

## SOCCER

- Ranked No. 1 in VISAA Div. II as of Oct. 4
- 10-0-3 as of Oct. 5
- Next match today at home against New Covenant
- Homecoming match against Hargrave on Oct. 19



EYES ON THE PRIZE: Goalie #1 *Bob Almenas '25* and *Ameer Albishah '26* eye the camera before playing Christchurch to a 2-2 draw on Sept. 22. Photo by Carter Krzeminski

## FOOTBALL

- Ranked No. 3 in VISAA Div. II as of Oct. 10 even though NCS has defeated both opponents ranked above them.
- 5-2 as of Oct. 6
- Fishburn cancelled Homecoming

## TENNIS

- Ranked No. 5 in VISAA Div. II as of Oct. 10
- 4-3-1 as of Oct. 3
- Next match is at Covenant on Oct. 16

## FIELD HOCKEY

- 3-3 as of Oct. 3
- Next game is Oct. 16 at Covenant
- At VES on Oct. 20



GET OUT OF THE CAGE! *Sophia Camp '27* (#7) and her teammates burst forward from their goal in anticipation of the next attack. Photo by Eason Zhou

## VOLLEYBALL

- 4-7 as of Oct. 6
- Homecoming game against Eastern Mennonite on Oct. 17 (last home match -- Senior Night)

## CROSS COUNTRY

- Boys came in 3rd at Blue Ridge Invitational
- Will host the BRAC championship race in Botetourt County on Nov. 4



Ring the bell, *Alex Dickenson '24* enjoys the honor of setting the new 5k course record of 19:52 at the Take the Hill 5k. Alex's mark will stand at least until next fall since there will not be any more home meets this year. The senior also came in 5th at the Blue Ridge Invitational with a time of 17:19, leading the boys to 3rd place. Meanwhile, *Kerri-gan Chaney '25* won the girls race finishing in 18:39, which was more than two minutes faster than the next girl. Chaney will be defending her BRAC title Nov. 4. Below she runs with *Harry Anderson '25* on Sept. 20. Photos by Robert Robillard



# WILLIS HALL HERALD

FRIDAY THE 13TH EDITION

NEW  
2023  
W.C. E  
ho i School  
2024

### INSIDE THE ISSUE:

- + HOMECOMING SURVEY
- + GRAPHIC NOVEL REPORT
- + NEW FACULTY AND STAFF PROFILES
- + NEW AMERICAN STUDENT PROFILES\*
- + FALL SPORTS UPDATES ON BACK PAGE

## • SCARY STORIES

- + \*NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROFILES COMING SOON



Editorial

# Let us all dance!

Dancing - a harmless activity you can do anywhere, with anyone, and at any time. For some, dancing comes as a form of art or expression, but for others, it's a way to connect and spend time with friends and family. Dancing can be many things, but being the reason for costing your future should not be one of them.

For senior Kaylee Timonet of Louisiana, a video of her dancing with friends at a private party would be the reason she lost her chance at a college scholarship. After her principal, St. Pierre, got a hold of the video, he called her into his office where he chastised her for not living up to "God Ideals." He proceeded to take away her role as Student Government President and remove the school's support for her college scholarships. Since then, her story has gone viral across many platforms and news outlets, where she has gained support against her unjust punishment.

Fellow classmates have shown support in a protest walkout at school asking to "Let the girl Dance." After all the backlash with St. Pierre's punishment, he has since given back her position as president and resumed endorsement for her scholarships. Unfortunately, although the situation seems to be resolved, the deadline for Timonet's scholarship passed before her punishment could be reversed.

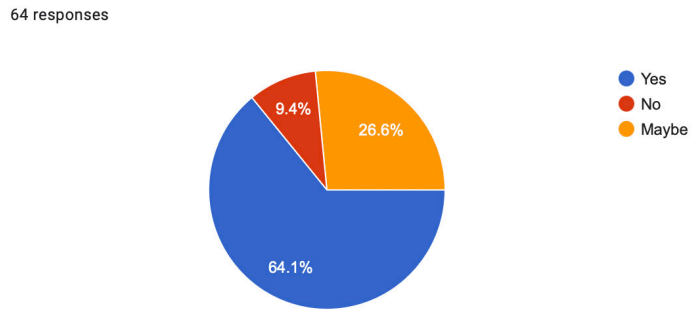
"Regardless of what the principal thought about Timonet's dancing, I think his punishment was a step too far," said Upper School SCA President, Attilio Ciccuzzi '24.

"I myself love dancing," Attilio mentioned, "and I'm glad that if another student or myself were in her position, our North Cross community would have reacted much differently."

Upper School Director Stephen Belderes had a visceral reaction. "This is literally literally the plot of Footloose," he said. "That's outrageous. It makes no sense."

At North Cross, dances are a key aspect of student life that brings excitement and anticipation all throughout Willis Hall. This October, high schoolers are gearing up for Homecoming week and all the activities associated with it.

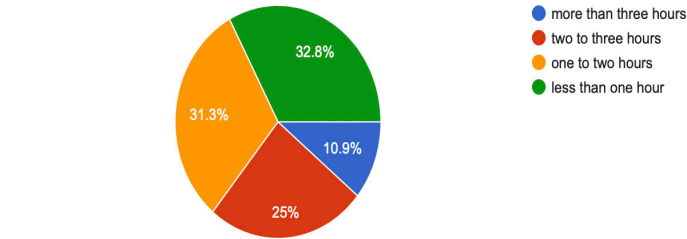
As we go into Homecoming, we should be glad to be at a school like NCS. Do you intend to dance at Homecoming?



## OPINION

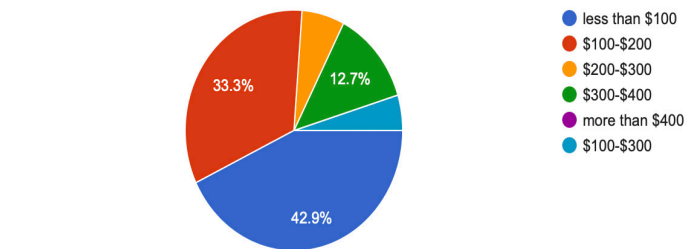
How much time do you project spending on getting ready for Homecoming?

64 responses



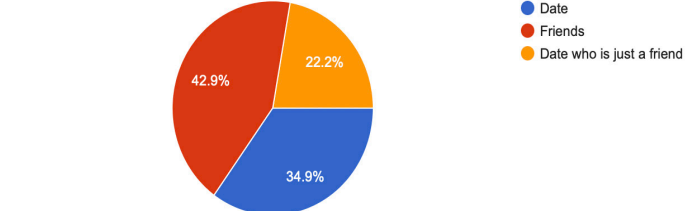
How much money do you plan to spend on Homecoming?

63 responses



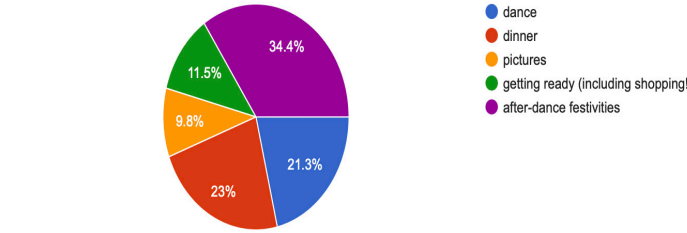
Are you going to Homecoming with a date or with friends?

63 responses



What is the best part of Homecoming Dance?

61 responses



# The Willis Hall Herald

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

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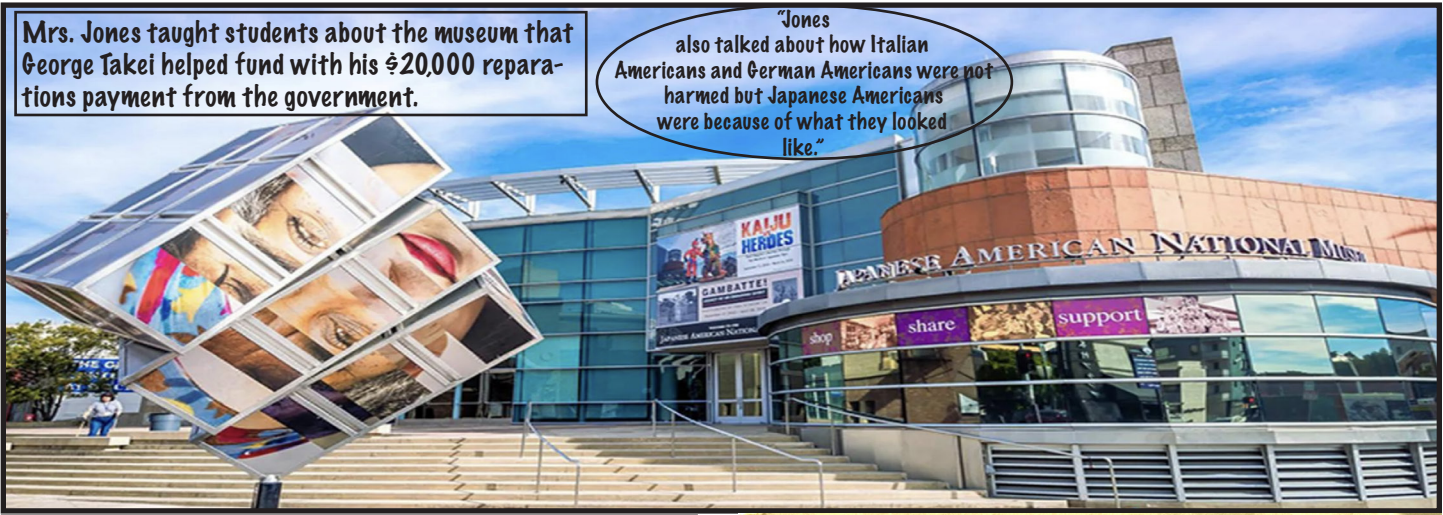
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## HERALD GRAPHIC REPORT

# Willis Hall explores *They Called Us Enemy*

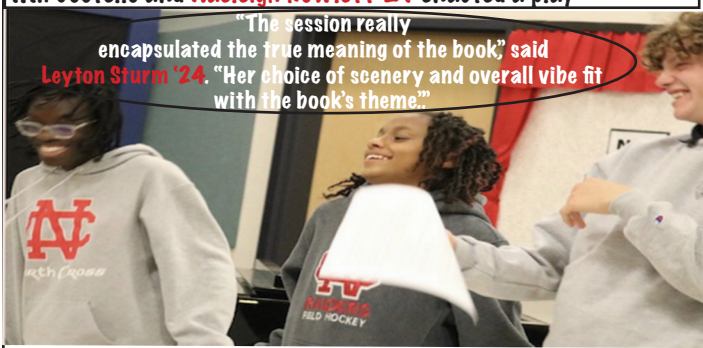
Students and faculty read the graphic novel over the summer and then processed their understanding of the book in twelve breakout sessions on Sept. 20.



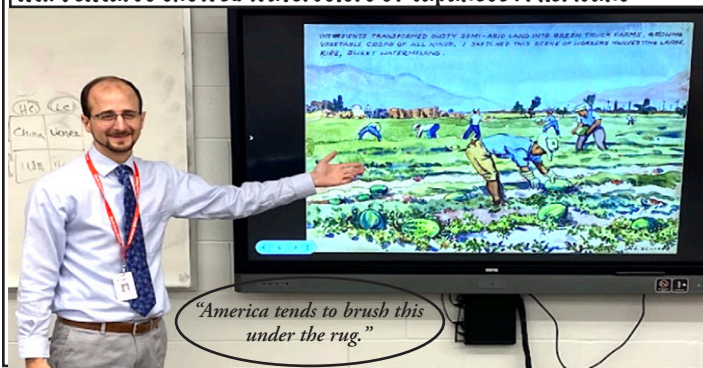
### Vivian Pickeral '24 taught students to braid rugs



### Mr. Costello and Kaeleigh Howlett '24 enacted a play



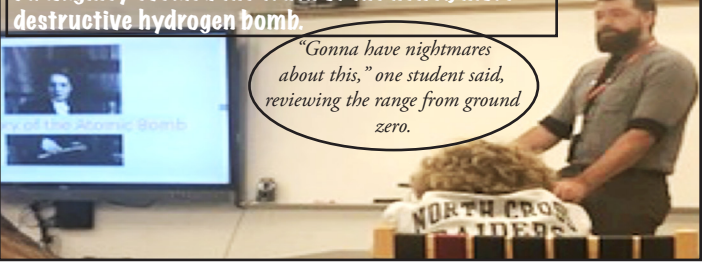
### Mr. DeMarco showed watercolors of Japanese Americans



# How to Make a Comic

Students used artroom resources to make their own comics. "I loved being able to do a graphic novel and explore the different aspects of art by being able to connect it to what the students are learning about comic books in art class," said art teacher Amy Jackson, who led the session along with Kerrigan Chaney '25, Mallory Kern '25 and J2 Rhodes '24. I think the pictures in the novel help visualize what it was really like living in the conditions that they were in," said Umair Razul '24.

### Dr. Naginey evealed the truth of the newer, more destructive hydrogen bomb.





# Q and A with NCS’s first Director of Security Operations

## Chris Kuyper brings Superman ethos, experience and expertise to keep school safe

**Can you name any superhero crime fighters who inspire you?**

The one superhero that I attached myself to who I thought that I really wanted to be because of their values was Superman. He exuded truth, honesty, integrity. He would help anybody. Right? And he would risk his life doing it. But he was Superman. I always wanted to be that type of person that somebody could look up to. It’s really important to me. So when I was your age, a little younger, I thought about what I wanted to be when I grew up. And I always wanted to be somebody that helped community help people. The first profession that came to my mind, was being a police officer.

**Can you give an example of a way you performed as a superhero?**

You know, as a police officer, and I know, I’m retired now, but as a police officer, you wear that uniform, right? You wear that costume, if you will, just like Superman, right? For me, it was very important, how I related to people and how I relate myself to people. Because, you know, kids, I mean, you should see, you see me in the Lower School. All the littles come up to me give me hugs and fist bumps and all that and I know I’m doing something right when that happens, but I’ll tell you as a police officer, wearing that uniform to me, was a sense of pride. A sense of pride that you not only represented the best of your You to me, but you had to act that way, every single time. Because you know how people look at certain individuals, me as a police officer and they automatically assume who I am as a person, how I’m going to act. That would be rough, tough. All that. I would come to people, I would open doors, I would buy people dinner, we bought a family dinner, when they’re down on their luck, couldn’t pay their rent, we pay the rent me and several other officers. But it’s being there, being an example for our community, and rubbing off on people. I just had a parent email me and said, ‘Thanks, Officer Kuyper. Now all of a sudden, my daughter wants to be a police officer when she grows up.’ And I’m like, hopefully she won’t be. But that’s the positive effect that you can have on people.

**Can you share examples of when you faced danger as a police officer?**

I’ve been in law enforcement now. 28 years, retired last year. So when I became a police officer, I didn’t want to just be a police officer. I wanted to



**‘LOOKS LIKE A PORK CHOP’** *The map of Grand Island, NY near Buffalo is on the screen behind Kuyper as he discusses his path to Roanoke and NCS.*

be the best. I mean, honestly. So. And I guess that comes from military culture that you want to be the best in everything you do. So I was on a SWAT team for 17 years.

**How much is SWAT utilized here?**

In those 17 years that I was on SWAT, you name it. Any critical event that you saw between 1997 and 2014 or 2015. I was there. Right? So the Virginia Tech tragedy. We were one of the first SWAT teams to arrive on scene. And actually, we had SWAT training that day in our offices right off the interstate. So we went through just about every single situation that occurred at Virginia Tech. Our team got activated and went through every critical event. Whether it was a high risk search or a barricaded hostage rescue type situation, our team got activated. But it also was dignitary protection.

So I was part of the security detail for many vice presidents, as well as congressmen and congresswomen and presidents of the United States. So close on security detail for Mitt Romney. President Obama, President Trump, and also Vice President Cheney. So many critical incidents. The double shooting at Westlake, for example, with WDBJ-7. I was working at that day as well.

**Why was it so dangerous?**

I was with the FBI for the last two years of my career, traveling the country, teaching classes and all that, and then retired last year. And then eventually came here. So I was on our SWAT team from 1997 to say 2014/2015. That was the highlight of my career, because I ascended to the position of assistant commander of the team. I also had the most dangerous job for like 12 out of those 17 years. I was the point man on our entry team. Which if you don’t know what that is, like any, any critical call that where somebody was in a house or a building, I was like the first person in the door every single time. And, you know, that gave me a sense of leadership. And you had people like counting on you to make the right decisions. And I took pride in being in that position. And we did search warrants. We had Colombian drug lords here in Roanoke. We had a terrorist zone here in Roanoke. And we had to take people into custody, and a lot of times we had to go into their homes or the buildings.

### Chris Kuyper’s Work History Timeline:

- Wendy’s during high school near Buffalo
- Five years in military starting in Texas
- 26 years with Roanoke County Police
- Including 17 years as member of SWAT
- Two years with FBI
- North Cross School



**Director of Security Operations** *Photos by Malaiah Purcell*

**What made you want to work at NCS?**

So before I came here, I wasn’t even looking for a job. Honestly, I was working in health care as a safety manager. And I had a meeting with the head of school, Ms. Lemon. I’ve seen leaders. I’ve seen leaders on every single level throughout my career in law enforcement and the military and she basically we sat down, and she’s like, ‘Chris, we need you. We want you to assume this position that has never been had before, or not been filled before.’ Because of my experiences and what I’ve done in the community. She was very convincing. She’s a very strong leader. And she instantly captured my attention. When she said why, this is why we need you. And I was very impressed with her. And from there, it just became natural to quit my job and come here.

So as a police officer, I would come, you know, patrol, North Cross School. And what I found out was, everybody was so welcoming here. Everybody was great, like the kids would wave to me. And that’s a big deal. Because people don’t wave to police officers say, ‘Hey, you know, we’re glad you’re here.’ Very often it’s usually the firefighters. Yeah, I get out my car, I talk to kids, I fist bump, you know, shake hands and all that. And I always thought to myself, and this was like in the mid to late ‘90s /2000s. This is such a great school. The faculty and staff members are also very kind.

The former head of school, Dr. Proctor, I had a meeting with him just out of the blue, just stopped my car talk to him. He’s like, ‘Man, we were trying to start a hockey team here.’ I play ice hockey. ‘And one day, we’d like to do that. And you should really think about coming here one day.’ That was probably 10 years ago. And it’s come full circle. . . . If I’m going to do this at a school, it’s going to be North Cross.

**Did you take a class on potential scenarios or on the human mind?**

You know, if I showed you all the certificates, certifications, and training that I’ve had, it, like, literally, I’ve got a log filled, and it’s probably about four inches thick of certifications. Education is vitally important. On-the-job training is important as well. Learning from your peers, learning from your supervisors, and all is vitally important, but I love formalized training. And I’ve gone through everything from like FBI schools on like, you know, bombs, right, or terrorist attacks, to behavioral health classes, as well as CIT, which is crisis intervention training, which every police officer goes through how to talk to people, right? I’ve gone through all of it. And you know, that’s what I would tell you to do, is you might come to a point in your careers, your future career where like, you’re like, ‘Man, I’m good. I’m set,’ right? Like there’s nothing else I can learn. Push yourself to be better than what you were the day before. And that’s the mindset I’ve always had, no matter what it was.

**What was the craziest story you can tell us?**

I will tell you a funny story a crazy story just came to mind. So picture this. Remember, I told you I was the point man on our SWAT team. I would go in first, right? So not too far away from here. We had a search warrant on a sex offender. Right? Bad dude. We want to get him in custody, and they’re violent people. So this guy had his front door barricaded. So he had a bar across it. We had a warrant for him. And so my RAM guy’s name was Jay Mates. He was a sergeant with the raw mechanical support. And Sergeant Mates rammed the door, right? And it would not budge. Rammed the door, it would not budge. Rammed it again, would not budge, and we lost the advantage. Right? The element of surprise. So you know, some doors like front doors have like four square panels, like top two top, two bottom. I said ‘Jay, Ram, the panel, Ram, the bottom panel of the door. He rammed that panel, it bounced out. And as short as I am, and as small as I am now, smaller then. I went in through that panel, walked upstairs. The guy was in his underwear. Placed him in custody before the entire SWAT team was able to breach and enter the door. My kids all the time they make fun of me. They’re like ‘Dad, you’re balding.’ Or ‘Dad, you’re you’re short.’ And I said ‘Don’t make fun of short people. Because look at that moment. If I was any bigger, we wouldn’t get that guy in custody as quick as we did. Right?’ So yay, for short people.

**How safe is North Cross?**

The short answer to your question is building plans. We talked about a vulnerability assessment that I’m doing on our campus. And what that entails is, where do we need access control? Where do we need additional cameras? Where do you place people in, in a room, for example? Fencing, we have an open campus, right? In creating a prioritized list, I don’t just mean creating a prioritized list of what we need to do to make our campus safer. Teachers understand because I sent out an email about propping doors open, and the dangers of that. So changing culture, but also coming up with a plan to spend money on things that will keep us safe, like fencing, for example. We will be pricing gates out here in the next six months. There’s a lot of things that we’re doing behind the scenes, creating an emergency operations plan. It’s a marathon, not a sprint, to make sure all these things are done.

### Fun Facts

- Can be seen doing lip-syncing with fellow police officers on YouTube
- Favored ‘80s “hair bands” in his youth
- Listens to Taylor Swift with his teenage sons



# Sprouse adds Hogwarts magic to math classes

By Aadeetri Pandey

Many people in Willis Hall might be wondering what that smell is. It smells like pumpkin pie whenever people pass by room 13.

Whether students have Jennifer Sprouse as a teacher or not, they can certainly smell her favorite fall scent and see the posters she hangs up in her classroom bringing a much-needed light and a fresh fun feeling to the Upper School. Perhaps all the decor and smells helped her feel more comfortable in her new situation.

“I’m always nervous on the first day of school,” Sprouse said. “Just because I don’t know my students. I don’t know how it’s gonna go.”

Sprouse has a very vibrant personality that is shown in her room. She has many math posters in her room along with other things she likes like Harry Potter. Her favorite book is Prisoner of Azkaban, however her favorite movie is “Order of the Phoenix.”

She grew up in south Alabama and attended a large high school that had around 2500 students, but the summer before her junior year she moved to little Christiansburg.

“I remember the first football game,” Sprouse said. “The football team ran out on the field and I was like, ‘Is the middle school doing an exhibition?’ But it turned out that it was the football team. I felt so bad because you know, I’m used to seeing people walking down on the field and seeing nothing but numbers. And their guys look like they were all ninth graders or something and I’m like ‘Where are your football players?’”

One thing most people don’t know about her is that she likes 3D printing. She has a few of her creations in her room, and she hopes to have a 3D printing class in the near future.

This is her first year as a high school teacher. Before this, she had been teaching pre-algebra and geometry at Cave Spring Middle School. In the Upper School, she teaches Geometry, Algebra

2, and AP Statistics. She has over 100 students, about half of the Willis Hall student body. She hasn’t taught Algebra 2 in a while and has never taught AP Statistics. This doesn’t discourage her from trying her best.

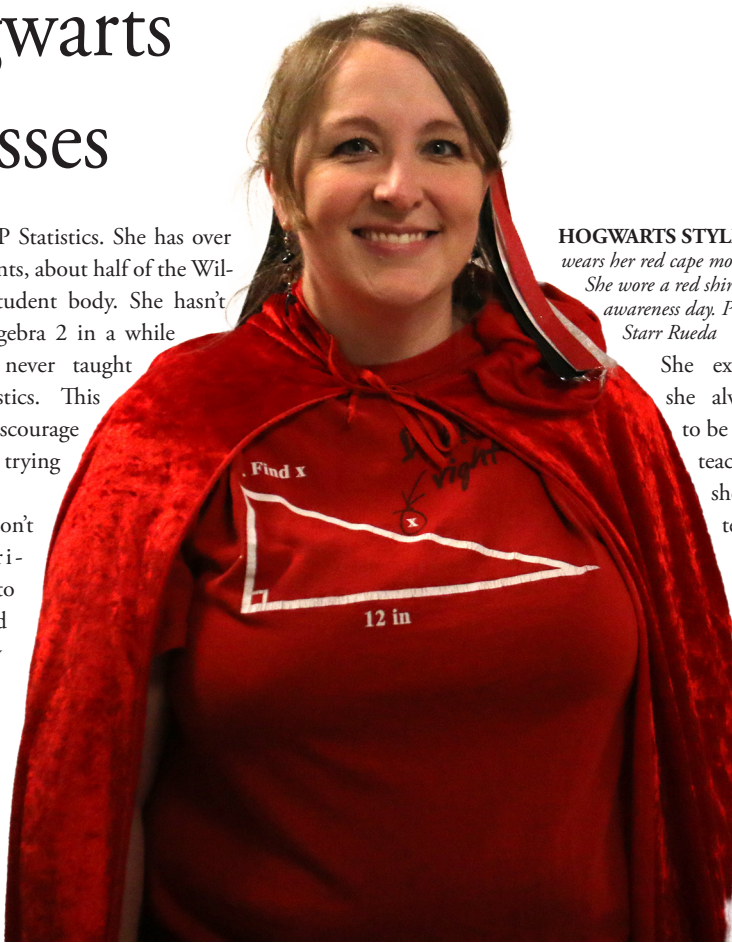
“I don’t necessarily have to be liked by every single person,” she said, “but I want to make a good impression. So where they’re not going home and saying let’s drop that class,

Her favorite type of math to teach is geometry. While she has always been good at math, she believes that her teacher’s support helped her love for the subject to flourish. In particular, her fourth-grade teacher gave her more advanced worksheets

in class so she was never bored.

“I’ve always kind of challenged myself to do math as fast as I could,” Sprouse said. “I would make stupid mistakes. But math has always been the one thing that I don’t know. I get really, really, really weirdly nerdy about it.”

Sprouse went to Virginia Tech to get her bachelor’s then she got her master’s at Radford University. She has 15 years of experience teaching. She did take a six-year break when her children were born but jumped back into teaching after they were old enough.



**HOGWARTS STYLE:** Sprouse wears her red cape most Fridays. She wore a red shirt for dyslexia awareness day. Photo by Mia Starr Rueda

She expressed that she always wanted to be a high school teacher, however, she was stuck teaching middle school, which she still enjoyed. She felt that the Roanoke County school administration never took her concerns into con-

sideration. Because she could handle the “bad kids” they kept on giving her more, so she felt that she never got the respect she deserved.

She interviewed for the job in March and was offered the position of an upper school teacher on the spot. It was a hard decision for her to make, but ultimately she decided that it was for the best.

“I started telling people and letting them know that I was not coming back around May,” Sprouse said “I was super excited about it.”

It’s expected that things will be different when moving to a new school. A few things are the grading system, the classes, and the schedule. However, for Sprouse, the biggest difference is the students’ behavior.

“The biggest thing that I’ve noticed between the students here is there’s a level of respect and a level of pride in their school here,” Sprouse said. “Over there we were dealing with kids ripping the handles off of the sinks in the bathroom, and as soon as they got refurbished, they would rip them off again so we never could keep soap dispensers in the boys bathroom because they would just rip them off the wall.”

Her relationship with the other faculty members is different as well. Although she is friends with

# Mountcastle brings test-prep expertise to English 10

By Anne Bradley Cullen

Before new English teacher Emily Mountcastle had children, she worked part time as a SAT verbal instructor. Now she’s back full time.

“I wanted to teach at North Cross because I love to teach,” Mountcastle said, “and I knew it would be a great environment of engaged students and caring faculty.”

Mountcastle went to Patrick Henry High School and then James Madison University where she was an English Major and received a Master’s in Education.

“I was a pretty good student, social and engaged,” she said. “I liked my teachers and worked hard in my classes.”

Mountcastle taught at Patrick Henry High School for five years and she also worked with students at Roanoke Catholic and Crystal pring Elementary.

“I have wanted to be a high school English teacher since I was little,” she said, “as I always looked up to my grandmother,

who was a high school English teacher as well.”

Veronica Weston ’26 appreciates Mountcastle.

“I think Mrs. Mountcastle’s style of teaching is relaxed, but in a way where I am able to learn a lot,” Weston said. “The class has been interesting so far and she is a great English teacher. She makes the learning fun with projects and videos included in her classes. My favorite thing we have done in her class so far were the group presentations on The Crucible. These presentations really took

a deep dive into the background and making of The Crucible.”

Justin Jones ’26 agrees.

“I really enjoyed The Crucible project, and I think that her class is really exciting, fun,

and enjoyable.” Lastly, when asked what she does in her free time Mountcastle says:

“I like to run, bike, or go to yoga. I also love to cook and bake. You can usually find me at the park with my kids though!”



**FRESH FACE:** Emily Mountcastle shares room 12 with Dr. Britton Andrews, where she teaches American literature to mostly 10th-graders. Photo by Robert Robillard

*“I wanted to teach at North Cross because I love to teach,” Mountcastle said, “and I knew it would be a great environment of engaged students and caring faculty.”*

*“I really enjoyed The Crucible project, and I think that her class is really exciting, fun, and enjoyable.”*  
Justin Jones ’26

# Sprouse placed at least 44 posters on the walls of room 13

some of the faculty like Tiffany Sakaguchi because they both used to teach at Cave Spring with each other, most of the faculty is new to her.

“Everybody has been very warm and welcoming,” Sprouse said. “I’ve spent more time with the other teachers than I did in previous years because a lot of times we would be so overwhelmed. We would just kind of have lunch locked in our class-

room with the door shut, trying to get something done. And here it’s like going outside and eating with the other teachers and just kind of chill. It’s just really nice.”

Although she no longer works at Cave Spring she still is an active member of their community. Her husband still works there and her children go there. She is in charge of the marching band cos-

tumes so she is required to be there for every home football game. This means she can also see some of her old students whom she still loves. However she is super excited for this new chapter of her life at North Cross.

“I get to see my former kids from there and they ask how it is at North Cross and I’m saying it’s amazing,” Sprouse said. “I love it.”



# Sailor, dancer, writer plans to be fighter pilot

Gracie Munro hopes to follow her brother into one of the academies.

By Ally Stone

**This new ninth grader not only competes in an unusual sport racing sailboats, she plans to be a fighter pilot.**

Gracie Munro came here from Community School and she came to North Cross because she already knew some people here and liked the way it looked.

She hopes to be in the Air Force as a pilot.

Gracie also really loves to sail and will compete in races in small sailboats.

She met her best friend in preschool,

and likes dogs more than cats because they are more affectionate. She has a dog and it's name is Hamish and he is a West Highland Terrier.

Gracie says she cherishes her brother because he was an inspiration to her for her future career. Her brother is in the Navy and is in the engineering unit.

She loves playing on the piano, and especially loves dancing and can be quite competitive about it.

“Whenever I am dancing and on point,” Gracie said, “I feel like I’m flying.”



SUMMER SUNSET: Mia Starr poses for a friend before school starts.

# Soccer player transfers from Lord Botetourt

By Nola Daninger

**On the first day of school, soccer player Mia Starr ‘26 experienced the unknown.**

Mia realized that North Cross is very different from her old school, Lord Botetourt. She transferred from LB to NCS because there were more options and opportunities. Mia has played soccer since she was 3 years old. Wanting to experience something new, this year is her first year playing tennis.

“North Cross is definitely different from my old school,” Starr said. “Everything is more

together here, the social aspect is much better. There are more people to talk to and a lot of options considering clubs and opportunities like that.”

When Mia is not playing sports or making new friends at school, she

enjoys watching movies. Especially “La La Land!” Something Mia is also very passionate about is music.

“My favorite artist of all time is definitely Frank Ocean,” Starr stated.

Something else Mia Starr really enjoys is writing and journalism.

“I discovered I liked writing in

9th grade last year,” Starr said, “I liked it because I realized I was a really fast and pretty good writer.”



FIRST PERSON CAPTION: In this picture, I am sailing near the Outer Banks with my best friend (You can see her hand in the left side of the picture). This was just over a week ago, right before orientation. This was my first time sailing with my family, because usually I sail a two person boat called a 420 with crew, Wilson. My name is Gracie Munro, and this year I am taking Journalism as one of my electives. This is my first time at a new school, and I'm very happy that I got picked for this class. I like drawing, sailing, and camping. I have lived in Roanoke my whole life but I love traveling to new places! Photo by my dad, Devon Munro.

*“I discovered I liked writing in ninth grade last year,” Starr said, “I liked it because I realized I was a really fast and pretty good writer.”*

# Robotics Club welcomes new ninth grader

Meadows continues interest from previous school.

By Caroline Welfare

**First day of school, Claire Meadows ‘27 arrived feeling a mix of nervousness and excitement. She easily slid into the routine, though, even as the chaos of the school year began.**

A bright spot was the Robotics Team.

She brings with her from her old school a love of robotics. She participated in a parent-run team before, and is happily preparing to do it again. Claire has done this for a while, from the youngest age possible (first grade), and is excited to do it again this year.

“I’m excited to join the robotics team because my last team wasn’t great and always butted heads,” Claire remarks, “but it seems like this will be fun!”

She came to North Cross, not only for robotics, but because her family decided it would be the best fit for her, with the Crosswalk program. Although Crosswalk is there for homework help, she usually finishes her work in class or completes it at home.

And Claire has time at home. She doesn’t do a sport, but that means lots of time with her dog. Her favorite color is purple, pronouns are she/her,



RAIDER SPIRIT: Claire Meadows sports Raider red. Photo by Eason Zhou

and she prefers indoor activities to outdoor, going to bed early on the freshman trip. when remembering the activities the freshmen on the trip had done before lunch.

“I wanted to have fun, and I did,” Claire said

# Florida girl comes to NCS via Community School

Stone arrived in Roanoke a few years ago and also attended James Madison last year.

By William Hendrickson

**Stepping foot onto North Cross School, Alexandra (Ally) Stone ‘27, was unsure what her first day in this new environment would be like. The halls at North Cross looked very different to Ally when compared to her previous schools because as she looked around everyone here was in a uniform and the school itself was much smaller.**

Ally moved to Virginia about four years ago from the beautiful state of Florida. She transferred from James Madison Middle School following her eighth grade year. Ally enjoys reading the Harry Potter series of books, her favorite one being Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone. She likes

the first one the best because she thought it was a really good story and it was also the first one she read. She loves horses and cats and enjoys horseback riding weekly. Ally does not own her own horse, so horseback riding every week is how she finds a way to spend time with them. At home, she has one dog Emma, which is a beagle mix.

“I really like North Cross so far,” Stone said. “The kids here are really nice, but school is a bit stressful.” Ally is taking Biology, World Literature and Journalism classes just to name a few.

Although Ally can be quiet and shy at times, the students in

her classes have all been welcoming and she feels comfortable and glad to be at NCS.

Although she enjoys reading the Harry Potter books, Ally is not reading anything interesting right now. When asked about our summer reading list, she said she thought *The Book Thief* was an interesting book, although quite sad.

In her spare time, Ally enjoys writing creative stories so a journalism class in her first year at a new school seems like the perfect fit for her.



MONA LISA SMILE: Ally Stone poses for a portrait. Photo by AB Cullen



# New student Gabby Miller speaks out on her first year

Star lacrosse player did not plan to attend NCS but followed her brother Sebastian.

By Mia Starr Rueda

**Gabby Miller '26, a lacrosse player and honor roll student, comes from Cave Spring high school.**

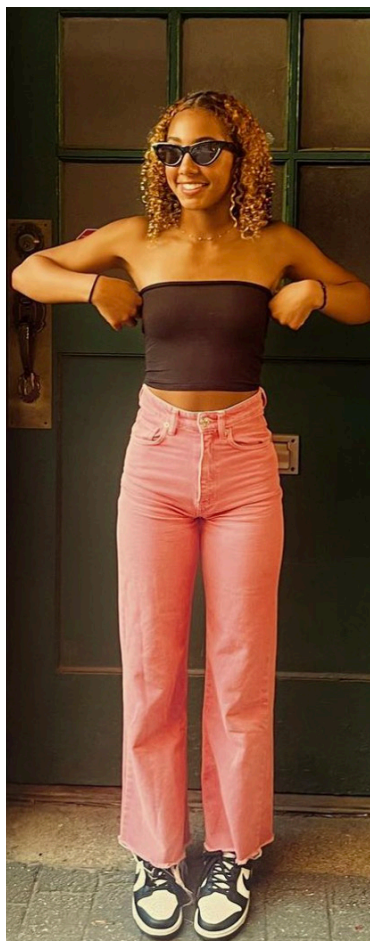
Gabby was a straight-A student coming into North Cross and she is still looking forward to keeping that up.

"North Cross was a better decision," she said, comparing it to Cave Spring.

Having a fresh start at her new school makes her happier mentally. She said her old school was not as clean nor was the food as good. Gabby has made many friends she hopes will become long lasting friendships, which she found hard to have at her old school.

Gabby will continue to play lacrosse this year, although she may be at a new school, her extroverted personality won't make it hard for her to be known for what she does. Gabby loves to play lacrosse in her free time. Everytime she steps out on the lacrosse field she feels "powerful and influential," she said. Gabby hopes to lead the team with her quick wit and leadership. She plays on defense with a longer stick and scores the winning points for the team. Gabby played varsity last year as a ninth-grader.

In Gabby's free time, she enjoys drawing, which explains why she is



*Gabby Miller poses for the camera in Richmond after shopping at stores at the Chesterfield Towne Centre. We make a quick pit stop in front of the green door, where we continued to capture moments and smiles on camera to be posted on social media. Photo by Mia Starr*

in the Art Club where she spends most of her free time.

Gabby also enjoys playing basketball. She was number 10 on her team at Cave Spring. Gabby wants to make a positive change on the school, along with keeping up with academics and sports by putting her best foot forward in everything she does.



*Bridgette Finch works on a task for art teacher Amy Jackson. Photo by Gracie Munro*

## Painting and drawing and sketching, oh my!

By Gracie Munro

**Bridgette Finch '27 sits alone with her canvas. She moves her hand around fluidly, the brush gliding across the surface, slowly revealing the picture that is so clear in her mind. As the scene starts to come together with bright colors and shapes, she finishes off her most recent work of art with her signature.**

Bridgette has a passion for art. She enjoys drawing flowers, nature, and other still life and landscape scenes, but she loves painting most of all.

"It's fun how different paint works on all kinds of material and experimenting with a range of textures," Bridgette says.

She came to North Cross when she was 3 years old, but was homeschooled for most of her life. Since she was coming to high school she decided she wanted a new beginning, and had heard good things about the school. In addition to Bridgette and her sister Addy joining

North Cross this year, her dad has also started working on the faculty team for the Crosswalk program.

One of her greatest inspirations that started her love for art, however, was last year.

"Summer 2022 I had the opportunity to make a large painting for the family courthouse in downtown Roanoke," Finch said, "I had a lot of fun doing that."

As well as her art, Bridgette also enjoys Scouts. Currently Bridgette's rank is Star Scout, one of the last ranks before Eagle. To earn this rank you have to prove yourself in many skills and show that you can be a good citizen in your community by doing service for others with little to no consolation.

"Since I joined in 2020 I have gone on countless adventures and moved up in the ranks," she said "I love hiking and camping and I feel very free in nature because I love being surrounded by trees and wildlife."

# 'Ohio girl' lands at NCS

By Lauren Boone

**Mackenzie Gibbs '25 describes herself as a homebody who sleeps in her free time and drinks Dr. Pepper. She listens to Harry Styles and Taylor Swift. Gibbs loves binging "Grey's Anatomy." and she watches movies like "The Notebook."**

The "girl from Ohio" transferred this year as an 11th grader. She was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio and moved to Roanoke where her father has been hired for a job. Gibbs attended a school located in her

hometown, where she was involved in competitive cheerleading prior to transferring to North Cross.

When asked for her opinion of North Cross, Gibbs responded, "I love the students, faculty, keycards and the general atmosphere."

She is focused on her academic career and is currently taking four AP classes for her junior year; AP Comparative Government, AP Chemistry, AP English, Language and AP Calculus AB. Gibbs is interested in schools located around the region such as UNC and UVA.

*"I really want to go to a big school, especially if it's a school with a good football team. I like how spirit really brings the students together."*  
- Mackenzie Gibbs



**TWO NEWBIES:** Addie Finch '25 and Mackenzie Gibbs '25 buddy-up for fun at Fall Festivus. Photo by Sarah Sledd

"I really want to go to a big school," Gibbs said, "especially if it's a school with a good football team. I like how spirit really brings the students together."

Gibbs visits Columbus often on the weekends to spend time with her family and childhood friends.

Her cheerleading team won the state championship in Ohio, but Gibbs is positive about the end of competitive cheerleading. She sees it as a beginning or an opportunity to play new sports as she plans to play lacrosse in the spring.

## American in the dorm, but Valdez loves the country

By Malaiah Purcell

**Evan Valdez '27 loves the country.**

He loves, "Hunting deer, riding four wheelers, and fishing sometimes," Valdez said are his favorite three hobbies.

He also added that his favorite thing to do with the deer meat is to make it into jerky or put it in pasta.

"I live in the boonies of North Carolina," Valdez '27 stated.

He sent a picture of the view from his home in North Carolina, which is about 20 miles south of Greensboro.

"I love my grandparents more than my mom and dad," Valdez '27 said. Valdez says he enjoys spending time with his grandparents more than his

mom and dad because his grandparents embrace their Christianity and they aren't as strict as his parents.

Valdez watches his church on TV while he lives at the dorm.

"I want to be a veterinarian," Valdez '27 said, because he loves animals.

He hopes to study at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where his mom went. He loves the Carolina blue of the Tarheels.

He has a French bulldog named Nova after the Chevy car from the '60's.

Valdez likes all animals but not snakes, because they're fast and "move weird."

*Photo by Malaiah Purcell*



*"North Cross was a better decision."*  
- Gabby Miller



# THE HORRIBLE HEADACHE

By Gracie Munro

I unlocked the door to my small apartment. Stepping inside and locking the door, I slip my shoes off, wet with rain, and collapse on the couch still in my rain jacket. I roll over and lazily reach for the remote. My cat Darcy walks over and rubs against my leg. I reach down to pick him up and set him on my lap. I cross my legs on the cushion and let him lay down next to me, stroking his back. I grab the remote and turn on a show. I press my fingers to my temple and wince.

The horrible headache that had been painning me all day had returned yet again.

I get up, pushing Darcy off of me and walk over to the kitchen to get some Advil and water. I look out at the storm raging outside, the lightning flashing, the building creaking. I look at my reflection in the window with the rain running down.

I blink --and for a second-- another face stares back at me. In-human and deformed, its skin hanging off of its face in

ragged sheets with its blank eyes staring back at me. I blink again and jump back, stepping on Darcy's tail. He scratches my ankle and runs under the bed. I look back in horror at the window, barely feeling the scratch, only to see that the reflection on the surface is my own. I walk slowly to the bedroom, never turning away from the glass. I walk backwards until I hit a wall -- turning around and falling back in surprise. I clutch my head again, thinking God, I really need some sleep. I get ready for bed, tying my hair up and slipping into my cool sheets.

I shudder at the thought of the face. I lay awake for a while, not wanting to sleep, fearing what I might find staring at me when I wake up. I pull out my phone. 1:37AM, the screen reads. I sigh and open my phone, checking my notifications. Unknown number a s 3 5 1 o f # sent you a message! I stare at the screen, not daring to move. I open the message with sweaty shaking hands. "L o k "

i s d e . " is flashing across my screen. I try to close the window but my screen is frozen. It starts making a distorted noise, like a mix between a voice and a strangled scream being broadcasted from a water damaged radio. It gets louder and louder, and my phone starts to burn my hands. The sound starts to hurt my ears, my headache throbbing so painful I thought my head would explode.

The sound was vibrating through me as I clutched at my ears and started screaming as well. The sound still intensifies as fear and unimaginable pain envelope me. All of the lights in my room begin to brighten, blinding me as I scream even louder. My fingernails dig into the skin around my ears but I barely feel the pain as everything grows stronger and stronger. All of my senses are overwhelmed, and with one final scream and a blast of bright light, I lay on the floor, ears in my hands, head and brain splattered all over the walls.

By Kenzie Raub

The boy, early in his teenage years, sat on a chair at a table as he sewed the dark fabric of the cloak he was making. He had been working on it for some time now, his goal to finish it by Halloween. It was now 6 p.m. on October 31st, and he was only a few threads away from completing his project. Velvety black and soft to the touch, he knew this would be perfect for his new friend.

"How do you like this so far?" The boy asked, holding up the cloak and turning to face a dark corner of the room. In the corner stood a towering figure wearing a once white collared shirt that was now stained with blood. Withering leather suspenders traveled across the torso and connected to dark red pants with golden buttons. It was clearly a male body, one that had been deceased for quite some time. The figure had long, bony fingers and spindly legs, as if it were

# Dead Pumpkin Friend

standing on stilts.

The most notable part of the figure, however, was its bloody, gory neck missing a head.

"It looks great!" The figure said in a haunting yet cheerful voice. "I think I'll fit right in."

"Good," the boy responded, laying the cloak back down and continuing to sew it. "I think you will, too."

"When will I get my head?" The figure asked.

"In just a minute. Let me finish this cloak real quick."

"Alrighty then."

Soon enough, the boy finished the cloak and held it up, admiring his creation. He stood from his chair and walked over to the headless figure who was standing patiently in the corner.

"It's finished!" The boy announced.

"I love it!" The disembodied voice said. The reanimated man reached forward with his slender fingers, the joints cracking as they moved, and grabbed the cloak, pulling it over his shoulders and snapping the button at the top by the base of his neck. The cloak traveled all the way down to the knees of the reanimated corpse, leaving his bloody shirt and pants peeking

out from its dark curtains. Despite not having a face (or head, for that matter) to show his emotion, the boy could tell his friend was extremely pleased with his gift.

"Vay! Let's get you a head," the boy replied. He walked off to the other side of the room and grabbed a pumpkin Halloween bucket. It was light orange with a face that resembled that of a classic carved jack-o'-lantern. There was also a hole in the bottom of the bucket, one that the boy had drilled himself, about the size of the boy's fist. Instead of using the handle to carry the bucket, he held it close to his chest with both hands and walked back over to the man, grabbing his chair with one hand as he passed it and dragging it behind him.

The boy placed the chair in front of the man and stood on it, stretching his arms up toward the neck of the corpse. He could see a yellowing neck bone sticking out from the pulpy mess of bloody flesh. He then lowered the bucket onto the neck, slipping the neck bone through the hole at the bottom of the pumpkin. Blood and loose muscle immediately began to pool inside the pail, yet the boy remained unphased. He hopped off the chair and pulled it back to where it was and looked at his friend's new look.

"You look great!" The boy said with delight.

"I feel great! And look," the man said, bowing his head slightly and pointing at the opening of the pail. "I can even collect candy tonight!"

"Maybe. Just don't let anyone see the inside of the bucket. The blood might throw some people off."

"Good point." The man nodded his bucket head. He stepped out of the darkness, his dirty clothes and pale, dead skin now vibrant in color. Even the pumpkin looked brighter and happier.

"Let's get going, then," The boy said. "I'll throw my costume on and we can walk around town."

"Perfect!" The corpse exclaimed. "Off we go!"

The boy and his undead friend walked out of the garage and into the driveway, trick-or-treaters were already flooding the streets, laughing and skipping from house to house. The boy smiled, giving a quick glance to his friend, who seemed to be watching the children with a mix of curiosity and joy. They set off, the orange watercolor sky glowing and giving them the color of life as they thought: "Let's just hope the bucket doesn't fall off!"

FRESH  
STORIES



# POOL OF BLOOD?

## A VISITOR AT THE BOXLEY BUILDING

BY ANNA CICCOTZI

Charlie carefully aligns the pool cue up with the final ball, and shoots the final shot to finish the game and earn his third win of the night. Alejandro and Charlie had been playing pool and ping-pong for the past two hours. Almost everyone else at the dorm was out that night, leaving the entire Boxley Building to Charlie, Alejandro, and Mr. Kier.

After a couple more rematches, Charlie and Alejandro got bored of playing. Charlie looked up at the clock - the time read 2:00 A.M. Has it really been that late? Charlie thought to himself. Then, Alejandro read the time too, and the boys pauseed with looks of confusion on their faces. After what seemed like an eternity of silence, Alejandro began to speak.

"Where is everyone? Curfew is 12:00, everyone should be back by now."

"I have no clue," said Charlie. "But it's Friday, people are probably just out having fun and will sleep somewhere else tonight. Let's go ask Mr. Kier."

Together, the boys walked to Mr. Kier's room, skipped knocking and just opened the door. The room was pitch black, and Mr. Kier was nowhere to be found. Charlie's stomach dropped, as he felt a chill rush down his spine. Mr. Kier was never not there, and even in rare cases when he had left, the boys would have received a notification. The two pulled out their phones to check for any news of his disappearance. Nothing, not a single text.

Wasting no time, the boys shut the door

and backed away from the room. Questioning what to do next, they made their way back to the common area to think of their next move. Charlie began dialing on his phone to call Mr. Kier. As the phone began to ring, Alejandro seemed to be distracted by something outside. Walking over to the window, Alejandro scanned his head across the street, until he suddenly froze in his spot.

"What's wrong?," Charlie asked. "Why did you pause?"

"No one's here," said Alejandro.

"What do you mean no one's here? We already know that," Charlie responded.

"No, I mean nobody is here at all. No one is even walking outside."

"Alejandro, it's like 2:30 a.m! Obviously no one is taking a walk."

"No, I know, but there's no cars either."

Charlie's grin dropped as he began to realize the extent of what Alejandro had said. Something was seriously wrong.

Trying not to show the fear that was beginning to take over them, the boys started discussing what they should do next. But before they could finish, they were interrupted by a loud knock on the window. Looking towards the source of the knocking, a mysterious figure appeared facing directly towards them. The

shadow-like figure stared at the boys, but didn't move. Although the figure blended into darkness, a glimpse of its face reflected in the light of a street lamp. They could not make out who the person was, but the boys could clearly notice a large absence on the being's face. The figure had no eyes.

Terrified, the boys sprinted in the opposite direction and ran up the staircase. With a quick decision, Charlie motioned to his dorm room, and Alejandro followed after him.

Once inside, the boys locked the door. Catching their breath, the boys just stared at each other with blank expressions.

"What do we do?"

Alejandro asked with a shaky voice.

Interrupting the conversation from progressing any further, the boys heard a familiar sound. It was the knock from earlier,

but this time, it was closer than before. The boys hustled quietly to the corner and grabbed anything they could find nearby to use as a weapon. Armed with a pair of scissors and broken guitar, the boys watched the door carefully.

Click.

The door unlatched, and the boys watched in terror as the door knob began to turn.

**Charlie's grin dropped as he began to realize the extent of what Alejandro had said. Something was seriously wrong.**

FRESH  
STORIES

# THE CAMERA

BY MAEEVE PARKER

"No way!" Sarah screamed as she frantically ripped apart wrapping paper and let it fall onto the floor with no regard as to where or who it was headed for. From behind, her little brother gave her an angry look as he had become the target of the wrapping paper and it was clustered in a big pile at his feet. However Sarah didn't even notice, as she was so focused on the item within the wrapping paper.

"Let's see it," her mother said from across the room. At that very moment, Sarah excitedly pulled out an old camera from the 1980's that she had seen months before in an antique shop with her mom. She had loved the little camera, and was excited to discover that it still worked, and had begged her mom for it, but her mom did not budge. Sarah was left holding a grudge against her mom over the camera until the very moment when she unwrapped it on Christmas morning. Sarah immediately dragged her little brother, Eli, out the door and into their backyard, so that she could practice with the camera. After a couple minutes of adjusting the lens, setting the aperture, and arguing with Eli, Sarah took her first photo on the camera of Eli standing outside in a puffy jacket that covered half of his face.

A few weeks later, she drove with her friend, Lola, after school to the pharmacy to pick up the pictures she had taken in to get processed the day before. Sarah couldn't stop talking about how excited she was for the photos to come out, especially the ones she took with Lola. Sarah walked into the store, while Lola waited in the car, and made it to the pick up desk where she asked for her pictures. The man at the counter asked for her name, but when she answered, he hesitated. He stared at Sarah and

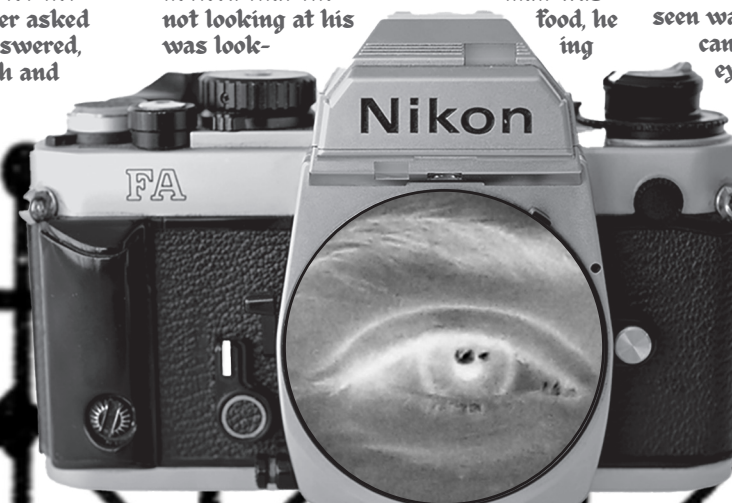
looked slightly nervous before saying, "Yeah so there was something off about your photos after they printed," he paused. "Do you still want all of them?" Sarah let out a small laugh, and replied "That's totally fine", but the man still didn't seem too convinced. After getting her photos from the paranoid man, Sarah walked out of the pharmacy to Lola's car where she told Lola all about the strange encounter. They laughed about it, and soon Lola said, "Well let's see these 'strange' photos for ourselves" Sarah ripped off the plastic seal, careful not to bend the pictures within, and slowly took out the first photo. It was the most recent photo she had taken of Lola driving from the day before, and it looked perfectly fine. They looked through the rest of the photos together, and then Lola dropped Sarah off at her house.

That night while Sarah was getting ready for bed she decided to select a few of the photos to hang on her bedroom wall, so she took out the photos once again. However, this time when she looked at them she noticed something strange in the background of her first photo with Eli. She squinted her eyes, held the photo close to her face, and suddenly let out a loud gasp. In the photo, Eli wasn't alone. There was a man standing directly behind him in a perfect pencil position with wide eyes and something in his hand. With a shaky hand, Sarah picked up the next couple of photos, and stumbled upon one of her friends and her at dinner one night the week prior. She analyzed the photo and recognized a familiar face sitting alone at the table behind her friends with a knife in his hands, cutting the biggest piece of steak she had ever seen. When she looked a little closer at the photo she noticed that the man was not looking at his food, he was looking at her.

straight at Sarah's camera with bloodshot eyes. Suddenly, Sarah began to see his face in every photo she had taken since Christmas day. When she looked up from the photos, his face was in the reflection of her vanity mirror behind her, but when she turned around it was gone. Sarah's hands grew numb and she dropped the photo onto the floor, took her camera and ran to her car parked in the garage. She drove to the antique store, and with a pale face, she returned the camera. As she left the store, she noticed a small light flickering in the back corner, where a man stood watching her.

A couple of years later, Sarah is starting her first day at her new job. She wakes up bright and early and dresses in her most business-y outfit in order to express to her new co-workers and boss that she is serious about the job. Sarah walks into the double sliding doors of her new office building right on time, and is feeling on top of the world. She decides to stop by her new boss's office before the day begins in order to re-introduce herself. When she gets to the office, the door is shut and a couple of minutes later the door opens and a man walks out and smiles at Sarah before she steps into the office. Soon, her boss welcomes her and says, "I am so sorry you had to wait, we randomly received a donation from that man of a collection of vintage cameras." Sarah hesitates, but replies "That's so cool, I used to have a 1980s camera when I was a teenager, they are so unique." Sarah's boss agrees and pulls one of the cameras out of her drawer, but when Sarah sees the camera she freezes in place.

A couple of days later a missing person report is filed on Sarah, but she was never found. The last place she was ever seen was leaving work, with an old 1980s camera in her hand and tears in her eyes.





# BEWARE WHEN TAKING WALKS IN THE WOODS

By Nola Daninger

I was running home from school, rushing past the trees and brushing against bushes. My mom always gets mad when I'm home late, I don't really know why. This is why I have to take the short cut, through the woods. I've only gone this way once but I made my way through. I checked the time on my watch after running for what felt like forever. 3:06. I had to be home by 3:15 and am almost at my house, so I decided to walk. Scratch.

What was that? I checked behind the trees around me, nothing there. I'm probably just imagining things.

Hahahah.

Okay, that was NOT my imagination. Maybe it was a squirrel. What the heck, this isn't "Ice Age." Squirrels can't laugh! I started to run again. To my relief I saw my mailbox just a few steps away. I hurried to the door and threw myself inside, locking the door behind me. My mom was sitting on the couch, doing work. I checked my watch again, 3:15. I sighed with relief, perfect.

"Hi mom!" I said, trying to sound chipper.

"Oh hi Alaina, how was school?" She checked her watch nodding.

"It was fine!" I answered quickly. "I stayed a little longer than usual to finish up a project."

"You're on time, do you have any homework?" She asked.

"Yeah, I'll go do that now!" I stated. Mom nodded and resumed writing down notes. Clifford, my dog, zoomed in and started barking. He always barks when someone he knows comes home. I pet him and gave him a treat and then went up to my room and he snuggled up against my Mom.

I went upstairs and pulled out my science

binder. I started to work on my upcoming homework.

Around an hour later, I heard my dad call me down for dinner. Hm, he's home early. I looked out my window to see that my mom's car, as well as my dad's car, was not parked in the driveway, where it usually is. They must have parked somewhere else today, weird. I made my way downstairs, as my dad came inside the door with a weed wacker. I was surprised to see Clifford was not barking. I guess it was because he had already come in.

"Where's mom?" I asked Dad intently. "She was here like an hour ago."

"Oh, she is getting her car repaired." He started. "Someone decided to key it."

"Oh okay, where's your car?" I asked. "Oh, Uhm," he started, but I interrupted him.

"Whatever its not important, what did you make for dinner?"

"I picked up Chipotle, I'll go get us some drinks from the fridge upstairs," he stated

"Okay."

Dad looked kind of tired, his face was very pale and he's never looked so physically drained. Daydreaming, I heard the door open behind me.

"Hey honey we're home." My father and mother walked in. My heart dropped to the floor.

"W-what?" You were-" I started. My parents were in completely different clothes then what I saw them in.

"What?" My parents looked confused.

"If you're here.. who's.."

BOOM.

A gunshot cut me off.

By William Hendrickson

Walking on a trail in January, a family of five are wandering through the woods. While walking on the trail a big snow storm is going to hit. In the woods they hear the cracking and crunching of their feet stepping on branches. Then the sounds of birds singing and other bugs watching them in the trees.

The youngest of the group spots a building in the distance. "Hey dad can we go over there?"

His father, examining the building, decides that it is not a thought- out decision if he went to the building. "No son, it is not safe," the man said.

The child, looking at his father in disappointment, starts to walk away dramatically like someone just ruined his life. "Hey you know, you should let them have some fun while we are on the trip," Emily said. Emily is the mother of the family. She is the one responsible for the trip they are taking this week.

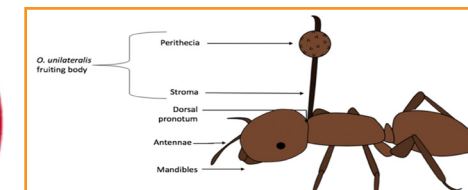
The family continues walking to the end of the trail. Near the end of the trail they did not hear as many animal sounds. They also noticed that the mysterious building was near the end of the trail. The youngest Kevin kept begging his father to go to the building. "Can we go please?" Kevin said.

"I said 'No Kevin, it is too dangerous and we don't know what is inside of it,'" his father said. The man walks off in agitation leaving the rest of the family at the trail. Confused, everyone looks at each other and tries to figure out what he is mad about. The car arrives and everyone gets in the car excited to have dinner at the hotel. The car drives off and a faceless figure was watching them in the distance. Tracking their every move, he then walks toward the building.

Attention and Warning:

# ZOMBIE FUNGUS REPORTED ACROSS ROANOKE COUNTY

*Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, commonly known as zombie-ant fungus



By Caroline Welfare

Like the zombie fungus that causes ants in the rainforests to bite onto vegetation and freeze as the mushroom slowly uses their bodies as fertilizer, the Mammalian Decay Fungus will spread from one cadaver to live mammals by spores in the air or by direct contact will the corpse.

**INSPECT YOUR FOOD BEFORE YOU EAT IT.**

Especially for game hunters and hikers, be warned that the fungus spreads through an animal's system for days before any outward symptoms begin to appear. The scientists on the case are making very little progress thus far, as getting samples is an extremely difficult task.

**IF YOU SUSPECT YOU MAY HAVE THE FUNGUS, REPORT YOURSELF AND THEN BARRICADE YOURSELF AWAY FROM OTHER PEOPLE.** We don't want to deal with a zombie apocalypse, now.

**PROTECT YOUR PETS**

Stay with your pets when you let them out and keep them away from any backyard wildlife you may have. In the case you do see an animal, back away, go inside, shower, wash your pet, and just in case, write your will. As another precaution, send any uncontaminated family members or important others away to prevent whatever fungal infection there may be from spreading to them. If it's any consolation, your (potential) cadaver will be used for science.

**Panicking and Overreacting is NOT Recommended**

If you are infected, panicking will raise your blood pressure and spread the infection faster. Moving to the coast will not help, as there is no guarantee it will be safer there and there will be a job vacuum over here. Think of our economy. **DO NOT WORRY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS IT MOSTLY UNDER CONTROL.**

**REMINDER:**

Protect yourself, your family, and your pets.

Check your food before consumption.

**KEEP GOOD HYGIENE.** It will help and also it is healthy.

Don't eat roadkill unless you know it's safe, or random mushrooms, come on people, you should know this already. **REMAIN CALM.**

FRESH STORIES



# GIRLS PLAY VES TODAY IF NOT ABDUCTED BY ALIEN ZOMBIES

By AB Cullen

As the girls tennis team began to start warm ups for their match against their big rival VES, something horrifically tragic happened.

It was Friday, October 13, the day of the girls tennis team's big match against VES. This match would determine who would be the conference champions.

All of the girls were excited but also very nervous and anxious. When 2:00 came, it was time for the girls to be dismissed and go change into their red skirts and white tops.

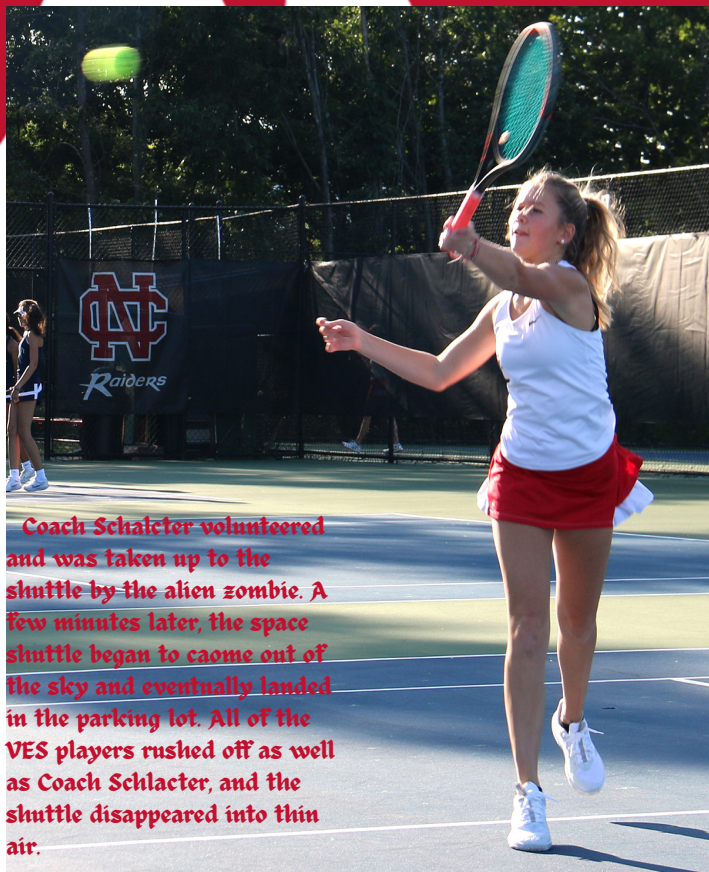
After changing, they made their way up the steps to the tennis courts where they met their coach Ryan Schlachter, who read out what the lineup was going to be. For the next hour, the girls warmed up and began to get focused in and ready for their matches. When 3:30 came around, the match was supposed to start, but VES was not here yet.

"It's ok girls, I'm sure they will be here soon.", Coach Schlachter said. Time passed and they still were not here, and everyone began to grow concerned after not hearing

from them about why they were not here.

Finally, Coach Schlachter was ready to call off the match, when all of the sudden a strange looking space shuttle appeared out of nowhere. Startled, everyone began to run and hide. After a few minutes, a weird looking figure appeared falling from the space shuttle and as it got closer and closer everyone quickly realized it was an alien zombie. Once the alien zombie got onto the ground, he demanded everyone to come out of hiding. He explained to everyone that the VES tennis team was being held captive on the space

shuttle. He demanded that one of the North Cross players come up to the space shuttle or else the VES tennis team would never be seen again.



Coach Schlachter volunteered and was taken up to the shuttle by the alien zombie. A few minutes later, the space shuttle began to caome out of the sky and eventually landed in the parking lot. All of the VES players rushed off as well as Coach Schlachter, and the shuttle disappeared into thin air.



FRESH  
STORIES

# Addie Finch is not your average girl, she's even cooler

Previously a homeschooler, the ice-hockey loving junior will finish at NCS.

By Anna Ciccozzi

Down at the rink, Addie Finch '25 races across the ice performing some of her favorite moves. Mohawks, Coast to Coasts, Bar Downs, Addie knows each move by heart as she directs the puck closer to the goal.

At first glance, Addie might seem like your typical girl with any other hobby. While popular sports like volleyball or dance appealed to some girls, Addie found a love for hockey.

"When I step onto the ice," Addie said, "everything disappears."

Addie's first interest in hockey sparked from a family trip to Lake Placid, New York, where the 1980 winter olympics were held. She and her family watched the movie Miracle, which according to Disney+ tells the story of the 1980 U.S hockey team winning the Olympics. When she returned back to her home in

Roanoke, almost as if fate, Addie would soon get the opportunity she was waiting for.

"My mom got an email from the head of hockey at the time asking me to try out," Addie said, "so I did, and I never looked back."

After nine years committed to hockey, Addie has coached three different little league hockey teams including boys teams and has practiced with colleges like Virginia Tech, where she was even asked

Addie strikes a pose during Fall Festivus.  
Photo by Eason Zhou

"When I step onto the ice," Addie said, "everything disappears."

Addie races to get to the puck before an opponent, coming from the opposite direction, gets there. Addie's position is left defense, and her goal is to pass the puck up to a winger. During this season, Addie was Assistant Captain of her hockey team, the Roanoke Lady Dawgs, which is part of the Rail Dawgs organization.



to help coach sometime in the future.

"Out of all the teams I have coached, U12 boys were the most fun," Addie said.

With her success and accomplishments in hockey, the path has not always been easy. Addie shares her experience being a girl in a male-dominated sport.

"It's fun when you're little," she said, "but when you get older, guys just have a physical advantage, and there are no good girls options in Roanoke."

These factors, along with ankle injuries, led to Addie's eventual decision to stop playing hockey.

Outside of Addie's vast hockey journey, Addie is a new student at North Cross school starting her junior year. Previously, Addie has been homeschooled, but she attended North Cross in kindergarten.

"Not being homeschooled anymore, I actually get to see people everyday," Addie said.

One of Addie's hidden strengths is that she is a really good debater who can speak on the spot. Although Addie finds debating to be an easy topic, her greatest weakness is not being able to "get out of a mood" once she's in one.

"Once I'm in a mood, I can't get out of it," Addy said. "I have overcome many different things in my life, but changing my mood is definitely not one of them."



# Freshman makes immediate impact on football field and community

DeShannon Reed’s life has changed with the new friends he has found at NCS.

By Maeve Parker

You may know DeShannon Reed from his success on the amazing football team as a freshman, but do you know about DeShannon Reed the amazing chef and fisherman?

Excited and optimistic, Reed ‘27, is starting his first year at North Cross School, and he has been looking forward to meeting new people and being a part of a fresh and different environment. His first weeks have been eventful, but Reed has settled in with the help of the North Cross’s

bright community.

“Everyone has helped me settle in,” Reed said. “I couldn’t just pick one person, it’s been like a community thing.”

The fall season is just starting, and Reed has been looking forward to the upcoming 2023 football season.

“My favorite time of the year is definitely the fall,” he said, “because of football season obviously.”

This season, he was especially looking forward to playing Benedictine College Preparatory at home on Sept. 22, as they should be the team’s

“My biggest inspiration would probably be my Grandma, because no matter how hard life is for her, she always looks at the good in every situation.”

-- DeShannon Reed ‘27



FLY GUY: DeShannon Reed gets horizontal tackling a Charlotte Country Day behind the line of scrimmage. Photo by Carter Krzeminski



DeShannon Reed ‘27 returns a kick against Charlotte Country Day School on Sept. 8, while Tonio Mack ‘26 looks to block for him. Photo by Carter Krzeminski

best competition of the season.

He plays the positions of running back and safety, and remarks that his optimistic attitude in the sport and his life comes from his grandmother. “My biggest inspiration would probably be my Grandma,” Reed adds, “because no matter how hard life is for her, she always looks at the good in every situation.”

While DeShannon loves football, one thing that many may not know about him is that he also loves to cook and bake.

“Baking and cooking really helps me express my creativity,” Reeds states, “and is something I’ve always had a passion for.” He has no favorite dish to make, as he loves the pastime so much that he would make anything and everything due to it being one of his favorite hobbies.

Another fun fact is that DeShannon’s favorite place to be is at his grandfather’s pond where he gets to fish. DeShannon loves to fish and he goes fishing whenever he can find the free-time. With the fall season coming up, it is a perfect time for fishing, so DeShannon will hopeful-

ly be able to spend lots of time at the pond in the future.

DeShannon Reed stats as of Oct. 6:

- Four kickoff returns for 65 yards
- 28-yard-long return
- 16 tackles
- 9 solo tackles
- one tackle for loss

“My favorite time of the year is definitely the fall,” he said, “because of football season obviously.”

# Bonds brings size, speed to defense

By Jacob Johnson

Used to private school life due to attending our rivals Roanoke Catholic, Nate Bonds ‘25 stepped foot on campus at 8:00 a.m. on day one dressed in formal attire with his Hey Dudes on foot.

Nate says he didn’t have formal dress days at Catholic, so he didn’t know we had to wear dress shoes with the stiff, itchy suits. He transferred from Catholic to NCS to be able to play for Coach Shannon Taylor and give him a better chance of getting to his high hopes of going to the next level in football.

“NCS isn’t that much different from Catholic,” said Bonds. “Just the school work is a little more.” He says he didn’t have as much school work at Catholic.

Standing at 6-foot and 190 pounds, Bonds has started every game playing outside linebacker so far and stacked up 26 solo and 28assisted tackles totaling 54 tackles as well as one sack.

“Even though Coach Taylor yells at me all the time,” Bonds said, “and it seems over nothing. He’s a really good coach.”

When Bonds is asked about his teammates he said he likes them.

“My teammates, yeah they’re cool so far,” he



NOT 007: Number 7 Nate Bonds ‘25 plays linebacker against Benedictine along with #6 Tristan Lange ‘26 and #13 Jase Rhodes ‘26. Photo by Carter Krzeminski

said. “As long as they don’t act weird in the locker room and know when to lock in, we’ll have no problems.”

When Nate isn’t playing football or in his two science classes, he likes to play “Call Of Duty” and

Fortnite. “When I play COD I feel like I’m tcTekk.” tcTekk is a gamer who records himself playing games such as COD, Fortnite, and other popular games.



POSSE POSING: JDeparted student Mika Droste, Nate Bonds ‘25, DeShannon Reed ‘27, Nate Hayes ‘26 and Jase Rhodes ‘26 seem to take the Honor Code Assembly seriously. Photo by Eason Zhou

“My teammates, yeah they’re cool so far,” he said. “As long as they don’t act weird in the locker room and know when to lock in, we’ll have no problems.”

-- Nate Bonds

Nate Bonds Stats as of Oct. 6:

- 54 tackles
- 26 solo tackles
- Two tackles for loss
- One sack



# Johnson plans to run track, edit sports pages

## Salem transfer hopes to parlay final years of high school into top college

By Liam Rippel

A huge part of Jacob Johnson's life is running track and field in the spring as it is his favorite sport.

"Definitely track and field" which was Johnson's response to what his favorite sport was. "I don't have to rely on people to carry their weight."

Johnson is an extremely gifted athlete, which is why he is very successful in track. He ran Track and Field at his former school Salem High School. Prior to coming to North Cross, Johnson had spent his last 10 years of school in the Salem School System. On the Salem Track team he participated in the 200 meter and 400 meter events as a sophomore. In these events he earned personal records of 26.32 in the 200 meter and 56.10 in the 400 meter races. These times show individual success and progress, this for Jacob is one his favorite parts of track and field.

Johnson has made an important decision in transferring to North Cross. He is now a junior, which is a big year for sports recruiting.

"It gives me a better chance of getting into a good college," Johnson said. "It provides an overall better education."

He is a hard working student academically and looks forward to college, he has interest in multiple

schools, one of which being Howard University in Washington D.C.

He enjoys his classes. "The teachers are more approachable, they and they are here to help, they actually care," was Johnson's answer to how different North Cross is to other schools he has attended. Johnson thoroughly enjoyed his time here, his response to which

school he likes more was "Definitely here more."

Johnson prefers the methods of teaching that are utilized here as well, he mentions Mr. Wilde, our Varsity Golf coach and long-time math teacher.

He says that he really enjoys Mr. Wilde and his class because, "He is just like chill."

Johnson says he learns much better when teachers are a little more laid back and relaxed in the classroom, as it helps him learn more efficiently. Although Mr. Wilde isn't the only reason he enjoys his 3rd period class so much. Johnson's favorite school subject is mathematics, as he says "Numbers just make sense."

Johnson has really enjoyed his short time at North Cross so far, he is looking forward to the rest of the year, and continuing to meet new people. He also looks forward to the spring, as he is excited to put his athleticism on display and post excellent track times for the team.

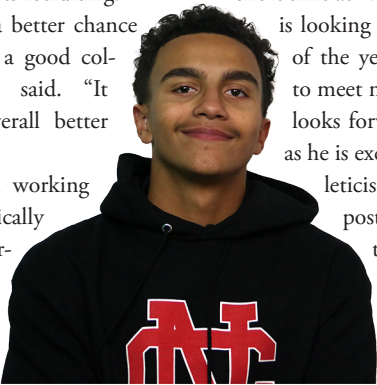


Photo by Eazon Zhou

*"The teachers are more approachable, they and they are here to help. They actually care."*



**I'M JACOB JOHNSON:** This is a picture I took while I was taking Driver's Ed over the summer. I used to have hair like in the picture above until around August 3. I decided to cut it when I realized I have to do too much in the mornings just for it to look decent. Can I tell you I love red and black?



**BMOC:** Listed as 6-foot-2 and 300 pounds, new student Trace Pickard '27 pops the top button of his dress shirt during the Honor Code Assembly next to Walker Reel '27. Sitting behind him, star running back Kam Johnson '24 enjoys the left Pickard brings to the offensive line as a guard. Pickard also rotates in at defensive tackle. Eazon Zhou

# Eubank takes over as Athletic Director

By Eason Zhou

Joining NCS as the new athletic director this summer, Jeremy Eubank immediately showed his talent for promoting the fall sports and athletes by posts on Instagram.

Eubank started a new life in Roanoke after being Director of Athletics at Chatham Hall, where he won an award from the Virginia Independent School Athletic Association as AD of the year, and AD of the soccer and track and field programs at Hargrave Military Academy before that.

"[NCS is] a great school, both academically and athletically," Eubank said. "You know, one of the biggest attractions for me was for my daughter to be able to go to school here. She started kindergarten. And then as well as the athletic programs that you guys offer here. It's an amazing success that you guys had over the last couple of years. And I hope to be able to continue that here."

"Obviously, it's more programs," said Eubanks when comparing programs at NCS and Chatham Hall. "I think the other differences obviously, it's single gender compared to coed"

However, he thinks there's not a lot of difference between a day school and a boarding school other than residential.

"Living in a day school, the kids go home," he said "You know, the kids have been great here and very welcoming. It was the same situation when I was at Chatham Hall as well."

Jeremy was not able to pick a favorite team at North Cross.

"I'm a big fan of all sports," he said. "I really enjoy seeing everybody going out there competing and giving it all."

I asked him which team will win a state championship again.

"Ah, that's hard to say," he said.



**SPORTY:** Jeremy Eubank patrols the sidelines during the night game at Salem stadium between the Raiders and Charlotte Country Day. Photo by Carter Krzeminski

"You know, I think a lot of it will come down to what other schools have. And as the rankings and standings come out, give us a better picture of where we are in our respective athletic programs."

Eubank created two new things for our athletic programs.

"One, if we win with class, we lose a class," Eubank said "You know, I think the second thing is, I want us

*"I'm a big fan of all sports. I really enjoy seeing everybody going out there competing and giving it their all."*  
-- Jeremy Eubank

think we've done a good first step in all that, as we've gone forward. And we'll continue to go forward and add different elements to our athletic de-

partment."

More interesting, his opinion on the Media Club is "I like everybody that I've met so far, I don't know everybody's name yet. But I'm hoping to get there sooner than later."

He was a five-sport athlete in high school, played college soccer and ran track as well. He said the one sport he would play if he could go back in time, he would play football.

What color will he pick to be a new school color? He personally wears a lot of black and white and gray.

He is a very neutral person. He said "I've not been asked, I'd probably be a blue, probably a royal blue."

What if North Cross added a new sports team?

"Right now, off the top of my head. I'm always open to ideas, a lot of that's going to come down to who we would compete with. There's a lot of talk about different sports within the State Athletic Association. It just depends on what other schools are competing in," said Eubank. "You know, I'd really like to see us grow and make sure that we have equal opportunity for all of our student athletes and want to compete in something. So I'd like to see more participation, really, across the board in all of our sports from all of our student athletes in the middle school and high school. I mean, there's not one real sport that we don't already offer. That I couldn't say that we could add something else at this point."

In the end he told us fun facts about himself. "Two things I'll give out," he said. "I have a twin brother who lives in Richmond. And I love to play Playstation, I'm glad to be here. I'm excited to be here. I look forward to meeting all of you guys through the number of activities that you guys have here. And go Raiders."

For more on Mr. Eubank, see Eason's Instagram site: [whh\\_ez\\_exclusive](#)