas y juegos. Y tambien

llegaron a apollar al resto del equipo ya ayudar a sus companeras porque el deporte era nuevo para muchas de nosotras. Futbol Americano de Bandera es un juego mental. Tienes que hacer muchas decisiones y confiar en tus companeras de equipo. Futbol Americano de Bandera da una oportunidad a nosotras a muchas otras mujeres a jugar un deporte que era mas de hombres. Es una forma de expresarnos. Las otras muchachas que estan en nuestro equipo no solo son nuestra companeras. Como hermanas perdimos, luchamos, ganamos, y celebramos juntas.

**Como hermanas perdimos, luchamos, ganamos, y celebramos juntas.**

Ya sea que perdamos un juego que podriamos haber ganado o que recuperamos una desventaja de 12-0 para ganar el juego por un punto,

todas estamos juntas en esto.

Terminamos la temporada con un record de 5-5, y un total de 99 puntos.

Ahora, estamos enfocadas en animar a mas personas a unirse al equipo o involucrase en el deporte el proximo ano.

Empiece por observar, porque gane o pierda, es un juego increíble. Con observar puede aprender

como se alinean la ofensiva y la defensa, los esquemas de carrera, pase y bloqueo, ya las estrategias de puntuacion. Lo mas importante es que aprendera lo que es un verdadero equipo, porque en este juego, todos tienen que desempenar un papel para llegar a la zona de anotacion.



PHOTOS BY JAZMIN CHINA

(Top) Sophomore Saniya Thurman runs with the ball during pregame warmups. (Middle) The offense lines up before a snap. (Bottom) Members of the Pirates' defense pose for a photo between plays during a scrimmage against Cary High School. Women's flag football is now an official club sport in North Carolina.



# One name, one game.

One star player from each winter sport shares one game everyone should watch

BY ELODIE PAGE



## Cole Newman

Senior Cole Newman swims the 100m backstroke and 200m individual medley. Last season, he qualified for regionals in the 500m freestyle and 200m medley.

"Come to conference." (January 22 at the Triangle Aquatic Center in Cary)



## Vivian Brennan

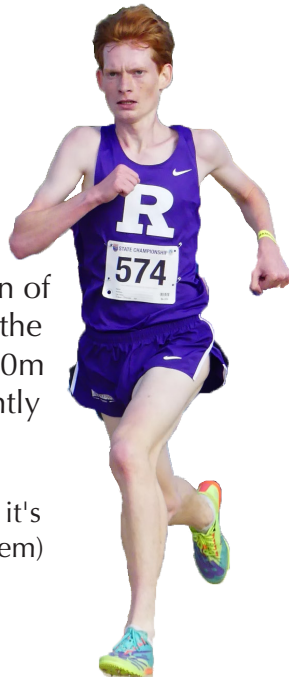
Senior Vivian Brennan is a one meter springboard diver. Last season, she won the conference, regional, and state title and was named All-American by the National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association.

"Come to the states dive meet." (Feb. 7-8 at the Triangle Aquatic Center in Cary)

## Philip Blum

Senior Philip Blum had his best season of winter track last year, placing fifth in the 1600m at states. He is racing the 1600m and 3200m this season, and is currently ranked fourth in NC in the 3200m.

"Probably [come to] States, even though it's far away." (Feb. 15 at JDL in Winston-Salem)



## Elizabeth Healy

Senior Elizabeth Healy set multiple individual and school records during winter track and field last season, including the 1000m and 1600m.

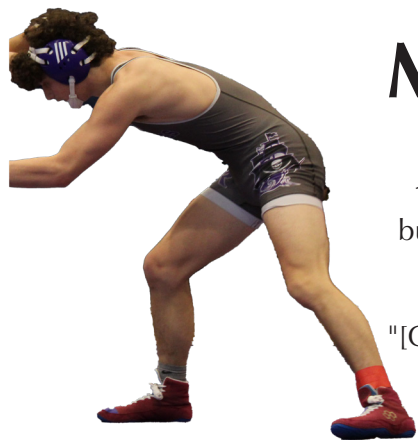
"The most exciting [meet] is the conference championship on January 23 at JDL in Winston-Salem."



## Marcello Luftig

Senior Marcello Luftig competes in the 157 weight class. He used last year as a building season and believes there will be more improvement this year.

"[Come see] the regional champion match." (Feb. 14-15, location TBA)



## Stephanie Diaz-Mendoza

Junior Stephanie Diaz-Mendoza competes in the 152 weight class. She placed fourth in states and was the regional champion last season, and has already won multiple tournaments this season.

"Definitely [come to] states because there's no way I'm not making it." (Feb. 20-22, Greensboro Coliseum Complex)

## Beck Arredondo

Sophomore Beck Arredondo is Riverside's starting point guard. She started all games last season, and contributed to the team's biggest win against Northern.

"The most exciting game will be Northern!" (Feb. 14 at Northern)



## Robert McDonald

Senior Robert McDonald is the starting small forward for Riverside. Last season, he was the third highest scorer on the team, and had a career high of 16 points and 10 rebounds.

"Come to the game at Jordan on February 7."





(Left) Students show out for the rival game against Northern. The theme was "Night Night, Northern." (Right) Stands are noticeably empty at the last football game of the year. The game was rescheduled for a Thursday after weather postponed the original date.

• PHOTOS BY BRYAN VO

## School spirit is declining...or is it?

*Attendance and participation is increasing at sporting events and dances.*

BY AIDAN GANTER & ISONG ESHIET

From dressing out in unique and quirky outfits, to purple stands surging with chants at a sporting event, Riverside shows its school spirit in a variety of different ways.

Student groups organize cleanups and decorations. Teachers encourage participation and foster pirate pride by competing in donation drives and fundraisers. Student government plans dances, and promotes themes for sporting events and spirit week, alongside a myriad of student activities.

Some students, however, believe school spirit has changed.

"I think it's declining," said senior Ziyad Jenkins while watching the final football game of the season. "People think more about themselves than their school."

On Thursday, Nov. 7, the football team lost its final game of the season to South Granville High. Several seniors in the stands shared their thoughts about the state of Riverside's school spirit.

"Some people just think they're too cool for it," said senior Genaro Hood. "We don't hype it up enough. No one even knew there was a game tonight."

With few students in the stands, this game appears to show a distinct lack of school spirit. As the final game of the season, and the last in the career of the senior players, it felt like a disappointing conclusion to the football season.

However, assistant athletic director Brian Strickland said that particular game was

an exception. The South Granville game was rescheduled due to weather, and the makeup date was added late in the season.

"It's been years since we've had a game attended like that by the student body," said Strickland. "We had our big Northern game... We weren't going to the playoffs, so maybe that was it for the fans."

Many of the students who were in the stands were student athletes themselves.

"I'm here to support my friends... through wins and losses," said Genaro Hood.

"I've seen other people supporting me when I play my sport," said Jenkins. "I feel like I should pay that back by giving my support and being supportive of other people."

Student athletes have free admission to Riverside sporting events, compelling many to attend home games.

"I'm very pleased with our student section and support... attendance by students has been up in every home game," said Coach Strickland.

Similar incentives are being offered to encourage more participation from the rest of the student body. Strickland also helped create Pirate Athletic Media, a student-run organization that covers Riverside sporting events on social media and schedules theme nights to encourage students to attend games.

"We throw out T-shirts," Strickland said. "We're thinking about letting in the first twenty students for free. We have some new ideas for this basketball season," said Strickland.

Winning helps, too. After making the state playoffs in 2022, Riverside's football team finished 4-6 in both 2023 and '24. But other teams' success has generated increased interest.

For example, attendance steadily increased last winter when the men's basketball finished 18-10 and reached the second round of the state playoffs.

Senior cross country runners Phillip Blum and Conner Tyrell finished second and third in the state, respectively, and the women's team qualified for the state meet as well. As the cross country program has grown more successful in the past six years, so has student participation.

And fan interest in Riverside's men's soccer team also spiked this fall as it competed for the conference title, then made a deep run in the state playoffs.

"Men's soccer attendance greatly improved," said Strickland. "I think school pride is definitely on the up. [We're] hoping that support will start equating to conference championships and winning... that will be the next step to creating school pride."

While sports may be one of the most visible displays of school spirit, it's one of many ways kids build a sense of community and support one another.

"I think SGA is a big contributor," said senior Henry Hoff. "I've never had the

most school spirit, but doing SGA is my way of showing it."

Riverside's student government association (SGA) organizes many events, such as holding seasonal food drives, voting on and proposing themes for spirit week and dances, and even promoting sports.

Some students, however, wonder if more could be done.

"I think we should make more announcements over the intercom about our sports games," said junior Izzy Allison Pleasants. "[More cookouts and events] would definitely increase school spirit."

Other students shared concerns about themes designed to promote school spirit excluding some classmates.

"One thing about not showing up to jersey night, is just not having a jersey. Why should you have to own a jersey just to go to jersey night?" said senior Sam Ovstrovsky.

Despite any supposed oversights in the organization of school events, the role SGA plays in school spirit is crucial.

"SGA fully promotes and organizes spirit week, homecoming, and, this year, the pep rally," said senior and president of SGA Abby Cho. "We do the food drive, class

events, candy grams, and movie night. I definitely do think the student government improves school spirit."

*"I'm here to support my friends...through wins and losses."*

*Genaro Hood,  
senior*

*"[We're] hoping that support will start equating to conference championships and winning...that will be the next step to creating school pride."*

*Brian Strickland,  
assistant AD*



Theater tech students build a shelf to store construction resources on. Construction started in October and is expected to last several more months. • PHOTO BY NICO JORDAN

## Theater construction delays fall play to January

BY NICO JORDAN AND DIEGO JUARES-VELAZQUEZ

A major renovation project will postpone Riverside's fall play to January.

Construction began in Riverside's theater and auditorium in October and will continue for several months. The renovations are funded by a \$600,000 bond Riverside got in 2016, which increased to \$1.2m after the pandemic.

Mr. William Holley, the tech theater teacher at Riverside, says that "The bond is to renovate and improve schools that are dated."

Many schools in the area got bonds to help improve

things that are too old or aren't functioning correctly. Riverside's bond was specifically made for audio, visual and lighting in the school's theater.

*"The play is Alice in Wonderland. I believe it's January 31 and February 1."*

*Nazanin Ghulami, senior co-president of Riverside's International Thespian Society*

"I can't replace my stage, I can't replace the seats, I can't replace certain things," said Holley. "I can only do audio, visual and lighting." The construction is going to include many phases, including in February when the theater will be shut down completely.

"All the power's going to be cut to the building in our area," said Holley.

Because of this, the fall play was delayed from

October to January. Riverside's theater department will be putting on Alice in Wonderland, with senior Nazanin Ghulami playing Alice.

With the stage and auditorium under construction this fall, students in theater classes spent most of the quarter learning about different aspects of theater instead of practicing for the play.

"We're learning a whole bunch of new lighting stuff, so it's kind of a positive that they're bringing in all this new stuff so we can mess around with it while they're building it." Says Gates Butler, a senior in tech theater.

Some students didn't even know that the play was being delayed.

"I would not have been aware of it had I not been told multiple times," says senior Henry Lasseigne. "I didn't know it was delayed."

## Retrasos en la construcción del teatro hasta enero

BY NICO JORDAN AND DIEGO JUARES-VELAZQUEZ

Un importante proyecto de renovación pospondrá la obra de otoño de Riverside hasta enero.

La construcción en el teatro y auditorio de Riverside comenzó en octubre y continuará durante varios meses. Las renovaciones están financiadas por un bono de \$600,000 que Riverside obtuvo en 2016, el cual aumentó a \$1.2 millones después de la pandemia.

El Sr. William Holley, maestro de teatro técnico en Riverside, dice: "El bono es para renovar y mejorar escuelas que están anticuadas".

Muchas escuelas en el área recibieron bonos para ayudar a mejorar cosas que son demasiado antiguas o que no funcionan correctamente. El bono de Riverside fue específicamente destinado para el sistema de audio, visuales e iluminación del teatro de la escuela.

"No puedo reemplazar el escenario, no puedo reemplazar los asientos, no puedo reemplazar ciertas cosas," dijo Holley. "Solo puedo hacer mejoras en el audio, visuales e iluminación."

La construcción incluirá varias fases, incluyendo una

en febrero cuando el teatro estará completamente cerrado.

"Van a cortar toda la electricidad del edificio en nuestra área," comentó Holley.

Debido a esto, la obra de otoño se retrasó de octubre a enero. El departamento de teatro de Riverside presentará \*Alicia en el País de las Maravillas\*, con la estudiante de último año Nazanin Ghulami interpretando a Alicia.

Con el escenario y auditorio en construcción este otoño, los estudiantes de clases de teatro pasaron la mayor parte del trimestre aprendiendo sobre diferentes aspectos del teatro en lugar de ensayar para la obra.

"Estamos aprendiendo un montón de cosas nuevas sobre iluminación, así que es algo positivo que estén trayendo todo este equipo nuevo para que podamos experimentarlo mientras lo están instalando," dice Gates Butler, estudiante de último año en teatro técnico.

Algunos estudiantes ni siquiera sabían que la obra había sido retrasada.

"No me habría dado cuenta si no me lo hubieran dicho varias veces," dice Henry Lasseigne, estudiante de último año. "No sabía que la habían pospuesto."

*"La obra es Alicia en el País de las Maravillas. Creo que será el 31 de enero y el 1 de febrero."*

*- Cuarto de bachillerato, Copresidente de la sociedad internacional de tescianos de Riverside Nazanin Ghulami.*

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# Computadoras regresan a los carros, no a los estudiantes

POR FIONA FEHRMAN Y  
SOFIA ALVAREZ PEDRAZA

Los estudiantes no recibirán Chromebooks este semestre.

Al comienzo del año escolar, cuando se distribuían los Chromebooks, se encontraron chinches caminando a su alrededor, lo que llevó a que se recolectaran los Chromebooks. Los profesores han pasado a realizar tareas en papel y muchos estudiantes han comenzado a traer sus propias computadoras personales.

A medida que avanza el año, los padres comienzan a preguntarse cuándo los estudiantes recibirán Chromebooks. Los estudiantes, por otro lado, ni siquiera están seguros de quererlos.

"Ya es casi la mitad del año y no me gusta la tarea de computadora," dijo el estudiante de diez grado Joshua Young.

Otros están frustrados y están listos para regresar a lo digital.

"Son un recurso muy importante y útil y eliminan la necesidad de utilizar papel para cada tarea," dijo Jeff Nero, estudiante de doce grado. "También son útiles para los estudiantes que no tienen acceso a computadoras fuera de la escuela."

"Quiero que todos tengan Chromebooks para que nuestras tareas puedan volver a estar en línea, de modo que sea más fácil seguirlas y poder calificarlas más rápido," escribió el estudiante de diez grado Timothy Arthur en una encuesta compartida por El Gancho de los Piratas. Hay algunos carritos de Chromebooks que circulan por la escuela. Los profesores pueden reservarlos para el día para que los estudiantes puedan completar las tareas en línea esos días.

Algunos estudiantes están frustrados y piensan que las computadoras son vitales para completar las tareas de manera efectiva y están enojados por el tiempo que les a toma recibirlas.

"Es decepcionante cómo la administración mantuvo a los estudiantes, al personal y a los maestros en la ignorancia durante esta situación," dijo el estudiante de once grado Shakam Simpson.

La principal Gloria Woods-Weeks envió actualizaciones a los padres en noviembre.

"Si toda la logística se desarrolla según lo planeado, anticipamos que la distribución comenzará el 18 de noviembre de 2024," dijo Woods-Weeks en un correo electrónico a

los padres.

Pero justo antes de que comenzara la distribución, la coordinadora de medios Tara Gold envió un correo electrónico informando al personal que tenían que pausar los planes.

"Abrimos la parte trasera de las computadoras y encontramos chinches y cucarachas en la placa base," dijo la coordinadora de medios Tara Gold. "Encontramos la computadora del 'paciente cero' que tenía el nido de Chromebooks de donde creemos que se originó el brote."

En una reunión del Equipo de Mejoramiento Escolar (SIT, por sus siglas en inglés) se decidió que en lugar de enviar computadoras a casa, la escuela usaría carros de Chromebook que pudieran transportarse con ruedas a las aulas.

A los miembros del equipo SIT se les dieron dos opciones sobre cómo distribuir las computadoras a los estudiantes. La primera opción era que los carritos de Chromebook se mantuvieran en las aulas con la opción de que los estudiantes usaran un sistema de préstamo para obtener computadoras del centro de medios. La segunda opción era que se asignarían computadoras a los estudiantes y se las podrían llevar a casa.

Nueve de los diez representantes del SIT votaron por la opción 1.

Aunque los carritos dan a los estudiantes acceso a las computadoras, aún quedan algunos problemas.

Primero, se desinfectaron 1095 chromebooks y se recolectaron 450 cargadores. Esos números no son suficientes para que cada uno de los más de 1900 estudiantes de Riverside tenga una computadora dedicada.

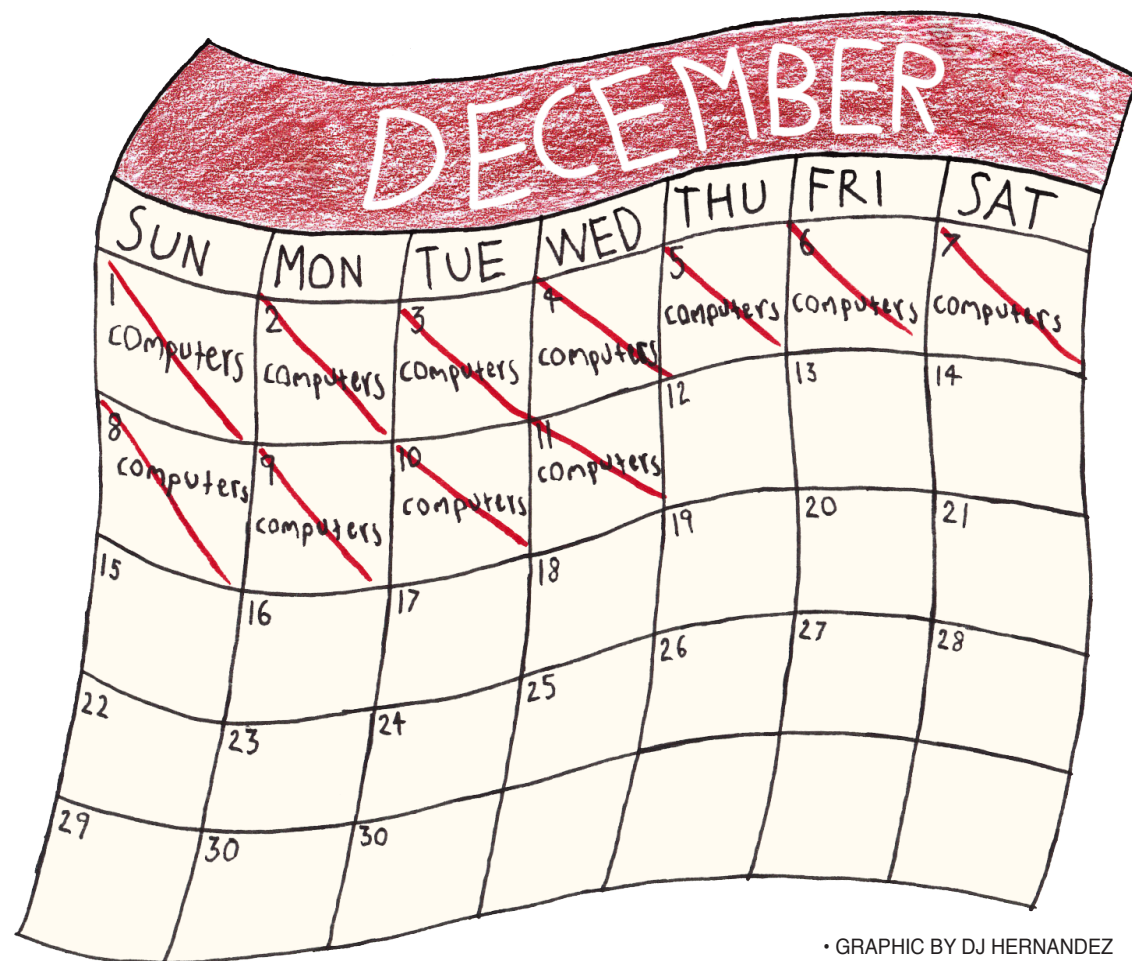
Otro problema es que en el pasado el distrito no permitía que los carritos de Chromebook permanecieran durante la noche en las trailas.

"Sabemos que esta no es la solución ideal para todos y también tenemos la esperanza de satisfacer las necesidades de todos," dijo la profesora de inglés Emily Ericson, presidenta del equipo SIT, en un correo electrónico al personal.

A partir del 10 de diciembre hay 10 carros de portátiles disponibles. Muchos se utilizarán para realizar exámenes durante las últimas semanas del semestre.

"El sistema se construye alrededor de ellas," dijo el estudiante de último año Joshua Savage. "Son una necesidad."

TRADUCIDO POR SOFIA  
ALVAREZ PEDRAZA



• GRAPHIC BY DJ HERNANDEZ

## Laptops return to carts, not students

BY FIONA FEHRMAN &  
SOFIA ALVAREZ PEDRAZA

Students will not be getting Chromebooks back this semester.

In the beginning of the school year when chromebooks were being distributed, bedbugs were found. The school collected the Chromebooks immediately, teachers shifted to paper assignments and many students resorted to bringing their own laptops.

As the year goes, parents are starting to wonder when students will get Chromebooks. Students, on the other hand, aren't sure they even want them.

Many teachers at Riverside have transitioned away from online assignments and back to paper and pencil work. Some students see the benefits of paperwork.

"It's already almost halfway in the year and I kinda like no computer homework," said sophomore Joshua Young.

Others are frustrated and are ready for a return to digital.

"They are a very important and useful resource and eliminate the need to use paper for every single assignment," said senior Jeff Nero. "They also are helpful for students who do not have access to computers outside of school."

"I want everyone to have Chromebooks so our assignments can go back to being online so they're easier to keep up with and can be graded faster," wrote sophomore Timothy Arthur in a Pirates' Hook survey.

There are a few chromebook

carts that roll around the school. Teachers can reserve them for the day so students can complete online assignments on those days.

Some students are frustrated with how this situation has been handled. Many students think computers are vital to completing assignments effectively and are angry with how long it's taken to receive them.

"It's disappointing how the administration kept students, staff, and teachers in the dark during this situation," said junior Shakam Simpson.

Principal Gloria Woods Weeks sent parents updates in November.

"If all logistics fall into place as planned, we anticipate distribution to begin on November 18, 2024," said Woods-Weeks in an email to parents.

But just before distribution was set to begin, media coordinator Tara Gold sent an email informing staff that they had to pause the plans.

"We opened up the back of the computers and found bedbugs and roaches in the motherboard" said media coordinator Tara Gold "We found the 'patient zero' computer which had the nest of bugs we think the outbreak originated from."

At a Nov. 20 school improvement team (SIT) meeting it was decided that instead of sending computers home, the school would use chromebook carts that could be wheeled to classrooms.

Members of the SIT team were given two choices for how to distribute computers to students. Option one was that chromebook carts would be

kept in classrooms with an option for students to use a check out system to get computers from the media center. Option two was that computers would be assigned to students and they would be able to be taken home.

Nine of the ten SIT representatives voted for option one.

Although the carts give students access to computers, there are some issues that remain.

First, 1095 chromebooks were sanitized and 450 chargers were collected. Those numbers aren't enough for each of Riverside's 1900+ students to have a dedicated computer.

Another problem is that in the past the district hasn't allowed chromebook carts to stay overnight in the trailer classrooms. That means that if a trailer teacher wanted to do online assignments they would have to wheel out the cart every morning and afternoon.

The SIT team addressed these problems during its November meeting.

"We know that this is not the ideal solution for everyone, and we are also hopeful that we are meeting everyone's needs," wrote English teacher Emily Ericson, who is the SIT team chair, in an email to staff.

As of December 10, there are 10 carts of laptops available. Many will be used for testing during the final weeks of the semester.

Many students hope to receive devices in the spring.

"The system is built around them," said senior Joshua Savage. "They're a necessity."

# "I've always just had this passion for helping"

Q&A with new assistant principal Kwame Stith

BY NELLIE PURDY

## How long have you lived in the area?

"I am originally from the DC/Maryland/Virginia area. I grew up there, went to college at the University of Maryland, at College Park, and then found my future wife.

"We moved to Tampa, Florida, because she was in the military. I lived in Texas as well, and then moved back to Maryland for a little bit, and then I moved to Charlotte in 2009"

"I am new to Durham. I still have a lot of my things in Charlotte. My sons are still there, I'm just in the middle of transitioning."

## How long have you worked in education?

"This is a little over my 18th year. I started off as a teacher in alternative education in Texas, and then I was a social studies and AP Psychology teacher in Maryland for five years. When we moved to Charlotte, I was a social studies teacher for two years, and then became a dean of students, administrator, school administrator, and then an assistant principal."

## What made you want to work in education?

"I've always been passionate, even in college, about tutoring and mentoring young people. I've always just had this passion for helping them find their gifts and realizing their passions."

## Where did you work before joining Riverside administration?

"Before I worked here, I worked in CMS, Charlotte Mecklenburg schools. I was there for 12 years, and then I decided to take care of some family, so I took some time off, and now I'm here in Durham Public Schools."

## How did you end up here in the middle of the year?

"After everything was settled with family, I had to find a way to get back in and realize my passions and my dreams. So I did some research, found Riverside High School, and here I am."

## Are you overseeing specific students by their last name?

"For now, my alphabet would be from A through E."



• PHOTO BY KALISSA EVERETT

New assistant principal Kwame Stith answers questions during a *Pirates' Hook* interview on Dec. 6. Stith was recently hired as the replacement for Darryl Bradshaw.

## What's your first impression of RHS?

"I like my first impression of Riverside. Even when I came to interview it was like, 'The students are nice, very respectful, very welcoming. The staff is very nice and very welcoming.' 'So if there's anything I have to say about Riverside I believe, whether it's staff or students, [there are] some great, some great people and great, great personalities here.'"

## Is there anything that you hope to accomplish during the first couple weeks on the job or long term?

"I'm just looking forward to helping Dr. Woods-Weeks take Riverside to the next level, help Riverside be the best school that it can be and work closely with the admin team. I'm just looking forward to being a part of the team, getting to know

great students as well as getting to know the staff."

## Will you be taking over Bradshaw's roles, such as restorative practices?

"Yes, I will. I believe I will be taking on a lot of the same roles as Assistant Principal Bradshaw did."

## Will you also be involved in the school's infrastructure and maintenance?

"Yes, I will be. I'm in a process now, transitioning, trying to get acclimated, trying to get used to things. But yes, I will be over facilities and infrastructure."

## Did you know you'd take his roles? Is that why you came to Riverside?

"It wasn't necessarily about the role of the duties. It was just about

"I had to find a way to get back in and realize my passions and my dreams. So I did some research, found Riverside High School, and here I am."

*Kwame Stith,*  
assistant principal

"I will say that [the resignation] was not related to the incidents. Of course, I can't speak about personal issues there. But we had some rough situations. We dealt with it appropriately, as you can see, but I just made a decision and I had to focus on family. Family came first"

## Those must have been tough experiences as a principal. Do you feel like that changes your perspective and what you bring to Riverside?

"There were some tough and challenging times. As a principal or assistant principal school leader, you don't ever want to encounter situations like that. But they were difficult times, and we did the best that we could to support the family.

"We did a lot of supporting with the students and staff as well, because a lot of them were close to that situation, and so we just had to do our best to support them emotionally, socially, and just help the family out and respect their wishes as it related to that situation."

## What's the difference between being a principal and AP?

"The difference is that we serve as assistant principals to support the vision of the principal. So as a principal, a lot of times you set the vision, you set the mission and the tone, and you are the individual who at the end of the day has the last word.

"In terms of decisions as an assistant principal, in my role now, that is to serve, and that is to support Dr. Woods-Week's vision and mission to the best of my ability."

## What similarities and differences do you see between CMS & DPS?

"I see a lot of similarities in Riverside in regards or in relation to previous schools that I served. Every school has its great things going on, and they also have their challenges.

"At Riverside, I think you have great programs here. You have great students here who want to do the right thing, but we also have some areas that we need to work on, but that's every school. That's no different than [any other] school."

## What does your role as an assistant principal here entail?

"Just executing the vision of Dr Woods weeks, but also getting to know everyone, individually, and trying to support students and staff to the best of my ability. I will be supporting the science department and supporting the Social Studies Department as well, so I'm looking forward to that."

**When we were doing our background research, we saw that you were a principal at Rocky River High School. The Charlotte Observer reported that there were a couple of different incidents in 2022 and '23 about an inappropriate teacher-student relationship and a student getting shot off campus. The articles also suggesting that your resignation might have been linked to those incidents. Would you like to provide any additional context about that?**



Environmental club members clean up the stadium. Clean ups are a regular part of club meetings.

## Students run holiday charity projects

BY VILMA ROLDAN LAZO

A few weeks into the school year, a small group of students came together to form a charity group at Riverside.

Hurricane Helene caused widespread destruction and numerous fatalities across the eastern coast of the United States.

"The primary goal of the Hurricane Helene relief drive is to provide resources and support to people in Western NC that are affected by the hurricane," said sophomore Izzy Allison-Pleasants, one of the Environmental Club officers.

"Our job as Environmental Club

officers in the relief drive is to advertise and get the word out about our drive to make sure that it is known around the school." Allison-Pleasants said.

Inspiration for the relief drive started when students witnessed the vast devastation in Western NC.

"Seeing the amount of destruction in Western NC and understanding that it was an environmental issue, [the officers] discussed with Ms. Ericson about running a relief drive for this affected area," said sophomore Musfirah Sohail.

Sohail believes that getting the word out about a school-led relief drive is influential in how successful

the drive is.

"We planned on creating posters, collaborating with other clubs, and getting on the announcements to ensure that everyone knew about the drive," she said.

"Collective action in helping North Carolina communities provides people with the essentials they need to survive, benefiting them," said sophomore Eileen Guo, a co-president of the club. "It brings people together, strengthens relationships, and makes the community more resilient and united."

Guo believes that planning how to transport items to people ensures people affected get the help they

need.

"We transport donated items to Western NC through the mutual aid group," she said. "We have students and faculties drop off supplies at Ms. Ericson's room."

All officers agree that the relief drive has been successful.

"This success is thanks to the generous donations we received and the hard work put in throughout the way," said Guo. "Riverside supported us so much by promoting the initiative through announcements."

English teacher Emily Ericson is the Environmental Club advisor and is in charge of making sure the relief drive operates smoothly and helps transport donated items.

"It is important to build communities where we are," Ericson said, "because at the end of the day we are the ones that take care of each other."

The Hurricane Helene Relief Drive is still operating.

Ericson encourages people at Riverside to keep donating items to her classroom in room 214.

Riverside's Student Government

Association (SGA) also organized a Thanksgiving food drive.

"The goal of the food drive is to collect and distribute food to help our Riverside community so they can enjoy a nice meal during the holidays," said senior Kharmina Mitre.

The SGA Food Drive has been a tradition at Riverside for more than 10 years. Food donated is to be non-perishable and Thanksgiving related.

"It's been a tradition to host a Thanksgiving food drive," said Mitre.

Senior Abby Cho is also co-organizer for the food drive. She said motivating students to donate is one of the most important aspects of

organizing a school-wide food drive.

"We set a prize that will motivate students, which in this case is a Chick-Fil-A breakfast," said Cho. "When people see you bringing stuff in, they'll feel more encouraged

to join the food drive as well."

Nile Mangum and Lucy Heery also contributed to this story.

### Want To Help?

HIGH SCHOOLS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE HELENE

McDowell, Watauga and West Henderson High Schools are coming together to help western NC communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. The money raised will be split evenly across the three schools' counties.

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## Recaudación de fondos dirigido por estudiantes

POR VILMA ROLDAN LAZO

Alas pocas semanas de empezar el curso escolar, un pequeño grupo de estudiantes se unió para formar un grupo benefició en Riverside.

El Huracán Helene causó una destrucción generalizada y numerosas víctimas mortales en toda la costa este de los Estados Unidos.

"El objetivo principal de la campaña de ayuda es proporcionar recursos y apoyar a las personas afectadas en el oeste de Carolina del Norte", afirma Izzy Allison-Pleasants, una de las responsables del Club del Medio Ambiente.

"Nuestro trabajo como oficiales del Club Ambiental en la campaña de ayuda es anunciar y correr la voz sobre nuestra campaña para asegurarnos de que se conozca en toda la escuela," dijo Allison-Pleasants.

La inspiración para la campaña de ayuda surgió cuando los estudi-

antes fueron testigos de la enorme devastación en el oeste de Carolina del Norte.

"Al ver la cantidad de destrucción en el oeste de Carolina del Norte y comprender que se trataba de un problema medioambiental, [los oficiales] hablaron con la Sra. Ericson de organizar una campaña de ayuda para esta zona afectada", dijo Musfirah Sohail, estudiante de segundo año.

Sohail cree que hacer correr la voz sobre una campaña de ayuda dirigida por la escuela influye en el éxito de la campaña.

"Planeamos crear letreros, colaborar con otros grupos, y hacer anuncios para asegurarnos de que todo el mundo supiera de la campaña."

"La acción colectiva para ayudar a las comunidades de Carolina del Norte proporciona a las personas lo esencial que necesitan para sobrevivir", afirma Eileen Guo, estudiante

de segundo año y copresidenta del club. "Une a la gente, fortalece las relaciones y hace que la comunidad sea más resistente y esté más unida."

Guo cree que planificar cómo transportar los artículos a la gente garantiza que los afectados reciban la ayuda que necesitan.

"Transportamos artículos donados al oeste a través del grupo de ayuda mutua", dijo. "Tenemos estudiantes y facultades que dejan donaciones en la sala de la Sra. Ericson."

Todos los oficiales coinciden en que la campaña de ayuda ha sido un éxito.

"Este éxito se debe a las generosas donaciones que recibimos y al duro trabajo realizado durante todo el proceso", dijo Guo. "Riverside nos apoyó mucho promoviendo la iniciativa mediante anuncios."

La profesora de inglés Emily Ericson es la asesora del Club Medioambiental y se encarga de que

la campaña de ayuda funcione sin problemas y de ayudar a transportar los artículos donados.

"Es importante construir comunidades allí donde estamos," dijo Ericson, "porque al final del día somos nosotros los que nos cuidamos unos a otros."

La Campaña de Ayuda por el Huracán Helene sigue en marcha. Ericson anima a la gente de Riverside a seguir donando artículos a su clase en el aula 214.

La Asociación del Gobierno Estudiantil de Riverside también organizó una colecta de alimentos para el Día de Acción de Gracias.

"El objetivo de la colecta de alimentos es recoger y distribuir alimentos para ayudar a nuestra comunidad de Riverside para que puedan disfrutar comidita durante las vacaciones", dijo Kharmina Mitre, estudiante de último año.

La colecta de alimentos de la Aso-

ciación del Gobierno Estudiantil ha sido una tradición en Riverside durante más de 10 años. Los alimentos donados deben ser no perecederos y estar relacionados con el Día de Acción de Gracias.

"Ha sido una tradición organizar una colecta de alimentos para el Día de Acción de Gracias," dijo Mitre.

Estudiante de último año Abby Cho también es co-organizadora de la colecta de alimentos. Ella dijo que motivar a los estudiantes a donar es uno de los aspectos más importantes de la organización de una colecta de alimentos en toda la escuela.

"Establecemos un premio que motive a los estudiantes, que en este caso es un desayuno Chick-Fil-A", dijo Cho. "Cuando la gente vea que trae cosas, se sentirá más animada a participar en la colecta de alimentos."

Nile Mangum y Lucy Heery también contribuyeron a esta historia.

# Dragons, frogs and bubble machines

## Chinese Lantern Festival returns to Cary

By VIOLET DAVIS

“Colorful.” “Luminous.” “Enchanting.” These are a few words students used to describe their visit to Cary’s annual Chinese Lantern Festival.

While this year will only be the ninth winter festival in Cary, the tradition dates back 2000 years ago to China’s Han Dynasty. The festival has gained a great deal of popularity since 2015, and over 200,000 guests are expected to attend this year.

Entering the one-hour walk at the Koka Booth Amphitheater, visitors are taken down a lantern-lit pathway and led into the entrance of the festival. Attendees are greeted by a vibrant array of hundreds of glowing lantern displays, transporting them from Central NC to the mystical world more than 25 Chinese artisans have built for their audience. Not only is the festival filled with these intricate, LED-lit lanterns, but it also includes cultural art performances and interactive activities.

This year, performances run intermittently featuring acts of lively acrobatics

and dancing.

Sophomore Sam Murphy says the performances are her favorite part of the festival. “I really liked the performances because it was something I had never seen before and so it was really cool to watch,” Murphy said.

Interactive activities are another fan favorite. This year’s feature a smoke cannon, illuminated dance floor and colorful seesaws.

Not only is the festival filled with these intricate, LED-lit lanterns, but it also includes cultural art performances and interactive activities.

Junior Nick Igescu attended the festival in 2022 and says these activities were his favorite part.

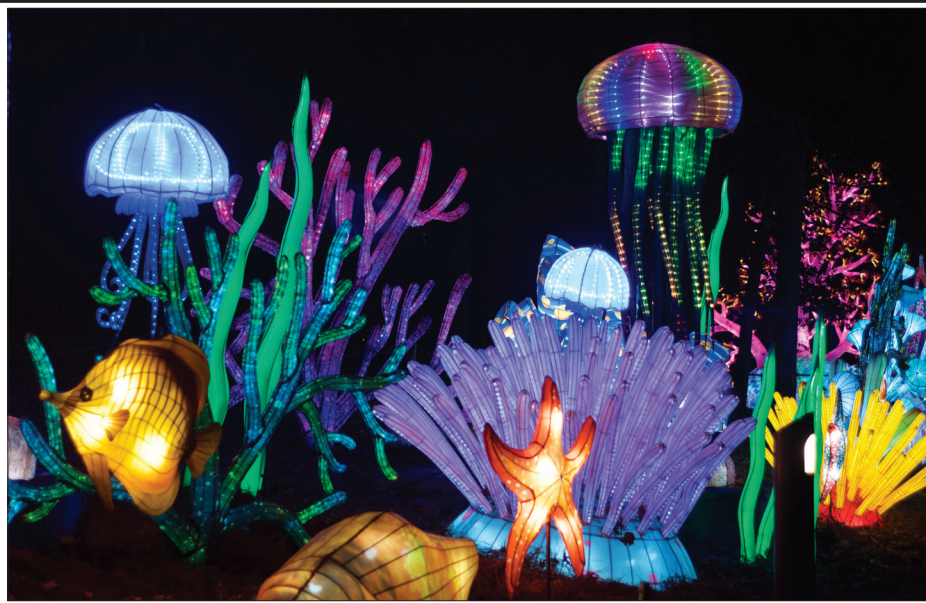
“I liked the big dragon lantern and the bubble machine,” Igescu said.

2024

Attendees are thrilled to know that this display will make another appearance this year, in addition to over 40 new lantern displays, including an under the sea extravaganza and Chinese zodiac photo op.

zodiac photo op.

The festival will be open from Nov. 16-Jan. 12 from 6-10 pm. Tickets cost \$36 for general admission. For more information, visit the amphitheater’s website.



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(Top to bottom) An underwater ocean landscape, siheyuan 1, frog, siheyuan 2, and lanterns on display at the Chinese Lantern Festival. The festival runs from Nov. 16 to Jan. 16 at the Koka Booth Amphitheater in Cary, NC. • PHOTOS BY VIOLET DAVIS

<p>12/16</p> <p>National Chocolate Covered Anything Day</p>  <p><small>• GRAPHIC BY LUCY HEERY</small></p>	<p>12/17</p> <p>Winter Band Concert 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm</p> <p>Basketball Home Game v Person Men's JV 4:30 pm Women's Varsity 6:00 pm Men's Varsity 7:30 pm</p>	<p>12/18</p> <p>Freshman Get Together Hosted by SGA. Cookies, Cocoa, and Games! 6:45-8:00 RHS Cafeteria</p>  <p><small>• GRAPHIC BY DJ HERNANDEZ</small></p>	<p>12/19</p> <p>Women's Basketball Home Game v Cristo Rey 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm</p> <p>Holiday Concert 7:00 pm</p>	<p>12/20</p> <p>Early Release!</p> <p>Basketball Home Game v Hoggard Men's JV 4:30 pm Men's Varsity 6:00 pm</p>
<p>1/6</p> <p>Basketball Home Game v Athens Drive Mens's JV 4:30 pm Men's Varsity 6:00 pm</p> <p>National Bean Day</p>	<p>1/7</p> <p>Basketball Home Game v Durham Academy Men's JV 4:30 pm Women's Varsity 6:00 pm. Men's Varsity 7:00 pm</p> <p>National Bobblehead Day</p>	<p>1/8</p> <p>NC Chinese Lantern Festival 6:00 - 10:00 pm in Cary</p> <p>National Bubble Bath Day</p>  <p><small>• GRAPHIC BY NILE MANGUM</small></p>	<p>1/9</p> <p>Wrestling Home v Jordan 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm</p> <p>National Static Electricity Day</p>  <p><small>• GRAPHIC BY LANA MCILVAINE</small></p>	<p>1/10</p> <p>Basketball Away Game v Hillside Men's JV 5:00 pm Women's Varsity 6:30 pm Men's Varsity 8:00 pm</p> <p>National Houseplant Appreciation day</p>  <p><small>• GRAPHIC BY TULA WINTON</small></p>

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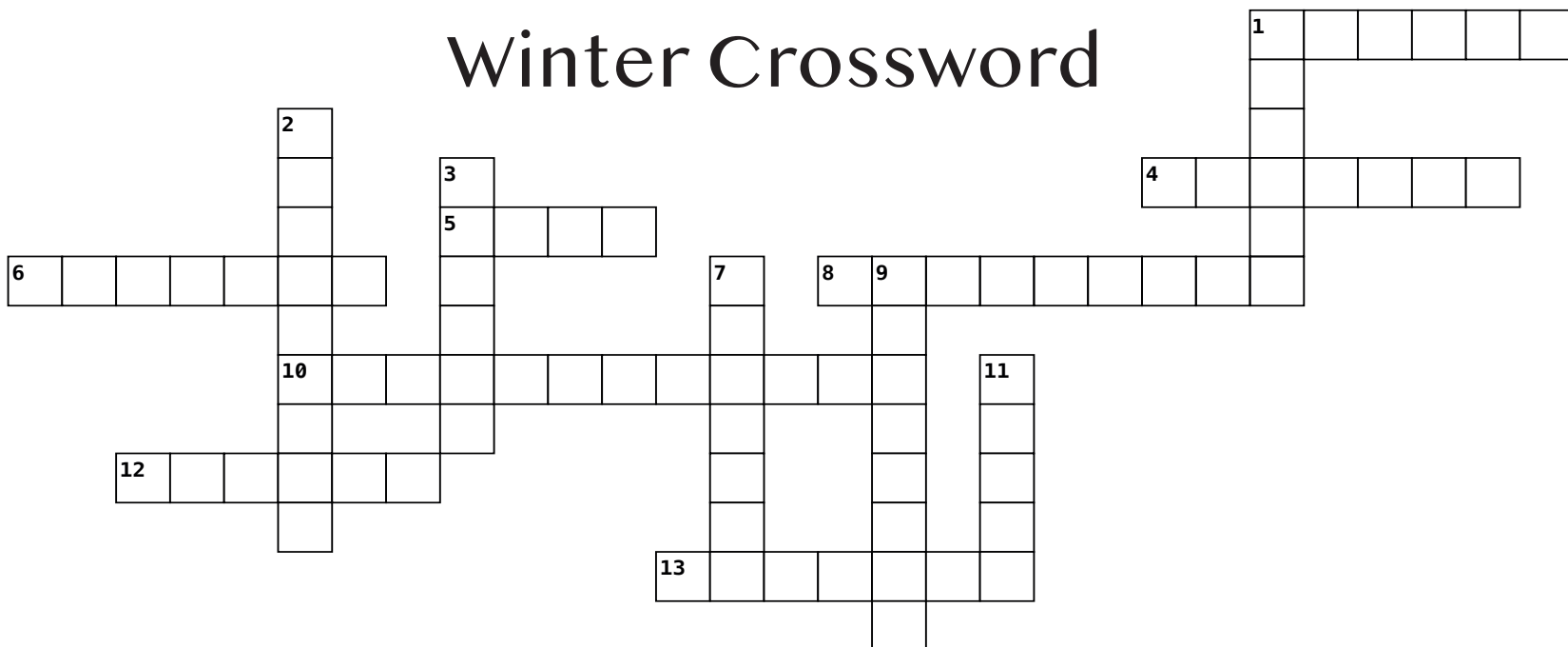
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# Winter Crossword



**Across**

1. "Keep the main thing the main thing"
4. What you find in Riverside's chromebooks
5. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Riverside's traffic director
6. "Roll, \_\_\_\_\_, roll"
8. 'Tis the season
10. All exits lead to this road
12. Season when your breath becomes visible and your motivation becomes invisible
13. New classes start in \_\_\_\_\_

**Down**

1. What's dropping after finals season
2. "I" in "Pirate PRIDE"
3. Synonym for addicted to reading the newspaper
7. Seven candle holiday
9. Nine candle holiday
11. He has the MOST pirate pride

## Comics

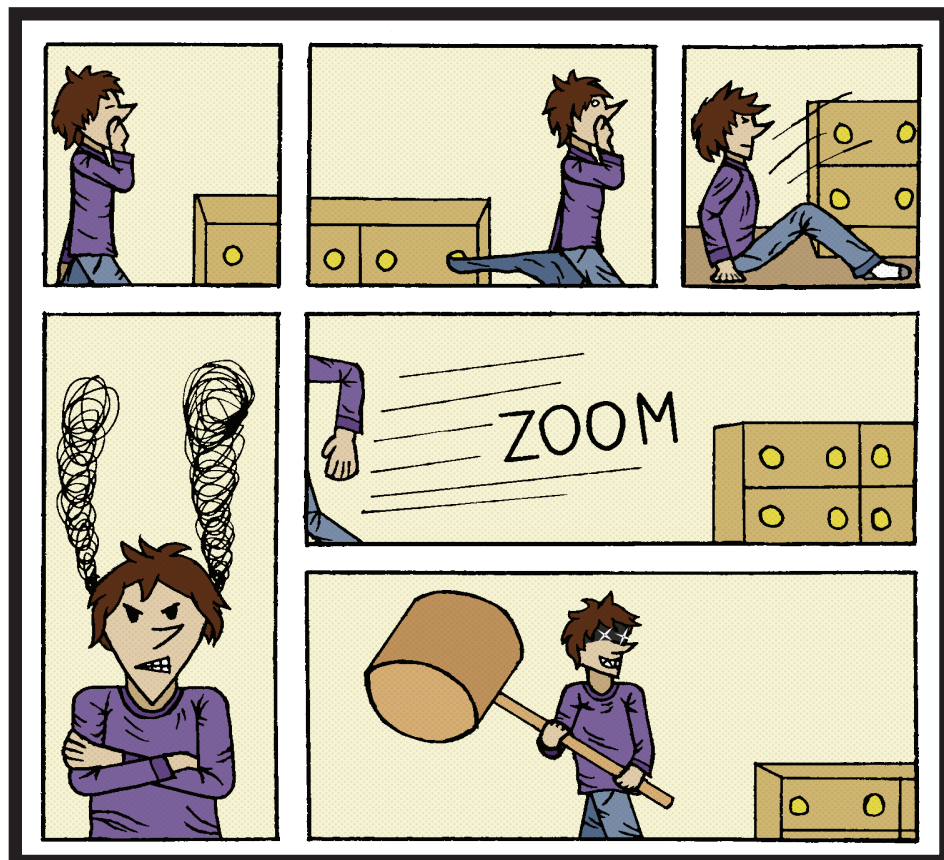
### What's up with the weather?

BY TULA WINTON

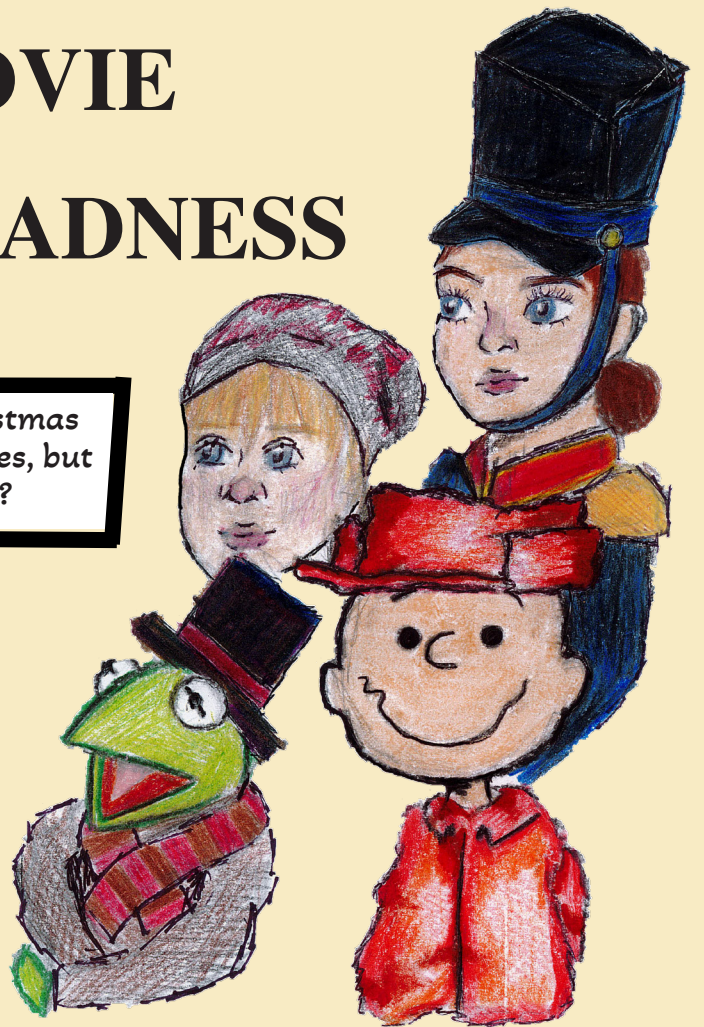


### Snagged

BY DJ HERNANDEZ



# HOLIDAY MOVIE MADNESS



The true meaning of Christmas is watching nostalgic movies, but which one is the best?

\*GRAPHIC BY SADIE IRBY

**How the Grinch Stole Christmas (1996)**

*Bitter creature tries to take Christmas from Whoville*

**Home Alone 1** *Kevin defends his house from stupid burglars.*

*A man raised by elves stalks dad and spreads chaos.*

**Elf**

**The Muppet Christmas Carol** *Goofy puppets reenact Charles Dickens.*

*Kids venture on a train to meet Santa and hot cocoa.*

**The Polar Express**

**How The Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)** *Jim Carrey in a fur suit steals Christmas.*

*Askeleton from Halloween takes over Christmas.*

**Nightmare Before Christmas**

**Nutcracker and the Four Realms** *Holiday multiverse gets saved by Clara.*

*Kevin's replacement defends his home.*

**Home Alone 3**

**Home Alone 2** *Kevin gets on the wrong plane and ends up in NYC.*

*A boy avoids bullies and tries to get a BB gun for christmas.*

**A Christmas Story**

**Charlie Brown Christmas** *Depressed kid searches for meaning, finds it in friends*

*Off-brand Home Alone 1, but his parents hate each other.*

**Home Alone 4**

**The Grinch (2018)** *The original, but better soundtrack.*

*Weird 80's movie about Christmas lights.*

**National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation**

**Die Hard** *Is this even a Christmas movie? Yes it is.*

**WINNER:**