

# Murray Delivers Speech “On Being Kind”

Head of School Stephen S. Murray  
 H’54 ’55 ’65 ’16

My father used to tell me a story about his great, great grandfather, who lived in New York City at the time of the Manhattan Draft Riots, during the Civil War. These riots primarily involved working-class Irish immigrants, who were being conscripted wholesale to serve in the Union Army. It went without saying that they could not afford the \$300 commutation fee, whereby a wealthy individual could hire someone to fight in his stead.

This simmering resentment against the draft in turn led to heated racial animus against Black Americans, both freed and enslaved persons, whose dire plight elicited little sympathy from the destitute Irish, who themselves had experienced famine and extreme deprivation.

In one particularly cruel episode, as my father told the story, our forebear, his great, great grandfather, Irish American himself, was out and about in lower Manhattan, and he came upon a mob that was setting off uptown to burn down an orphanage for African-American children – it was likely the Colored Orphan Asylum at 44th St. and 5th Avenue.

He raced ahead of the mob, and arrived in time to warn the inhabitants of the orphanage and help the children get out in time. The orphanage itself was burned to the ground.

I hope this story is true. I like to believe that it is, though I have never been able to independently verify it, beyond my father’s telling. Either way, this extraordinary gesture of good will towards others, of following one’s better instincts, makes for a proud legacy, something for future generations to strive to live up to.

But being such a lofty act also puts the gesture a bit out of reach, makes it somewhat difficult to emulate – it’s more the stuff of heroes. What if we consider something slightly more ordinary, the kind of situation we are more apt to encounter in the normal course of things?

My best friend once described to me an experience she had in the fourth grade many years ago. There was a new girl who had moved into town and had joined her class mid-year. The family lived in very modest housing and were of modest means. She did not wear the right clothes or listen to the latest music.

At some point in her first few days, she had to have a routine check-up with the nurse at school, who found that she had head lice. People cringe when they hear of lice but of course it is as normal a human experience as catching the flu and can happen to anyone, regardless of their hygiene.

Well, this nurse marched down to the girl’s classroom and announced that the new girl was going home because she had lice and that the rest of the class would now have to be checked.

You can imagine the reaction. Worse yet, the poor girl had to stay home for a week until the



Head of School Stephen S. Murray H’54 ’55 ’65 ’16 delivers his convocation speech. Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

problem cleared up, and then when she returned, the cruelty started. Her classmates taunted her mercilessly, called her dirty. Having not yet had the opportunity to make friends or find acceptance, she suddenly found herself all the more isolated, the butt of a thousand daily slights. What a desperately sad, lonely, humiliating experience this must have been for her.

Soon enough, this friend of mine noticed what the girl was going through and decided to invite her over to her house for the afternoon. This led to another invitation, and another. They became friends. Suddenly this girl was no longer quite so vulnerable. Suddenly she was not entirely exposed socially. Like the bully who backs off when even just one person sticks up for the small kid, the crowd backed off and left her alone. Eventually, they too began inviting her to parties and outings, and the lice incident was entirely forgotten.

By the way, that best friend of mine? I went on to marry her. I mean, who wouldn’t want to spend the rest of their life with such a person?

My point here, of course, is that while we may be inspired by stories of noble, heroic actions, it is the small, compassionate gestures in our everyday lives, that make the real difference. The quality of life in a given community is directly determined by how frequently each of us takes advantage of the small, daily opportunities to follow our hearts – to show kindness.

In his book, *The War for Kindness*, Stanford Professor Jamil Zaki’s writes about the profound importance of showing empathy. He says, “Empathy’s most important role... is to inspire kindness: our tendency to help each other, even at a cost to ourselves.” Still, he goes on, “Kindness can often feel like a luxury – the ultimate soft skill in a hard world.” (...) And yet, Zaki goes on to say, seen through another lens, kindness may in fact be one of our “most

important survival skills.” (p.5)

According to Ira Byok, an American physician who writes prolifically on medical care, famed anthropologist Margaret Mead made a similar point when asked by a student what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. It was not the making of tools or performing burial rituals -- “Mead said that the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur that had been broken then healed ... In the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. ... A broken femur that has healed is proof that someone has taken time to stay with the person... , has bound up the wound, has carried the person to safety and has tended the person through recovery. ‘Helping someone through difficulty is where civilization starts’ said Mead. We are at our best when we serve others.”

Even so, cautions Zaki, we don’t always act on this evolved trait, this natural impulse to show kindness. “We can,” he says, “but we often don’t. (...) The modern world has made kindness harder,” he writes.

Take social media. In certain ways, digital communication connects us. We are more networked, linked, “friended,” “followed,” “liked,” and “shared” than ever before in history. And yet it also draws us apart.

Digital platforms somehow give us license to say and do things we otherwise, in any other context, would find reprehensible. How many of you have witnessed online insults and cruelties between people who would not dream of saying such things face to face ...?

Given that we have the highly evolved potential to show each other kindness, and yet we do so unreliably, we clearly have to make the effort. Which leads me to my main point, the question I want ask this community as we kick off this school year: What kind of community do we want to be a part of? What standards of

civility, empathy, respect, and kindness do we aspire to live by? We have a choice, after all.

Certainly, Covid increased the challenges we face. ... If I only experienced you behind a mask, or more distantly as a small square on a computer screen, or even more distantly, as some profile with a nickname on snapchat – why would I be invested in your wellbeing?

As we process some of the lessons from this period of time on our own campus – in some cases lessons learned the hard way – and as we seek to understand how we can do better, we need to recognize this choice – we need to choose to make an effort to tap into our natural empathy for each other. Recent experience right here at Lawrenceville has taught us that the stakes are high, that people can be hurt, that tragedies can occur – and so we need to get this right, for everyone’s sake.

Of course, we don’t always know the impact that a mean or unkind gesture is going to have. But it isn’t that the point? We almost never know what another person is actually going through ... and we need to take to heart that comments can land hard, and they can bring about tremendous, unintended harm.

A friend from Ohio once told me a story from his high school years – a story about how you just never know what someone else is actually going through, and that story has stayed with me.

All during middle school and on to high school, a certain student had the same hallway locker next to my friend -- a small, shy, pimply kid who always seemed to be alone. Except when the bullies found him.

Now, my friend was a football player who went on to be a quarterback at Yale. Even as a high school freshman, he was a pretty big, confident kid. He watched these juniors in leather jackets come around every day, and make this poor kid’s life miserable.

One day, this friend of mine had had enough. He suddenly grabbed the biggest kid by the lapels of his leather jacket, threw him up against a locker hard, and said, slowly, “Leave him alone, and do – not – touch – him – again. Ever.” His tone made the message crystal clear. Like all bullies, he made a few blustery comments, but had nothing to actually back it up, and he walked away. My friend also walked away, and forgot completely about the interaction.

27 years later, he was at a high school reunion, sitting with a group of friends. A guy walked up to his table, composed and confident looking, and said, “Carmen, I need to thank you, you know you saved me.” My friend said, “I don’t think I know you.” And the other guy replied, “Yes, you do – our lockers were side by side for 6 years. You stood up for me one day, and you saved my life.” Carmen still didn’t get it.

“I was done,” he said. “Those guys had made my life hell, and I was done, I was going to end it, but when you stepped in, it changed things. I mean it, you saved my life, I am not kidding.”

You just never know what a person is going through. A small gesture of unkindness can land far harder than you intend – and there is no taking it back – and by the same token, a small act of kindness can do far, far more than you anticipate.

We can build our community one act of kindness at a time. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa said, “Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

And we don’t even need to overwhelm the world – we just need to shape our corner of the world – we just need to make Lawrenceville into the best possible version of itself – and I know we can do this.

So, yes, indeed, we will of course look for those loftier moments when we can do something memorable or heroic. It might be saving an orphanage from a mob, or more simply, standing up to a group of bullies.

But let’s not forget those even more common, everyday opportunities – when your roommate dares you to post an embarrassing photo of someone and you refuse, or when you see a person on their own who just needs a quick friendly word to tag along to dinner or to join the game of beach volleyball over at the Big Red Sport Court.

Those moments add up, and if we act on our better impulses consistently, they become woven into the fabric that holds us together – they become the community, not just that we aspire to be, but who we are.

Just remember, back in the fourth grade, so many years ago, all it took was a simple invitation to come over to play after school, and that changed everything. And that’s what I call ‘being kind.’ So, let’s ROLL, and let’s have a great year!

*Note from the Editor.* This is an excerpt from Murray’s convocation speech.



## Editorial

## Today's Culture, Tomorrow's Tradition

This past week, Head of School Stephen Murray H'54 '55 '65 '16 P'16 '21 swore in a new generation of Lawrentians at the annual Convocation ceremony. This tradition has persisted for years, honoring the 214 year history of the Lawrenceville School and all of the students who came to define that legacy. Yet only 213 years of Lawrenceville have really been sworn in, as far as the recent student bodies' memories serve—the Class of 2024, or the class of the year of the plague, never received that opportunity. Here are the V Formers, leaders, and friends, still thriving across campus in spite of this fact. Yet in stressing a “return to normalcy” Lawrenceville suggests with the arrival and slow departure of Covid-19, countless pre-Covid traditions have been lost post-transition.

With the loss of the old, however, comes the opportunity to build anew. Though students who experienced the Covid-19 years might have missed the old campus traditions that existed pre-Covid, we do not have to return to the old in order to “return to normalcy.” We have instead the ability to forge our own post-Covid Lawrenceville, and it's up to us, the Class of 2024 and beyond, to seize that chance.

Three years ago, the current V Form class

arrived in boxes. On Zoom, hundreds of thousand-yard stares in cameras became classrooms, strangling our ability to physically connect with one another (or at least keeping us six feet apart.) It is unmistakable that the Fall Term of 2020 was difficult. Many students likely still recount the threat of the missed spit test or the paranoia of the ever-blinking POM tracer.

Yet Lawrenceville persevered. Today, among the Upperform, most if not all of us can attest to the strong friendships we have formed, the hardships we have bested, and the leadership that we have collectively demonstrated across campus. We overcame the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, endured a year of distancing and a term of total digital isolation, and came out with enthusiasm for a new sophomore year, and an appreciation for both the School and each other.

But we cannot overlook how Covid-19 pandemic razed many of Lawrenceville's old traditions and clubs. Clubs such as the Young Democrats, an important political activism on campus, fell into disarray, while others, like Working Title, a long-form creative writing publication, ended up completely forgotten. The Class of 2024 never had the chance to experience the Ropes

Course during freshman orientation, nor the induction ceremony mentioned beforehand, nor did they even get the chance to enjoy the simple pleasure of sitting close by friends and peers during their freshman year.

But what would we have gotten had the Covid-19 pandemic not happened? In the past year, Lawrenceville's Covid-19 return policy has stressed a “return to normalcy.” But what is normal? Over the past three years, Lawrenceville has consistently been transforming from the school it once was. On an obvious level, the student body has transformed, but with it, more subtle changes to campus culture and corresponding extracurriculars and traditions have occurred as well. Someday, you will pick up a mirror and realize the face you once had no longer exists. The Lawrenceville of the past no longer exists either—none of this year's seniors were on campus to witness it—and so returning to the past becomes an unnecessary task driven mostly by nostalgic photos and stories from past seniors.

The Board questions the need for us to return back to the old traditions of Lawrenceville. Tradition still matters, of course. But Lawrentians survive in spite of tradition's absence, even reemerging to redefine it. The traditions of the future are ultimate-

ly the products of today, and by extension, the students reading this Editorial right now. Countless traditions and lasting clubs are the products of new, or relatively new, initiatives. The First Amendment, a staple publication on campus, is only 14 years old, paling in comparison to The Lawrence's 143. Splash, perhaps one of Lawrenceville's most prized traditions, only began six years ago back in 2018. If it persists, Democracy Day will emerge as our campus's newest tradition too, only a year old. Or perhaps these traditions and clubs will fade away in the following years as well. Nothing at Lawrenceville needs to be permanent.

Old traditions still survive. Convocation still happened just this week. But old traditions sometimes fade into the past as well. On the eve of the U.S.'s participation in World War II, there exist records of the Woodhull House winning a trophy that no longer exists for a competition that no longer exists either. Without the students who fought for that competition the Woodhull House won, though, what value would that trophy and competition hold? Even the Woodhull House's House Olympics win this past week may become a footnote in the House's history in the next many years.

Though we have an instinct to return

to the old, nostalgia tends to depict the past through rose-tinted lenses. Perhaps the only tradition Lawrenceville needs to restore is its dynamic culture of change and student creation. We the students are now sowers of the future, and it's up to us to grow campus culture according to our desires, expectations, and standards. Campus culture does not die with the defunct club or the outlived tradition—it lives with us, and the students to come.

Lawrenceville must embrace change; sometimes, the old does not return—and that is alright. Sometimes, a global pandemic ravages what once was. That is alright too. Clubs can pass away, traditions can fall apart, and they can sometimes resurface. Even if they do not, it is nothing to mourn. Ultimately, it is not the passage of time or growth that makes traditions and cultures bloom and decay. It is us. As Dean Davis mentioned during School Meeting, we the students choose what we want our campus cultures and traditions to become. It's time for us, Lawrenceville, to decide which traditions, cultures, and clubs we will create for future Lawrentians to honor in the years to come.

*This Editorial represents the majority view of The Lawrence, Vol. CXLIII*

## A Chance to Create

## The Virtues of House for Lawrenceville at Large

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The last time the late-summer sun beat down on Lawrentians in formal attire, the Class of 2026 had only spent about a week on campus. At last year's Convocation, fanning themselves with program cards, the then new II Form class rose from their seats and listened to the carillon ring out the opening chords of “Triumphant Lawrence.” They sheepishly eyed the returning students, wondering who would initiate the singing. That day, nobody did—the ceremony opened in reverse a capella, Lawrentians silent under the sound of the bells. Their baffled looks—“I don't know how this goes!”—reflected Lawrenceville students' collective identity last year: undefined and undecided. On the second day of orientation this year, Doug Davis, Assistant Dean of Student, pointed out Lawrenceville students' inability to condense its school culture into words. The real challenge facing our community is neither memorizing the lyrics to the school song or coming up with an appropriate sound bite for an audience, but being decisive about the actions we take to build a culture we'd like to live in.

Two centuries ago, the School did have a thriving campus culture—Lawrenceville was unified through its students' upbringing,

a monolith of white male privilege. Long before female students and students of color were as valued and significantly represented in the School community, a closed off Lawrenceville fostered homogenous values, ambitions, and thus a strong, unified campus culture. Like today, Lawrenceville admitted a student body of certain desired demographics, but for most of Lawrenceville's past, these coveted traits belonged only to an elite cross-section of America. Campus culture was not more coherent because it contained more spirited kids; but because it was cherry-picked by an administration with particular goals.

Today, Lawrenceville no longer limits their admissions to a certain subset of the population but by the presence of certain ambitions, admitting highly competitive students who perpetuate competitive cycles between close communities like Houses. Lawrenceville's student body evolved in parallel with an America learning to dismantle discriminatory systems, and with this diversity came the need for artificial structures to

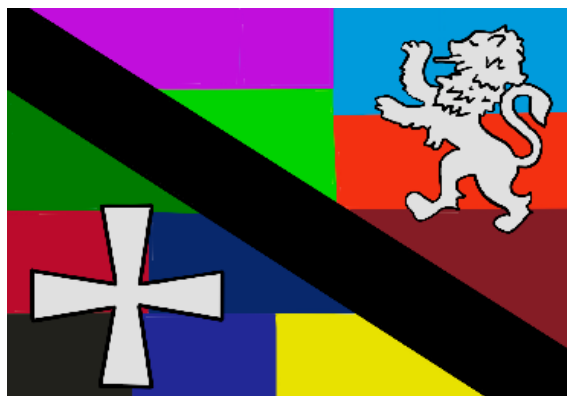
grow deep, genuine inter-student connections from. The rise to prominence of the House system, and with it, today's vibrant, rich “House culture,” was not an accident; it was a deliberate strategy employed by a School seeking talented students willing to

it isn't naive to hope that what flourishes in the structure of the house could bloom on a larger scale across Lawrenceville.

That House identity is so integral to the Lawrenceville experience represents the administration's success in hoping to evoke a strong sense of belonging in every student, even if they only feel such community within a small cross-section of the School. Yet an insulating House system has darker effects, cultivating toxic behaviors on the basis of House divisions. The work of creating and upholding this unique dimension of our residential life is, as described at orientation, a continuous process, one that any Lawrentian can help define. The adults who place students into Houses do so with optimism for who they might become, but it is in the students' power to craft a future for themselves out of these opportunities.

This year, student leaders are drawing confidence from this power to cultivate culture in order to unify the campus across House lines. The historical rise of strong House spirit should not mean that school spirit is unachievable—if we can choose to identify with

and support a random subset of the community, why shouldn't that affinity be directed towards the entire student body? We can be kind to anyone, after all—as Head of School Stephen Murray H '54 '55 '65 '16 P'16 '21 touched on in his commencement speech, the current version of Lawrenceville can find common ground through courageous concern, a School of bully-vanquishing chevaliers, knights in red armor. However, spontaneous and habitual kindness doesn't need to be prompted by crisis: a passing smile, a nod of appreciation between classes, and a knock on a library pod are everyday building blocks of community. Unlike the School's initial culture, built on socioeconomic, racial, and gendered uniformity, choosing to be empathetic is an ability that every individual has. By expanding the circle of who we stand and clap for, we could become competitive without being cutthroat, abandoning the razor-sharp line between winning and losing. Could such a campus culture—in some sense, a widening of the House—sustain itself? That's something entirely in our power to decide. A campus culture built on students' mutual respect and understanding may knit our huge community into one that is as intimate as a House.



Aileen Ryu '26 / THE LAWRENCE

leave their own communities in search of new, exciting ones. What sets Lawrenceville apart from peer schools is that we have such a strong House culture, for better or for worse. To some extent, School culture is House culture, and the competitive, somewhat stereotypical spirit it breeds: as each House represents a microcosm of the school,



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# From Pariah to Palatable

## *How We Came to Accept Plastic Pollution*

LEO MAHE '26

On the first anniversary of Earth Day in 1971, a powerful ad campaign from the environmental organization, Keep America Beautiful (KAB), showcased an Indiginous American man distressed by the amount of trash around him. In fact, the actor was not Native American, but a Italian American named Espera Oscar de Corti, although few viewers knew this at the time. The advertisement concluded with the message: "People started pollution. People can stop it." The clip pulled on the hearts of millions of Americans, many of whom felt a deep emotional connection to the single tear rolling down the actor's cheek. The "Crying Indian" campaign won two Clio awards for its effectiveness as a public service announcement and, in the public eye, is almost entirely remembered fondly.

One year before the ad campaign aired, the first official Earth Day marked the largest single-day protest in history, with over 20 million participants seeking more regulations protecting the environment from those actively destroying it. To appease the public, the government passed bills such as the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts and established the Environmental Protection Agency. Following these successes, activists began to target single-use plastic bottles and the corporations that made them.

At the time, bottle companies were beginning a transition to single-use plastic bottles. Yet by 1970, environmentalists knew that single-use plastics didn't decompose but instead degraded into microplastics—plastic particulates that are linked to impaired development, birth defects, and cancer in children when ingested. Microplastics were deadly to animals, especially in the ocean, decreasing their appetites to the point of starvation. These tiny plastics absorbed toxins and carcinogens, transporting them into humans' bodies through food and air.

It seems only natural, then, that Keep America Beautiful would launch the campaign to fuel environmental action. However, there was one small problem: KAB was primarily funded by Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, the same organizations that were transitioning to single-use plastics. In the 1960s, single-use plastics were taking the world by storm, moving into dozens of industries. Environmentalists had a strong case against plastic production, and the fact that single-use plastics were in their infancy made them even more vulnerable. With the success of the first Earth Day, plastic producers couldn't take any chances. An early environmental shift would have lost bottling companies the billions of dollars in profits they made from the switch from expensive glass to cheap plastic. Meanwhile maintaining plastics' place in production meant making trillions of dollars in future revenue. Attacking single-use plastics would hurt the profits of bottle companies funding KAB, an inherent conflict of interest for KAB. Coca-Cola might sponsor a multimillion-dollar plan to put recycling bins on the streets of Chicago, but they would never support a solution that would decrease their revenue. Bottle companies have regularly lobbied against plastic regulations, as reported by *The Intercept*; why would they suddenly support environmental action?

Unfortunately, KAB failed to advocate for real environmental action and helped popularize surface-level action. In fact, KAB advocated against real change, evidenced by their attack on bottle bills. Bottle bills require companies that sell bottled beverages to pay people who return their empty single-use plastic bottles. Although this typically just means getting five cents back per bottle, the ten states with bottle bills have a bottle recycling rate of around 60 percent, whereas others have a rate of just 24 percent. While most environmental move-

ments were advocating for more bottle bills, KAB fought against them along with many of their corporate sponsors which *The New York Times* reports have been fighting against these bills for decades. Today, KAB and its sponsors focus on litter and recycling, both of which do not harm bottle companies' profits. Instead, litter reduction and recycling only mitigate some of the problems with plastic production.

"The Crying Indian" ad campaign hijacked the Earth Day movement, turning the focus of well-intentioned environmentalists from systemic problems to small, irrelevant ones. Considering the organization's views at the time, the seemingly innocent message from the ad that "People started pollution. People can stop it" is both useless and nefarious. This message centers the problem of plastic pollution around people throwing plastics into their surrounding environment and obscures the root cause of plastic pollution: the production and wide-scale use of plastics itself.

Even the advertisement's anti-littering argument is flawed. Throwing single-use plastics into landfills instead of streets only means that

Sarah Fernandes '26 / *THE LAWRENCE*

people won't see the plastic problem. Recycling did not exist at the time of the ad, so litter would go to landfills or incinerators. Landfills still leech microplastics into soil and rivers, and the plastics that are incinerated release microplastics into the air, potentially harming nearby populations. Now, leaving these microplastics to disintegrate on the streets is not a better solution, but picking up litter improves nothing but the landscape's image. Outside of making people feel accomplished, ending littering is an ineffective solution to reducing plastic pollution's harmful impact on humanity and the environment.

Yet, the ad's success bumped environmentalists off the track of reducing plastic production and towards reducing personal waste. Environmental agencies slowed their agendas to make room for KAB, welcoming it as a legitimate agency before realizing years later the malice behind its actions. According to the Plastic Pollution Coalition (PPC), ads from KAB "frame and visualize the problem as litter, not plastic production, and they suck environmentalist energy into picking it up." The ads pit themselves against environmental agencies in what the PPC called "a beautiful if evil strategy." KAB took the legislative momentum from the successful Earth Day campaign and shoved it into minor consumer-level change.

Today, KAB's crowning achievements involve cleaning initiatives and recycling bin accessibility. Albeit a positive effort, these mea-

asures mask the many industries profiting from plastic production, such as KAB's sponsors. KAB centers the blame for plastic pollution on the lack of recycling accessibility and personal action. While many focus on the fact that not enough people recycle, few people discuss how just 22 percent of #1 plastics, the most recyclable kind, are recycled after being brought to recycling facilities. Thousands of volunteers interested in making a difference sign up for initiatives, such as beach cleaning or trash sorting, that have little impact. Meanwhile, dozens of environmental organizations now support KAB as a legitimate agency. Outside of their abject harm to environmentalism, KAB has created a wave of meaningless advocacy that will not reduce the environmental impact of plastics.

Although Keep America Beautiful is not alone in successfully brainwashing the public, it has contributed to devastating environmental harm. The U.S. generated 2.9 million tons of plastic waste before the first Earth Day in 1970, a number which has since increased to 30 million tons a year. Recycling, while better than a garbage dump, has ultimately acted as a convenient cop-out to make the public feel better about purchasing plastics. Plastic manufacturers advocate for recycling because it allows for increasing production without protest from the public; today, 8 to 10 percent of annual fossil fuel usage comes from plastic production, and production is estimated to quadruple by 2050. Plastic reduction is no longer a central concern among Americans, and plastics have become a staple of human life. The conversation around plastic pollution has focused on personal responsibility—to "be the bigger person" and recycle. Recycling bins and plastic straw bans aren't going to change the amount of annual plastic waste; sweeping bans on more widely used plastics are needed to make any meaningful change. Small actions are better than nothing, but the strong resistance against just moving away from plastic straws—an action that would reduce plastic waste by only 0.08 percent—highlights the modern indifference towards plastic pollution.

Although the "Crying Indian" ad campaign is remembered fondly by many as the reason they started picking up trash, it also contributed to a push to turn plastic production into a consumer issue instead of a producer one. Keep America Beautiful has harmed the environmental movement with its advertising efforts, compromising environmental change by protecting its corporate donors. Even now, it is unclear whether Keep America Beautiful's motives have changed; the organization advocates for cleanups, recycling, and urban forestry while continuing to ignore the root causes of the plastic problem. It has also partnered with environmentally questionable corporations, such as Marlboro, Nestlé, and the International Bottled Water Association.

Looking past Keep America Beautiful, the environmental movement needs to stop considering mitigation an effective measure against plastic waste. Ocean cleanups might save a few turtles, but they won't stop plastic corporations from destroying the environment and significantly harming human health. Instead, the movement should shift its focus toward reducing and eventually ending plastic production. Bioplastics are fighting a losing battle against a century of plastic innovation and need funding from corporations and the government to become successful. Although it will be challenging, perhaps we can achieve what we failed to do in 1970 and end plastic waste altogether. Focusing public pressure on plastic bans can both create government action and force the hands of corporations. If this happens, perhaps we can finally solve the plastic problem.

## Letter to the Editor

A response to "The Case for American Communism" published in Opinions on May 26, 2023

To the Editor:

Mr. Gupta's article, "The Case For American Communism," is a laudable exercise in scholarly debate and an opportunity for diversity of views. All high schools need not just diversity of students, but diversity of opinion. I write with this principle in mind.

I'll state right off: in a communist system, as seen in practice in the 20th century and beyond, neither Mr. Gupta's article in *The Lawrence*, nor my letter in response, would be published. If we tried to disseminate it privately, we would be arrested, imprisoned, if not liquidated. There would be no Lawrenceville School, no *The Lawrence*, no diversity of media and opinion. Religions outlawed. A band of unelected, violent intellectuals would form a vast secret police and military that would snuff out all dissent. That is Communism in action.

The government would rubber stamp all decrees and laws handed down from the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (See *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx; the writings of V.I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, Fidel Castro, and Kim Jong-Il; and *The Black Book of Communism*).

As I learned from decades of study in the field of international history, the writings and statements of repressive regimes are harbingers of future action. On the international scene, Communism has proven aggressive, hegemonic, and brutal, leaving whole societies and ancient cultures in turmoil and despair: witness Tibet and Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1990.

Liberal democracy has many faults, but it is as Thomas Jefferson said, "The last great hope of mankind." It is a mere sliver in human history. Other great Americans and international leaders have extolled the benefits of Democracy: Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lech Walesa, to name a few.

In 1776, the greatest revolution in history, which led to so many democratic revolutions and movements thereafter, occurred in America. It's been a rocky ride, with great turmoil at times; and yet it brought forth the greatest growth in incomes FOR ALL AMERICANS that the world has ever seen.

Yes, vast wealth inequalities exist in capitalist countries, and this can be addressed, as it has been aggressively in the western world through taxation, income distribution through

social programs like welfare and Medicaid, and tax breaks for businesses that then create good paying jobs. Wealth is invested in companies, they in turn expand and bring on job growth.

Let's look at Cuba since 1959, which is cited as an example for America to follow.

In 1959, Fidel Castro made a speech to the community at our Lawrenceville School chapel. He was jocular and full of platitudes. He talked of a new society with democratic goals. The crowd loved him. He became a beloved leader for many progressive intellectuals around the world. It was chic to like Castro.

But soon, Castro's Cuba turned inward, repression became the norm, and a political and economic party elite would steer the country into the hands of the Soviet Union. All institutions in civil society were subordinated to the state. A command economy was decreed. This led to an economic elite of party members at the expense of the people they claimed to be helping.

Cubans began to flee the new regime. In 1980, 125,000 immigrants escaped to the United States. U.S.-Cuban relations deteriorated over Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba and Cuban foreign adventures to Africa and Latin America.

Since 1959, upwards of two million Cubans have fled the island due to low economic growth, stagnant wages, lack of opportunity, and repression. On the surface level, Cuban education is impressive, and yet, it is mostly science and math oriented without any open discussions. And to what end is education anyway if you cannot build a better society?

Education is central to Cuban Communism. "Revolution and education are the same thing," said Fidel Castro. To build Communism, a new man must be created." And yet, objective testing by international experts has been eschewed by the Cuban government.

Finally, the case for Communism, as seen in practice, is an exercise in folly. Communism unleashed the worst in societies around the world. And what are we left with? A repressive revanchist Russia, China on the verge of war with its neighbors, North Korea speaks for itself. And let's not forget the victims: the 100 million souls that died. Alone, bereft, starving.

— SAMUEL BLAKE  
CLASS OF 1980



## And the Winner of the 2023 House Olympics is...

MIA KINCADE '25 &  
CHARLES POTTER '25

This Saturday, students from the Circle and Crescent gathered in the Bowl for the 20th annual House Olympics—an opportunity for Houses to compete for house points through various activities and competitions. All members donned their colorful house gear, with many wearing bright and eccentric accessories to show their pride. The games included a three-legged and a tricycle race, a human rock-paper-scissors tournament, a school song-singing contest, and a jump rope relay race for V Formers.

The winner of this year's House Olympics was the Woodhull House. This is the Woodhull House's fourth win since the event first began in 2003, the house's most recent win being in 2019. House President Gray Devine '25 said, "It felt electric to win. It needed to be done, and we did it." Chris Bai '25 attributed the House's win to its members "hard work and dedication."

Following the Woodhull House, the Stephens House placed second. Former Stephenite Maddy Widener '24 noted that the House had "so much energy and such a large group, including the



Photo of House Olympics

[V Formers]." "Stephens was ready to win!" she said. In contrast, Frances Brooks '24 said that she "did not expect to win," and was shocked when the House erupted into loud cheering. In Brooks' opinion, their second place win was due largely to the support and excitement of the V Formers.

The Griswold and McClellan Houses tied for third place. Christopher Trucano '25, a member of the Griswold House, said that it

was the leadership of House President West Violich '25, as well as the "immense spirit and pride of the House," that helped them place in the top three. McClellan House President Alexandra Raymond '25 emphasized that she was "so excited and so proud," calling the McClellan community the most "spirited and connected on campus."

Despite not placing at House Olympics, members of the Kirby and Dickinson

Courtesy of *The Lawrenceville School*

Houses reflect fondly upon the experience. Kirby House President Ella Fessler '25 said that she was "glad to see how Kirby girls kept themselves composed during times of trouble and loss." Kirby Social Representative Kosiso Okonkwo '25 added that Kirby "had a lot of fun, and at the end of the day, that's what House Olympics is all about." Her fellow House member Alice Kizilbash '25 noted that Saturday was a great time to

get to know her new housemates: "We have some great new additions to the House... We just had fun, and that's all you can do!"

Eric Han '24, a prefect in the Dickinson House, appreciated the spirit his House brought to the fields as well as watching the III and IV Formers compete. He highlighted some of Dickinson's best moments in the Olympics, such as getting "first place in the trike race and second place for the senior event."

House Olympics were also an opportunity for new Lawrencevillians to experience Lawrenceville's spirited campus culture while bonding with their Housemates. New III Former Mabel Spritzer of the Stanley House said that she "loved the House Olympics," with Jake Sturtevant '26 of the Cleve House echoing Spritzer's sentiment, noting that he had "a great time and loved the energetic house pride."

House Olympics is a cherished school tradition that kicks off the school year in a lively, spirited way and fosters pride amongst the Circle and Crescent Houses. Win or lose, this competitive tradition brings the Lawrenceville community together as a fun back-to-school initiation.

## Taking a Peak into the Future of Campus Wellness

SYDNEY WANG '25

Dr. Rae Chresfield, the newly appointed Dean of Campus Wellbeing, was officially welcomed into the Lawrenceville community in July of this year. Chresfield will be working closely with Student Council Wellness Representative Cassie Dillard '24 to improve student wellness on campus.

Chresfield and Dillard have already discussed extensively Lawrenceville's health and wellness policies. Chresfield emphasized the importance of gaining a better understanding of Lawrenceville and its students before she can work effectively towards making wellbeing "more meaningful [for] students at [the School]." Taking long walks around campus has helped Chresfield "learn more about campus culture while meeting students."

Chresfield's goal is to redefine "wellbeing" from a

student perspective. "This way, we are all talking about the same things and then creating interventions... based on what students actually see themselves needing," she explained, "By the end of this year, what I'm hoping to do is something like [baking] a cake, with students, faculty, and staff coming together to form the different layers." Chresfield hopes to initiate more open and engaging discussions about "making campus wellbeing a meaningful experience."

Dillard echoed a similar sentiment: "The thing with Lawrenceville is that it's a really big institution, so when it comes to wellbeing, a lot of people have to step up for that deep rooted change to happen," she said. Her goal for this year is to work with Chresfield on implementing changes in policy that she believes would improve student wellbeing, such as making Narcan more accessible and creating sign-up portals on Sentinel for counseling

sessions.

Both Chresfield and Dillard emphasized the importance of receiving input from the student body and involving the larger Lawrenceville community on matters of campus wellness. Specifically, Dillard plans on having the Wellness Council collect feedback from students. In doing so, she can gain a better understanding of what students feel would be "productive programming" for their wellbeing, whether it be taking nature walks or attending yoga sessions. "I want more people to reach out because I'm here as a liaison between the student body and the adults... I'm willing to fight for any cause if you would come to me with your stories or problems," Dillard said.

Likewise, Chresfield has noted that she will be "leaving her door open" for students that wish to engage in conversations with her regarding what they feel are important topics on campus.



Photo of Dr. Rae Chresfield

Courtesy of *The University of Delaware*



# Trike Riding in Style: Fashion at House Olympics

SONIA IVANCIC '25

At last Saturday's annual House Olympics, students showcased their impressive mini-trike riding, yoga-ball bouncing, and frozen shirts defrosting skills, with the Woodhull House placing first, followed by the Stephens House, and the McClellan

and Griswold Houses tying for third. Yet, the best aspect of House Olympics was not the overlapping cheers or relay races but each House's distinct getup. From tie-dyed shirts to face paint, everyone boasted a unique look, though some common trends unified the 11 Houses.

Cowboy hats, a staple for the Carter, Kirby, McClellan, and

Stanley Houses, frequently appeared at House Olympics. Similarly, brightly colored tutus and face and body paint were used ubiquitously. Many Crescent Residents also took to using body paint to make hand prints along their legs in House colors. Almost every House had quite a few members cut up average T-shirts into uniquely shaped tops. By cropping

bottoms, sleeves, and necklines, students used their creativity to create more comfortable, better-fitting, and stylish House shirts.

This year, Houses wore two types of shirts. The Stephens, Kirby, and McClellan Houses donned dyed ones. While the Kirby and McClellan Houses created subtle yet fun tie-dye patterns, the Stephens House wore

their usual maroon shirts with dyed overlays—the bleached and stenciled patterns eye-catching against the deep red. The rest of the Houses wore their embellished printed jersey shirts.

Many Kennedy members, as usual, sported a spray-painted “K” across their arms or chest, and the Stanley House spruced up their green tees by painting and sequencing the front and back with last names and word art. This year, individual creativity was put on display as students created a spirited ensemble using their own combination of hairstyles, jewelry, headbands, hair spray, face paint, and other accessories.

The process of creating anything is always more rewarding than the final product, and House Olympic fashion is no different. While showing off your looks on the big day for house points and pictures is a huge part of House Olympics, the exercise of customizing your outfits for the competition is a wonderful activity that brings members together during the first few days of school.

I always look forward to the evening during orientation week, when the Stephens House would head out to the Crescent Greens to dye our shirts. Talking and comparing designs on warm nights with music in the background is a uniquely Lawrenceville experience as we get to know our housemates from all over the world. The feeling of community you get through creating together is a great lead-up to the unity needed for the games. Even more anticipated is the getting-ready that occurs in each House's common room and porch as the hour approaches. Almost better than my memories of House Olympics are the ones of us Stephenites styling our shirts, braiding each other's hair, and seeing seniors return in their old House shirts. Our excitement builds as we see other Houses on their porches. There are only a few times during the year when an entire House has fun together, and the belonging you feel when laughing, cheering, and getting ready as a House makes this annual Lawrenceville tradition all the better.



The Kennedy House during House Olympics

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

# Hi, Barbie! Hi...Oppenheimer?

LOUIS PARK '26

Before last summer, the phrase “Barbenheimer” was merely nonsense, but now one cannot scroll on Twitter or TikTok without seeing the word everywhere. “Barbenheimer” is the portmanteau of two movies, *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, both released on July 21, 2023. These movies breathed new life into the stagnant film industry in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Hollywood Writers Guild of America strike. What is it about these movies that had people lined up outside theaters?

*Barbie*, directed by Greta Gerwig and starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, is a comedy film based on the Barbie doll that many played with during their childhoods. When Barbie (Margot Robbie), a plastic doll who comes to life in Barbie Land, begins to feel the emotions of the girl who plays with her, she sets off to the real world to make the girl feel better. However, as Barbie starts her quest in the real world, she comes face-to-face with the misogyny and patriarchy of American society. In a world where feminine symbols like the color pink, bows, and even Barbie herself are sexualized or ridiculed, this

movie highlights the beauty and joy of femininity and womanhood.

Meanwhile, *Oppenheimer*, directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Cillian Murphy, is a historical thriller about J. Robert Oppenheimer, a nuclear physicist who developed the atomic bomb by leading the secret “Manhattan Project” during World War II. The film is divided into Oppenheimer's personal history, the Manhattan Project, and the hearing after the Manhattan project during a rather long 180-minute run. The film brilliantly illustrates the process of developing an atomic bomb to end the war while hypocritically dooming humanity.

The main reason “Barbenheimer” was trending on the internet was because of the completely different styles of each movie. While *Barbie* explores the fantastical Barbie Land that showcases bright colors and over-the-top outfits, *Oppenheimer* features dark history with heavy moral implications.

While these two films were box office hits, controversy arose due to fan-made “Barbenheimer” posters that combined *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*. In some posters, *Barbie*'s pink colors and the atomic bomb's mushroom clouds were

synthesized, resulting in memes of pink mushroom clouds. This led to opposition in Japan, as many Japanese citizens claimed the caricatures were extremely insensitive to the suffering faced in the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Despite this backlash, *Barbie* and

*Oppenheimer* have reminded many of what is so special about going to the movies. Even though they have very different genres and moods, everyone can find something to love about these cinematic masterpieces.



Gloria Yu '26/ THE LAWRENCE

## Fall Play Reading & Impulse Auditions!

Are you interested in getting involved with Lawrenceville's theatre program, the Periwig Club? You should stop by the KAC for a quick audition this coming Friday, September 15 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm! First, audition for the fall play reading, which is a performance where actors deliver their lines without physical movement. Next, audition with some friends for Lawrenceville's famous Impulse Troupe, the improv comedy group on campus. We hope to see you all there!



# Analyzing This Year's Loudest and Proudest Houses

MIRA PONNAMBALAM '26

House Olympics only comes once a year, so for III, IV, and V Formers, it is of the utmost importance to represent your House well. The best way to do this? Decorating yourself from head-to-toe in House colors and screaming chants as loudly as possible. Even III Formers and new students who have only been part of their respective houses for the past few days go above and beyond to express their spirit. Anabel Guerreiro '24, a Stephens prefect, says the key to making new students feel included enough to cultivate House pride is "leading by example" and "showing them that it's fun as well as actively inviting them." Each House has its unique way of showing off spirit. Some demonstrations of pride are incredibly visible: the "Cleve Hulk" in full green body paint for one. The question is: which House had the most spirit this year?

A major part of House Olympics is looking the part. Houses like Stephens and Kirby spend hours decorating and cutting up their shirts. In muscle-tees, crop-tops, and shredded off-the-shoulder tops, Lawrenceville students are as fashion forward as ever during House Olympics. Each House has its own unique shirt design, but some stood out more than others. "I liked what Woodhull House was doing. They were really creative with how they cut up their shirts," said Reed Cloninger '25, a IV Former in Kennedy House. Members of the Stephens



Emily Pan '24 / THE LAWRENCE

House, like Guerreiro, were huge fans of their own bleached shirts. Guerreiro even claims their "method of shirt creation is the most creative with the bleach." Stephenites were not the only ones who loved their House's shirts. Sophie Yang '26, a III Former in Carter, expressed a similar appreciation for the creativity of the Stephens shirts. "I always think Stephens' shirts are pretty cool because of the whole bleached fabric thing," added Sophia Earl '25, a IV Former in Kirby, placing Stephens' shirts second only to her own House. "We really put some effort in," said Earl in reference to Kirby's DIY tie-dye t-shirts. Guerreiro admits that she too particularly enjoyed the tie-dye, as well as the blow-up red pepper suits worn by the House's V Formers. "It caught me by surprise," she expressed when recalling her

reaction to the dozen pepper suits at House Olympics. The blue spray paint adorning the Kennedy shirts allowed them to stand out in comparison to neighboring Circle Houses. Earl also enjoyed McClellan's light-purple shirts this year while Yang favored the bright greens of Stanley House's clothing.

The House shirts were not the only way students demonstrated their pride. Students wore makeup, body paint, and accessories to highlight their outfits. "I saw a lot of people with really cool Carter makeup," said Guerreiro. Many students also wore eye-black and body paint correlating with their House's colors. Houses went all out, as members of the Cleve and Kirby Houses covered nearly their entire bodies in green and red, respectively. Others, such as Carter House, stuck to specific designs with body paint. "It's fun.

It's creative. You gotta have people slap their hands on you [to make hand prints]," mentioned Yang. Some even dressed up as specific characters, such as Luke Pometti '25, a member of the Woodhull House who drew Batman on his chest since the House's colors align with those of Batman. Most Lawrentians were found wearing accessories such as tutus, hats, or necklaces. Stanley in particular wore many bright big accessories. Members of Hamill wore bright blue masks and wigs. In Kirby, "girls were tying red cowbells to themselves," mentioned Earl.

After House Olympics, hoarse, worn out voices were evidence of commitment to the screaming, chanting, and loudness that show House pride. Guerreiro saw Cleve, McClellan, Stanley Houses as the loudest this year. Loudness is such a vital component of House

Olympics that one of the events was a demonstration of volume for House points. Yang, for one, believed either Carter or Stanley were the loudest. "Kirby's seniors were really loud. I think Stephens and McClellan were really loud too," mentioned Earl. Cloninger remarked how the only "close second [to his own house] would be McClellan—they just have that 'Purple Pride.'" Alongside volume, each house must have catchy chants. Yang said that Carter's chant was one of the best as they "have the creativity factor... It had a rhythm to it. It had a very specific beat. It was very catchy," she described. She also expressed fondness for Dickinson's "Dicky Time" chant: "It's so out there, but at the same time it's very catchy. It goes around in your head." Cloninger felt similarly about the chant, calling it "unbeatable."

Hamill and Stanley Houses' accessories were vibrant and full of pride. Griswold, Cleve, and Carter Houses went above and beyond with their body paint and makeup, displaying their dedication to their Houses. The Stephens, Kirby, and Kennedy Houses were undoubtedly creative with their shirts, which broadcasted their House spirit. McClellan and Dickinson's House pride was evident from their volume and chanting. The Woodhull House managed to show its house spirit with its dedication and skill in each event, winning House Olympics. Still, despite all the House spirit demonstrated by other Houses, McClellan House won the House

## Exploring New Territory: II Form Orientation

CLEMETINE SUTTER '25  
FEATURES ASSOCIATE

New school, new classes, new teachers, and so many new faces: novelty is a defining characteristic of a freshman's experience stepping onto Lawrenceville's lush green campus. As students make the leap from middle school into high school at Lawrenceville, orientation week helps create a smooth transition to a Lawrentian's life amidst feelings of nervousness and excitement.

A II Former's days on the Josh L. Miner Ropes Course (the Josh) creates the opportunity for new students to get to know their peers before stepping into the classroom. Each day is loaded with ice breakers and bonding. Sophia Abi-Atme '27 recalled that orientation was "about as fun as it could have been" and a "good way to get a feel for the place and the people." From climbing rock walls to playing Kumcha to participating in the recently established Bowl Cup, the II

Formers enjoyed just less than week of fun as they gathered their first impressions of their class and the school community as a whole. After her orientation week, Celestine Sutter '27 noticed that "there's a lot of interesting people at Lawrenceville, each with their own purpose or goals, which made orientation a really exciting experience. Everyone had so much to say."

Most II Formers agree that, while entertaining and effective, orientation hours should be shortened. According to Sofie Garmise '27, hours of icebreakers in the heat of the afternoon sun were draining, particularly when students had to stay late on campus for more organized activity. For "one who particularly values sleep" like Sutter, "it might have been nice if activities ended earlier in the evening," allowing more wiggle room to get to bed early or enjoy more time to relax.

While long hot days on the Josh may be tiresome,



II Form Orientation on the Josh L. Miner Rope Courses

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

the Ropes Course Instructors (RCIs) brought resounding energy and enthusiasm to every orientation activity. Even with hesitant II Formers, RCIs threw themselves into games with warmth and eagerness which "speaks to their genuine desire to welcome freshmen into the Lawrenceville community," said

Abi-Atme. Echoing the same admiration for their hospitality, Garmise said "you can tell they truly want to be there."

With one week down and many to go, the Lawrenceville II Formers have much to look forward to. Garmise eagerly awaits the beginning of ice hockey season and Abi-Atme

is looking forward to "settling into a daily routine after getting to know the community better." Sutter is excited to "try new things and explore the opportunities Lawrenceville has to offer." Shaking off nerves and building up familiarity with others, orientation helped set up II Formers to roll into a great year.



# Making Lawrenceville a Home Away From Home: *A Guide on Battling Homesickness*

**BABETTE HENAULT-BASSETT '26**

One of the most common reasons teenagers choose to attend boarding school is to gain independence. Boarding school is often the first time students find themselves away from their families. While many students go to sleepaway camp or other short-term summer experiences away from home, boarding school is a completely different experience. A year at Lawrenceville means students spend nine months from their families and friends, only visiting every once in a while. While this may seem daunting or unusual, especially for II Formers, many of whom are only 14 years old, students shouldn't focus on what they're leaving behind but instead think about the new experiences and relationships that they'll forge.

In the first few months, students will meet countless new faces and try many new activities that help block out the feeling of homesickness. However, some students will find that connecting with others and making friends is a challenging task, especially in a new environment. At times, students may feel out of place on campus and turn to their friends and family at home. However, it's important to find a balance

between staying connected and feeling supported as opposed to developing a dependence on parents and friends at home.

Lilah Firestone '25, a returning IV Former who entered Lawrenceville as a new III Former, and Anne Clifford-Levy, a returning III Former, both dealt with feelings of homesickness at some point in their first year. While her first year at Lawrenceville was initially exciting, as the year "transitioned into more of a routine," Firestone began to battle with homesickness. Firestone emphasized that "everyone experiences this transition together in II Form year, but as a new III Former, it is easy to feel alone amidst that struggle." She advises students to look out for and be empathetic with each other, since no one knows what others are dealing with. Clifford-Levy '26, who was separated from her twin brother for the first time in coming to Lawrenceville, felt that the beginning of the year was a "big adjustment." She turned to talking with friends and sharing stories about memories from home at Lawrenceville. Clifford-Levy also advises new students to "be open about homesickness and talk about it with [their] new friends because, not only does it lessen those emotions [of homesickness], but it also helps



Rehanna Yakubu '25 / THE LAWRENCE

[students] connect with friends and grow those relationships." As students build new relationships and create new memories, they will become more comfortable at Lawrenceville, but it's important to recognize the time needed for the transition to happen.

Students attending boarding school for the first time are

presumably ready to make the big transition to living away from home, but when they finally arrive at school, anything can happen as feelings and emotions change. The most important thing for new students to remember is to make friends with as many people as they can, and connect with others. It's always helpful

to remind yourself that others are going through homesickness too. By having a good foundation of friends that can help students feel more comfortable, and having people to rely on when problems occur, students can truly make Lawrenceville feel like a and be a second home.

## A Proud (and Smart) House of Hummingbirds

**LUKE PURICELI '25**  
FEATURES ASSOCIATE

As the first official week of classes has nearly come and gone, Lawrentians, new and old, are acclimating to the swing of things inside the classroom and beyond. With House Olympics and other orientation activities in the past, Lawrentians celebrated the beginning of a new year by gathering for Convocation. During Convocation, Interim Dean of Students Blake Eldridge '96 H'12 P'25 presented a number of House awards. These awards include the House Cup, given to the House with the most House spirit, the Green Cup, awarded to the House with the most improved GPA, and the Adams Cup, presented to the House with the largest impact in community service. Out of all of the awards, the most celebrated cup is arguably the Chivers Cup, given to the House with the highest GPA in the previous academic year.

The Chivers Cup for the 2022-23 school year was presented to the Carter House. The Chivers Cup has been historically known as the most desired award among students.

New Carter students were inspired and motivated by their House's winning of the Chivers Cup. III Former Whitney Anttila '26 felt optimistic for the academic year after winning the Cup, explaining how winning the Chivers Cup gave her "a good read on what type of community Carter is," emphasizing how the House "care[s] about academics, but also care[s] about putting housemates first to achieve the same goal."

With new girls excited about their victory, even past generations of Carter birds are celebrating. Former Carter resident Alexis Tarumianz '22 was not surprised that Carter won the coveted title of the Chivers Cup, stating that, "as a Carter House alum [it gave her] so much joy to know the girls of Carter continue to shine everyday." She currently attends Southern Methodist University, but notes how her House's "winning of the Chivers Cup inspires [her] to give college [her] all."

Other new students of the Carter House felt triumphant during convocation, including Paige Gogolak '26. Gogolak explains how, "even though the current IV and V Formers



The Carter House Winning the Chivers Cup

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

put in the effort to win the Cup, I still felt proud of my House and all of our hard work, inspiring us to follow their path."

Former president of the Carter House, Cassie Dillard '24 jokingly shared how "this award proves once again that Carter is the best House on campus!" Dillard

especially felt proud considering the challenging nature of Lawrenceville academics in the past school year. Another Carter alum, Keira Lehmann '24, was "not surprised that [they] won, as [they] all worked so hard last year with academics, and [she] feel[s] accomplished with all of the hard

work [they] did, as it was not easy." While Carter holds this dignifying trophy, it will not be easy for the House to keep their cup. With all this being said, it may be hard to win the Chivers Cup again this school year, but if Carter keeps on doing what they're doing, it should not be a problem.



## The Lion, The Jets, and The Promise Of A New Season Who Are The Teams To Watch In The 2023-2024 NFL Season?

NIKHIL DHURUV '26

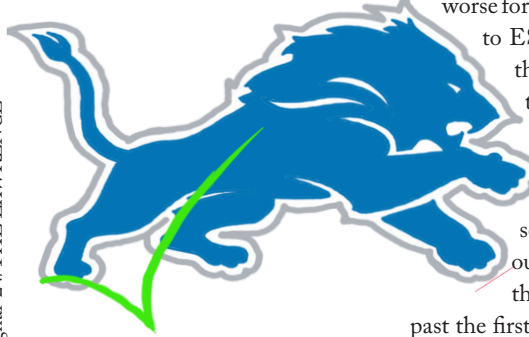
Thursday, September 7 marked the start of the 104th season of the National Football League (NFL). The NFL is a professional organization that joins together 32 teams from all around the United States to compete in an 18-week season followed by a playoff in which teams ultimately aim to win the Superbowl and bring home the Lombardi Trophy.

Starting off with last season's Lombardi Trophy winners, the Kansas City Chiefs. The Chiefs have shown that they didn't need help from recently departed star wide receiver, Tyreek Hill, to bring home the trophy. Numerous players such as Patrick Mahomes, Travis Kelce, Harrison Butker, and JuJu Smith-Schuster have and will continue to fill in the void left by Hill as they once again will be a force to be reckoned with under the authority of Head Coach Andy Reid and the leadership of Superstar

Quarterback (QB) and reigning MVP, Patrick Mahomes. Moving on to last year's Super Bowl runner-ups, the Philadelphia Eagles. The Eagles, led by former Alabama quarterback Jalen Hurts, soared through the NFL standings as they finished their season with a 14-3 record. With the addition of star running back D'Andre Swift to the already dominant offensive core of Jalen Hurts, A.J. Brown, and Devonta Smith, the Eagles will continue to be a top-tier team in the league.

Now comes possibly one of the biggest questions in this upcoming NFL season: Will the New York Jets live up to their hype? The Jets had quite the eventful offseason, acquiring stars like Aaron Rodgers and Dalvin Cook while also getting assets like Allen Lazard. On paper, the Jets seem to be one of the favorites to win the Super Bowl. Breece Hall, Garret Wilson, and Sauce Gardener are all phenomenal players, and with their new additions, it seems like they can

only get better. So why are so many people still hesitant?



The Logo of the Detroit Lions, one of Dhruv's top contenders for next season

There are numerous factors, such as chemistry and experience of the team, that have to come into play in order for success, both of which the Jets seemingly lack. Aaron Rodgers is only familiar with one of the team's wide receivers, Allen Lazard, which means there will be an adjustment period for the team as they get used to Rodgers' playstyle. On top of that,

only Aaron Rodgers has any kind of playoff experience. It gets even worse for New York, as according to ESPN writer Mike Clay, the Jets have the second toughest schedule in the league in terms of opponent strength. It will be interesting to see how this team turns out, but I can not imagine them making it anywhere past the first round of the playoffs.

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Detroit Lions look like potential playoff contenders. The Lions had a slow start to the 2022 season but finished strong, winning eight out of their 10 last games. According to Clay, the Lions have one of the easiest schedules in the NFL based on opponent strength, and with the star-studded offense of QB Jared Goff, Wide Receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown, rookie running back Jahmyr Gibbs, and star Defensive End Aidan

Hutchinson, the Lions could be a scary team.

Last but not least, the New York Giants are an underdog for this upcoming season. After barely making the playoffs last year, the Giants saw off the heavily favored Minnesota Vikings in a decisive 31-24 win in the Wild Card round of the playoffs. During the offseason, the team added Tight End Darren Waller to their arsenal as they continue to develop. They also added some big players during the draft such as Deonte Banks and Jalin Hyatt. Although the Giants seem to have what it takes to take it to the next level, they are faced with the hardest schedule in the NFL. This leads me to believe that while they will have a stressful season, they should be in the Wild Card race. Overall, this NFL season is going to be filled with tons of action, up-and-coming teams, and exciting new rookies. It's one you aren't going to want to miss!

## To Draft Or Not To Draft? A Guide On How To Dominate In Fantasy Football

AARAV PAREKH '25

With the NFL season officially underway, fans ranging from elementary schoolers to dads in their mid-60s are indulging in an endeavor that raptures over 40 million people per year: Fantasy Football. Fantasy Football is a game in which fans take turns picking positional players from around the NFL for their own made-up teams, where they earn points based on how well those players perform in real life. This article will go over some must-have players for your rosters, as well as a few that aren't looking so good for this season. The opinions in this article are based on the assumption that the league structure is full-point PPR (Point Per Reception) with 12 teams.

Let's focus on the positives first and turn to some sleeper picks you should be targeting in your leagues. A "sleeper pick" was defined as a player who should be picked higher than, and has the potential to outperform, his current ADP (Average Draft Position). The first player that comes to mind is George Pickens, a wide receiver (WR) for the Pittsburgh Steelers. With quarterback Kenny Pickett throwing him passes, Pickens tallied over 800 yards and four touchdowns as a rookie. Kenny Pickett appears to have taken a leap

both physically and skill-wise after an exceptional preseason, which should spell more catches for Pickett. The Steelers also have an improved offensive line to give Pickett time to throw the ball, along with an upgraded defense to get the ball back for the offense. Currently being picked as the 31st wide receiver off the board, I wouldn't be surprised to see Pickens finish as a Top-15 WR. Other sleeper wide receivers include Jahan

Dotson of the Washington Commanders, rookie Zay Flowers of the Baltimore Ravens, and Elijah Moore of the Cleveland Browns.

Switching over to the running back (RB) position, let's take a look at Cam Akers for the Los Angeles Rams. The Rams' offense

benefits from stretching the field, having both the best slot Wide Receiver in the league in Cooper Kupp, and a Top-10 Tight End in Tyler Higbee. Head Coach Sean McVay has continually raved about Cam Akers' skillset and potential, and in the final six games of his 2022 campaign, Akers had 115 touches (carries + receptions), six TDs, and was the sixth highest-scoring RB over that span (fifth in non-PPR). Those trends could very

well continue, especially since Akers seems to have fully recovered from tearing his Achilles tendon in 2021. This is a deep RB draft, so if you're unable to grab Akers, look for Jahmyr Gibbs of the Detroit Lions or James Cook of the Buffalo Bills.

There are also "busts" in Fantasy Football. These players may be overhyped or in a bad

Evans just turned 30 years old, and his body is showing signs of injury. Last year, Evans struggled with hamstring issues, and as of this week, he is dealing with a problematic groin strain. In older players, soft tissue injuries tend to become more common and tend to linger for longer, affecting Evans' production. Evans' new Quarterback, Baker Mayfield, also won't help. No hate towards Mayfield, but going from catching Tom Brady's passes to having the extremely inconsistent Baker Mayfield throwing you the ball is a clear downgrade. The final facet is Mike Evans' contract situation. Evans is only under contract for one more season, and his relationship with the Buccaneers has been strained as contract talks have stalled.

This season will likely be Mike Evans' last in Tampa, and it's unclear how much effort he will give to the team this season.

Another bust for this season is Dalvin Cook. At a quick glance, Cook looks like a great value pick. He was a four-time Pro-Bowler with the Minnesota Vikings and has had over 1,000 rushing yards for four straight seasons. The newly acquired New York Jet signed a one year, seven-million dollar contract,

and it would appear that he has a clear path to production as the Jets' primary running back. However, Cook is in a difficult situation: immediately after Cook's signing, Breece Hall, who suffered an ACL tear last season, was activated from the "Physically Unable to Play" list, meaning he is ready to play Week 1. Head Coach Robert Saleh has also stated that he and the rest of the team would like Hall to be the Jets main running back by the end of the season. At this point, the best-case scenario for Cook is that he gets the start in Week 1 and serves as the 1b to Breece Hall's 1a. The odds, however, are stacked against Cook. The much more likely situation is that Cook plays a good chunk of Weeks one to four before getting faded out of the game plan entirely. Last season, Hall was a Top-10 RB before his injury, and the Jets have continually committed to using him. Cook's contract is tough for the Jets, but the Fantasy Football decision is fairly simple.

Fantasy Football is a game of chance, but maximizing that chance can go a long way. The type of league, ADP, situation, contract status, and offense can all change a player's value, but picking a player in the later rounds and having them succeed gives your team a large advantage over others in your league.

Sonia Singhal '24/THE LAWRENCE



Aarav's #1 fantasy bust: Mike Evans

situation, but whatever the issue is, most of the time they should be avoided. My biggest bust for this year is Mike Evans. Evans has always been known for his incredible consistency, recently becoming the first player in NFL history to have nine straight seasons with at least 1,000 receiving yards. So why is he my biggest bust of the season? First, Mike

## Heatwave Board Picks

Name Role	Jackie Williams Features Editor	Will Wang Other Features Editor	Luke Park Managing Editor	Helena Chen News Editor 1/2	Cindy Shum Photos Editor	Aki Li Copy Editor 1/2	Emily Pan Graphics Editor	Garrett Heffern Opinions Editor
Photo:								
6am practice or 6pm practice?	6am	6am	Athletic exemption	6pm	6am for the Starbucks run afterwards	6pm 100%	pm duhdoy	6pm: need the morning homework sprint
Favorite icecream flavor at Melba to help cool you down?	Oreo	Oreo	Strawberry	Never been	Split decision	1 <3 butter pecan	strawberry and moon rocks. the cashier called it barbenheimer and i think thats iconic	Cookies and Crème
What's your strategy for how not to drip in sweat while walking between classes?	Put your hair up	Bring a fan	Don't sweat	Get a tardy	Travel exclusively through buildings	Walk fast wear shorts	sprint	100 degrees is no sweat
Which building has the best ac?	Abbott	KMSC	Not Mem, that's for sure	KMSC math side	Admissions	The math building has me shivering	GCAD	KMSC's the only one not an oven or icebox