



THE FALCON FLIER NEWS

Our first ever all digital Student Newspaper

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ABOUT

The newspaper club meets on Thursdays from 3:45-4:30pm.

Please email Mrs. Tippets if you would like to join us on Zoom!

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LAKELANDS PARK

MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Distance Learning at LPMS By PRANAVI BHAMIDIPATI

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, many schools were shut down and have been brought to us virtually. As many of us know, this is called Distance Learning. Many people have mixed feelings about this new type of learning. Some may think it is quite exciting and new. Others may think that it isn't as fun as going back to school in person.

Here at LPMS, we have reached the 4th quarter of Distance Learning. Since August 31st, we have attended our classes online using certain applications such as Zoom, MyMCPS Classroom, Canvas and other such tools. Some students



are now in the building (Victory!) and LPMS teachers have found new ways to teach simultaneously to students in person and at home.

Teachers and students find this whole concept new and interesting. To understand more how people feel about it, let's dive into some interviews.

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NEWS FROM THE SGA PRESIDENT, SADIE CAREY

The Lakelands Park Falcons are unstoppable! We can do anything online or in person when it comes to school. This year, the SGA has been working hard to make sure our students are enjoying online classes, and that we are doing as much as we can to help them.

Lakelands Park's SGA has been

building community at our school as much as we can. This year, so far, we have done trivia events, nice notes to teachers, and have had so many fun events! This included, spirit week, our Valentine's Day activities, and SMOB elections. We had so much fun planning and executing those!

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DISTANCE LEARNING INTERVIEWS CONTINUED

I have interviewed three sixth graders students, by the names of Anvitha Nakka, Viana Haghighat, and Sumedha Ghosh, who are new to distance learning and middle school. They all believe that Distance Learning is and is not enjoyable. "Distance learning isn't fun, but it's the right decision." Anvitha Nakka stated on the day of her interview. Many of us can relate to this statement. Surely, we don't want to be going outside during a dangerous health crisis. Better safe than sorry.

While staying online for 6 hours straight, we will no doubt face internet problems. Sumedha Ghosh stated that she faces internet problems and that causes her computer to react slowly. I am sure we all face internet issues such as these. But they are inevitable. We just need to cope with them, until they get better.

Our in-person classes and programs have also been cancelled

up until now. Sometimes, we may think about it would have been if there wasn't any Coronavirus. Viana Haghighat stated that she looked forward to Outdoor Education. It may not be as fun as it was *in person*, but the virtual Outdoor Ed seems like the perfect option and the safest one.

Mrs. Tippets, a 7th and 8th grade teacher stated that we can make the most out of Distance Learning. She points out that we have virtual check ins, and should strongly take those advantages of gaining help. She also states that it is very inspiring to be able to go outside and enjoy nature and spend more time with family.

Perhaps we should all be grateful for what we have. If we remember the first month of quarantine, we did not even have school! We are able to learn virtually, and now we can go back to learning in person.

SGA NEWS from Sadie Carey... Continued from Page 1

We know that learning online is difficult, it's hard to focus, and you don't get to see your friends. We have been trying to have lots of social activities for our students so that you can hangout with your peers more. Building community at Lakelands Park is our number one goal in the SGA!

We are excited for us to get back into the school building and have a normal end to our school year! We care for each of our Lakelands Park Falcons and look forward to seeing everyone, whether that be in person or through a screen!

Getting to Know Mr. Carlton

By Deetya Cheerka, Ritika Naik, Olivia L, Rushitha



Q: What did you do before you came to LPMS?

A: Before LPMS, I taught at Forest Oak Middle and Silver Spring International Middle School.

Q: Why did you want to become an English Teacher?

A: I originally don't want to become a teacher. I had an English teacher in Montgomery County High School who told me that I would become a great English teacher. I also went to summer school, and I had a teacher named Mr. Deliberti, who was an amazing english teacher, and made me find

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A Brief Look at LPMS Clubs

By NEEL THAPA



Have you ever thought about joining a club? Do you know what a club is? I'm not talking about clubs where people go dancing, I'm talking about after school activities that can introduce you to something new. Being in a club is a way for people to practice their talents, interests, and discover new hobbies.

During this pandemic, it is very important and helpful to be in a club. It is important because during a pandemic people are very isolated and do not regularly see their friends or extended family. If you play sports on a team you probably only go to practices or don't go at all. However, being in a club is like having a second family, since you see others in your club every week and you are able to talk and collaborate with them. As time goes by, you might even become friends with them and gain new relationships.

Another notable aspect about joining a club is that it doesn't hurt to have some extracurricular activities on your transcript. It actually helps because

colleges and high schools see how well you work with others, your interests and your dedication to practicing something you love.

In our school there are a number of clubs that all do different things for our school community. The first club that I will be talking about is the club that made the very thing that you are reading right now: the Newspaper Club! The Newspaper Club is a place where people who have interest in writing or want to become a newspaper writer in their future, go. The schedule for this club is every Thursday from 3:45 to 4:30. It is run by Mrs. Tippetts, who if you didn't know is an English teacher in our school.

Another club that I recommend that you should join is the MCPS Math Club. Just like in the Newspaper Club you get to practice a skill, although in this case it is math instead of writing. They meet every Wednesday from 3:40 to 4:30. During this time you either practice for future competitions or you go to other schools to compete against the other middle schools in our county. This class is run by Mrs. Hazel who is a math teacher in our school.

To continue, if you are interested in other aspects of school such as acting and politics there are clubs for that as well. If

you are interested in acting you can join the drama club which performs a play every few months and meets either Thursday or Wednesday and is run by Mrs. Bowden.

Although if you are interested in politics you can join the SGA where you can organize fundraisers, help the community and even run for important positions in our school. This club is run by Mrs. Krivos and is on Thursdays from 3:15 to 4:30.

There are also a number of other clubs in our school such as the Men of Tomorrow, Book Wars, Girls of Stem and the Jazz band. These clubs are also very useful in developing different skills and I would recommend you join one of them. You can also see the date and time of all these clubs by going on the LPMS website and going to the club section.

All clubs in our school are always looking for new members, so if you have interest in joining one don't be afraid to email the teacher who runs the club to ask to register. More clubs are always being added too, so check your Dashboard!

To conclude, I hope that I have broadened your horizons and that you will be convinced to join one of our many amazing clubs in the near future.

Meet Mr. Carlton Continued from Page 2

my love for reading.

Q: What are you most excited about for 2021?

A: For 2021 I am excited to get back to normal, and to see people in person that I haven't seen in a long time. Especially my students, and staff, friends and family members.

Q: What are some things that you like to do outside of school?

A: I love to cook, especially grilling. I also love doing active things, such as working out, biking, running, kayaking, weightlifting, hiking, and boating.

Q: Who is someone you look up to, and why?

A: The number one person I look up to is Fredrick Douglass because he threw hard work and willpower. He inspires me because he went from being a slave to becoming someone extremely inspirational. For being an African American, that was unheard of. His autobiography changed my life.

Q: What is your favorite book, and why?

A: My favorite book ever is Jaws, because it goes back to my childhood. It was the first movie I saw in a movie theater. It scared me to death, but it got me interested in sharks and all that stuff. It also got me to realize that a movie and a book could be so different. The movie "Jaws" made

me find my passion for books.

Q: What is something interesting you would like to share about yourself with the students/staff at LPMS?

A: I've done lots of jobs, including working on farms with horses, cows, pigs, doing landscape work, snow removal, I've worked at a zipline place, and lots of other things.

Q: Are there any books you would like to recommend to your student/staff at LPMS?

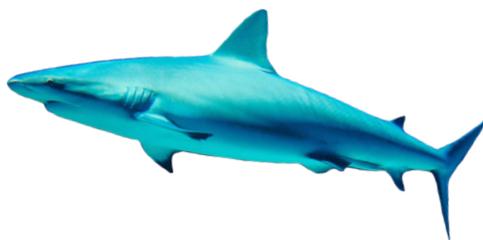
A: I love the book Food Fix. It's a non-fiction book written by Dr. Mark Hyman.

Q. Tell us about Yourself (favorite hobbies, sports, colors, school subjects, favorite Food, Vacation Spot).

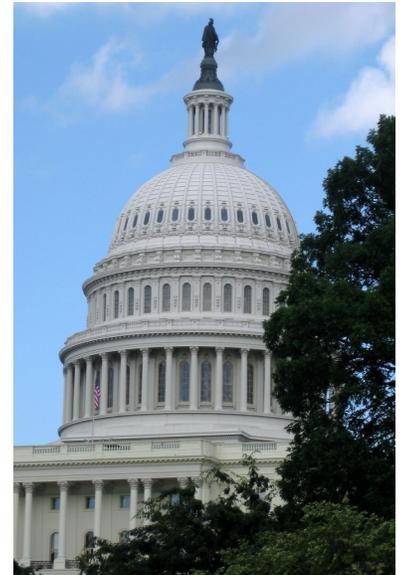
A: I love working out, my favorite color is blue. I also love watching football and doing triathlons. I love visiting the Upper Peninsula of Michigan,

Q. What is your favorite type of music or your favorite song?

A: I like most types of music, hard rock and heavy metal are what I tend to listen most of the time.



An Unbelievable Day in History: January 6, 2021



Column By Asher Lyons

Allow me to paint a picture: It is Wednesday, January 6, 2021. I, as you may have been, was sitting in front of the TV, watching history unfold as rioters invaded the Capitol building, disrupting Congress as they performed their constitutional duty. Congressmen, congresswomen, and senators hid under desks and in closets, terrified.

The Vice President was whisked away to a secure location, all while domestic terrorists broke windows, ran through the halls of the Capitol waving racist flags, ransacked offices, and

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CAPITOL RIOT COLUMN

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trashing our sacred American landmark. All of this done at the orders and provoking of the former President of the United States. It felt like a movie, with a plot so incredibly baffling that it could never actually happen in the real world. But, this did take place in real life, and it is history. Senate Minority leader Chuck Schumer compared the disgrace on January 6, 2021 to the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which led to US involvement in World War II.

A common question asked whilst discussing the riots in the Capitol is if anything like this has ever happened before? The answer to that is people have invaded the United States Capitol once before. That's it, just once. This other case took place in 1814, during the War of 1812, when the British stormed the Capitol and lit it on fire. The largest difference between these two events is that in 1814 a foreign enemy tried to burn the Capitol, as a display of strength during a war.

In 2021, however, the President encouraged people to march on the Capitol and that he would join them. His personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, said that they will do "trial by combat", and the President's son said to Republican senators that disagreed with Trump, "We're coming for you." Thousands of Donald

Trump's supporters heard all three of these men, and interpreted their statements to mean that "we need to run into the Capitol, disrupting Congress, which is in the process of certifying Joe Biden's victory, and ransack the building." This was not a foreign enemy, these were Americans committing an act of terrorism, against their own country.

The definition of terrorism is stated by Oxford dictionary as "the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims." Let's dissect this phrase by phrase. Was the riot earlier this month unlawful? Absolutely. These people trespassed on national property, stole documents, broke government property, disrupted congress while in session, and beat a police officer with a fire extinguisher, eventually killing him. Were these rioters acting with political pursuit? In other words, were they trying to benefit themselves politically? Yes. By raiding the Capitol they successfully interrupted, and delayed congress from confirming Joe Biden's electoral win. This would mean Biden could not be inaugurated, and therefore all these Trump supporters would get what they want: four more years of Trump being president. Congress while in session.

Were they violent and

intimidating? Yes. They rushed security guards inside the Capitol, made our elected officials hide in closets, and beat a police officer. Statuary Hall is a circular room in the Capitol with statues of many American heroes. I have been in Statuary Hall before. It emits an aura, and when you approach it you can tell that what's around the corner is very important.

I remember looking at all the statues, admiring the details etched into the leaders' faces, and clothing. With these memories flooding back into my head, I watched as terrorists posed with these statues, putting 'Make America Great Again' hats and flags on these sculptures of American heroes. I was disgusted, to say the least. Especially when I saw the Confederate battle flag, a symbol that white supremacists have adopted, being waved in this extremely important, historic and spiritual room. There is one remaining question that I have about these riots. Is this an end to an ugly chapter in American history that we have lived through for the past four years, or is it the start of an insurrection that will plague this country for all of the foreseeable future? Only time will tell.



A Perspective on Inauguration Day

By LIAM SLATTERY



On Inauguration Day, January 20, 2021, many American watched online as Joe Biden became the 46th President of the United States. We viewed many performances ranging from Lady Gaga to moving poetry by Amanda Gorman; benedictions to Jennifer Lopez.

Before the swearing in of the president, Vice President Kamala Harris was sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Harris then made history by being the first woman to ever hold the office of Vice President. On top of that, she was the first South Asian-African American woman to be sworn in as Vice President.

At 11:48, Chief Justice John Roberts swore in President Joe Biden. Using the Biden family bible, and he made history by

being the oldest president thus far.

President Joe Biden recently appointed his cabinet and task forces. He selected many key figures for his economic, national security and cabinet picks. The economics team has a lot of experience. President Biden chose some top-notch officials, like Janet Yellen as Treasury Secretary, who served under previous presidents and are planning to support the economy. The most important economic objective is passing a new stimulus package in the near future. Other teams have been appointed although we do not know whether they will be confirmed by the senate. The people running these departments have to hit the ground running due to COVID and its devastating effects on our country.

#With Me

Poem By Pranavi Bhamidipati

We stand together with all our might

And we look together, to the future

We know what it is like to lose

And we know what it is like to move

But we stay inside and the year comes to an end

With me, we will never forget.

For 2019 and 2020, are big years.

One that our world will never forget.

But, With me, we will live through it.

Hand by hand we will walk, but without masks

And We will not be alone.

We will walk together.

With Us



Going Back to School By COLLIN LEE

Here is a brief breakdown on going back to school in MCPS. On Tuesday January 12th the Board of Education delayed the start of going back to school in person due to the number of Covid-19 cases. The earliest time some students are going back to school is March 15th.

6th grade returned to school after Spring break in April and 7th and 8th grade returned on April 19. There are two groups: Group A and Group B.

The image below shows the Health Metrics Matrix for a Safe Return that was developed by Montgomery County health officials and CDC guidelines.

During the Board Meeting on January 12th, MCPS staff shared ideas that will be made to improve the new learning experience for all students. The following

- improvements include:
- Focused outreach services for struggling students
 - Greater use of the Wednesday virtual check-in day for students who need academic and social-emotional support
 - Providing opportunities to request an abbreviated schedule
 - Relaxing restriction allowing students to take up to two courses instead Credit/No Credit instead of a letter grade
 - Providing additional instructional times that may involve Saturdays, including for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses
 - Tutoring and homework help options
 - Providing additional professional development for staff to help

strengthen the virtual learning experience

MCPS states that, "In order to take advantage of some of these options. Students/parents will need to consult with their school counselor to make any schedule adjustments for the second semester and to ensure progress toward graduation requirements and post-secondary planning,"

This means that in order for students or parents to have additional changes from the options above for the Second Semester they will need to contact their school counselor in order to have those changes done.

Going back to school is a great goal, but is still hard to accomplish and students may choose to stay virtual.

Health Metric Matrix for a Safe Phased-in Return to In-Person Instruction – Revised (12/15/20)

14-Day Raw Average of New Cases		52-105	105 -157	> 157
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (MD Calculation Model)		5-10	10-15	> 15
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (CDC Calculation Model)		70 - 140	140 - 209	> 209
14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate <5%	Special Student Populations	Partial in-person experience	Partial in-person experience	Virtual
	Group 1	Partial in-person experience	Partial in-person experience	Virtual
	Group 2	Partial in-person experience	Consider partial in-person experience	Virtual

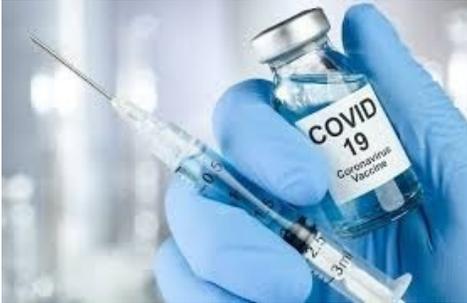
* Per 100,000 Residents. The models are calculated using a population estimate of 1.05 million residents in Montgomery County
 • In-person experience includes physical distancing, mask wearing and frequent hand cleaning

Reassess if new case rate increases by 2 per 100k or if positivity rate increases by 1.5% within 2 weeks

Advancements on the COVID-19 Vaccine

Research & Opinion Column

By Nishka S.



As you've probably heard, there is a buzz going around that the COVID-19 vaccine will soon become a regulation vaccine. However, the process behind the Coronavirus vaccine is much more complicated than most people think.

Actually, there isn't just one vaccine. Lots of medical companies are competing to make the best Coronavirus vaccine. To determine if it truly is 'the best', companies have to make the vaccine with almost zero side effects, and with full effectiveness. The vaccine also should [ideally] be safe for people of all ages, including infants.

Some of the leading vaccines are the Pfizer vaccine, the Moderna vaccine, and the Astra-Zeneca vaccine. These competitors are neck and neck, because whoever perfects the Coronavirus vaccine will earn billions of dollars, since the vaccine is the most in demand in the world.

The Pfizer Vaccine

Pfizer is a New York-based medical drug company that is already earning billions because of its prototype of the vaccine. Pfizer was one of the first companies to develop a safe version of the vaccine. It left all of its opponents in the dust. Pfizer has not been discreet about its work, and is sharing updates about their vaccine with the media. This is a smart move, because more people get to know about the Pfizer vaccine, and the more they know, the more they trust Pfizer. The Pfizer isn't perfect, but it is proven 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 - a higher effectiveness rate than all other vaccines.

To determine this information, the Pfizer vaccine went through a series of rigorous tests, involving over 44,000 people from 6 different countries. Pfizer plans to keep on improving their vaccine until it's perfect, and can become a regulation vaccine like the flu vaccine that you get every year at the doctor's office.

Pfizer has also revolutionized a new way of creating vaccines. Normal vaccines, like the Influenza, for example, inject a weakened or mutated part of the virus into your bloodstream. This way, even if you do experience some side effects, your body will automatically register the type of

antibodies needed to fight the flu (Antibodies are cells that destroy viruses when they enter inside your body.) When you actually catch the flu, your body will recognize it and send an army of specialized antibodies to attack it. Instead of injecting your body with a weakened form of the Coronavirus, you get injected with a small portion of the Coronavirus's genetic code. This tricks your body into thinking that the virus is actually present in your body, so it starts making and registering the specific antibodies that are needed to fight off COVID-19.

When the antibodies realize that the virus is not actually there, they retreat, and your body returns to normal. But, your body has registered the antibodies needed to fight Coronavirus in its database, and if you actually get COVID-19 later on, your body will be ready to take it on. The impact of Coronavirus on your body will be weakened to a cold. This type of vaccine is called mRNA. Plus, this is much safer than the original type of vaccines. Sounds perfect, right?

Well, the Pfizer vaccine does have some side effects. Nothing good comes without a price! The first thing is that only people age 18 and above can get this vaccine, as of right now. This is probably going to be changed in the future, but kids will not be the first ones to get vaccinated.

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VACCINE (Continued)

Also, the vaccine must be administered in 2 doses, 21 days apart. The side effects start showing up after the second dose of the vaccine. They include pain/swelling in the area where the vaccine was injected, tiredness, chills, and body aches. Finally, the Pfizer vaccine has to be stored at a temperature of -70° Celsius. That's colder than Antarctica! But, the Moderna vaccine can be stored at a passable temperature of 0° Celsius, aka freezing. The reason why the Pfizer vaccine has to be so cold is because mRNA vaccines need cold temperatures to be stored properly. Not all Coronavirus vaccines are mRNA, though.

Who Will Be Vaccinated?

The main priority is to first get frontline workers, medics, doctors, and researchers vaccinated, so they will be safe from the Coronavirus while working with patients. To achieve this, countries are buying the vaccine in bulk. Then, it will be distributed to the people who need it most. Pfizer recently signed a contract with the U.S. federal government for 100,000,000 vaccine doses in exchange for 1.5 billion dollars. The distribution has already started for hospitals and COVID-19 facilities. Pfizer has landed many such contracts with countries like China, for example. China has made a deal with Pfizer

for 50,000,000 vaccine doses for 250 million euros (300 million dollars). But, Pfizer is not the only vaccine manufacturer getting such contracts. Countries like India and Britain will be using the vaccines that were developed in their own countries. An Indian WHO-certified company called Bharat BioTech has also developed a Coronavirus vaccine, which has been approved in India. Astra-Zeneca is an England-based company, and Britain has approved the Astra-Zeneca vaccine for distribution. There are branches of Astra-Zeneca in many different countries, and one branch is right here in Gaithersburg!

In the near future, when the vaccine is open to the public, there will be mass distributions of the vaccine in every town. Drugstores and pharmacies will be offering the vaccine, and so will clinics, hospitals, and your local doctor's office. Adults will be getting the vaccine first, because of the minimum age, and once a kid-safe version has been developed, so will we. The vaccine should be available to the entire general public in April 2021. But, until then, all we can do is sit tight and wait eagerly.

Break The Chain



While you're anticipating the vaccine, the best way to stay safe is a technique called "Break the Chain." This is a simple way to think about how to stop the spread of COVID-19. Imagine that you have a line of dominoes. They're all lined up perfectly after one another. But then, they start to fall over. They fall slowly but steadily. The falling of dominoes represents families getting infected with COVID-19. And one of the dominoes in the line is *your* family. But, to stop yourself and your family from falling over, you just need to step out of the line and stop the chain reaction. This way, you'll not only save yourself, but also all the dominoes that are ahead of you.

For example, if a few people that live near you get infected and you're not sure if you're safe anymore, stay inside for at least 2-3 weeks. Minimize your social contact and quarantine yourself. After a period of 2 weeks, everyone who's been infected with the virus will start showing symptoms and you'll know whom to avoid. And if you've been infected yourself, your symptoms will show too, and you can get the necessary care in time, before complications. That also prevents you from going outside while you're asymptomatic and infecting more people. Breaking the chain is easy to do, and it has a positive impact on the health of you and others. Stay safe, stay strong, and break the chain!

NFL NEWS

By Evan Kaplan

Playoff Predictions and Results

Note these predictions were originally written in January

The wildcard rounds have finished and a lot of upsets happened, the Rams beat the Seahawks, Washington almost won which I was happy about, and some others. But coming up is the divisional round, the conference championship, and then the super bowl. I am going to be making my unbiased predictions and try to get all of it right and after I make my predictions see what the winner of each game

Starting in the AFC the Chiefs and the Browns, this one is easy. The Chiefs I think will win, they just have an amazing offense with Patrick Mahomes, and 3 pretty good wide receivers, and offensive line. Their running backs could use work but its Clyde Edwards- Helaire's rookie year so you can't blame him. They also have a really good defense that can stop pretty much every team, including the Browns. I'm even surprised that the Browns are in the playoffs much less won



in the playoffs. I guess they have 2 elite runningbacks, Nick Chubb, and Kyreem hunt, but they still don't stand a chance. RIGHT!

Next the final game in the AFC our Baltimore Ravens and the Buffalo Bills, this one is a bit harder and trust me that this is unbiased, I think the Ravens will win, and not by much though. I know Josh Allen on the Bills is a big MVP contender but remember how they were against the colts, they won by 3 points, and the colts were the 7 seed, I would have said the Bills would win if they didn't do so badly in that game. WRONG

On to the NFC, the Packers and the Rams, the Packers will win. The Rams will lose by a lot even though they won against the seahawks, it was just a lucky game. The Packers defense will slow the already hurt Jared Goff. And the best duo in the league Adams and Rodgers are unstoppable. RIGHT!

The final divisional game is the Saints vs Bucs. This one will be a fun one to watch because they are an equal team pretty much and no one has any idea who will win. I think the bucs will win because they have the offense as we saw in the regular season with Brady and Evans, and they have a defense with their defensive ends and linebackers. The reason why I think the Saints will lose is because they have the defense, they do not have an offense with Brees not being good anymore and not WRs or RBs.

It will not be good for them. I will be extremely close though. RIGHT!

Off to the conference games on the AFC, the Chiefs versus the Ravens. I think that the Chiefs will win because they have a record breaking offense and defense. Same with the Ravens just not as much. The best way to describe it is the Ravens are amazing but the Chiefs are better. Now that I'm in the conference games I will probably be less accurate because I don't know any factors that would hurt or help any team like if Mahomes got hurt then I'd think the Ravens would win but I don't know if that will happen so I will stick by my decision that the Chiefs will go to the super bowl. WRONG

The last game before the super bowl, Packers vs Bucs. I think the Packers will win this one because they are just overall better. Any other time compare a 1 seed to a 5 seed, its a huge difference and mainly this year because they Packers this year might be the best team maybe to only be contested by the Chiefs, and the bucs are not that good against other teams. WRONG

The final game, the super bowl. I have chosen Packers vs Chiefs. WRONG. It is Chiefs vs Bucs in the super bowl and not Chiefs Vs Packers. The team that won was the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Congrats Tom Brady on another Super Bowl win!

LPMS 8th Grader Testifies Before Board of Education

At a recent Board of Education meeting regarding the return to in person school, LPMS 8th grader, Katie Reed submitted her video testimony. Katie is also the daughter of 8th grade teacher, Mr. Jim Reed. Here is her powerful statement:

My name is Katie Reed, I am in 8th grade and my question to you is why are teachers going back to school without receiving the Covid-19 vaccination? With all these unpleasant conditions we are all experiencing, as well as the foreign experience of a pandemic, why must we rush back into this setting we once left, only differences are now the cases are higher, there are more deaths, worse circumstances and less safety?

My teachers from the past spring and my teachers this year have done a phenomenal job teaching and creating a safe space, even through the computer. Why rush them back? The teachers are doing everything in their power to help out, and be as supportive as they can. My teachers put us first day in and day out. For instance, my math teacher has met with kids over the weekends, or on the first few days of breaks. She creates a spot where I am comfortable to ask questions and does a fantastic job

teaching new material.

The teacher I am most concerned about is my own dad. My dad has the most impact on me, and he really cares about his students. I fear that if my dad doesn't get the vaccine and he goes back, that a student might be asymptomatic and pass it onto my dad. He might not make it, or recover from getting Covid-19 and we still don't know everything about this virus. I am not the only one with this fear.

Many families across the county are scared as well. I am not just fighting for my dad. I am fighting for all of my teachers, my best friend's mom and all the educators of Montgomery County. When you sign up for the job of teaching, you aren't signing up to put your life at risk. You are signing up to teach and watch students grow and improve.

Other counties have hosted Covid-19 clinics to get shots in arms, and help teachers get appointments for their vaccines, while our county is letting the teachers fend for themselves to find their own appointments. We are so close! Give the teachers the time to get the vaccine! Only 11% of Maryland's population has had the first vaccine while 3.5% is fully vaccinated [at the time of

her statement].

Why are we rushing into this environment again? About 62k cases and over 1k deaths have been a part of Montgomery county alone. Why are we rushing into this when we could wait a couple more weeks for all the teachers to be vaccinated? Why are we risking lives to go back to school? Kids are most often Asymptomatic. If they still continue to go to school without knowing they have covid-19 that puts peers, teachers, administrators and everyone coming to the school at risk without realizing it.

The University of Maryland just went all virtual to handle a Covid-19 outbreak. If we aren't able to trust college kids, then why should I trust other middle schoolers to keep my dad safe? Why should teachers have to depend on the community to stand up and fight for them to get vaccines? Is that a risk you want to take? For those of you with kids, are you sending your kids to in person school? Do you trust that the other students and their families are doing their part to minimize risk? We need to wait to go back to school for the safety and health of our educators before we go back to in person schooling.

Social Distanced Learning: Is it That Bad?

Opinion Column

By: Vasisht Perivilli



Image from Pixabay

During this COVID-19 pandemic, people have had to resort to online learning for education. This is also called virtual learning or Social Distance Learning (SDL). Many people have been calling it annoying. Is SDL really that horrible? Is it all that bad?

While Real-Life Classrooms (RLC) have the advantage of interactions in person with teachers and peers, given the current situation, SDL is the safe option. Come to think of it, SDL is not all bad. In fact, there are some good things about the SDL experience at LPMS, some of which I mention below.

1. There are very few flaws with technology used for SDL. Yes, there is the lag that everybody hates but other than that not much else. The technology is user-friendly with readily accessible technical assistance as needed. We can access a lot of wonderful applications on different

websites for learning.

2. There are many ways to connect with peers virtually. Breakout Rooms, which are typically used to have students work together, are pretty useful when it comes to interacting with peers. For instance, in my math class, when we finish our work in our Breakout Room early, we use the opportunity to talk with each other and have some fun.

Also, after-school clubs can be a good way to connect. There are many of those - Newspaper Club, Book Wars, Environmental Club, Math League, etc. More information can be found about the clubs in the LPMS ConnectEd messages. The school also occasionally does things to help people with this. For instance, there was a virtual trivia contest. I competed in it and it was a lot of fun.

3. People can get noticed more easily. Most of my teachers have the chat function enabled for conversations both privately with them and with everyone. The Everyone chat also functions very well because students can answer your questions. This is unlike RLC wherein if you have a question, you might not get it answered until the teacher is done with reviewing/teaching the concept because it can be distracting for the class. By then, you could have already forgotten your question.

However, with the chat function, students can get their questions answered more quickly and even if that is not the case, the question is not totally lost.

4. Some of the tools available can actually be very helpful. For instance, in RLC, you have to look through your folder for something, and it is sometimes unorganized. However, using MyMCPS Classroom, you can use the section "Modules" where everything is nice and organized.

Better yet, you can use your to-do list, where everything that has not been completed is. To find it, look at the top right corner of your Dashboard on myMCPS. You would want to get rid of all of the events first, so that only assignments are shown. Additionally, you can keep an eye on your grades continuously in Synergy. This helps with checking progress in your classes, identifying areas of improvement, etc.

In conclusion, I think SDL is a completely different learning environment from RLC, and I appreciate the opportunities that come with it. However, while this is true, I would like for us to return to RLC learning like everybody else, for the benefits of personal interactions, sports, etc when it is safe to do so.

Covid-19 Friendly Activities to Brighten up a Weekend



By: Sadie F

It is easy to feel swept up into a cycle of online school and the assignments that accompany it. It may be time to break the chain and venture outside of the confines of a zoom screen. Below are some fun, Covid-19 friendly activities and adventures to partake in.

-The International Spy Museum-

Location: 700 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20024

A Brief Description: When you enter the doors of The Spy Museum, you are welcomed into a new world of missions and secrets. You are encouraged to put your spy skills to the test and work together with your friends and family. At The Spy Museum, you may become acquainted with the gadgets, inventions, and news relating to espionage, both the present and past.

Covid-19 Safety Regulations: The Spy Museum has taken special care to make sure that it's visitors feel safe by taking the following precautions. In order to visit, you must book in advance as there is

limited capacity. They also require all visitors to follow the social distancing measures and wear a mask. Based around the museum there are hand sanitizing stations to keep everything sterile.

Website:

<https://www.spymuseum.org>

-Washington County Museum of Fine Arts-

Location: 401 Museum Dr, Hagerstown, MD 21740

A Brief Description: The Museum of Fine Arts houses over 6,500 interesting pieces of art all varying in different styles and forms of expression. This includes, but is not limited to, sculptures, prints, decorative arts, and paintings. Feel free to meander through the museum collecting new knowledge and perspective.

Covid-19 Safety Regulations: In the Museum of Fine Arts, they expect all guests to follow their guidelines and precautions to ensure that all visitors remain safe and healthy throughout their stay. The guidelines are as follows: You must wear a mask the entire time you are on the premises, maintain a safe social distance, and follow

the directional signs placed throughout the building.

Website: <http://wcmfa.org/>

-Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park-

Location: 1850 Dual Highway Suite 100, Hagerstown, MD

A Brief Description: After spending many days indoors, connecting with nature may be the way to go. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Park is home to many trails, a handful of historical structures, and stunning views.

Covid-19 Safety Regulations:

Because this is more of an outdoor activity, there are less restrictions around the park. It is requested that you carry a mask in case you come into contact with other park visitors. There are also a few parts of the park that are still shut down due to Covid-19.

Website:

<https://www.nationalparks.org/>

To state simply, the world is brimmed with exhilarating, interesting places. If you're open to venturing out, consider these possibilities along with the many others out there.

A Look at Martin Luther King Jr.:

Life and Legacy

By Asher Lyons



Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. No one could have guessed that he would become as influential on our past and present as he is today. So influential, that he continues to inspire countless young men and women fighting for an end to racial injustice to this very day. Martin Luther King Jr. felt he was destined to become a pastor, as both his grandfather and father held that title. Even as a young adult, Martin advocated for civil rights and by 1954 he held a leadership role with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This was his first step towards becoming a role model for the African-American community.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s first large protest took place in early December 1955, the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The goal of this movement was to end segregated seating on public buses. The boycott began in December of 1955, four days after Rosa Parks was arrested for not giving up her bus seat to a white man. The boycott lasted over a year and ended in late 1956, resulting in the Supreme Court ordering that Montgomery integrate its public buses. King proved to be a very motivating and inspirational leader over the course of the boycott. He emerged from it as a well known activist in the African-American community.

From 1957-1968, King traveled over 6 million miles and spoke before crowds 2,500 times. If there was a place in the US that was struggling with injustice, King would be there within a few days, giving an appropriate, poignant speech. The most famous of these speeches is the "I Have a Dream" speech, which he gave in Washington, D.C. in 1963. In this oration, King told the crowd about his hopes for the future, a future where Caucasians and African-Americans can interact with each other peacefully, and are treated equally. Even after 58 years, we still have to work on creating this future, as racial injustice continues to be an important issue.

Although Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968, his legacy still stands today. A notable characteristic of King's protests was the lack of violence. This was an idea he adopted from Gandhi, who always spoke of nonviolence being the best way to protest. Gandhi and King's idea of nonviolence is still used in many demonstrations to this day. For example, the football player, Colin Kaepernick, who knelt during the national anthem, at his games to protest racial inequality.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which began in 2013, fights for many of the racial justice issues that King protested in the 1950s and '60s. Although the BLM movement focuses more on police brutality towards African Americans, while King had a more broad goal of general equality, the main goal for both is to make the world a better place by having everyone treated the same. The 400 year long battle for African American rights in the US is still ongoing, but we have made progress, and with the help of inspirational leaders like Martin Luther King, society will continue to fight for justice, and gradually evolve to become the utopian dream that King had in 1963.

Sources:

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/biographical/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/about-martin-luther-king-jr/>

<https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>

A Time of Change

A Poem by Pranavi Bhamidipati

Dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

*Born in 1929,
In Atlanta Georgia on the 15th of January,
Lay a hero no one knew.
But he would soon become one, by a few years at noon.
During a time of segregation, lived this hero.*

*A time of change was starting,
But no one paid attention.
Southern blacks and southern whites did not get along.
Abraham Lincoln had signed the Gettysburg Address,
Way before this unfair song.
Of blacks and whites going to different facilities,
Of blacks being treated unfairly.*

*Birds fly up and down.
They are neither white nor black.
They are a mixture of colors, flying through autumn trees,
Of gold, red and green.
And people stand near them, White and black.
Inspiration comes from the beautiful nature,
Who isn't bound by any rules.*

*Graduated at 15,
Speaking from within,
Sparks of thunder come from the ground.
Whispers of equality come,
And the wind carries them all around.
Carried to jail or met with violence.
You cant silence sound with violence.
His mind grew and he kept fighting.
He would never give up.*

*1963, microphone in front,
Cameras on this hero.
It 's a time to change,
It 's a time to live,
It 's a time to see,
I have a Dream.*



Images from Pixabay

*Changed the world he did.
We live in a time of change.
1964, Nobel Peace Prize
A time to live,
A time to change
Paving his way through the unfair laws.
The civil rights act became law.
But he was assassinated, in April.
His dream and speech all live on,
To our world today.*

*Children awake,
For you live in a world where,
We suffer through a virus,
We don ´t understand the importance of civil rights,
We target each other with words with an end of a sword
We don ´t remember,
That we Live in,
A Time of Change*

**It's Time For A
Change**

Watch WandaVision!

By BRAM K

WandaVision is a Marvel show series that you can watch on Disney+. This show is unique because it finally gives the backstory of Wanda Maximoff who is one of the most complex and interesting characters in the MCU.

If you watched the first two or even three episodes and thought you turned on the wrong show (because nothing says Marvel like black and white romantic sitcoms) you're not crazy and it's understandable that you turn it off. But it turns a drastic corner around the third/fourth episode and the build up to the final couple of episodes is totally worth it.

You don't have to have to have watched any Marvel movies to enjoy this but I highly recommend you watch Avengers: Age of Ultron and Avengers: Infinity war so that you understand most of what has happened previously in the story line. That being said, if you are an avid Marvel fan (and binge watch all the marvel movies and shows over and over), you will definitely appreciate all the references, easter eggs, and connections to other movies (for example, Darcy Lewis from Thor, James E. Woo from Ant Man and the Wasp, and Monica Rambeau from Captain Marvel).

Even people who haven't liked marvel might enjoy this because it does a good job of representation with central female characters of different ethnicities. In conclusion WandaVision is exciting and captivating and all the cliffhangers, plot twists and surprises will leave you speculating about what's going to happen next and impatiently waiting to watch the next episode.



Safe and Fun Ways to Celebrate Your Birthday! By Raaga V



Lots of people have been celebrating their birthdays in the pandemic, but they haven't really gotten so many good and safe ideas. My birthday is coming up in February, and I have a few ideas that other people can use for their upcoming birthdays this year.

One thing that you can do is have a little safe drive-through. You can be outside, and your friends can come by in their cars and give their gifts for you. They can just park their cars you guys can just talk. Even though it won't be the same typical birthday party, this is a safe way to spend time with friends and family on your birthday during the pandemic. However, since we can't afford to be out in the cold too much, more Winter and Fall birthday ideas are coming up!

This idea is something typical that you can do any season during the pandemic. Zoom has never let us down during classes, so it probably won't during birthdays! You can do a fun Zoom birthday party and your friends can give you online presents! You can also play some online games and have some fun with your friends during your birthday. Some fun online games are Minecraft, Roblox, Fortnite, PUBG Mobile, Call of Duty Warzone, and one of the most trending games, Among Us!

Another birthday idea I came up with is called Unknown. The rules are that every one of your friends are going to give you a present, but they will not write their names or anything on it, as you're probably familiar with your friends' handwriting. Then, after you get all your presents, you will do a Zoom meeting and guess who gave which gift. Once you've guessed, you will open them, and you've got your presents! This is a very fun game to play, and it is also safe.

Even though there aren't many things on how to celebrate your birthday during the pandemic, there are some and the only thing we can do right now is to be safe, wear masks, stay 6 feet apart from people and just stay safe and happy. I hope you found one of my ideas fun to play and I hope you try them out.

Celebrating Pongal

By PRANAVI BHAMIDIPATI

During the Covid Times, it has been harder for us to get together with family and friends and celebrate the festivals we usually do. But we still put our heart and soul into these celebrations!

Known by many names, such as Sankranti (Andhra Pradesh), Uttarayan (Gujrat), Makara Sankranti (Odisha), Sakraat (Rajasthan) and known by many more across India, perhaps the most familiar name would be Pongal.

Pongal, is a Hindu festival that often occurs during the 13th, 14th and 15th of January. It is a 3 day festival celebrated in many Asian Countries such as India, Thailand, Nepal and Cambodia and many more.

It is dedicated to the Hindu Sun God, Surya Deva, celebrating the time when the Sun enters a new zodiac. There are 12 Zodiac signs. Just like the moon, the Sun will enter a new zodiac every month. We celebrate the first zodiac sign as the first of a new year.

How do People Celebrate it?

During Pongal, it is celebrated uniquely across the India. In the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and other states such as Tamil Nadu and others, people celebrate by making a sweet known as Pongal and making a rangoli



Kite Festival in India

surrounding it. They put it in a special Earthen Pot and place it on top of dried cow's dung. And they offer it to the Sun God and eat it.

Another favorite tradition of all Indians and others is to fly kites during

Pongal. Children would go out and fly kites. It is a way for children to get together with family and friends and to experience the rays of the sun on this auspicious festival.

Another tradition widely spread around Andhra Pradesh, Telengana and perhaps Tamil Nadu would be putting up Golu Dolls. Other wise known as clay toys. Each Golu Doll often depicts a scene in Hindu Mythology. Using your creativity, you can put them in any way you wish. Just use your imagination!



More Fun Facts about Pongal:

- People make a tasty sweet called Pongal
- People enjoy sugarcane juice during Pongal to signify prosperity and well being
- Celebrated across Asia
- Many different versions across Asia Countries
- There is actually a Sankranti for every month - signifying the transition of the sun from the zodiac of the past month, to the next.
- Schools are closed
- It is a way to get together with family and friends and just enjoy Pongal!

Arts and Crafts to Do When You Are Bored

By:Sumedha Ghosh

One year ago, would you have been as bored as you are presently? I know I wouldn't have been. We were normal students going to school, having homework, and meeting with friends and so on. But not anymore. This pandemic has lasted for around 9 months. From that time until now, we have been stuck at home, just being bored. Well, do you want a handful of interesting ways to get rid of the boredom? Here are some fun activities to do when you feel down or bored.



1. Color/Paint a Mandala: Coloring is something that helps time fly. You could color on the coloring books, but something even more interesting than that. So, firstly, you could make a mandala. A mandala is a unique pattern usually in the shape of a circle. You could print one or use an app on your phone for coloring mandalas. Then, you could just color in with pencils or paint. If you do it carefully, it will turn out amazing. You can use watercolor as well, but don't try that for a printed mandala, the ink may bleed.

2. Make Sculptures with Clay: Now, making sculptures takes lots of time and resources. You can buy polymer clay, or Model Magic at a local Michaels. But you can also make clay at home with glue and cornstarch, which is quite easy and inexpensive. You can make many different creative structures. (A hamburger, ice cream, and if you want to, a human!) After the clay dries, just paint it. Ta da! You have a wonderful sculpture. It doesn't have to be high class, just use it to add a touch of your own to the clay.



3. Make Slime: Slime is a trend that has always been around. To make slime, you need PVA glue and an activator, like Borax. The most used brand of glue for slime is Elmer's. You mix everything together and get slime. It might be sticky, so add more Borax. There are different types of slime. There is butter slime, fluffy slime, jelly cube slime, clear slime, slay slime, avalanche slime, and many more. Slime is easy and fun to make if you have the right ingredients. You can make slime without glue, but they melt.

4. Make journals: You can make journals as well! You will need paper, a thicker type. You will also need an awl, needle, and thread. If you want, get some washi tape and masking tape. First, take the amount of paper you need and fold all of them in half, hamburger like. Then make holes with the awl in the middle. Make sure they are evenly spaced. Then start binding the journal. Here is a link:

<http://www.mixedmediaart.net/mixed-media-art-journal/making-handmade-art-journal>. After binding, use washi tape to cover up the strings. Then the journal is yours!!

5. Sewing: Now, sewing is hard, but the simple way is not so hard. Decide what to sew. Then take your thread and put it through the loop in the needle. Then tie a knot. Then put the needle in from the back and out from the front. Then go to the next hole down and so on. This is the most basic way of sewing. If you want to go a step further, there is a cross stitch. That is quite hard. But just do the basics. You might find a new talent in sewing!

More Craft Ideas Continued on Page 19

CREATIVE CRAFT IDEAS Continued

6. Paint on Squishies: On Youtube, a lot of people have channels that are based on art. Some of them paint squishies. One such Youtuber is Moriah Elizabeth, who paints and customizes squishies on her channel. So you could do the same. If you have an old squishy, then start painting. If you don't have a squishy, you can buy a beauty blender in any shape. But painting is time consuming, so be prepared to wait!

7. Create Fake Flowers

If you want to bring some flowers into your house, but won't require any care, make fake flowers. You can use tissue paper or coffee filters. For coffee filters, make sure to color them. You can also make fake flowers with fabric. Use fabric like silk or polyester. If you are using polyester, try using satin, organza, acetate lining, and lace. Fake flowers add a nice touch and a pop of color to wherever you put them.

8. Create a Temporary Tattoo

You can create a temporary tattoo, did you know that? You can use eyeliner, the one that can be sharpened, and then draw a design on your designated place. Then take some hairspray and spray it over the eyeliner. Don't spray too much, or else your skin will become very dry. But this only lasts for a day before it starts to smudge. You can also use a Sharpie. Draw a design with a Sharpie. Then put baby powder over it. Then spray hairspray. Again, not too much. This tattoo would last for about one month.

While these are a lot of arts/crafts, there are many more you can come up with. I hope these crafts get rid of your boredom. I tried these, and my boredom just went away. The crafts take up some time, so when you have some free time, do these crafts. Time will just pass so fast, because you are having such a good time. Happy crafting!

A Maze of Poetry

By Pranavi Bhamidipati

Poetry is a maze

From one end to another

Left or right? Up or down?

To be nothing means to have everything?

To be hidden means to be sought

For what purpose are these words brought?

To confuse, to compel, to think!

To find the hidden treasure!

Tucked away from plain sight.

Speak! The language of poetry!

For words are your friends

To turn them, to twist them into any maze

For they are yours!

Glorious it has been. To follow these words.

To create, control read

For the entire world to work together

To uncover the treasure of the meaning

Of this twisted maze, coming from my twisted mind

Atrocious, this tea! See the shape of thee!

The shape, the color!

It looks like yonder!

Oh poetry

A maze it can be

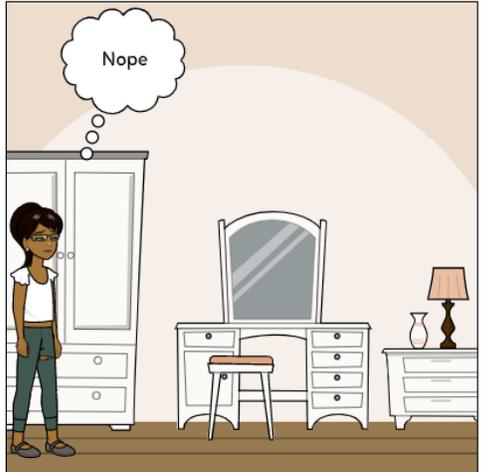
A struggle and frustration it can be!!

But once you find the key,

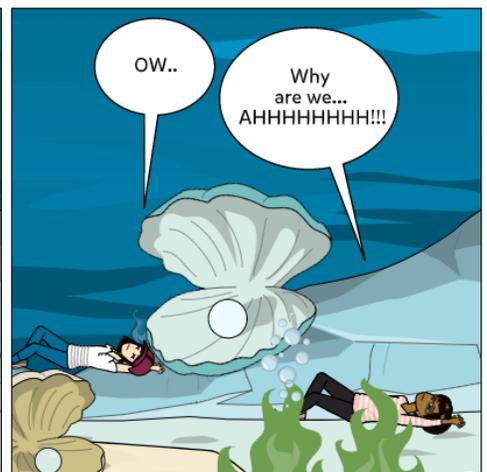
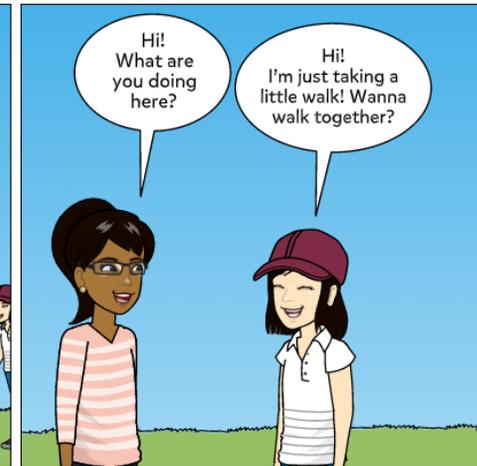
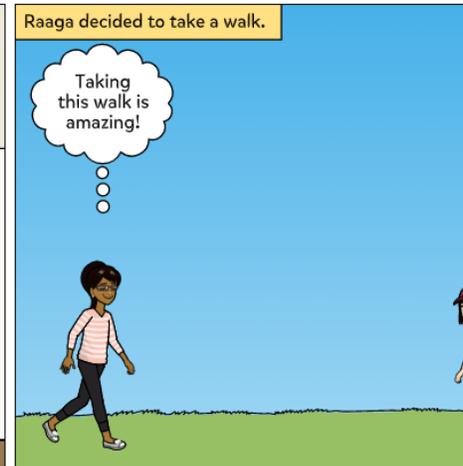
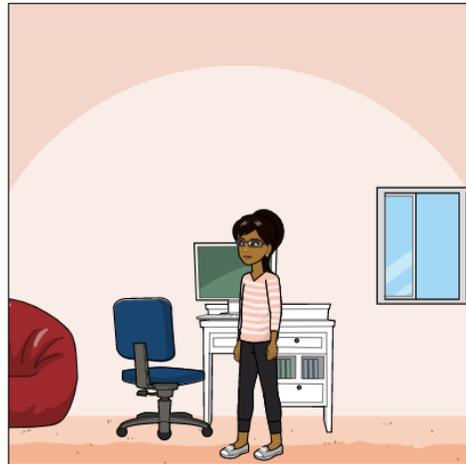
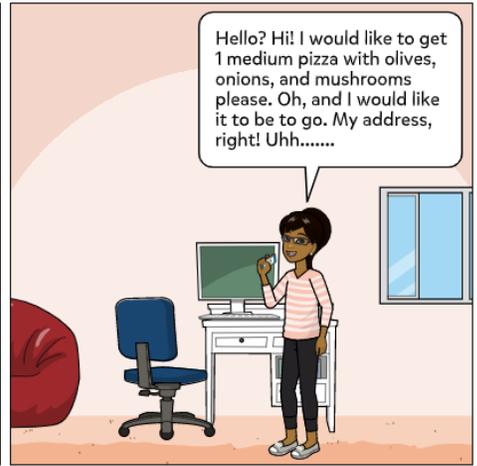
I promise

It won't be as hard as it seems.

A Crazy Day - A Comic in Two Parts By RAAGA V



COMICS (Continued)



TO BE CONTINUED...

Searching for Love Word Find

By Ritika Naik



V N P X C Q S L K H Y U S O L I F Y M E A S F J N
B L S L H V B O F S T L W F D E I V M G Y E G N O
F S U A O I D N Y L H U D A B E I M C U P I D B K
Z P W C C C W F T I U U C R A Q R W S R E W O L F
H K W B O L G F V L O D U P V N Z D M I T P T N F
E J Z M L V O N S A J A R E W A G Z C Y V H K G G
F H Z L A V Z V O D R H U C L Z C H B T Z D Y C M
V M Y G T O S D E Y F U D P O Z D E J C N B E R Y
Q A X F E O D J D A H G R H Q Q M S Z Y R V R A H
S H L O N Q V J I Z Y S U V F Z N L J V J V K G S
K H I E S W U J D F C T I U E T J J S S X L O E W
R T D C N L I S R V E M Q Q R Y Y G U J C U N K J
X E P K E T O U M I F S H A E Y X A Q D W L M K W
N F T K M C I T L R R Q E Y C Y L E Q V K M C N J
O F I T U B Z N V F G H D J Z J Y S Y T E B S U M
K I I E E N J D E P E N W N R K G N N P V M E V K
J M H S Q L L I I B M E Q A A P H E V O D M S B T
K N S J W O Q N C R I V Z V T L A J I G C V O L U
A Q M K B C K M T O J Q N S V Q J U T R F P R W E
M X T H A P X G Y Q O J W M H O J V E K P I G S K

- Chocolate
- Cupid
- Dove
- February
- Flowers
- Heart
- Hugs
- Letter
- Love
- Pink
- Red
- Roses
- Valentine

THE FALCON FLIER STUDENT MEMBERS

Due to the paper being online, some students elected to have their last names withheld.

Pranavi Bhamidipati

Deetya Cheerka

Sadie F*

Sumedha G

Evan Kaplan

Lily Kaplan

Bram K*

Olivia L

Asher Lyons*

Ritika Naik

Vasisht Perivilli*

Nishka S

Liam Slattery

Neel Thapa

Raaga V

* indicates Editors

The views expressed in this student newspaper are solely those of the individual author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the entire Falcon Flier staff or of Lakelands Park Middle School.