

[Advertisements]

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman embracing from behind. The man is on the left, wearing a dark sweater, and the woman is on the right, with long wavy hair. They are both looking out towards the right. A QR code is positioned on the right side of the image, and text is overlaid on the top and bottom. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape. There are decorative starburst icons in the corners.

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In a warm embrace from the Avalon community with prayers for consolation of Mr. Davern and his family,

Irene B.Davern



June 26, 1941 to January 23, 2024

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Like the seed buried in the ground, you have produced the harvest of eternal life for us; make us always dead to sin and alive to God.

The Avalon School



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The Chronicles

Volume 5, Issue 2

Washington House Secures Lead in Hostile Takeover of Competition

Mateo Bara-Serrano

Chronicles Staff Writer

Calvert House started off strong in this year's house competition, amassing a wealth of points during early Festival Day competitions, but Washington House with its band of bards has proved to be an obstacle in the course of Calvert's dreamed voyage to victory as the men in gray have taken the overall lead in the house competition with a commanding victory on the Immaculate Conception festival day. The day proved to be an unfruitful one for Calvert, as Washington House managed to get a leg up on the games, the very thing that had kept Calvert ahead of them despite Washington's poetic prowess. This did not bode well for them, leaving them in third place with a 305 point deficit against Washington and a 160 point deficit with second place Stewart House.

Washington House has continued their winning ways from last year, securing a firm foothold in the poetry competition with bardic heavyweights Patrick Stroot, Oliver Bilinski, and Peter Bronzi. Mr Tobin, a poetry judge, comments on the matter saying, "On the poetry they're in strong shape, they're really good at all levels." While Washington has had an out-



Elann Hyde wears his house colors despite being removed from the game for tomfoolery *Photo by Tyler Vanags*

standing performance in poetry, they seem to face a tight rival, Carroll House. While Peter narrowly secured the Captain's round leaving Joszi Teleki in second place in a close match between the two, Mr. Tobin also notes that Will Nerstheimer has "emerged as a top level reciter" with his stellar performance of his Romeo speech, saying it was, "delivered with the right tone, right dramatic quality, and without the slightest problem of memorization." Another commendable reciter hailing from Carroll House is Logan Curley from the

run for their money in the poetry this year. Stewart House seems to have made their mark this year too, thanks to the efforts of Virgil Phair, with his stunning performance, though both Stewart and Calvertn have banked on the games rather than in poetry. Calvert House's captain, Vincent McHale has proven to be an effective leader, using his charismatic spirit to shape up his team during the games. He does not waste a single resource at his disposal, working with students of all ages to gain the upper hand. While most Houses have

7th and 8th grade bracket, who time and again has proved himself a worthy asset, this time with his recital of 'Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.' Commenting on this young poetry pugilist, Mr. Tobin added, "Every festival day he comes well prepared, his memorization is ex-

found it difficult to get all of their kids to cooperate, this does not seem to be the issue for Vincent, as he's found a way to get everyone in sync with him. This has gained him a serious advantage during the games, allowing for a proper collaboration to a degree other houses may find harder to attain. It's thanks to this that Vincent had secured the lead for the majority of this year, however it's got a tough competition ahead against the leading contender, Washington House.

Washington house performed spectacularly during this year's feast of St. Thomas Aquinas Murderball Tournament. You could say they even won almost all three games miraculously. During the day's second round, Calvert House 9th grader Hector Garcia stood off against Washington House 4th grader Samuele Rodriguez in a 1 on 1, both the last man standing on each of their respective teams. Surprisingly, Samuele managed to land a shot on Hector before his opponent could hit him, winning the game for Washington and helping them secure another wealth of points. This catapulted them over the 4000 point threshold. It's safe to say that at the moment, Washington House's lead is secured, leaving Calvert stranded in second place with an increasing gap.

Contra Dance Makes a Full Swing Return to the Avalon Community

By Vincent McHale

Chronicles Staff Writer

The Contra Dance has finally returned to the Avalon and Brookewood community! What a turn out it was: upper schoolers, lower schoolers, middle schoolers, grandparents, and parents all came to enjoy the good times that they knew would be there. The dances started off simple and got a little more challenging as the night went on. The challenge was not because they were particularly hard to do, but because it was hard to hear the instructor over all the banter that was going on near the food, no matter how close you got to the speaker. Every family was asked to bring something according to their last name, and no diners were disappointed. There were plates of food flying left right and center, little kids running around with sodas, laughing and chasing one another even out the front door. Thankfully Mr. Tom Stroot kept a watchful eye over them as they entered into the front grassy area, which became the hot spot for the lower schoolers to play.

Every dance that was performed



Avalon and Brookewood students of all ages tearing up the dance floor. *Photo Courtesy Mrs. Bilinski*

was something different, and the dance floor was full of dancers for every number. Joyful fiddle music drove the swinging, strutting, ladies' chains, four hand stars and all of the moves of the dances. The dances are lively and easy to learn.

Tex Bronzi, Avalon 2nd Grader, said that his favorite dance was the "Split the Banana." He enjoyed running down the line and doing all the other things that came with it. Nacho Teleki, Avalon 1st Grader, agreed with Tex's excitement that there will hopefully be more of these kinds of dances. This seemed to be a common

theme for the lower schoolers. Emma Love, a Brookewood 2nd grader, also thirded that point made by Tex. It seems that with such high praise for this kind of event that more will hopefully come to follow. The fun was not just limited to the lower schoolers. Everyone was dancing with everyone, from the lower school dancing with the highschoolers, to the high schoolers dancing with the grandparents, teachers dancing with students. Everyone was friends that night, and none were left out of the fun that was being generated on the dance floor.

The only problem to come of this evening of joy, was the line to the food. Due to the incredible turnout, the line for the food wrapped the Claridge Room. Many times people snuck in with their family or friends to beat the line out. This was honestly a brilliant idea to cut down on the wait time to get to the food. While everyone was getting food the dancing came to a halt, allowing Mr. Davern to call everyone's attention for Prayer. While he did try his best to get everyone's attention, just the sheer volume inside made it hard to hear him over the speaker. Everyone was having too good of a time to even hear Mr. Davern over the speakers. Then out of nowhere, or as if on cue, fireworks erupted right outside the windows of the Claridge room. For about twenty minutes there were fireworks going off and on. All the little kids swarmed outside hoping (and succeeding) on getting a better view. Then as if they had planned it all, started to shout, "More!", and well, more did explode after that.

The night marked a great comeback of an Avalon tradition. The joy of the participants was a clear sign that the dance is back for a good long run.

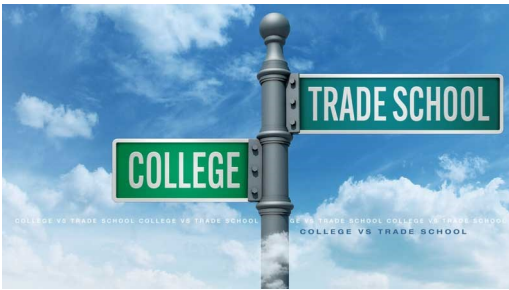
[News]

College vs. Trade: Current Seniors Weigh the Choices

By Vincent McHale
Chronicles Staff Writer

With the ever rising price of college, parents are starting to look at more affordable options for their kids to find a good career. Some students here at The Avalon School, most notably Karsci Teleki, have turned to the trades instead of pursuing a degree. While yes, it might not seem as prestigious or fancy as going to a college for four years (and walking out with tens of thousands of dollars of debt), the number of jobs that come with the trade sector is growing fast. The trades are something that will always be needed, especially as the rising population necessitates the building of more infrastructure and increases the demand for the workers to do the building. While on the other side, for as many welders we need, we also need college-trained professionals: doctors to take care of our health, lawyers to defend us when needed, engineers to design the buildings, and scientists to push us into the future. Now, it seems that everyone is going to college because it just seems necessary, as high school used to be for everyone.

At The Avalon School the trade route is something that is not looked down upon. I spoke with Mr. Hawley, a long time college counselor for the school about this trend. He told me, “At Avalon it is something that we encourage kids to think about.” According to Mr. Hawley, Avalon doesn’t just want to help the kids get a well-paying job to live their own life, but they also think about the next generation. This is something else that makes Avalon that much more special. The teachers and advisors here are not



They want to make sure that whatever they choose, it will help them succeed.

One of the biggest downsides of trade work is how it is mainly directed at men. The trade sector is dominated by males, but that does not mean that women are not allowed to go into it. The women in the trades do often get high praises from their co-workers or bosses from the amount of work put into the jobs. This comes from the owners of many different trade companies that I have talked to over the summer. Girls are more likely to go to college than boys, not just because of their on-average better grades, but also the degrees they choose to be in. Nursing is a prime example of this. A Nursing degree only takes four years to complete and then you are finished, and can go right out into the workforce. But nursing is also a degree that is heavily dominated by women instead of men. While going into a trade does mean that you do not have to go to college, it doesn't mean there won't be some classes you have to take.

Where to go after high school? This is easily the most commonly asked question for highschoolers. Forty years ago the economy was very different, but with inflation and the price of houses going up as well

just looking at what could be best for the students but also the families that they will form in the future. as food and mainly college tuition, some jobs just don't seem as worth as much. The element of trades that gets many people interested in it is the money that comes with it. Mr. Hawley told me, “I know hundreds if not thousands of private school teachers, and about two of them own beach houses. It is usually because there are two working couples, or they inherited the beach house. I know like five HVAC contractors who all own beach houses.” This simple statement rings in kids' ears. When they hear that you don't have to go to college, and you can still make gigabucks, enough for a beach house, their ears perk up. The trades, if done properly, can make you a lot of money, but if done badly you can end you up in a tough place, but that is true with college as well. Mr. Hawley explained the lingering appeal of college when he told me, “In the US it has kind of become a stamp in your life book in order to land...what really should be an entry level job.” This notion of going to college after high school is starting to seem like a necessity to even land a job now. This is not because the jobs really do require a college degree but because of the inflation of college degrees in the workforce. It is a good thing that people are interested in learning. Your mind and what you have in it is something that no one can ever take away from you. All trades require some level of education in order to do the jobs, with plumbing you need to know about volumes and such, electrical with circuits that require more math than other trades. So even if you do go into a trade, do expect to still be doing some sort of math or science.

At Avalon the trades are something that all kids should look into just to see if they would be interested in any of them.

Karsci Teleki Goes the Trade Route and Pursues a Welding Career

By Danny Santa Rita
Chronicles Staff Writer

Karsci Teleki graduated last year from Avalon, where he was a promising and talented student, so it came as a surprise to some when he made his decision to avoid the traditional route of college and go to a trade school. Although he was well-suited for an academic route, Karsci said in an interview “Well, as good as a student you guys said I was, I am not sure I live up to the appraisals here. I was sure that I did not want to go study for four years at a college and end up with thousands of dollars in debt so I started looking at alternative options, that being the trades”. Although he was originally searching for trade schools within the DMV area, it was a specialized welding school in Troy, Ohio that caught his eye. The school he found was The Hobart Institute of Welding Technology, a school that has a great reputation with not only teaching people how to be good welders, but also in being able to help their students get jobs after graduation. They include a special section of the



Karsci on the job.

Photo Courtesy Karsci Teleki

school that is designed to get students jobs straight out of the classroom. He was pleased to see that the cost for a ten month program is only \$24,000. He stated that this is great because “After school I will have no debt. My grandfather left money for me, God rest his soul. He put money away for me when I was born. He put it into a stock account to the tune of \$40,000 and this allowed me to pay for the school and the house I have there. I rent a house, me and a

buddy from New York”. Karsci began his course by learning oxy-acetylene welding, an outdated form of welding using gas to weld metal together as well as to cut it apart. The gas cutting is still used today but the welding is done using electric arcs. There are three processes of welding he is going to learn; Stick, MIG and TIG. He is currently taking Stick, which is harder than MIG but easier than TIG and claims he is “ Having an interesting time with that. Might have lost my mind on Friday and destroyed my booth. But aside from that I am doing great.” He will take the other two as well later on down the line. As well as enjoying the work he is doing he also enjoys the teachers, most of whom are alumni from the school who had welded for 30 to 40 years then returned to the school to teach out of love of what they do. He is very happy where he is and does not think he could have found a better place for himself. He still keeps in touch with his old friends from Avalon such as Joe Romasco, Max Downey, Alec Hawley, David Sorenson, Frank Haley and others who are getting their work done in college but are not as happy as he is where they are. He has a class

size of around thirty people, mostly men, who take the same classes and will graduate together. The smaller class size makes it easy to meet classmates and form friend groups similarly to how it works at Avalon. The institute's location of Troy, Ohio is a very small town inhabited mostly by elderly people. There is not much going on there but nearby areas such as Beaver Creek are bigger and have more places to go including a mall and a few restaurants. Karsci seems to enjoy the area saying that “There is a lot to do. The buddies are good.” He currently plans to work local structural or pipe welding jobs once he's out of school as he wants a settled and structured life rather than always being on the road, even if the money is better. His date for finishing up his program is August 2nd with the option of taking additional classes if he doesn't feel ready. There is currently such a shortage of welders that you can go right into positions without needing an apprenticeship, so he is confident he will get a job even if he is not the best welder. It is a good business to be in right now and Karsci states that “if you don't wanna go to college this is the way to go.”

[Feature]

A Seniors Complete Guide to Eating Out at Lunch Period

Co-written y Benedict Alicea, Logan Bonsby and Vincent McHale

Nando's Peri Peri

★★★★

Ben Alicea

Nando's Peri Peri is an excellent choice for a good meal at a semi-affordable price. It's located at the front of the Wheaton Mall, across from Sydney's Burger. During the weekdays, they run a deal, where you can get a ¼ chicken, with a side and a drink for only \$10, and with what you get, I'd say it's worth your money. Nando's offers a variety of food, such as sandwiches, pitas, and wraps, but their main specialty is roasted Peri Peri chicken. Their chicken is roasted and seasoned to perfection, and they toss it in the house hot sauce of your preferred heat level. We ordered a ½ chicken and a side of fries and corn on the cob, which was plenty of food for both of us and it cost us around \$20. Overall, Nando's steps to the pricey side of food, but now, \$10 for lunch seems to be the default price for most restaurants. A fair warning to students is that the food takes a little while to prepare, so maybe you want to order beforehand so you don't miss class.



Logan Bonsby eating at Nandos Peri Peri

Photo courtesy of Ben Alicea

Sydney's Burger

★★★★

Logan Bonsby

One eatery near Costco is a stand-alone restaurant called Sydney's Burger. Sydney's is a small business that offers classic burgers, bacon burgers, and everything of that sort. They also have all-day breakfast specials. Most combos are around \$10 but they do offer a special for only \$6.99 which includes a burger with 'Sydney's Sauce', a drink, and their signature seasoned fries. The deal is even better with a

10% discount since I'm such a regular there and I've befriended the front-of-the-house worker, 'G' and he has given the discount to other Avalon students, whom he recognizes by the style of dress.



Man protesting to keep Costco hot dogs at \$1.50 price point

Photo via Google

Costco

★★★★★

Vincent McHale

The greatest place to go for lunch as a high schooler is clearly Costco. Nowhere else can you get a full lunch for only \$3.70. This gets you a big slice of pizza, a hotdog, and a soda. Although this is far from the healthiest option out there for lunch, in a pinch it will get you through the day. The downside of Costco is the line. If you get there at the wrong time you might not have enough time to sit down and eat but you can always eat on the walk back to the car.

Two Hands

★★

Ben Alicea

Two Hands is an interesting new restaurant in Wheaton Mall. It's a Korean corn dog stand. Korean corn dogs are like regular corn dogs but with heese inside and different types of toppings. You can customize your meal and get different things like a batter made from fried potatoes on the outside or a batter made from crushed hot Cheetos. I got the lunch combo which came with a horchata slushie, a potato corn dog, and Hot Cheeto fries for \$10. For what I paid, It was a good amount of food, but I felt terrible after eating it. It's extremely greasy and I don't even wanna know how many calories it was. It's honestly not the best bang for your buck, and it's pretty unhealthy so I don't think I'm going back anytime soon, but it's still a good option.

Hangry Joe's

★★★★

Ben Alicea

Hangry Joes is probably the most infamous place to eat at Avalon. The hype over this Nashville hot chicken restaurant started to gain steam when Mr. Matt Stroot started praising the restaurant to his students. My sister lives in Nashville and she has taken me to a couple famous hot chicken restaurants so I went into Hangry Joes with very high standards, and I have to admit, it pretty much lives up to those standards. They offer a huge variety of things. The basics are a sandwich, tenders, chicken and waffles, wings, and loaded fries. You pick your spice level, with the highest being so spicy, that you must sign a waiver to ensure you won't sue them if you get hurt. I went there on my birthday last year with a couple of classmates, and my friend Bebo, an exchange student from last year. He got the spiciest thing on the menu and he was crying while he was eating the sandwich. It's pricey, with combos costing \$15, but it makes for a good place to go on special occasions.

Continental Pizza

★★★★

Logan Bonsby

Continental Pizza is a very well-known restaurant in Kensington that is within walking distance of Brookewood. Continental has a limited menu of pizza and subs and it takes cash only, which could be a negative to some would-be customers. The pizza is the way to go with \$12.50 being the price for a small 10" and \$13.90 for a 10 x 14" large pizza. Although it's just regular pizza, they do it perfectly here, with the right amount of sauce, and cheese and baked to perfection. And for those feeling a little more hungry, the fries are a good option with light seasoning. Even though I've never had any of the subs myself, I've heard good things about the steak and cheese but the subs, while there is a good selection, are a little more pricey at about \$14 for a 16" one. Food is made to order here so it always comes out hot.

Quickway & Hibachi Express

★★★

Logan Bonsby

There are multiple Japanese Hibachi locations near Avalon and Brookewood. One is close to Unique Thrift off of Viers Mill, called Quickway and another is near Brookewood in the Kensington Shopping Center, called Hibachi Express. They have a decent selection of different Japanese foods, including sushi, spring rolls, dumplings, and poke bowls. But their main dishes are their Hibachi plates, consisting of

either rice or noodles and optional vegetables. Each plate has an option of either chicken, beef, tofu, shrimp, and salmon. The price is something to love too, being only \$7.95 for the chicken hibachi, and with the hearty helpings of rice and meat, the price-to-volume ratio is only beaten by Costco

Charleys Cheesesteaks

★★★★

Vincent McHale

Now if you are looking for a place to go for a decent Philly Cheese steak then this should be your go to. While the price is nothing like it is for Costco, being upwards of \$15, it is a nice treat once in a while. If you go for the large Philly, fries and a drink it will fill you up nicely but again it is on the pricey side.

Taco truck near unique thrift

★★★

Ben Alicea

Hidden behind a rug shop in the parking lot of unique thrift lies a hidden Hispanic treasure. It's a taco truck that makes some of the best tacos I've ever had. They have classic street tacos, burritos, pupusas and so much more. I got the birria tacos, which are a type of street taco with marinated pulled beef, grilled like a quesadilla and served with a sauce to dip in. I can't recommend it enough. They take cash and card and it usually costs around \$14 which isn't unreasonable because street tacos are pretty expensive. I also got a pupusa another time I visited and it was amazing.



Ben and Logan pose for a photo with the lovely cashier of Sydney's Burger, G

Photo courtesy of Logan Bonsby

[Feature]

Emanuele Contini’s Life Journey Leads to Faith and Witness

By Francesco Contini
Chronicles Staff Writer

Emanuele Contini, a man from a small city in Italy called Latina, right next to Rome. If my father’s life was a movie, you would just say “wow” at the end of it. My father’s life is filled with countless stories, some funny, others shocking. He has had such an insane life that he still tells stories that I have not heard before. He was raised in a completely different lifestyle than how he raised his own kids. However, we have to dive deeper into his life to understand how it ended up the way it did and why he eventually came to America.

My father is the second born in a family of six. At eleven years old, he was sent to boarding school until he turned seventeen. His family was very tight. Back then, everybody in Latina knew his family and their name. He was raised to understand that it was important to have a good last name because it opened many doors. His family owned a business. The business was the storing, building, and distribution of frozen foods like gelato (Ice Cream). When he was young, his family did not go to church because there was no God in the picture. All that mattered was to have a last name and a successful business. However, whenever he went to see his grandparents, his grandmother would always speak



about God. She gave him a better understanding of faith and of Christianity, as did the Salesians, and his boarding school. He became more interested. He read *The Religious Sense*, which helped to deepen his faith as did the movement that would eventually shape his life: The Neocatechumenal Way. The NCW was giving a catechesis at the church in Latina. He decided to go to the catechesis, and he heard something that made him stay and listen.

“The speaker during the catechesis said: ‘You cannot see the love of God in your cross.’” He meant that we question ourselves, saying that if God loves me, why do I have this suffering in my life. This was relevant to him because when he was young, he

was on the beach when someone came behind him and started to strangle him. He thought it was his older brother just messing around, but when the man would not stop, he realized he was in trouble. He blacked out. When he awoke, he was told that the man was someone who escaped a mental institution that same day. My father was left traumatized. And so, he kept listening to the catechesis. He joined the NCW when he was seventeen. However, when he was twenty-two, he was

drafted to the military. He was put into a school there, and taught others how to drive trucks and buses. However, one day he saw a man that looked very sad. He asked the man what was wrong. The man told him that he wanted to leave, that he did not want to be there anymore. My father, in a rush to keep working, gave the man a few words of encouragement. He told him: “Tutto Passa” (Everything passes). He told the man that it would be fine. My father took a few steps toward his office, and then... BOOM! He heard an explosion right behind him. He turned around and saw that the man had taken his own life. The incident made a huge impact on Emanuele. “I understood that man’s life can be a tragedy. And when suffering has no meaning, it

makes people prefer death than having to live life when it has no meaning.” After serving his time in the military, my father continued in the NCW and went to Australia with a team to do missionary work since there were parishes in Australia that wanted to start The Neocatechumenal Way. He went all over Australia. He was then sent to the USA to do the same thing. He went to Dallas, El Paso, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Boston, and Washington DC. “Washington DC is where the most beautiful thing happened to me; I met this girl, and I was so struck that I never recovered after that.” That girl became his wife and the mother of eight children. They lived in Latina, Italy. They had their first three kids there, however in 1994, John Paul II sent our family to Washington DC as missionaries, and we have lived there since then.

From living in Washington DC, they continued to go on mission to Cleveland, Cincinnati, Georgia, Philadelphia, etc. My father said that his old self would have changed his life many years ago. However, he realized that the way his life went with every tragedy, every suffering, was fundamental in order to see that Jesus is not a religious idea, but a concrete person who met him in the meaninglessness and violence of his life. He never would have thought that his life would go the way it did. And he would not change a thing.

Avalon Gears up for Big 20th Anniversary Gala Celebration

By: Chronicles Staffers

Excitement builds for the 20th Anniversary Avalon-Brookewood Gala that is coming up on March 23. This is always a big night for the schools, but this year is a special one. To get a fix on what is coming our way, *The Chronicles* was able to track down the director of the gala, Mr. Gil McPherson. With scores of music in his hand he was humming a tune and working out steps for a dance number as he hurried from class to the Claridge Room. Still, he generously gave his time for an interview.

Mr. Gil McPherson shares with Mr. Alicea the distinction of having experienced the Gala as a student. When we asked him how it was for him to be on the student end of the Gala experience, Mr. McPherson replied, “I always loved it. It is surpris-



ing that I loved it. On its face you would find it embarrassing to sing and dance in front of people who were all dressed up in evening attire. But I found that with Mr. Corey [who directed the gala in the early years of the school] he had this way of just helping us to embrace the thing we were doing. You were doing it with your friends and it was just a lot of fun.” But there was another dimension to the experience that Mr. McPherson learned, one that he very much wants to impress upon his stu-

dents. He told us, “I always felt a great appreciation for the night because it was a chance for the kids to say thank you and also for all the parents and the donors to say thank you for all the work that my father and his colleagues put in. So I always felt it to be a real night of gratitude.”

Mr. McPherson has been the overall director of the Gala for the last three years, including the all-video Covid year gala, but he has been very active in all six years of his time as a teacher here. He has done a great job, but it has not been without its challenges. When we asked him to describe for us a challenge he faces, he did not hesitate: “The challenge is that there are a lot of kids with a lot of energy and it is hard to harness that energy into a cohesive bit. Basically, my hope for every number is to keep that energy. It is good energy but

that is the challenge every time, to take that good boyish energy and harness it to produce something that is good, fun, and organized.” This is Mr. McPherson’s trademark style and the fine high school numbers of the last years bear witness to it.

Any sneak peaks into the coming gala? A free-talking Mr. McPherson suddenly became very tight-lipped, not wishing to spoil the night with too much talk up front. In front of the dogged questioning of *Chronicles* staff, Mr. McPherson did give us a few small hints of coming attractions. There will be a cameo appearance of a beloved faculty spouse. (An inside *Chronicles* source identified this spouse as Grainne Tobin). There will be a special spotlight on the revival of this school newspaper and the ugly Christmas sweater contest has given rise to a number in the show. For more information, well, you will just have to come and see.

[Sports]

Avalon Black Knights Fight Through Tough Basketball Season

By Logan Bonsby
Chronicles Staff Writer

This season at Avalon has been full of ups and downs for our players. There have been a few strong wins and many close losses for our Black Knights. The first big win of the season was against the Smith Jewish Day School with a final score of 87-76 in a very dramatic double -overtime. Initially in the first quarter the Black Knights had a slow start and at the end of the first quarter the score was 22-9 SDJS. But by half time Avalon pulled to the lead scoring 27 points bringing the total to 36-30. Avalon and SDJS fought hard and the score was 64-64 by the end of the game. Adding two more periods the teams fought neck and neck until the Black Knights



Trey and Pietro consult during a break in the action *Photo courtesy Tyler Vanags*

Total Points Scored	
Trey Simmons—221	Elann Hyde—38
Pietro Bardelli—92	Noah Green—27
Javen Jones—40	Marcus Yidnekachew—22

pulled away in the fourth quarter posting a final score of 87-76. Trey Simmons and Pietro Bardelli were our top shooters putting up 39 and 25 points.

The next victory of the season, against the

Spencerville Adventist Academy Hornets, was Pietro Bardelli’s last game before returning to his home country of Italy. Similarly to the previous game, the Hornets gained the lead in the first quarter, leaving our Black Knights trailing behind 22 to 14. But as always our team is quickly able to rally and counter the opponent. We held the lead for the rest of the game scoring a final win of 72-65. Highlights included many three pointers by Bardelli and a stylish dunk by Simmons.

Unfortunately, this season has had many let downs. Last month against the DC International School Dragons Avalon was not able to break through the Dragon’s lead and the game closed off at 57-51, with many players remarking that victory was in their grasp. But the final score is still impressive considering that the Dragons are one of the best teams in their league. According to Jack Abel, who is a Basketball player and a loyal Trey Cuts customer, and was my correspondent at the St. Anselm’s game on January 22nd, Avalon was able to keep a steady lead of about twenty points and Avalon was breezing through their defense and Trey was able to make one of his signature dunks. Towards the end of

Points Per Game
(Of this season so far)

Trey Simmons—27.6

Pietro Bardelli—15.3

Javen Jones—5.7

Elann Hyde—5.4

Noah Green—3.9

Marcus Yidnekachew—3.7

***Trey holds the top spot for PPG in Maryland and is about #100 in the entire U.S.*

the game our Black Knights lost a little steam but they held together closing the game off at 71-62.

The Black Knights were able to bounce back a week later with a 71-62 victory against Saint Anselm’s. This is a promising sign for the end-of-the-year Saint Anselm’s tournament. Avalon has squared up against very tough competition this year and hopes to claim yet another trophy in the end of the year tournament that they have often dominated.

NBA Calls a Foul on Enes Kantor for his Criticism of Chinese Policy

By Kasper Syski
Chronicles Staff Writer

In a surprising turn of events, Enes Kanter, a well-known NBA player, recently found himself at the center of a controversy that led to his departure from the league. Kanter, recognized for his outspoken views on social and political issues, particularly in his home country of Turkey, faced severe consequences for speaking out against human rights abuses in China. Kanter’s journey from a rising star in the NBA to a controversial figure began when he openly criticized the Chinese government’s treatment of the Uighur Muslim minority in Xinjiang.

His plea for justice gained attention globally, but it also created tensions within the NBA, which has strong ties to China, an essential market for the league. The NBA, being a global sports powerhouse, has been criticized in the past for not addressing human rights concerns in China due to its significant financial interests in the country. China contributes substantial revenue through broadcasting



Photo courtesy of Google Images

deals, merchandise sales, and sponsorships, putting the league in a difficult position when Kanter continued to speak out against the injustices he witnessed. The breaking point came when Kanter, during

a press conference, directly criticized the NBA for what he perceived as prioritizing profits over principles. He accused the league of ignoring human rights abuses in China while advocating for social justice in other situations. This bold move, however, had serious consequences for Kanter.

In a surprising announcement, the NBA declared the termination of Enes Kanter’s contract, effectively removing him from the league. This decision sparked various reactions on social media, with some praising Kanter for his courage and others criticizing the NBA for suppressing freedom of speech. Kanter’s departure raises important questions about the connections between sports, politics, and business. Athletes increasingly use their platforms to address social and political issues, but Kanter’s case shows the challenges they face when their views clash with the financial interests of sports organizations.

This incident prompts discussions about the moral responsibilities of sports leagues. Critics argue that the NBA’s decision sends a concerning message about its



Photo courtesy of Google Images

commitment to human rights and freedom of expression. Supporters, however, claim that the league must consider its global partnerships and financial stability to ensure the continued growth of the sport. In conclusion, Enes Kanter’s removal from the NBA highlights the relationship between sports, politics, and business. China is a huge and profitable market for the NBA and they do not want to lose it. The case of Enes Kanter serves as a reminder that, in the world of professional sports, taking a stand for principles may come at a significant cost.

[Sports]

Thomas Pitsenberger Returns after Successful Football Season

By Vincent McHale
Chronicles Staff Writer

Anyone who goes to The Avalon or Brookewood school has heard the stories of the Pitsenbergers. This mighty clan of twelve kids has taken the schools by force, from Josh Pitsenberger dominating soccer, and football, to David and Thomas being the muscle of Calvert House. Thomas Pitsenberger left The Avalon school at the start of senior year, where he attended Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda to play football.

Football has always been a passion for all Pitsenbergers as all eight of the boys have played at least 1-2 years of football. Thomas started out playing football when he was only eight years old, following in the footsteps of his older siblings, starting out with Maple Wood, a youth football program. Then after joining the ranks as a highschooler at The Avalon school he joined the football program. He excelled with his brother under the ever watchful eye of Coach Spinner. After the football program got shut down at



Thomas Pitsenberger in action for Walter Johnson. Photo courtesy of Thomas Pitsenberger

the end of the 2021-2022 school year he was left with no program to play for. After completing his Junior year at The Avalon school, his love of football became a heartache. So he decided to

transfer to Walter Johnson to play football there. While at Walter Johnson he made use of the opportunity given to him.

The team welcomed him, as Thomas puts it, “Me being me, I was accepted very well to the team.” Both his players and coaches respected him. Something that his former coach, Coach Spinner, put very plainly was “To get respect you must give it first.” Thomas knew this going into the program and did simply that. This allowed Thomas to absolutely dominate the football field. Thomas was no ordinary player, oh no. Thomas is more of a Swiss army knife kind of player. Thomas played not just on offense but also defense, playing Full Back, Tight End, Running Back, Linebacker, and Defensive End. Thomas also played on special teams, both on kickoffs and punts. Thomas scored only 2 offensive touchdowns, but scored 5 defensive touchdowns. He racked up a total of 70 tackles for the season as well as 2 interceptions, both of them he returned for a pick-six.

While his time playing football was well used, the season came to an

end. After some debate on whether or not to return to The Avalon school to finish out his year, he decided it would be best if he did.

Thomas’s arrival has been well received by the highschoolers, mainly his notorious friend group, B40, who all much appreciated his return. The Calvert House is also very grateful for his return as they keep a strong 2nd place in the House Standings. Thomas’s time at Walter Johnson also led him to realize a few things about The Avalon School. Pointing out how it's nice not having to worry about what you wear or what you look like, because everyone has to wear the same thing. Thomas also pointed out that at public school it is very hard to grow a good relationship with the teachers. While it is the opposite at The Avalon school, where the teachers make sure you are doing your best and also making sure they themselves are the best for you as your teacher. Thomas is happy to be back at The Avalon School or as he puts it, “Good to be back at Avalon with the boys.”

Underdog Sentiment Goes Against the Chiefs in Super Bowl 58

By Kasper Syski
Chronicles Staff Writer

The Kansas City Chiefs, known for their powerful plays and skilled players, have once again secured a spot in the highly anticipated Super Bowl. While many fans are thrilled about this accomplishment, some people in the football community have mixed feelings about the Chiefs making it to the big game once more. For some fans, the Chiefs' success feels stale. This marks their second consecutive appearance in the Super Bowl, and the third time in the last four years. Some supporters of other teams were hoping for a fresh face to take the spotlight. It's not that people don't appreciate the Chiefs' talent. They certainly do, but there's a desire for variety and a chance for other teams to shine on the grandest stage of American football.

Adding to the emotions is the fact that the Chiefs will be facing off against the San Francisco 49ers, the team they defeated in the Super Bowl just a couple of seasons ago. This re-



match has stirred up a mix of anticipation and apprehension among football enthusiasts. Many fans, especially those who are not die-hard Chiefs supporters, are rooting for the 49ers this time around. The 49ers were a powerhouse in the past with five Super Bowl victories, but the last one was back in 1995. They have an exciting young quarterback with Brock Purdy who has put up numbers that rival former SF greats Joe Montana and Steve Young.

Fans do not dislike the Chiefs or deny their talent; rather, the desire for a change in Super Bowl champions has taken center stage. There's also

the human tendency to root for the underdog. When a team continuously reaches the pinnacle of success, some fans begin to long for an underdog to rise and seize the moment. The irony this year, though, is that oddsmakers are

making the Chiefs the underdogs (although not by much). This makes sense as the 49ers had a better record during the year and played better in the big games. One must be careful betting against the Chiefs. Their star quarterback Patrick Mahomes is 10-1-1 against the odds spread in 12 playoff games.

Mahomes and the whole, dynamic roster, have become a football powerhouse. While a portion of the NFL fan base wants a different narrative, one where an unexpected team rises against the odds, some people just can't help pulling for the Chiefs. And

it is not just the Chiefs fanbase. Mahomes is just plain fun to watch. Who can forget his 26 yard run on an injured ankle to sink the Eagles in last year's Super Bowl? And of course, Chiefs supporters are overjoyed to see their team in the Super Bowl again, reveling in the continued success and consistency that the team has demonstrated. The excitement of watching Mahomes' incredible throws, the team's strategic plays, and the possibility of another championship win is enough to keep their spirits high.

[Opinion]

Writer From Brookewood Responds to Last Issue’s Opinion Piece

Letter to the Editor

I am writing to address the article “Distance Between Brookewood and Avalon Becoming Far too Wide”. While the piece is well-written and I agree with certain points, I would like to discuss certain ideas within it that sparked debates at Brookewood. I agree that many students from our schools do not know students from the other and that more mixed events would help solve this problem, but the way that the author represents Brookewood girls was belittling. Between rivalries with The Heights and anger over the title “Brookewood’s homecoming” (5), the author objectifies Brookewood students by addressing us as though we are simply girlfriends, or a piece of meat being fought over by two dogs. The author’s tone suggests that Avalon boys ought to have ‘dibs’ on Brookewood girls as “the better school” (5). The main clause I took issue with was, “If you want to meet someone from Brookewood, you will have to do it all on your own...How are you supposed to take a date from Brookewood if you have never met anyone from there?” (5). Brookewood is a school for the education of young women, not a display of possible girlfriend options. There is more to us than our potential to be a girlfriend. Also, relationships require input from both parties to work. Take action! A girlfriend will not miraculously appear without effort! It is not the responsibility of the school to provide dates for its students. As a Brookewood girl, I ask you to be aware of how you represent others in your articles and how that will influence your readers. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Katie Stroot



Opinion Editor’s Reply

I can both see and agree with the points made in the response. I understand the wording was not the best and could be changed, as to not make it seem that I am objectifying Brookewood. I did not mean to do so, and have no intention of doing so. The main point of the piece was not to objectify Brookewood in any manner, but rather just show the distance that seems to be growing between the schools, and how the Heights and Brookewood seem to be getting closer. Referring to how the classes don’t seem to know each other at all, and not about the romantic side. I simply made mention of taking a date from Brookewood because you would be going as friends, but because the schools are not that close it just doesn’t seem like it could happen. I understand that the wording used in the article particularly in this line, “How are you supposed to take a date from Brookewood if you have never met anyone from there?” This could have been made clearer to be more about friends than dating. Brookewood is a school, just as much as Avalon is, but we call each other brother and sister school, not “Affiliated. " The student body is what makes a school a school. But when the students don’t know each other as much as they used to, when people hear stories of other schools and refer to the students, not many have a clue about who they are.

The reference to calling Avalon “the better school” is not meant as a jab towards Brookewood but rather to the Heights. Saying that I see Avalon as the better school for boys then the Heights. Although I do respect the Heights and all that they do I have no problem with any of the three schools. It is just that when you hear from other students from SJC that they thought Brookewood was the sister school to the Heights, it can be disheartening to hear such a thing. While I admit the piece could have been written better, I think the main point of the piece has been missed. That being that Avalon and Brookewood do not seem to be as close as they once were.

Vincent McHale

You Saw it as a Kid? Still, You Need to Rewatch *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*

By Ben Alicea
Chronicles Staff Writer

When it comes to picking a favorite movie, there are a lot of films that come to mind, but none have stood out to me, more than Wes Anderson’s 2009 classic, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. I fell in love with this movie as a kid, but I enjoyed the film much more when I was older, as I was able to understand many jokes and I realized there are a lot of themes and messages that lie under the surface.

The story follows Mr. Fox, a troubled fox, who lives an exciting life of crime, stealing birds from all the big farmers. When Mr. Fox gets himself and his wife caught in a farmer's trap, she makes him promise to never steal a bird again. Fast forward and Mr. Fox is a writer for the local paper with his column. The first time we see his unhappiness is when he tells his wife “I don’t want to live in a hole anymore. It makes me feel poor.” He communicates how he doesn’t want to feel like a wild animal anymore, and he chooses to move his family so he can feel

more domesticated.

He buys a house right in between the three most dangerous farmers in the land, Boggis, Bunce, and Bean. He is warned by

everyone around him not to buy the house, but he disregards their input due to his pride. Mr. Fox pulls together a big heist, where he and his new friend, Kylie, will steal from Boggis’ Chicken Farm, behind Mrs. Fox’s back. After their first successful heist, Mr. Fox decides to do another two more. The idea of his inability to resist stealing can be compared to battling addiction, as he’s supposed to leave that life behind, but he cannot resist. This film revolves around Mr. Fox’s existential crisis. He believes he is a wild animal, who is posing as a civilized animal, that no matter how hard he tries, he cannot put away his wild instincts. Eventually, his obsession



cause all other animals around the area to live underground. He faces the consequences of his selfish actions and makes everyone around him hate him. At this moment, he becomes determined to redeem himself and his family. The film’s true message comes towards the end, during Mr. Foxe's redemption, where he encounters his biggest fear.

The Wolf scene has always been my favorite scene. What I believe is that Mr. Fox doesn’t fear Wolves, but what they represent. Wolves are nothing but pure, unfiltered, undomesticated wild. Although he admires Wolves, and the true freedom that they have, he fears pure wild, just as he fears pure do-

mestication, as he is seemingly in the middle of the two sides. Throughout the film, he seemingly begins to think of himself as pure when all wild, calling himself a “wild animal” at many points, using it to excuse the reason why he stole from the farmers and endangered his family. However, once he meets the Wolf, the living embodiment of what a truly wild animal is, he learns that he is nothing like it. Mr. Fox is finally able to truly discover himself for who he truly is. I think the film’s title perfectly describes him, as he's not only clever and quick, but he is also full of surprises and talents, as well as being eccentric. He fascinates everyone around him. The ending of this movie is beautiful because it breaks out of the cliché ending that animated films tend to follow. The protagonist doesn’t win, and he ends up living in the sewer, which is worse than a hole. Despite losing to the farmers, he learns the most valuable lesson this movie offers: learning to be content with your current life. This is why I advise you, as the reader, to re-watch this movie if you’ve already seen it, or watch it for the first time. It’s hilarious and charming, and it has something for everyone of all ages.

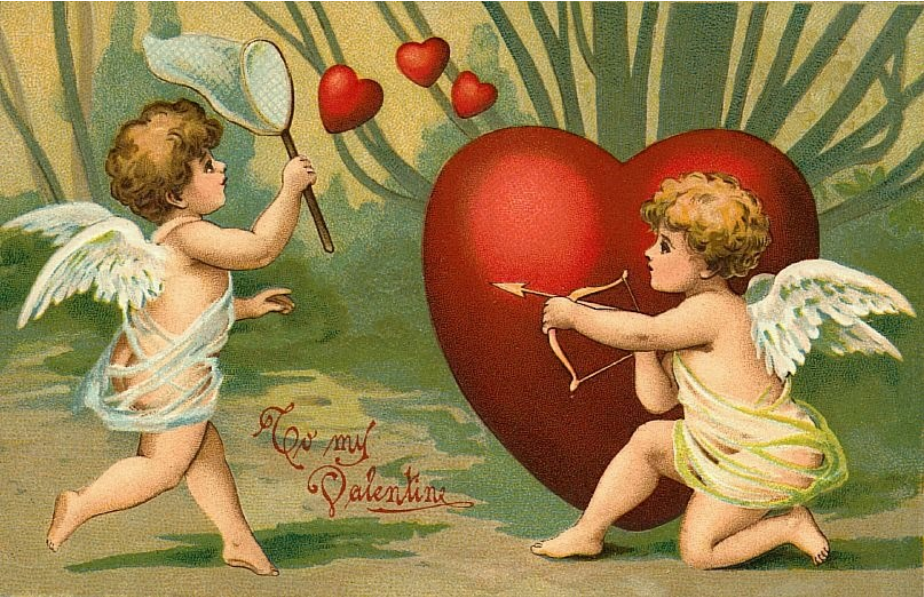
[Opinion]

How To Save Money On St. Valentines Day

By Logan Bonsby
Chronicles Staff Writer

For most people St. Valentine's Day is either a great day of celebration for loved ones or a boring day of loneliness. But for some couples it's a day of doing nothing at all. Avalon Teacher Mr. Tobin and his wife Mrs. Tobin are one of these couples, who think that Valentine's Day is a sort of 'made up' holiday to generate profits for large companies. They think that it's much more valuable to have your own special days in a relationship. But if I went to my girlfriend one day and said "Hey, I'd like to save some money, we shouldn't do this phony holiday" she would probably take it as a sign that I'm going to break up with her and not a meaningful though. Mr. Tobin made it very clear to me that if any taken men have this idea that it is very important to have this discussion at the beginning of a relationship or before any Valentine's Days have taken place.

However, is Valentine's Day really a "made up holiday"? The full name is *Saint* Valentine's Day, the holiday has its roots in the Feast of St. Valentine's celebrating the martyrdom



of two different Saint Valentines, Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni. Various legends sprouted around these two saints which are the origins of various traditions that are celebrated during the holiday. For example Valentine of Rome was said to have signed a farewell letter with 'Your Valentine' to the blind daughter of his jailer whom he healed. He is also said to have cut hearts from parchment paper and given them to soldiers and Christians to remind them of God's love. By the 14th

and 15th century a recognizable form of St. Valentine's Day began to pop up, notably in Chaucer's romantic poem about St. Valentine's Day. Whatever the wholesome Catholic origins of St. Valentine's Day is, they do not matter as the modern holiday has been secularized and commercialized into just 'Valentine's Day' and turned into a billion dollar industry with little connections to its religious roots. Mr. Tobin explained to me that it's much more meaningful to celebrate

special days within a relationship. He told me that he and his wife celebrate the day that they met and their engagement. In reality, St. Valentine's Day has very little to do with romance itself other than traditions added on later. Special days like these hold much more romantic value and doing this can strengthen a couple's love for each other. In many cases in modern times, couples during this day stray away from showing love and appreciation for each other, and it often turns into just trying to please one's partner.

Vincent McHale, who is one of the few students at Avalon that is not a bachelor, had much to say. He agreed with me, saying that while St. Valentine's Day does come from Catholic traditions, it in its modern form has been twisted and commercialized. He said that it's more important to be attentive. "Say the other person is having a bad week, you should show up with flowers to show appreciation" and that doing this shouldn't be limited to one day per year. Although he has his opinions, he still celebrates the holiday with flowers, candy and a heartfelt letter. For everyone reading, despite my opinions I will still be taking my girlfriend out and treating her on this 'phony' holiday.

What on Earth Have Marvel Studios and Disney come to?

By Francesco Contini
Chronicles Staff Writer

Disney, along with Marvel Studios, were always everyone's favorites. Disney created the perfect movies that you would watch over and over again, along with movies that you would use to keep your child occupied and quiet for some time. Whenever a new Marvel film would come out, everyone would be excited and get ready to go to the movie theaters. They were just doing really well in the film industry. However, recently, Disney and Marvel itself have been producing fewer and fewer good movies and more second class, mediocre, boring, and just worse films overall. The question is: what is going on and why? The answer is very simple.

When I was a kid, I would watch Disney movies all the time. My family said that when I was a toddler, I would watch some of them on repeat, or at least once a day. I loved watching Disney movies because to me they were always the best, most enjoyable, never-get-old movies. But at some point pretty recently, they just started



to make movies that were plain bad. The last movie that was actually decent was *Moana*. I have not seen a Disney movie since *Moana* that I have actually liked and thought was worth it. So I just stopped watching new releases. Disney's films - before 2005 let's say - were all very well done. Those were movies that were watched more than once. Each of them had their own story. None of them were very similar to another. Most of them revolved around a love story, but they were each great. Disney now puts more and more

path. I will not lie, I was hoping *Marvel's Avengers Endgame* was going to be a lot better than what I saw. Ever since that movie they have just gotten worse and worse. It feels as though the producers do not really know where to go with Marvel, and so they are just trying to crank out a bunch of empty material that is random and boring instead of actually taking some time to think and create fewer but better productions. Marvel is also trying to give women "the respect they deserve" by making more female superheroes. A

good example is She-Hulk. It is not a good series because the need to make a statement overrides the need for a quality story. I have lost hope in Disney and Marvel because they no longer are really trying to make good, well-done films like they used to. They are mainly trying to send LGBTQ messages, and what better way than through the industry that everyone watches and has watched since they were a kid. It seems as though they care less about the quality of their films and more on supporting the LGBTQ community by just making productions for them, even if they are poor films. It is frustrating and sad to see what movies the new generation is going to grow up with, and not know any of the actual movies that are good. The worst part is that if they watch the old movies, it will probably be the live action versions, and they were all so terrible. Not one of the live action movies was good. And so they'll say: "This is what movies used to be like, man these were some trash"! In the end, my point is that if Disney and Marvel do not stop making trashy films just to send out messages, they are going to keep making horrible movies, lose an audience, lose respect, and keep losing money.

[Culture]

Former Black Knight Jack Grange Makes Mark in Music Scene

By Ben Alicea
Chronicles Staff Writer

Right now, The DMV area has one of the best music scenes for Rap and R&B that it has ever had. Artists like Brent Faiyaz, redveil, Joony, KP SKY-WALKA, GoldLink, JPEGMafia, and others are putting the DMV on the music map. One of the up-and-coming artists from our area who is making a name for himself is Jack Grange (Stage name: Grange). a 20-year-old artist from Germantown Maryland, and a former Avalon Student. He has been making music since 2022 and has made a name for himself in



the DMV underground music scene. He's had major success, with 22k monthly listeners, and his most popular song, *Caught in Thoughts* reached 1.5 million streams on Spotify. His songs give off the vibe of early Mac Miller and BROCKHAMPTON. His music has a very chill and relaxing vibe to it, which is a refreshing change of pace compared to the majority of DMV rap. He is an outstanding artist, and you can tell he pours his heart out into his music. I discovered him by stumbling across his Instagram page and once I listened to his music, I knew that I had to write a story about him, so I sent him a DM asking him if we could schedule an interview.

"Music has always had a big impact on my life," Jack told me. He grew up listening to artists like John Mayer and Jack Johnson, but he didn't listen to rap until High School. He did chorus in school and did theater and musicals. Jack says that he was always inspired by music, but he was somewhat just embarrassed to pursue it. Jack went to Avalon for half of his 8th grade year and all of his 9th grade year,

from 2017-18. Jack expressed how much he enjoyed his time at Avalon, especially coming from public school. Jack loved his classmates and the school community. He was less distracted with small classes and more engaged, and he felt Avalon helped him develop as a man. He even said that his favorite English class he had ever taken was Mr. Matt Stroot's class. In his time at Avalon, he met twin brothers named Antonio and Ralph Negron, who had made their song while in high school. Jack, who was eager to learn how to produce music, begged them to teach him. His music taste in high school started



Stream *Caught in Thoughts* by Grange on Spotify by scanning this barcode

with just DMV Crank until he discovered artists like Tyler the Creator, Mac Miller, and Kanye West, who were the inspiration behind his music. Jack states that inspiration doesn't come from one source. "Inspiration can just hit you at any given time. Many different things have inspired some of my music."

After his freshman year, Avalon moved the campus to Wheaton, which was too far from Germantown, so Jack had to transfer to Wootton High School. He didn't have time to pursue music until he got

to college. He went to college in Boulder. He started by playing free beats from YouTube on one phone and rapping over them into a microphone. He met a kid named Bruce, who lived on the dorm floor below him, and he had a studio set up in his room. Jack started making songs for SoundCloud, which didn't get much traction. After a little while, he got a distro kit and recorded his first major song *Caught in Thoughts*. "A friend of my brother is in the music industry, and he would constantly tell me about the importance of *Laces* inside of the store. "It was sick! I pre-saves on Spotify, over and over work together." Jack is currently working

on multiple projects in the works with other artists. His new album *Just a Tape* is now streaming on all platforms.



The Avalon and Brookewood Schools Present

MACBETH

Directed by Erin Bone Steele

Friday, February 23rd at 7 pm

Saturday February 24th 7 pm

Sunday February 25th 2 pm



Avalon and All the World

Beloved Student-Athlete Pietro Bardelli Heads Home to Italy

By Ben Alicea
Chronicles Staff Writer

It was a sad day on December 20th in the Avalon School, which is unusual for the last day before Christmas break. It was the last day at Avalon, for two of our Italian exchange students, Antonio, and Pietro. Luckily, right before Pietro left, I was able to sit down and interview him before he went back home. It was sad to see him go, as we had grown very close, but I'm grateful that I get to write a story about his time here in America.

Pietro Bardelli is #15 On the Black Knights basketball team as a shooting guard. He is an exchange student at the Avalon School for the first semester of the 2023-24 year, and in this short time, he proved himself to be a memorable player in the Black Knights Hall of Fame. He's an outstanding Athlete, full of passion for his sport. He hails from the town of Varese, Italy, where he played for his town club team, Varese Basketball. He was an extremely valuable player for the



Pietro and his teammates after his last game. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Vanags*

team. In his six games, he scored a total of 92 points, with an average of 15 points per game. Sadly, he couldn't play the entire season since he only came from September to December. Worst of all, he's going to have to miss the most anticipated sports events of the year, the legendary Heights game, and the St. Anselm's tournament.

study our plays more.” I also asked Luca Tonini, who is also an Italian exchange student, about the sport's presence in the country. He said that it's not as popular as soccer, but a good amount of people play. He also said people don't watch the NBA or basketball at all on TV. Pietro said he's excited to come back to his club team.

When I asked Pietro what it's like playing basketball in Italy, he said it's completely different from playing basketball in America. There are more physical players here in America. In Italy, there are more strategies on each play, and we grew in his time at Avalon. He felt that he improved in a lot of ways, especially in shooting consistency and his free throws. “I'm very happy I chose to come to Avalon to play in America. It was an amazing experience. I loved all my teammates and the friends I made.” He also expressed how much he valued Coach Greg and he felt that he helped him grow as an athlete.

Landon Neely Hears the Siren Call of Japan in his Future

By Danny Santa Rita
Chronicles Staff Writer



Photo from Landon Neely

Landon Neely has had a strong fascination with Japan since he was in middle school, but what may seem like a mere interest to some has actually become a full plan of life that he is committed to follow. This dedication has combined with his more recently found passion for nursing and his calling to do missionary work to form his career plan. His plan is to move to Japan and become a nurse after attending Catholic University for at least four years, likely attending a summertime Japanese language program for credits and making some connections. This plan is very unorthodox and difficult to pull off. According to his research, only around five foreigners pass the Japanese nursing license test out of however many take it in a given year. Still he is very dedicated to making his plan work and achieving his dream. When asked about where he got the idea of doing nursing in Japan he stated that the reason why he is interested in Japan and the reason he wants to move there are separate reasons that “happen to intertwine at certain points”. In regards to the reason he actually wants to move to Japan he said

“I kinda felt a calling to do mission work there and it ended up meshing really nicely with my passion for nursing”. He knew he wanted to do mission work long before he knew he wanted to be a nurse. Originally his plan was to be an English teacher but it was “more of a means to an end to reach Japan” rather than something he was actually passionate about. After praying about it and lining up some careers to see what clicked with him, he found that nursing really stood out and appealed to his interest in helping others. It was somewhere around six months ago that he came to that realization. On top of that

it could combine with his missionary work nicely. The reason behind his interest in Japan as a country is quite different from his reasoning to move there. When Landon was in middle school his brother was into Japanese anime and Landon started to watch them as well in an effort to find things to talk to his brother about. This grew into a real interest of his own, leading him to start collecting Japanese comics and to continue watching anime. He stated that that is how he got into Japanese culture and “opened up to Japan as a whole”. His family is currently very supportive of his decision but it took a while for them to be that way. When he first began to form the idea of moving to Japan he could not convey his reasons for gong very effectively and assumed that everyone would probably understand. This is not a situation where he can really say “why not?” as this is a massive decision that will affect his whole life and he is aware of that which he clearly stated saying that “It's a big decision because I will be literally across the world and there's a lot of stuff I'll miss out on. I wont see my family as often, my little brother isn't gonna have me when he's in college because I'll be across the world so yeah it's a big deal. I'm giving up a lot but I prayed about it at home”.

When it comes to adjusting to life in Japan, he stated that “language is only half the battle.” The Japanese have a very different culture to America which includes different social cues, manners and other cultural traditions. Landon knows this and studies Japanese culture and history to account for it. He has found an unlikely ally in Japanese youtubers and streamers. He claims that watching them has helped him get a better grasp of their culture. Of course with college, travel and housing comes the issue of funding. He has been working a job at Chick-fil-a and will continue to work and save money throughout college. His missionary work also allows him to ask his church for money and of course he can always reach out to his parents for additional funds. Though his plan may seem very specific, he is trying to stay very openminded. When he says “nursing” to a certain extent he just means working in healthcare, likely a hospital. He still doesn't know about his housing there or where he wants to stay and is open to whatever options would suit him best. The whole road to his final destination is difficult and somewhat unclear but still he delves into it, nervous but still excited for his future.

Avalon Hosts Young Canadian Hockey Stars of the Future

By Max Dai
Chronicles Staff Writer

Avalon has had visitors from all over the globe in its twenty-year history, but very few from our northern neighbor, Canada. This year, thanks to an American youth hockey league that recruits top notch talent from the world's greatest hockey nation, we have two young Canadian hockey players who have come to Maryland with big dreams and a ferocious commitment to a tough program. Sean Goyette and Malik Bourque-Vigneault had been noticed by recruiters for their high-level skills. Getting noticed for being a standout hockey player in Canada is like being a Brazilian standout in soccer. Hockey is hands down the national sport of Canada and the people take great pride in their nation's world preeminence in the game. So, these two are the real deal.

Although Sean was a standout defenseman on his local club, he told me that he was first noticed by recruiters when he came down to play in summer tournaments in America. Malik (also a defenseman) played in these tournaments, but he said he was also helped when recruiters saw film clips from his local club. Both Sean and Malik are known as solid defensemen who can also score. They play for Team Maryland now, which is part of Tier 1 Hockey Federation (THF),



Sean Goyette and Malik Bourque-Vigneault work together on a goal scoring chance. *Courtesy Sean Goyette*

which is an American youth hockey league in 14 states. It is a showcase for talented young players who aspire to go on to play bigtime college hockey in the US. The most important hockey programs in America are in New England and the Upper Midwest. This is exactly what Sean and Malik aspire to achieve. They want to be noticed and hopefully get a scholarship to

play for one of these schools. Their commitment is impressive. Malik told me that they are at the rink from 6 pm to 10 pm every night. They travel to games almost every weekend and few of them are around here. Minnesota, New Jersey, Boston, New York, and Providence are some of the places these two have traveled to on the weekend. They play anywhere from 2 to 5 games on one of these

road trips. They both told me that they play 25+ minutes a game. In hockey, the pace is so demanding and skating is such a strenuous activity, no player is on the ice for more than 90 seconds at a time. The players are constantly changing and the average total minutes played in a game for a single player is around 20. The fact that Sean and Malik get so much time means two things: 1) they are incredibly fit and 2) their coach has a lot of confidence in their play. But playing five games in a weekend! Both guys agreed that those weekends left them very tired.

They both told me that keeping up with schoolwork has been a challenge. “It is just so hard to find the time,” Sean said. Malik agreed, “the nightly practice and the road trips make it hard to keep up.”

Despite these challenges they both agreed that the sacrifices have been well worth it. They feel like they are getting much better and their hopes are high. When I asked them what the best outcome for their strenuous efforts would be, the answer was easy. They both grinned and said, “the NHL.” Malik would like to play for his favorite team, the Colorado Avalanche. Sean would like to follow his brother to the organization of the Seattle Kraken. NHL or not, Avalon wishes *Bon Chance* to our Canadian hockey players.

Max Dai Reflects on Coming to Avalon from Chinese Capital

By Max Dai,
Chronicles Staff Writer

From the bustling streets of Beijing, a boy named Max embarked on a journey that would redefine his understanding of the world. He came with dreams as vast as the Pacific Ocean. He left behind the familiar sights and sounds of his homeland and with his pride and courage left to pursue education in America. As he navigated the hallway of his high school, he encountered a myriad of challenges that tested his resilience and determination. The first of course was how to communicate with the teachers and other students. His English was not amazing, but he immersed himself in his studies, diligently practicing his English and seeking guidance from teachers and students...

During this time, I have communicated frequently with international students from all over the world and with native-born American students. In communicating with them, I not only improved my oral English expression ability,



Max chilling at Universal Studios. *Photo courtesy of Max Dai*

but I have also enriched my vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. After my first half year in America, I learned that America is a receptive home for people from all over the world who bring different cultures and customs. While studying in America, I have felt deeply this openness

and diversity. I was deeply impressed by different festivals, different diets, and even lifestyles in different regions. In such an environment, I learned to respect and accept different cultures and broaden my horizons. Although America is a multicultural country, I still faced some cultural shocks when I first arrived here. In terms of language communication, social etiquette and daily life, I discovered many differences between myself and Americans, and I needed to adapt and learn. However, through exchanges with local students and other international students in America, I have gradually adapted to the new cultural environment and improved my ability of cross-cultural communication. In the process of studying in America, I have also needed to deal with various trivial matters of life independently, such as property management, shopping, transportation, etc. These independent experiences have cultivated my ability to think and solve problems independently, making me more mature and confident. Through this experience, I have greatly improved

my academic level, language communication ability and social skills. At the same time, the experience of studying abroad has also enhanced my understanding of different cultures. By living independently and solving problems, I am more confident and mature. The openness and diversity of America has offered me a rich, broadening experience, and allowed me to make many friends from different countries. Generally speaking, studying in America has been a rare experience in my life. It not only enriches my knowledge and experience, but also has a profound impact on my life.

