

The Pirates' Hook



OPINION

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EDITORIAL

More than a Day

Every year on April 22, Earth Day brings global attention to the state of the environment.

First organized in 1970 by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, the movement began as a response to rising concerns about pollution and environmental damage. Since then, it has grown into an international event involving countless people, all focused on protecting the planet.

While Earth Day operates on a global scale, its impact is stronger at a local level.

In Durham, community efforts from conservation programs to volunteer cleanups give residents opportunities to take direct action.

Initiatives like the April 19 Beaver Marsh Preserve Cleanup and Bill Corey's "Milkweed for Monarchs" project that helps increase the butterfly's habitat highlight how community involvement can help the local ecosystem, turning awareness into change.

At Riverside, students are also finding ways to contribute. This year, Earth and Environmental Science teacher McKenzie Chestnut is leading a campus-wide litter cleanup on Earth Day. During

second, third and fourth periods, her students collected trash around campus for a class analysis. Open to any class that wished to participate, the initiative encouraged students to contribute to their community and

help protect their environment.

Ultimately, Earth Day serves as a reminder that global change sometimes needs local solutions. But it can't just happen one day of the year.

From international movements to school led local cleanups, each action contributes to a broader impact. Even with all the bad news about climate change and environmental damage, when students push for change it can lead to both local and global impact.

Each action contributes to a broader impact

Mas Que Un Dia

Cada año, el 22 de abril, el Día de la Tierra llama la atención mundial sobre el estado del medio ambiente.

Organizado por primera vez en 1970 por el senador estadounidense Gaylord Nelson, el movimiento comenzó como una respuesta a las crecientes preocupaciones sobre la contaminación y el daño ambiental. Desde entonces, ha crecido hasta convertirse en un evento internacional en el que participan innumerables personas, todas enfocadas en proteger el planeta.

Aunque el Día de la Tierra opera a escala global, su impacto es más fuerte a nivel local. En Durham, los esfuerzos comunitarios, desde programas de conservación hasta limpiezas voluntarias, abren oportunidades a los residentes para tomar acción directa. Iniciativas como la Limpieza del Beaver Marsh Preserve el 19 de abril y el proyecto "Milkweed for Monarchs" de Bill Corey, que ayuda a aumentar el hábitat de la mariposa, destacan cómo la participación comunitaria puede beneficiar al ecosistema local, convirtiendo la

concientización en acción.

En Riverside, los estudiantes también están encontrando formas de contribuir. Este año, la profesora de Ciencias de la Tierra y del Medio Ambiente, McKenzie Chestnut, está liderando una limpieza de basura en todo el campus en el Día de la Tierra. Durante el segundo, tercer y cuarto período, sus estudiantes recolectaron basura alrededor del campus para un análisis en clase. Abierta a cualquier clase que quisiera participar, la iniciativa motivó a los estudiantes a contribuir a su comunidad y ayudar a proteger su medio ambiente.

En última instancia, el Día de la Tierra sirve como un recordatorio de que el cambio global a veces necesita soluciones locales. Pero no puede suceder solo un día al año.

Desde movimientos internacionales hasta limpiezas locales dirigidas por escuelas, cada acción contribuye a un impacto más amplio. Incluso con todas las malas noticias sobre el cambio climático y el daño ambiental, cuando los estudiantes impulsan el cambio, pueden lograr un impacto tanto local como global.

• PHOTO COURTESY OF COOL EARTH CLUB



Cool Earth members Tinsley Johnson, Benjamin Davis and Timothy Arthur pick up trash along train tracks in south Durham. Cool Earth does cleanup events throughout the city.

By design

BY NORAH LUBECK

When you start high school, you're thrown into this new environment. AP and honors classes, class ranks and GPA, clubs and involvement, and the list goes on.

When I was a freshman, I felt a little lost. I knew I wanted to be in the engineering program, but beyond that, I felt a bit overwhelmed with the other options for classes I could take at Riverside.

During my sophomore year, I joined the journalism program and learned how much I liked designing pages and using photos to tell stories. The engineering program and journalism helped me recognize a topic that I was interested in: Architecture.

This new interest stemmed from wanting to look at a topic that used design, art, and problem-solving all in one. But aside from the Civil Engineering and Architecture class in the PLTW program, there was no option for me to explore the career path at school.

Because of this, at the end of sophomore year, I decided to take a series of Durham Tech courses for a certificate in Architectural Technology.

During my junior year, I spent three hours each day in architecture classes, hand drafting, lettering and sketching, on top of learning about construction and computer-aided design platforms. I later learned that the classes were standard weighted, unlike the typical dual enrollment courses, which get the same weighting as an AP class.



Even though I did well in them, my class rank dropped significantly.

I spent a week panicking when I found this out, wondering if I should drop the program and go back to Riverside to load up on all the AP courses I could and try to fix my class rank.

I had to decide what counted more: a higher GPA or continuing classes I genuinely cared to be in.

In the end, I decided to continue. Finding what you're passionate about is one of the most important things you can do in high school. I didn't follow the typical path of loading up on AP classes junior year. Instead, I took classes that challenged me and that I actually enjoyed.

Now, as I review my college options and make a decision, I wouldn't go back and change my path.

The intersection of two topics I was interested in helped me grow. Without taking a step out of my comfort zone into Durham Tech and sticking with the architecture classes, I would have missed out on an opportunity that helped me figure out what career path I wanted to take. I learned that sometimes the most valuable choices aren't always the ones that look best on paper.

Seven times to wonder

BY NELLIE PURDY

I hear the "beep beep beep" of the PA system, and before the announcement is even made, I shut my laptop, grab my phone, and head to the corner of the classroom.

I tell myself it's just another false alarm, but a little part of me is still afraid. It's the part of me that wonders if it's not.

Seven lockdowns since November. Sitting silently on the dusty floor of trailer 7, I notice sunlight sneaking through the blinds that my teacher stopped bothering to open two lockdowns ago.

My back hurts from being pressed up against an outlet on the wall as I wait for the police to arrive and clear each room. It usually takes about an hour. The same thoughts swarm my mind as I count the minutes until I can go home.

I wonder if it's the same person calling reports in.

I wonder how long it will take for the building to be swept.

I wonder what I'll do if I hear gunshots.

I wonder what's happening on the police scanner my classmates downloaded freshman year.



I wonder about the parents who receive the same disturbing message so often that they're desensitized.

I wonder how tired the police are of hearing the same call - and if they will still care if the calls are ever real.

After every lockdown, Riverside families get the same message from school administrators. "The lockdown has been lifted, and no weapon was found. We thank our law enforcement partners for a thorough investigation and for maintaining a safe environment for our students and staff."

Following each adrenaline spike and delayed dismissal, I sit in standstill traffic as the police direct a congested carline.

I wonder if this was a false alarm or a failure to find a weapon on campus.

I wonder who to blame for this new normal.

Most of all, I wonder if it's possible to find a solution in a world where one ignored report could cost us our lives.

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Face off:

Best cheap eats in Durham?



• ART BY TATUM ASRICAN

Burritos at Cosmic

BY LEVI BROWN

Cosmic Cantina is a locally-renowned Tex-Mex spot famous for its cheap food and staying open until 4 a.m., and I believe it to be the best cheap food spot in Durham.

Located on Perry Street near Duke's East campus, I went with a few friends to get some of their food and to prove that it is a great place to get some terrific, affordable food.

Walking in, my friends were skeptical at the unique exterior of the store. Initially they didn't even realize it was the restaurant, as it just looked like an empty, derelict store on the outside.

However, the inside is a different story, which has bright colors, warm lights, and a cozy brick and wood interior.

The menu is vast with plenty of cheap and enticing options. My friend and I got chicken burritos. I myself upgraded to a deluxe version, which doubles the size and adds guacamole and sour cream.

Chowing down, the burrito was very

tasty, with really good chicken plus the complimenting rice and beans inside.

The guacamole was the best part, though. There was a good proportion of avocado to the other ingredients, such as onion and tomato.

I also got a side of rice, which was a cheap, medium sized cup of orange, Mexican-style rice. It was well-seasoned and tasted really good, complimenting the other food.

The meal also came with a small side of chips and pico de gallo.

My other friend who got the burrito, sophomore

Stephen Dunstan, agreed.

"The food was good and not too expensive," said Dunstan. "Vibes were good, too, with music constantly playing."

He, along with my other friends, found out that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, and that the food and atmosphere more than made up for any doubts.

I highly recommend stopping by Cosmic Cantina if you also enjoy Tex-Mex, a warm environment, and plenty of great food for the price.

I believe it to be the best cheap food spot in Durham

Quesadillas at Chubby's

BY WILL GRAY

In this day in age, especially in Durham, one of the hardest feats is finding a great place to eat if you are eating on a budget. But if you want to get an awesome meal under \$15, Chubby's Tacos is where you want to go.

There is one location in Durham in the Woodcroft shopping center. It has a very welcoming atmosphere that includes booths, tables, a bar and a large salsa bar.

Some of the best value items on the menu are the quesadillas, specifically the chicken quesadilla, which is generous portions at a price right around \$10.

Other great items on the menu are the burritos that are all right under \$11 and come in many varieties. The steak burrito is the best one you can get for that price.

Most restaurants give you very sparse portions for the price you pay for the food, but Chubby's never disappoints. I have never still been hungry after ordering.

Most restaurants give you very sparse portions for the price you pay for the food, but Chubby's never disappoints. I have never still been hungry after ordering.

One also major perk is if you order it comes with complementary chips and salsa, and the salsa selection has many amazing options with unlimited refills. My personal favorite is the salsa verde.

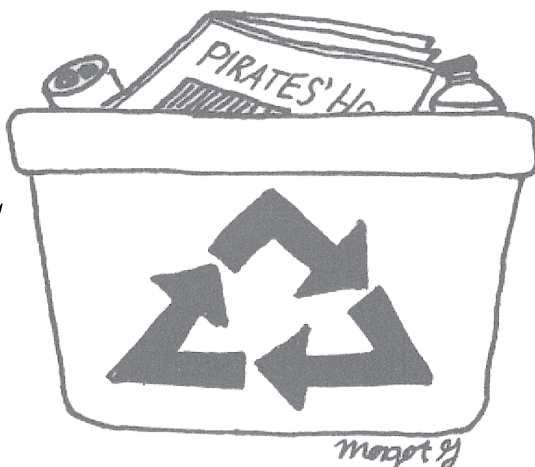
There are plenty of places to get a burrito around town, but what sets Chubby's apart from places like Chipotle and Moe's is their great quality of food. Plus, you pay \$3 less for a meal and still

get more food.

Also, when you eat here rather than a Chipotle or Moe's you're supporting a local food spot rather than giving more money to fast casual restaurant chains.

All these different amenities add great value to the already low cost of the food.

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National Honor Society seeks new advisor

Kelby Hardy to step down from role



• PHOTO BY KALISSA EVERETT

Students' names are placed on chairs at the NHS induction ceremony. The event was held on April 21 and inducted 69 new members.

BY FIONA FEHRMAN

Math teacher Kelby Hardy recently announced that she will not serve as the National Honor Society (NHS) faculty advisor next school year.

Hardy has been the NHS advisor since the start of the 2024 school year. It's one of Riverside's largest student organizations, and at the time of publication no faculty member has volunteered to take her place.

Over 120 Riverside students are a part of NHS, a nationwide organization that is based in student achievement and service.

"Being an NHS advisor is a lot of work," said Hardy. "We have over 120-ish members. So just being able to keep up with all those students and your 107 students in the classroom is challenging."

NHS is based on four main "pillars" that guide the organization's work and what they look for in members: scholarship, service, leadership and character.

"Our pillars [are] why we ask students to complete a certain

number of service hours, whether it be tutoring, in school events, out of school events," said Hardy.

Students fill out a Google form that asks them about leadership roles, advanced classes they have taken, challenges they experienced in those classes and what they've learned.

"[The form is about] just getting to know them as a student, and as a student leader," said Hardy. "And why they want to be in NHS."

After the application deadline, a board of teachers and school staff review the applications and make acceptance decisions.

"We meet for anywhere from two and a half to three and a half

hours, depending on how many applications we get," said Hardy.

Eligible students receive an email inviting them to apply to the club.

Before Hardy had the role, English teacher Victoria Watson was the club advisor. She was newer to Riverside and was looking to step up within the school.

"It was a leadership opportunity, something to take over," Watson said. Watson says that though NHS is important, students tend to overstate its importance to colleges.

"I think students think it's important as the college footnote," said Watson.

"However, as the advisor, I reminded them that it's more about the opportunities that you get while being in NHS. The programs and

volunteering are more significant than just being a member."

Junior Cole Sease is one of NHS' members that joined partly due to college applications. He said that one of the reasons he believes NHS is important is because it is a common part of a student's application.

"I feel like it's just a very standard thing to have," Sease said. "Most schools have it, and it's good for students, and it's good for their college applications."

After four years, Watson decided to step down due to going back to school to get her masters degree and her son coming to Riverside.

One of the reasons for the turnover in advisors is the lack of incentives. Club advisors receive no benefits or extra pay in exchange for their work. In addition to teaching, NHS advisors have to hold meetings and plan events for the club.

"I have different schools or community partners that'll reach out and request volunteers," said Hardy. "The induction process is tedious...[it involves] reaching

out to our data manager or the district to get data for students that have a 3.0 or higher, going through the data and taking out any students who are already in

NHS or who have applied before and have been dismissed."

"If they want the program to continue to live on, [administration] has to have a panel," said Watson. "They have to share the workload, or they have to provide an instant incentive for the teachers to be advisors."

Many members of NHS would be sad to see it end.

Junior Bridget Jenniches said, "It would be unfortunate, considering I put a lot of time and effort into my application, and I'm putting a lot of time and effort into getting my hours this year," junior Bridget Jenniches said. "So if it went away

next year, and I just wasn't able to do it anymore, I'd be a little upset."

Although the future leadership of the club remains unclear, there have been steps forward in making sure it continues.

"Every year we have to pay our fee to be an accepted chapter," said Hardy. "That's already been done for next year. It's already been approved."

Assistant principal Jasmine McKoy remains confident that the school will find a solution.

"We will find someone," said McKoy. "We're fully equipped to take on leadership in certain departments or certain roles, such as NHS. So we will figure it out."

"The programs and volunteering are more important than just being a member"

- Victoria Watson, English teacher

"We're fully equipped to take on leadership in certain departments or certain roles such as NHS."

- Jasmine McKoy, assistant principal

La sociedad National De Honor busca un nuevo asesor

Esacnee para leer el articulo en espanol en nuestro sitio web thepirateshook.com



Anik Sen nombrado BTOY

POR PARIS CHAVIS

El profesor de matemáticas Anik Sen tuvo dos excelentes maestros en la escuela secundaria que lo inspiraron a hacer lo mismo algún día.

"[Ellos] vieron en mí un potencial más allá de ser solo un estudiante y me ayudaron a alcanzar mis metas", dijo Sen. "Quería retribuir a la próxima generación de estudiantes y ser un apoyo similar para ellos."

Después de graduarse de la escuela secundaria en 2020, Sen asistió a Duke y luego continuó allí para estudiar un posgrado y convertirse en maestro.

"Obtuve mi maestría del programa MAT de Duke", dijo. "Nos asignaron a dos escuelas durante el año en que estábamos obteniendo el título. La segunda escuela a la que me asignaron fue Riverside."

Sen trabajó con la profesora de matemáticas de Riverside, Julie-Lynn Borquin, mientras hacía su práctica docente.

"Cuando se abrió una posición con la oportunidad de trabajar justo al otro lado del pasillo de ella, no pude decir que no", dijo Sen.

Ahora, en su primer año enseñando Matemáticas 3 y Matemáticas 3 Honores, Sen ha sido nombrado Maestro Principiante del Año.

Sen describe su estilo de enseñanza como un equilibrio entre estructura y apoyo.

"Me gusta pensar que soy 'exigente y comprensivo'", dijo Sen. "Tengo altas expectativas para mis estudiantes, pero también me gusta construir relaciones con ellos."

Para ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar confianza, Sen se enfoca en reforzar lo que ya saben antes de introducir conceptos más difíciles.

"Al dar refuerzos positivos sobre las cosas que ya saben, espero que eso los anime a sentirse más seguros para intentar cosas que quizá no conocen", dijo Sen.

Sen también ajusta su enseñanza dependiendo del nivel de la clase. En Matemáticas 3 Honores, enfatiza la preparación para futuros cursos AP, mientras que en Matemáticas 3 estándar se enfoca más en aplicaciones del mundo real.

"Para muchos estudiantes, Matemáticas 3 es la última clase de matemáticas que toman, así que pensar en cómo pueden aplicar esas habilidades a situaciones de la vida real es donde está el enfoque", dijo Sen.

A pesar del reconocimiento, Sen dijo



• PHOTO BY ISABELLE ABADIE

(From left) Assistant principal (AP) Will Okun, AP Kwame Stith, principal Gloria Woods-Weeks, math teacher Anik Sen, AP Tammy Patterson, AP Gene Jones, AP Jasmine McKoy, and math teacher Christy Simpson pose with Sen's award plaque.

"Honored and humbled"

Anik Sen named RHS Beginning Teacher of the Year

BY PARIS CHAVIS

Math teacher Anik Sen had two great high school teachers who inspired him to someday do the same.

"[They] saw potential in me as more than just a student, and helped me achieve my goals," said Sen. "I wanted to give back to the next generation of students and be a similar support to them."

After graduating from high school in 2020, Sen attended Duke, then stayed on to attend grad school to become a teacher.

"I got my master's degree from the Duke MAT program," he said. "They placed us in two schools during the year that we're getting our degree. The second school that I was placed in was Riverside."

Sen worked with Riverside math teacher Julie-Lynn Borquin while student teaching.

"When a position opened up with the opportunity to work right across the hall from her, I couldn't say no," Sen said.

Now in his first year of teaching Math 3 and Math 3 Honors, Sen has been named Beginning Teacher of the Year.

Sen describes his teaching style as a balance between structure and support.

"I like to think I'm a warm demander," Sen said. "I have high expectations for my students, but I like to build relationships with them as well."

To help students build confidence, Sen focuses on reinforcing what they already know before introducing more difficult concepts.

"By giving positive reinforcement to things that they do know, I hope that it encourages them to feel more confident to try things they that maybe don't know," he said

Sen also adjusts his teaching depending on the level of the class. In Math 3 Honors, he emphasizes preparation for future AP courses, while standard Math 3, he focuses more on real-world applications.

"For a lot of students, Math 3 is the last math they take, so thinking about how they can apply the skills to real life situations is where the focus is," Sen said.

Despite the recognition, Sen said the award reflects the system around him.

"I feel very honored and humbled to be recognized," Sen said. "This award is just a reflection of the great teachers I have in this hallway."

Borquin, who worked closely with Mr. Sen, during his student teaching, said his success comes as no surprise.

"He was a really strong student teacher," Borquin said. "to see him thriving as a first-year teacher is not surprising."

She added that his ability to connect with students stood out from the beginning.

"His positive attitude and ability to build relationships with students [stood out]," Borquin said.

According to Borquin, Sen's preparation and professionalism set him apart.

"He plans his lessons out really well and focuses on making sure he's teaching the math correctly [while] also trying to make it fun," Borquin said.

Sen said he hopes students leave his class with more than just math skills.

"In order to succeed, sometimes you have to struggle," he said. "That's something they can apply to anything in their life."

"In order to succeed, sometimes you have to struggle. That's something they can apply to anything in their life."

- Anik Sen, math teacher



• PHOTO BY KALISSA EVERETT

Sophomore Edison Sava, senior Izabella Miller and freshman Abby Edgerton watch science teacher Tavia Webley react to winning the 2026 RHS Teacher of the Year award. Webley has taught at Riverside for 27 years.

"The queen of the science department"

Tavia Webley is Riverside's 2026 Teacher of the Year

BY CHANDLER CATES

Anticipating the results and prepared to congratulate a colleague, science teacher Tavia Webley was pleasantly surprised when Riverside's administrative team came into her room with balloons and poppers.

"It really felt good," said Webley. "It was a nice surprise."

In order to become Teacher of the Year (TOY), teachers must be fully-licensed, teach full-time, and be nominated by their peers.

Each year, the Riverside staff nominates colleagues, then votes for one person from a list of finalists.

This isn't the first time Webley has won. She was also named TOY during the 2006-07 school year.

"It's a wonderful honor," Webley said, "It's very humbling to be nominated by a peer, and then, for the school body of teachers, to vote and then be selected."

Webley has been teaching for 27 years. She started her career at Green County Center High School, located in Snow Hill,

NC in 1999, then joined Riverside in 2000 and never left.

Webley always wanted to be a science teacher. She received the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship and attended North Carolina Central University.

"I wanted to help students understand a concept that I thought was difficult," said Webley.

Some times her work extends beyond the classroom. For example, years ago, she had a student whose parents were in a car accident and needed extensive medical care for an extended period of time. Webley and other staff members raised money by collecting change in the cafeteria.

Current students see Webley as an inspiration and someone they can turn to.

"She makes you know that she's someone that you can go talk to," said junior

Cheyenne Clark. "Through her warm ups, she makes sure to talk to us one on one, make sure we understand."

"She taught me to keep going, don't get frustrated," said junior Kaija Smith. "I will never forget her kindness, her smile."

Science teacher Daniel Kemp considers Webley a valuable asset to the Riverside community.

"She is my department chair. She is my mentor. She is the queen of the science department!" said Kemp.

Over the years, Webley has helped Kemp, as well as other teachers, in many different ways.

"She has made it really easy to want to stay in teaching," said Kemp. "She has done everything she could to make sure I had all the support that I needed."

When she's not at Riverside, Webley enjoys cooking, needlework, spending time with her family and traveling.

"Whenever our family is together, we're gonna make it a good time," she said.

Paris Chavis and Ja'Sona Simmons also contributed to this story.

"I will never forget her kindness, her smile."

- Kaija Smith, junior

"I wanted to help students understand a concept that I thought was difficult."

- Tavia Webley, science teacher

Tavia Webley es Maestra del Año

POR CHANDLER CATES

Tavia Webley es nombrada Maestra del Año en Riverside por segunda vez.

Anticipando los resultados y preparada para felicitar a un colega, Tavia Webley se llevó una grata sorpresa cuando el equipo administrativo de Riverside entró en su salón con globos y confeti.

"Realmente se sintió muy bien", dijo Webley. "Fue una sorpresa muy agradable".

Para convertirse en Maestro del Año (TOY, por sus siglas en inglés), los docentes deben tener su licencia completa, enseñar a tiempo completo y ser nominados por sus compañeros. Cada año, el personal de Riverside nomina a sus colegas y luego vota por una persona de una lista de finalistas.

Esta no es la primera vez que Webley gana. También fue nombrada Maestra del Año durante el año escolar 2006-07.

"Es un honor maravilloso", expresó Webley. "Es una lección de humildad ser nominada por un compañero y que luego el cuerpo docente de la escuela vote y te seleccione".

Webley ha enseñado durante 27 años. Comenzó su carrera en Green County Center High School, ubicada en Snow Hill, Carolina del Norte, en 1999; luego se incorporó a Riverside en el año 2000 y nunca se fue.

Webley siempre quiso ser maestra de ciencias. Recibió la beca North Carolina Teaching Fellows y asistió a la Universidad Central de Carolina del Norte (NCCU).

"Quería ayudar a los estudiantes a comprender conceptos que yo consideraba difíciles", explicó Webley.

A veces, su labor se extiende más allá del aula. Por ejemplo, hace años tuvo un estudiante cuyos padres sufrieron un accidente automovilístico y necesitaron atención médica intensiva durante un largo período. Webley y otros miembros del personal recaudaron dinero recolectando monedas en la cafetería.

Los estudiantes actuales ven a Webley como una inspiración y alguien en quien pueden confiar.



"Ella te hace sentir que es alguien con quien puedes ir a hablar", dijo la estudiante de tercer año (junior) Cheyenne Clark. "A través de sus ejercicios de calentamiento, se asegura de hablar con nosotros individualmente para verificar

Cont. en p. 11

"OF COURSE I'M WATCH


RIVERSIDE STUDENTS SHARE THEIR PLANS FOR

By Jameson Osborne, Nelson




"My whole family gathers to watch the final and make food. We choose a team, like France or Argentina. I don't really go out. I stay with my family. We have a big gathering, make food, and watch, it's usually my whole extended family. We have a big TV that we all watch it on."

- Mark Orozco Aguilar, junior




"Of course I'm watching the World Cup. I'm either supporting Mexico or the USA. This is because I'm from the USA, and my parents are from Mexico. I'll probably watch the games on some website. My family likes to host a little party if one of our teams wins. We have little snacks and all that."

-Kevin Hernandez, junior




"I'm gonna have to say I'm supporting France this year. It's because of the bloodline, its lifeline, you know? It's a good team with good players. I have been watching the World Cup since the one in 2014, in Brazil. I just fell in love with soccer. Sometimes, for the World Cup, we'll go places, we'll go out of the country, and we'll watch the World Cup to enjoy the soccer. I know this year, I talked to maybe going to a couple World Cup games and yeah, maybe eating out and just having fun and playing games. It's, like, a whole big family thing. I'm super excited,"

- Allan Thomas, sophomore




"I'm really excited for the new talents that are going to be playing in their first World Cup. I'm backing Spain this year because I think it's gonna have a lot of new players, so I think it's gonna be an exciting team to watch. My family watches the World Cup at either my house, or my Dad's firefighter station. We make food, like dinner or breakfast, before games and eat together during the game."

- Baez Sharpley-Truong, freshman



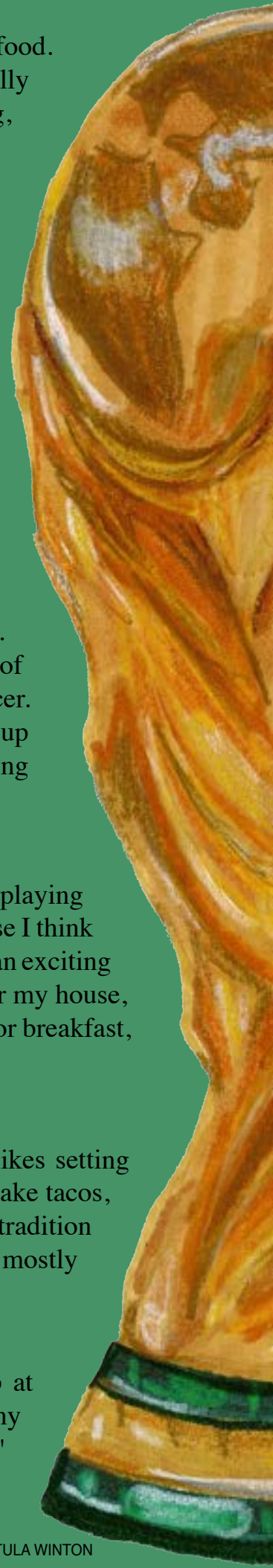
"I am supporting my country of Mexico. My family likes setting up a big party to watch games with flags and food. We make tacos, enchiladas and other Mexican and Hispanic foods. The tradition is mostly food-based, and then we watch the games. It's mostly my whole extended family, so it's a big thing."

- Carlos Jimenez-Reyna, sophomore



"I'm supporting Argentina. I watch the World Cup at my house on the TV. My family doesn't really have any traditions. We just watch the games when they are on."

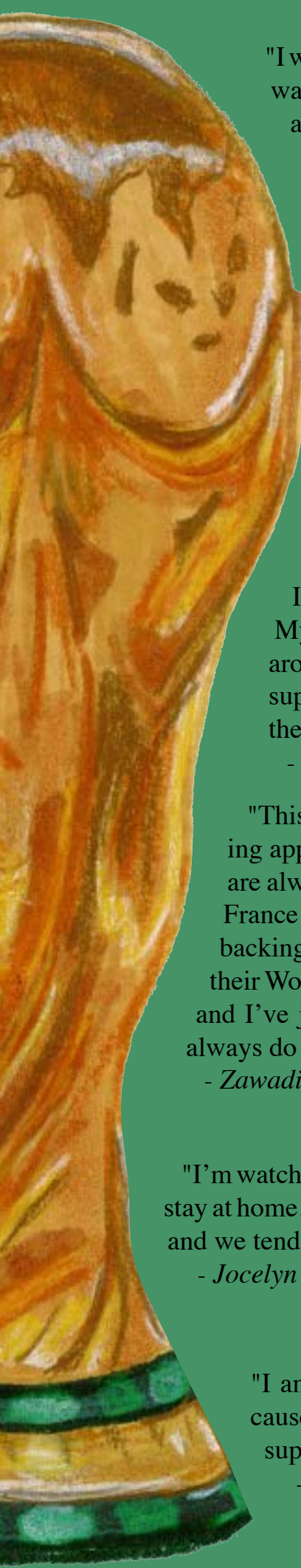
- Kevin Morello, junior



...ING THE WORLD CUP."

...R THE BIGGEST SPORTING EVENT OF THE YEAR

...a Kerr-Ritchie & Jose Obil Del Cid



"I will be supporting Brazil because me and my family enjoy watching Brazil play. But I won't be watching it as much as I used to because I am not currently with my family. We do not necessarily do anything special besides my family getting together and shout at the TV."

- Traceyann Hill-Loutin, civics teacher

"I am supporting France in this tournament. Their team is looking really good. I've played soccer basically my whole life, so watching things like the World Cup makes sense. I also liked watching my national team, Honduras, at their stadium. We as a family would watch the games when they came around. Now we all gather and watch at our house."

- Wilmer Lagos, sophomore

"I'm supporting Portugal because of Cristiano Ronaldo. I like watching the World Cup on my TV or on my phone. My family also likes to host parties. They are usually themed around the teams we're supporting as a family. My family is also supporting multiple teams like Brazil and Mexico. So we have themed parties based on those teams."

- Juan Perdamo, junior

"This year, I'm planning to watch on my TV or whatever streaming app I have that has the games on it. In my house, the games are always on whenever there's one playing, and my family's big France fans, so whenever they're playing, we watch them. I'm backing France because I was a big Mbappé fan for a while, and their World Cup song is pretty good. I have a couple French jerseys and I've just always been a big France fan, plus the U.S. doesn't always do too well, so there's no real point in supporting them,"

- Zawadi Owino, sophomore

"I'm watching the World Cup and I'm supporting England. Usually, I stay at home. My older brothers are really passionate about the games, and we tend to watch them together."

- Jocelyn Fernandez Medrano, sophomore

"I am going to be watching the World Cup alone, because my family doesn't watch soccer. The team I'll be supporting for the World Cup is going to be Argentina."

- Josúe Orozco Reyes, sophomore



Don't overlook the dark horses

BY TAJ HARELL

The NBA playoffs is a 16-team tournament notorious for its comebacks, game winning shots, and dark horses.

Teams like the 2023 Miami Heat, an 8-seed that went all the way to the Finals, or the 2011 Dallas Mavericks who had the greatest finals run of all time, are legends that will never be forgotten.

Now that the 2026 playoffs are upon us, there are two dark horse teams you should be on the lookout for.

There are more stars in the Western Conference than it's seen in years, including the top 4 MVP candidates.

It's hard to see a lower-seeded team making a run to the conference or NBA finals, but I'm here to tell you that the Minnesota Timberwolves can do it.

With all the super teams in the West, people tend to forget that the Timberwolves are coming off back-to-back conference finals appearances.

Superstar Anthony Edwards is averaging more points and steals on better efficiency than he was last year.

And don't forget that the Wolves already beat the Denver Nuggets in the playoffs two years ago. The Nuggets are the Wolves' first round match up in this year's playoffs.

As of Thursday, when this paper went to print, The Wolves have stolen game 2 and tied the series at 1-1.

In all, don't be surprised if the Wolves make a run to the finals.

The Eastern Conference is more open than ever. Teams like the Indiana Pacers and the Boston Celtics lost superstars Tyrese Haliburton and Jason Tatum to injuries, and it's created a wide open hole for one team: the Cleveland Cavaliers.

If the Cavaliers are going to make a run to the NBA finals, this is the year to do it.

In each of the past two years the Cavaliers lost to the Pacers and Celtics, and both went on to reach the NBA finals.

This year is different. The addition of star guard James Harden adds much needed scoring and passing to an already elite defense headed by Even Mobley and Jarrett Allen. Harden also takes some of the scoring load off of their star guard, Donovan Mitchell.

Even though Tatum is back from injury, the Cavaliers have the pieces and star power to get revenge and make a run to the Finals.

The Cavaliers secured game 2 on Monday and have a 2-0 series lead over the Raptors as this paper went to print.

In the NBA Playoffs the best teams usually win, but the Minnesota Timberwolves and Cleveland Cavaliers are here to prove this is not the case.



Senior Grace Arrington gets her hair done by art teacher Maegan Fitzgerald before a softball game. Arrington plays pitcher and shortstop.

Locking in

RHS athletes prepare for games in a variety of ways

BY TAJ HARELL, LEVI BROWN & JASON IWARA

Music. Food. Hair care.

These are some of the many ways Riverside athletes prepare to play.

For many Riverside boys lacrosse players, music helps calm their nerves before a game. Senior midfielder Aaron Montgomery listens to a lot of different artists to get ready to play.

"Drake, Westside Gun and Freddie Gibbs are some of my favorite artist to listen to," Montgomery said. "I feel like it helps me clear my head and just gives me the right mindset, helps me focus more."

Senior Sebastian Cruz Valdez also uses music to keep calm.

"I feel like it just puts you in that mindset," Cruz Valdez said. "It gets you locked in."

However, some athletes take a different pre-game approach.

"I like to take deep breaths," sophomore goalkeeper Preston Russell said. "Stretching while taking deep breaths helps me feel every muscle."

Lacrosse Captain Lucas Dodge also prefers silence.

"I just sit in silence or play wall ball,"

he said. "Throwing the ball against the wall helps work on my passing, so I get my stick dialed in beforehand."

Like Dodge, senior softball player Grace Arrington avoids talking to teammates before a game.

"I go and get my hair done by Ms. Fitz, then I get dressed," Arrington said. "I do not go to the locker room because I do not believe in socializing before warm ups. Then I eat, either the rest of my lunch or a protein bar."

The hair, she said, is key.

"I deviated from my hair for one home game, and we lost," she said. So I said 'never again'...and we haven't lost a game since then."

Senior Juleah Somers takes hair into consideration for her pre-game routine as well.

"I think if I play really bad with a certain hairstyle, I won't do that same one for a while afterwards," Somers said. "So if I do a ponytail, I'll do a braid the next time."

Senior baseball player Ryan Dipolitto likes to get to the field early and relax.

"I'll get there two hours before the game," he said. "Usually sit around for a bit, just calming my mind. I always drink a Fairlife protein shake."

Senior sprinter Saniya Thurman focuses on staying hydrated and fueled, too.

"I listen to music and drink lots of water, and make sure I get a good meal in," Thurman said.

So far, all the different routines seem to be working.

Montgomery starts alongside Cruz Valdez, and the pair has combined to score 22 goals and notch 32 points through the team's first seven games.

Dodge is the team's leading scorer. He has 30 goals on the season and is closing in on 250 career points.

As of Thursday, April 23, the men's lacrosse team is 4-6 and plays Voyager Academy on April 28.

Arrington has a batting average of .471 and an on-base percentage of .548. On the mound, she's struck out 109 batters, the most in the Tobacco Road Conference, and recorded her 300th career strikeout on April 20.

Somers has a batting average of .459 and an on base percentage of .583. Somers also has a slugging percentage of .703, one of the best in the state, according to MaxPreps.

As of April 23, the softball team is 11-4 and plays Chapel Hill on April 28.

Dipolitto is having the best season of his three-year varsity career. In 14 games played he has a home run, 19 hits and 18 stolen bases, which ranks 11th in the 7A division. He also has a batting average of .396, which is 8th in the conference.

As of April 23, the baseball team is 10-6 and plays Northern next on April 27.

Thurman set a personal record this spring in the 200 meter dash with a time of 28.75. The track and field team's conference championship meet is April 28, followed by the NCHSAA Central Regional Meet on May 8.

"I deviated from my hair for one home game and we lost. So I said 'never again'...and we haven't lost a game since then."

- Grace Arrington, senior

April All-Stars

Baseball



Junior pitcher Jesse May has an Earned Run Average (ERA) of 3.57, which ranks fourth in the Tobacco Road Conference. May is also batting .324 with 3 doubles and 12 RBI. The Pirates play Northern twice this week.

Track & Field



Sophomore Baylis Healy placed first in the Girls 1600m at a home meet on April 13 against Southern, NCSSM and Chapel Hill. Healy helped lead the team to qualify for Regionals in the 4x800m relay.

Men's Lacrosse



Senior Lucas Dodge leads the team in multiple stats, including goals per game (3.0), assists per game (1.8) and shots on goal (4). As the leading scorer, Dodge has had 21 goals and is aiming for 250 career points.

Women's Lacrosse



Senior Nora Heffernan leads the team in goals per game (1.7) and shots on goal (29). Heffernan has recorded 27 ground balls so far, which ranks 10th in the Tobacco Road Conference.

Men's Volleyball



Junior Noah Mecagni has recorded 165 kills so far, ranking him fifth in North Carolina. Mecagni has also helped lead the team to their current sixth-place rank in North Carolina, the highest in program history.

Men's Tennis



Senior Alex Abrams-Garrett has been named Player of the Match three times this season. On April 9, he won in both singles and doubles against DSA. The team is ranked third in conference.

Track & Field



Junior Ahmad Wilcox placed third in the boys 400m dash at a home meet on March 25 against Hillside and Southern. Wilcox also helped the team place second in the 4x100m relay at the home meet on April 13.

Softball



Senior Paisley Russell is ranked first in the Tobacco Road Conference in batting average (.620) and slugging percentage (1.000). The team is ranked first in conference as they prepare for playoffs.

Men's Golf



Senior Beckett Millett leads the team with five birdies on the year. Millett helped the team place second in a non-conference match on April 9 and third in their Tobacco Road Conference match on April 14.

Women's Soccer



Junior Greyson Range leads the team in assists per match (1.7) and has a career high of 5 assists in total for this year. The team is currently ranked third in the Tobacco Road Conference.

*Stats according to MaxPreps as of April 23

BY ELODIE PAGE, JASON IWARA & ISABELLE ABADIE

Anik Sen Cont. de p. 6

que el premio refleja el sistema que lo rodea.

“Me siento muy honrado y humilde de ser reconocido”, dijo Sen. “Este premio es solo un reflejo de los excelentes maestros que tengo en este pasillo.”

Borquin, quien trabajó de cerca con el Sr. Sen durante su práctica docente, dijo que su éxito no es ninguna sorpresa.

“Fue un practicante docente muy fuerte”, dijo Borquin. “Verlo prosperar como maestro de primer año no es sorprendente.”

Agregó que desde el principio se destacó su

capacidad para conectar con los estudiantes.

“Su actitud positiva y su habilidad para construir relaciones con los estudiantes [sobresalieron]”, dijo Borquin.

Según Borquin, la preparación y el profesionalismo de Sen lo distinguen.

“Planea sus lecciones muy bien y se enfoca en asegurarse de que esté enseñando las matemáticas correctamente [mientras] también intenta hacerlas divertidas”, dijo Borquin.

Sen dijo que espera que los estudiantes salgan de su clase con algo más que habilidades matemáticas.

“Para tener éxito, a veces tienes que luchar”, dijo Sen. “Eso es algo que pueden aplicar a cualquier cosa en su vida.”

Traducido por Jose Obil Del Cid

Tavia Webley Cont. de p. 7

que entendamos”.

“Me enseñó a seguir adelante, a no frustrarme”, comentó la estudiante Kaija Smith. “Nunca olvidaré su amabilidad y su sonrisa”.

El maestro de ciencias Daniel Kemp considera que Webley es un activo valioso para la comunidad de Riverside.

“Ella es mi jefa de departamento. Es mi mentora. ¡Es la reina del departamento de ciencias!”, afirmó Kemp.

A lo largo de los años, Webley ha ayudado a Kemp, así como a otros maestros,

de muchas maneras diferentes.

“Ella ha hecho que realmente quiera seguir en la enseñanza”, dijo Kemp. “Ha hecho todo lo posible para asegurarse de que yo tuviera todo el apoyo que necesitaba”.

Cuando no está en Riverside, Webley disfruta de la cocina, la costura, pasar tiempo con su familia y viajar.

“Cada vez que nuestra familia está junta, nos aseguramos de pasar un buen rato”, concluyó.

PARIS CHAVIS Y JA'SONA SIMMONS TAMBIÉN CONTRIBUYERON A ESTE ARTÍCULO.

TRADUCIDO POR FEDERICA CEDENO

Dear Lenny Prom Edition



Dear Lenny,
This is my first year going to prom and I'm worried. What do I need to know?

*Thanks,
Junior*

Dear Junior,
Here's what you need to know. Prom is Saturday, May 2, from 8 pm to midnight. The shindig will be held at the Hilton Durham near Duke University and the theme is "Enchanted Swan Lake."

Tickets are \$80 for a single and \$125 for a couple. They cannot be purchased after 11:59 pm on May 1, so I'd shake a peg leg and step to!

Don't forget to dance and have fun. You're only a junior once!

*Sincerely,
Lenny*

Dear Lenny,
My date and I want to go out to eat before we get to prom this year. Do you have any recommendations?

*Sincerely,
Curious*

Dear Curious,
Aye, I've always thought the grub is the most important part of any special night. I recommend trying The Loop., lit's a fine feast, and it isn't too hard on the ol' dabloons. Just make sure you eat heartily enough to keep up with your mateys on the dance floor.

*Enjoy yer meal,
Lenny*

Dear Lenny,
I'm still in this round of senior assassin, and my dress costs too much to get wet. I'm worried someone will get me out while I take pictures before the dance. What should I do?

*Best,
Terrified Target*

Dear Terrified Target,
Lucky for you (and your dress), Prom is an immunity day! You don't have to worry about scallywags coming to eliminate you,

but Sunday...All's fair in senior assassin and water warfare.

*Sincerely,
Lenny*

Dear Lenny,
I'm worried about prom. I have a date in mind but I don't know how to ask them out. What's a cool way to ask someone out for prom?

*Thanks,
Procrastinator*

Dear Procrastinator,
Ahoy, I recall the days of young love, chasing mermaids through the seas. I think you should wait to do your promposal at lunch.

To really impress this fine matey, you need all hands on deck. Get your friends in on it so that your promposal is TOP TIER. You and your friends should stand on one of the tables with signs, balloons and roses, and scream across the room to your date. I guarantee they'll say yes!

It's never too late for love, but make haste! You're almost out of time!

*Good luck!
Lenny*

Dear Lenny,
I'm going to prom with my date, but I'm not sure what color I should wear. What would you recommend?

*Sincerely,
Colorless*

Dear Colorless,
There's only one hue that will halt your suitor in their tracks...GOLD! It's the color of treasure, and they ought to know that you're the greatest prize.

Avast, if you're having trouble finding any attire, stop by room 143 and see if Mrs. Nelson-Burgess has anything that makes ye merry!

*Best,
Lenny*

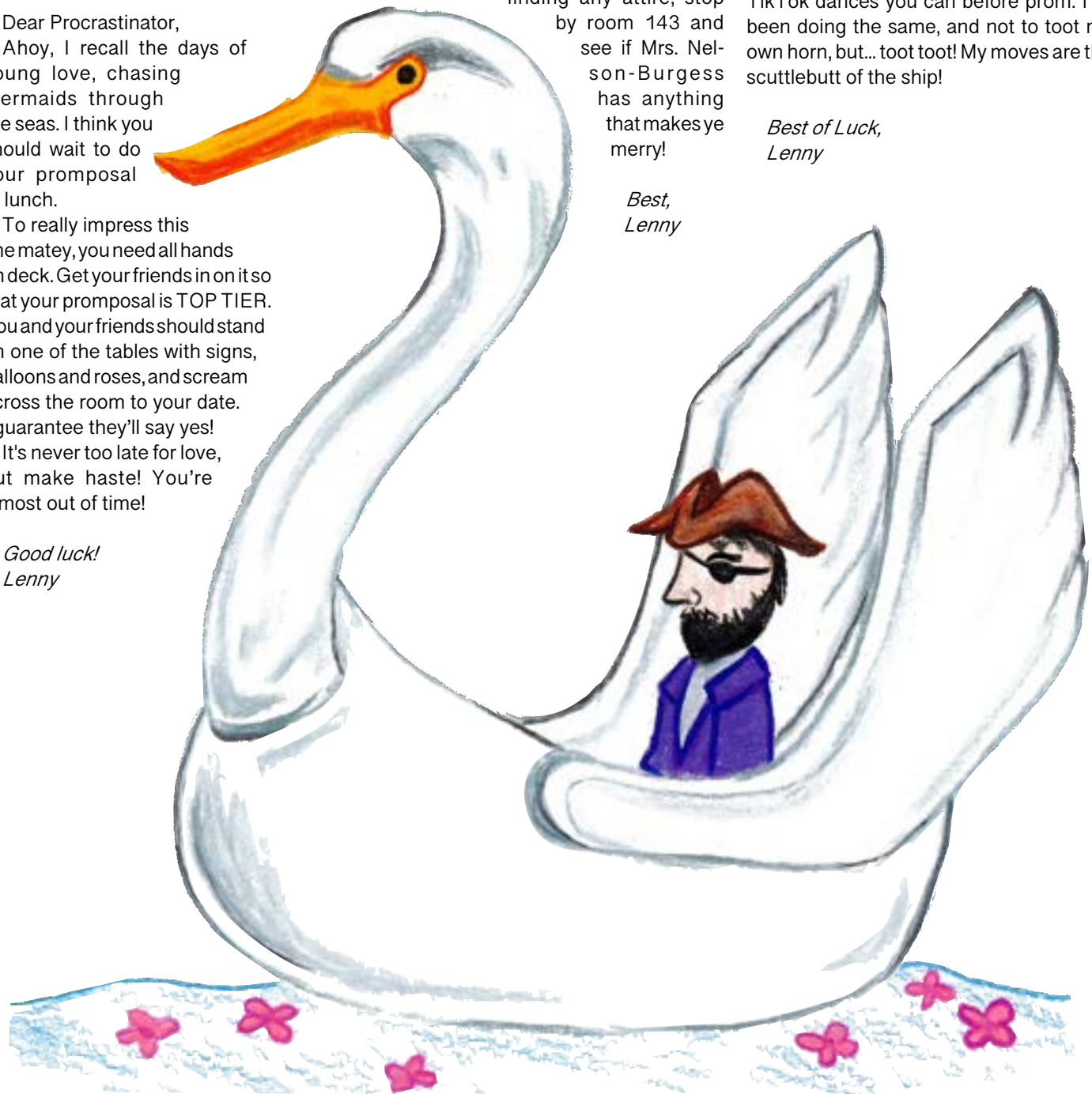
Dear Lenny,
I'm so excited for prom. I love being on the dance floor, but I have zero rhythm. I don't want to embarrass myself or my date. What should I do?

*Best,
Rhythmless*

Dear Rhythmless,
I'm glad you asked me for help! Arrgh, I once won back my crew in a washbuckling dance-off for the ages.

My advice to ye: try to learn all the TikTok dances you can before prom. I've been doing the same, and not to toot my own horn, but... toot toot! My moves are the scuttlebutt of the ship!

*Best of Luck,
Lenny*



"A spoonful of sugar and a whole lot of fun"

Mary Poppins comes to Riverside



BY YOHANA FLORES & AUSTIN WYMORE

Riverside’s spring musical, *Mary Poppins*, was one of the theater program’s most lively but challenging productions.

Students performed a theatrical adaptation of P.L. Traver’s book April 16-18 in the auditorium.

The play follows the Banks family, which is having problems with their two rebellious children and needs a new nanny. A mysterious woman, Mary Poppins, appears and takes the children on magical adventures and has a profound effect on all members of the Banks family.

While the flying nanny may be world famous, not everyone knows about the work and dedication that went into this musical.

“This show is incredibly dense, and all of these set changes happen during the scene,” said assistant director River Contreras. “Whilst things are still happening, we don’t get a blackout. Everything runs into each other, so we have to coordinate the light

cues and the sound cues and make sure the actors are in the right place so we don’t see anything that’s going on.”

Recreating the whimsy and impact on stage posed many challenges for those involved in the musical’s production.

“One of the big key-stones of *Mary Poppins* is that she’s magical and she flies. That’s the iconic part,” said Contreras. “But we don’t have a fly rig. So instead, we used a gobo [a shaped light stencil] that has Mary’s silhouette so we can have her silhouette fly across the stage.”

For others, like senior David May, who played Bert Banks, challenges included new speech and

singing improvements.

“I got a little bit of dialect coaching,” said May, “but for the most part, I just listened to recordings of professionals singing, and then kind of translating that to my speech as well.”

“There’s a lot more that goes into playing a role than just the words and the music that you do personally,” said May. “It is also interacting with your fellow comrades on stage, and the tech people and the music and whatnot.”

Despite the many obstacles, cast and crew members are proud of their col-

lective efforts.

“I’m most proud of the fact that we’re able to bring everybody together, and create something so intricate and so detailed in such a set amount of time,” said senior Delia Aguilar, who played the lead role of Mary Poppins.

The theater team hopes the audience recognized their efforts on stage and walked away with the wholesome message in mind

“Everybody has something different going on in their life, and sometimes, you just need to see something like that. It could make your night, you know?” said Aguilar. “And so I hope that it just brought happiness and entertainment into their lives.”

“Everybody has something different going on in their life, and sometimes, you just need to see something like that. It could make your night, you know?”

-Delia Aguilar



PHOTOS BY JASON IWARA

Top: Seniors David May (Bert) and Delia Aguilar (Mary Poppins) pose on stage. Left: May and Senior Axel Cai-Aveni (Park Keeper) perform a musical scene. Right: Aguilar, Joey Boliek (Jane Banks) and Winnie Sloan (Michael Banks) on stage. Boliek and Sloan are both elementary school students at Voyager Academy.



• PHOTOS BY SAUL JANIAC STEIN

"It's insane how many people try to come here."

Cherry blossoms attract thousands to Duke Gardens every spring.

BY SAUL JANIAC STEIN

Thousands of people visit Sarah P. Duke Gardens every spring to see the row of 22 Akebono Cherry Trees in bloom.

The trees were first planted in the front row of the gardens in 2010. They matured in 2020, and the crowds seem to get larger every year.

Duke Gardens has long been popular with Duke students and Durham visitors alike, but according to executive director Bill LeFevre, the popularity of the cherry trees is attributed to social media.

"A couple years ago it went viral on Instagram," LeFevre said while sitting in the newly-built welcome center on Saturday, April 12. "Ever since then, it's insane how many people try to come here."

According to an April 7 News & Observer article, in 2024 there were 624,000 visitors.

Even during the renovation this spring, 20,000 people came just to see the row of cherry trees.

LeFevre said the garden's Japanese influence began in 1984, when staff created a dam to control flooding. The dam created the current pond that houses the gardens' iconic red bridge and population of ducks.

"The director at the time, Doctor [William Louis] Culberson, was a fan of Japanese gardens and culture," LeFevre said.

Culberson, along with lead horticulturist and curator Paul Jones

and landscape artist Linda Jewel, began the creation of the Asiatic Arboretum.

"Other than the Cherry Allée [row of trees] there's a large number of cherries in the Asiatic Arboretum," LeFevre said.

While the Arboretum was finished in 1998, the gardens have continued new expansions and additions since then. The most recent of which is the renovation of the center at the front of the gardens.

The Garden Gateway project featured the creation of a new reception area and small cafe at the entrance to gardens.

But even with the new renovations, the cherry trees remain the main reason for so many visitors, explained LeFevre.

"It's insane how many people try to come here when the cherries are in bloom," he said. "We have as many as 18 to 20 thousand people a day."

The new entrance serves as a way to help guide all the patrons. But with all these people coming to the gardens, much help is still needed to keep up all their facilities.

According to LeFevre they have around 35 people on staff, half of which work in the horticulture department. But most of their work actually comes from non-staff members.

"We have 250 volunteers," LeFevre said. "Duke students work here, a lot of work studies... at any given semester we probably have 12 or 15."

"A couple years ago it went viral on Instagram... [Now] we have as many as 18 to 20 thousand people a day."

**- Bill LeFevre,
Duke Gardens
Executive
Director**

(Top Left) The Cherry Allee, a row of 22 Akebono Cherry trees, after the bloom. (Top right) The Cherry Allee in full bloom. (Bottom) The Duke Gardens welcome center. The welcome center has been under renovation for some time, but recently reopened on April 8, 2026.

Durham's Third Places

People go to "third places" to hang out with their friends, aside from home, school and work. There are spots all over Durham that welcome students and allow them to hang out, connect with each other and be themselves.

Eno Park



Duke Gardens



Central Park



Tobacco Campus



The Quad



Durham Farmer's Market



Motorco Music Hall



Durham County Library



The Can Opener Food Truck Park



CCB Plaza



Hunky Dory



Sole



Valley Springs Park



Nasher Museum of Art



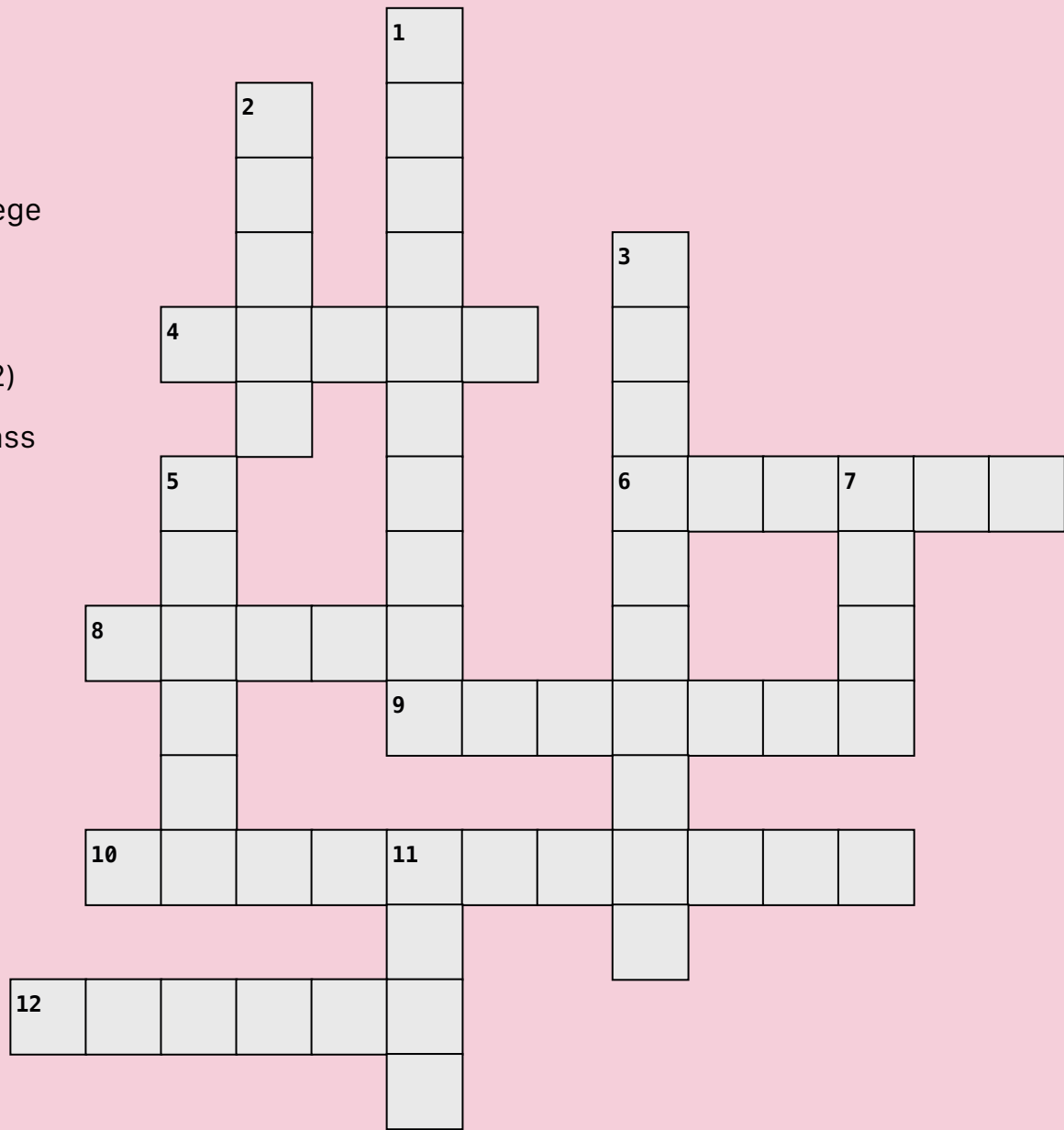
SPRING CROSSWORD

DOWN

1. The class that produces this newspaper
2. Cherry ____ (pg. 14)
3. A 'sickness' that spreads rapidly after college decisions
5. Spring sneezes
7. Symbol of grace, also a part of prom (pg. 12)
11. This word is on almost every bathroom pass

ACROSS

4. ____ gives the best advice of all time (pg. 12)
6. Type of flowers on the cover
8. "One of the big keystones of Mary Poppins is that she's magical and she _____. That's the iconic part." (pg.13)
9. Face off: cuisine (pg. 4)
10. Riverside NHS is facing ____ (pg. 5)
12. Space where people skip class (wooden)



NYT-STYLE CONNECTIONS

Create groups of four out of the words, placing them into categories!

CHERRY BLOSSOM	OAK	BECKETT	PINE					
JESSIE	RED WOOD	MICHAEL	MARY					
GINGHAM	NORA	CHAMPAGNE TOAST	GRACE					
STRAWBERRY POUNDCAKE	WILLOW	JANE	BERT					