

# THE Northern Exposure

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# In this Issue...

## 2025-26 Staff

Isabelle Flood.....Editor-in-Chief/Social Media  
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 Malaykah Mbeche.....Feature Editor  
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 Ella Snead.....Staff Reporter  
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# February

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## Northern Exposure Policy

The Northern Exposure will strive toward excellence by reporting news accurately, objectively and thoroughly. Providing leadership through editorials and establishing a forum. “Letters to the Editors” are accepted and encouraged, but should be written responsibly, in good taste, free from libel, obscenities and invasions of privacy. “Letters to the Editors” should be less than 300 words and must be signed. Letters may be delivered to room 2103.

### 1st Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

## ON THE COVER:

AJ Barnett, sophomore, brings the ball down the court for the Broncos  
 Photo By: Gracie Wolverton



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# *The Lost Art of Reading (And How To Get It Back)*

By: Kay Haas - Copy/News Editor

Written language is one of the most powerful tools humanity has. Humans have been recording stories since the dawn of time. Storytelling is one of the most universal and intrinsic parts of the human experience. Reading has many benefits on top of this. Nathan Miller, librarian, has seen the benefits of reading over his career.

“Whether you are reading fiction or nonfiction, you rapidly gain knowledge. Reading helps build vocabulary, a knowledge base, and critical thinking skills,” Miller said.

Michael Russell, librarian, also shared the benefits of reading.

“Reading for pleasure for just a few minutes a day can improve empathy, memory, and mental focus,” Russell said.

Despite the numerous benefits of reading, there has been a steady decrease in the number of students who read outside of the classroom.

According to a study performed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the average reading score among 12th graders has been continually decreasing since 2019. The Pew Research Center has said that the percentage of students ‘reading for fun’ is at its lowest percentage since 1984.

“I’ve followed [Pew Research Center] studies on this for my entire career as a librarian, and it’s

disappointing,” Russell said.

There has been a lot of debate about the direct cause of this decline. A common theory for the reason why literacy rates are in decline is because of COVID learning loss. Education for children was interrupted, and it has taken some time to get back into the normal routine of a standard curriculum. But, this cannot be the sole factor as these rates have been declining for quite some time.

“We now live in a world that’s full of distractions thanks to our cell phones and social media. It can be difficult to find a quiet place away from the noise and distraction of the world to settle into a great book,” Russell said.

According to the Harvard Gazette, Martin West, a professor of education at Harvard, believes that the “rise of screen-based childhood” could be a contributing factor to the declining literacy rates.

The declining of reading has many negative effects. Studies have shown that the more a student spends on social media, instead of reading, their vocabulary and memory decline significantly.

“Even more concerning is that these impacts are cumulative over time, so students who read just a little bit less than their classmates over several years will be significantly farther behind than students who read regularly,” Russell said.

However, despite these statistics,

Miller is not completely convinced.

“Here at North, we check out many more books per year than we did 25 years ago. In 2001, the year I graduated, Lee’s Summit North circulated 3,798 books. Last year, the number was 11,592,” Miller said.

One way that students can get back into reading is by reading magazines.

“There is a magazine out there about every topic. A subscription is usually cheap, and you can access over 6,000 for free through the Mid-Continent website,” Miller said.

Another way students can find books they are interested in is at the library.

“I could talk to 100 different students and likely recommend a different book for each student because of varied interests. It’s worth spending three or four minutes with a friendly librarian who’s read thousands of books to help find some quality recommendations,” Russell said.

Reading is an incredibly fun activity with countless benefits.



# SOCIAL MEDIA BANNED FOR YOUTH IN AUSTRALIA

By: Isabelle Flood - Editor-in-Chief/Social Media Editor

Australia has officially become the first country in the world to ban social media for people under 16 years old, and teens everywhere are talking about it. On December 10th, 2025, the law took effect on major social media platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and many more. If these apps did not delete accounts for users under 16 years old, they would face very large fines, up to millions.

The Australian government has claimed that the ban is intended to protect kids from things like cyberbullying and

exposure to dangerous content. Many parents and online safety advocates are in full support of the ban. According to ABC News, over 4.7 million accounts have been removed from platforms so far, but whether it has been successful remains to be determined.

Experts and teens say the ban will not solve the real problems and will just push kids to work around it. Reviews of the ban have been very mixed as well.

“Although the idea is there, I think this will only push teens to be more sneaky, which can be more dangerous

than letting them have it in the first place,” Baylie Huston, senior, said.

Some families feel closer and more connected without the influence of social media, while others feel very disconnected from the world.

Governments in other countries are watching Australia closely to see if they should implement something similar. So, while this ban has only been in place for a few months now, it has already shaken up the technology, parenting, and youth around the world.

## Distinction of REALM

By: Gracie Wolverton - Entertainment Editor

THEINK & Quill literary and art magazine at LSN has won the Distinction of REALM First Class award. The magazine accepts submissions of paintings, drawings, photography, writing, and other art forms, and publishes them in the magazine. This past year, the magazine was submitted to the National Council for Teachers of English in competition.

“This is the first year we

submitted the magazine for review. The distinction of ‘REALM First Class’ means that we achieved the highest score possible on their rubric,” Ashley Baker, Bronco Writers Circle sponsor, said.

The rubric on which the magazines are judged includes a vast range of categories.

“The magazines are evaluated with a rubric that includes literary and artistic quality and

diversity of student voices represented, editing, and design,” Baker said.

This award-winning magazine offers a great opportunity for students interested in art or editing.

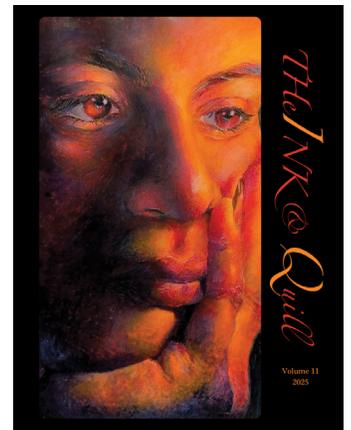
“The magazine gives students the unique opportunity to share their writing and artwork with other students, staff, friends, and family. It honors their hard work and creativity,” Baker said.

Students who participated in the creation of the magazine feel that working on THEINK & Quill offers great experiences.

“I found it really cool and fulfilling as we

worked really hard on the magazine for months,” Harper Hearne, junior, said.

The distinction of REALM First Class is an award of great honor and speaks volumes about the talent and hard work put in by all who worked on the magazine.





# North in Photos



By: Reagan Hill - Photography Editor  
Photos By: NE Staff



Photo Courtesy of: Senior Sigmon

# FILMS AND FLICKS OF 2026



By: Ella Snead - Staff Reporter

Going into 2026, there are many highly anticipated films, but many people are skeptical about whether they will meet last year's film quality standards. 2025 saw many film hits: *A Minecraft Movie*, *Lilo and Stitch*, *Zootopia 2*, *Wicked For Good*, and more. 2026 movies are expected to live up to these iconic films.

The five movie series *The Hunger Games*, based on the Suzanne Collins books, have been very popular throughout the years.

"I'm really excited for the new *Hunger Games* Movie... because I've read all the books, and it's kinda nostalgic," Grace Berdych,

sophomore, said.

The film, *The Hunger Games Sunrise on The Reaping* is coming out on November 20th, with significant actors such as Mckenna Grace, Elle Fanning, Maya Hawke, and many other familiar faces.

The live-action *Moana*, starring Catherine Laga'aia, will be released on July 10th. Disney has come out with many live-action films, such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Lilo and Stitch*, and many more classic remakes.

*Moana* fans have very high expectations for this live-action movie, hoping it lives up to the iconic animated movie, which is

one of the most-streamed movies on Disney+.

As the popularity of producing live action films seems to be on the rise, fans have mixed emotions.

"I'm not a fan of live adaptations. I don't think they've worked very well. Box office shows that they don't work very well," Terry Durnell, IB Film Teacher, said.

Other popular franchise films plan to release movies in 2026.

The newly engaged couple, Tom Holland and Zendaya, are both returning to their roles as Peter Parker and MJ in the upcoming film *Spider-Man: A Brand New Day*. This couple will be starring in their fourth movie

together, and fans cannot wait to see their chemistry on the screen again.

"Oh, they're so cute. They're perfect," Berdych says.

Alongside Tom Holland and Zendaya, Sadie Sink, coming off the widely known show *Stranger Things*, will be starring in *Spider-Man: A Brand New Day*. Her character hasn't been revealed yet, but it is very highly anticipated, and fans are eager to see her character in the upcoming film.

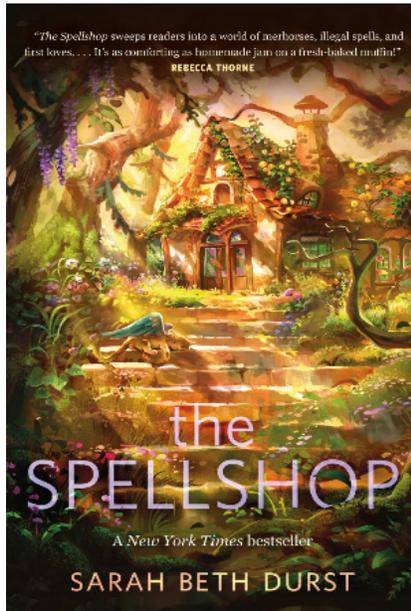
2026 has many enticing films with a lot of potential to look forward to. Between live-action Disney movies and thrilling dystopian films, 2026 will have many options for moviegoers of all ages.



# A Whimsical Read

By: Kay Haas - Copy/News Editor

Editorial



*The Spellshop* is a quaint story about Kiela, an introverted librarian, and her spider-plant assistant Caz, fleeing their home after a revolution breaks out. The pair end up traveling to Kiela's hometown and discover that magical storms have caused major damage to the land. In an attempt to save the land, the pair uses their research skills to create spells to save the area.

*The Spellshop* is written by Sarah Beth Durst and was originally published in 2024. The book became quite popular on social media platforms and has a whopping 145,570 ratings on Goodreads. This book falls in the "cozy fantasy" genre, a subsection of the fantasy genre that is mainly classified by "low-stakes" plots. This genre, and this book, focus

heavily on atmosphere, creating a really enjoyable reading experience.

The characters were well-written and added to the overall story. The world that Durst was able to create was incredibly whimsical and really enjoyable to read. The creativity of the setting was incredibly unique and made for an entertaining read.

Durst has written another book in the series called *The Enchanted Greenhouse*. While this book is not a complete continuation of the first, they are both in the same world. The next book in the series, *Sea of Charms*, is set to release in July of this year.

This book is perfect for anyone wanting an incredibly cute story with a fascinating fantasy world!

# The Local Luxuries of Downtown Lee's Summit

By: Malaykah Mbeche - Feature Editor

Lee's Summit is known for its charming, award-winning historic downtown with local shops and eateries, abundant parks and trails, and a strong community feel. This makes it a popular, family-friendly suburb near Kansas City with a mix of small-town ambiance and modern amenities.

Downtown Lee's Summit features historic brick buildings, boutiques, restaurants, and a popular farmers' market. It is recognized as a "Great Neighborhood" by the American Planning Association. The downtown area offers a variety of diverse shops and stores that locals can enjoy.

Sara Witteman, English teacher, enjoys the local bookshop Katie's Books.

"I teach English, and I love books, and so I love to shop local and go there to buy books instead of buying them off Amazon," Witteman said.

## Messner Bee Farm

While some locals enjoy the quiet bookstore, others enjoy the outdoorsy vibes and rustic charm that downtown's local businesses countlessly deliver. Messner Bee Farm is a family-owned business that specializes in natural beekeeping and handmade, hive-based products.

"My favorite store in downtown Lee's Summit is Messner Bee Farm. I love it because it has so many different products, and I love how everything there is locally



made," Parson Hendricks, sophomore, said.

## Whistle Stop Coffee

When locals go downtown, they often take the opportunity to visit the diners and coffee shops in the area.

"[I like] Whistle Stop [Coffee] because it's been there since I was a little kid and has good coffee; Fireside Chai, that's my recommendation, and Neighborhood Cafe," Witteman said.

Locals also visit downtown because they sometimes like to just take in their surroundings and enjoy the moment. Some grab a bite to eat while they shop while others simply enjoy a calm evening with no hassle.

"[I like to] sit outside at Whistle Stop



or sit outside at Third Street Social to eat dinner in the summer when it's warm," Witteman said.

## Other Options Downtown

Locals' preferences for what times they most enjoy going downtown vary. Many locals speak of the different activities that downtown provides during the jolly holiday season.

"My favorite time to visit downtown Lee's Summit is in the winter because I love walking around to see all the Christmas lights. I also love the Mayor's Tree Lighting, and watching the first Christmas decorations of the year light up," Hendricks said.

Other locals speak of the fun colors of the leaves as the weather gets colder and the drinks get warmer.

"[My favorite time to visit downtown



is] the fall, because all the colors are changing, it's nice outside, the sun is so warm when you're walking down there," Witteman said.

Downtown brings people together while offering fun moments and cozy sweater weather. Many locals enjoy attending seasonal festivals and events that create opportunities to socialize and celebrate together.

"I love going to Oktoberfest and Downtown Days to hang out with people as a good start to the summer or fall," Hendricks said.

There were also locals who suggested downtown should bring in some new shops and stores that would attract more customers.

"I wish there were a record store in Downtown Lee's Summit because I feel like it matches the vibe and would attract lots of customers," Hendricks said.

Downtown would definitely benefit from adding in a record store especially with Lee's Summit's vinyl collecting music loving inhabitants.

However even without a record store or anything more, downtown nevertheless provides vintage and rustic charms along with an inviting community. Downtown Lee's Summit brings the community together through its local shops, seasonal events, and welcoming atmosphere that keeps people coming back.



# BRONCOBOTS: *Geared for Success*

By: Gracie Wolverton - Entertainment Editor

The Broncobots are getting ready for the 2026 season. In preparation for the upcoming season, the Broncobots are building a robot to participate in competition.

“Every year, one of the first weeks of January, we get a brand new game. This robot has to play that game. It’s kind of like three versus three basketball in that usually you have to score more points than the other team. We

have to be able to build one of those robots to be on the field at any given time,” Jackson Reed, senior, said.

In preparation for the game, the robotics team has been testing out what is going to work for their robot.

“We’re testing [parts] as we make them to make sure they’re gonna work for our robot and bettering our design through the prototypes,” Amelia Hughes, sophomore, said.

One of the biggest parts of robotics is creating the prototypes and pieces used in the robot. Learning these skills can be useful for those interested in going into the engineering field in the future.

“My favorite part of robotics is getting to learn how to be a better engineer since I’m interested in going into an engineering field; getting these hands-on experiences beforehand, during high school, is just a lot of fun,” Hughes said.

The robotics program offers many opportunities for all types of students. Whether interested in programming and engineering, or social media management and photography.

“It’s a great experience just because not only can you do all of the hands-on stuff, on the mechanical side, but it’s also a great hands-on experience for the kids in the non-mechanical side,” Reed said.

One of the ways robotics can be beneficial in ways outside of

programming or engineering is managing the budget for the team.

“We’re completely self-funded, which means that we have to get around \$60,000 a year; that’s our operating budget,” Reed said.

Being involved in robotics at North is a great way to step foot into many different fields, from engineering to media; robotics has something to offer for every student.



Final match of the 2025 world championships  
Photo courtesy of Jackson Reed

## For the Future

The A+ program is an academic program that helps students in high school pay for college with scholarships and funding. The main way the A+ program is designed to be used is by a local two-year school.

“The A+ program is a state-funded program that, after



A+ training with Ms. Mooney  
Photo By: Isabelle Flood

completing the requirements throughout your four years in high school, will pay for up to six semesters of tuition at a Missouri community college or technical school,” Shannon Husted, A+ program assistant, said.

While the A+ program is designed to help students through a two-year community college, it can also be beneficial to those planning to go to a four-year school.

“Many four-year colleges in Missouri also offer some scholarships with their own money to recognize students

who complete A+ but still choose to go to a four-year school,” Jennifer Mooney, A+ coordinator, said.

Not all students who attend four-year colleges end up going through all four years. The A+ program can serve as a cushion in case of a change in plans.

“The money can be used for up to four years from the time a student graduates, so if they change their mind, it’s there as a backup plan,” Mooney said.

Even if a student is unable to use the monetary benefits of the program, A+ can offer valuable experiences to students while in high school.

“Students get real-world experience from completing their 50 hours of tutoring/mentoring. They learn communication skills, how to



navigate responsibilities, they work on being role models through positive behaviors, they can learn leadership skills and accountability, they learn how to navigate expectations and gain clarity about career interests,” Husted said.

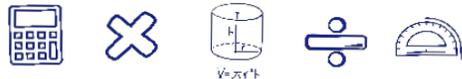
The A+ program is designed for all students, whether or not they plan to attend a two-year or four-year college or university. This program offers funding for students and valuable experiences.

# CLUBS Making An IMPACT

By: Emerson Godfrey - Assistant Copy Editor

Clubs at Lee's Summit North are always growing and creating new opportunities for students. Whether someone loves art, leadership, robotics, reading, or something in between, there are dozens of options for all interests. Two clubs in particular seem to catch a lot of STEM-loving students: Medical Club and Math Club.

## MATH CLUB



Math Club is an exciting club for any and all math-lovers or people who would like to dive more into the math world.

"We compete against many surrounding school districts in different math competitions. We travel a few times both semesters, and the students take tests over the categories they choose," Jennifer Phi, Math Club sponsor, said.

Math Club's competitions are both high-stakes and fun for the students involved. They compete for awards at the end of each competition.

But Math Club is not just about solving equations and writing formulas, it is also a community here at Lee's Summit North.

"You get to meet other like-minded people, go to competitions, and you get to spend time with Mr.

Ballinger and myself," Phi said.

Math Club prepares for competitions by meeting once a month or every other month during a Wednesday Bronco Time. Both a love for a challenge and a passion for math create great Math Club members.

"Practicing helps them to keep skills fresh in their minds and it builds camaraderie amongst the

students," Phi said.

Be sure to stop by for meetings and to cheer on your friends and classmates in Math Club.



Math Club with awards after Warrensburg competition

Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Phi

## MED CLUB



Medical Club (Med Club) is a great choice for students interested in the medical field and making an impact around the Lee's Summit area.

"Medical Club helps

students by providing learning experiences within their niche. For example, we have guest speakers from the medical field that come in. They tell us all about their day-to-day schedules, the education it took for them to get to where they are, and so much more information about their job," Chris Walker, Med Club sponsor, said.

Med Club has been working hard to make an impact.

"The Medical Club has been continuing with our monthly meetings. One of our most recent projects was making cards for Children's Mercy

Hospital. Making cards was not only fun and relaxing, but it also helps to brighten patients' days," Walker said.

Med Club focuses on a variety of medical interests to build on many students' passions.

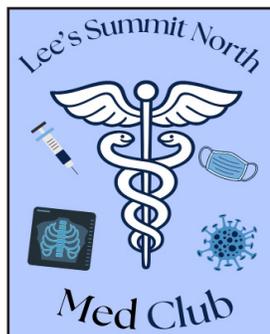
"I think the Medical Club is so important because it can immerse students in so many different directions of the medical field," Walker said.

Med Club has built a space for students to indulge in their passions which can sometimes be difficult to cultivate in other ways. Med Club spends their meetings recapping the previous month, looking at what to improve, and

searching for new opportunities to help the community. They additionally look at highlights from competitions which students in Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) can participate in.

"This allows students to compete in different fields of medicine. There are skill based competitions, debate based, presentation based, and more. Also, if you are a member of HOSA you can earn a cord for graduation, which is super cool," Walker said.

Having Med Club at LSN allows for fantastic ways to find community, get involved and bring enthusiasm towards a greater cause.



# JROTC

## Creates Future Military Leaders

By: Reagan Hill - Photography Editor

The LSN Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program (JROTC) is both a class and an activity that prepares students for success in future military-related or other similar careers. Led by Chief Steven Gardner and Senior Brandy Sigmon, the instructors create a fun and loving environment to enhance the learning experience in the classroom.

"After retiring from 30 years in the Air Force, I wanted to be able to continue to serve and wear the uniform I grew up in and love. I'm able to pass along all my experiences in life that could help the cadets in our program," Steven Gardner, JROTC teacher, said.

Along with the positivity shared by the teachers, students have also benefited from taking the class.

"[The teachers] are so sweet and caring, taking this class feels

like you're a part of a family," Addie Owings, freshman, said.

This one-of-a-kind class has not only provided students with the opportunity to find a supportive group of peers, but has also allowed students to learn lifelong skills that they can use to be successful in whatever they choose to do in the future.

"JROTC is a student-led program, teaching us about integrity, leadership, and accountability. I decided to take the class because I want to join the Air Force and because it teaches me to be a good person," Owings said.

Although many students believe the JROTC program is only for students seeking future careers in the military, the course has much more to offer.

"We teach physical training, health and wellness, aircraft history, leadership, aerospace science, personal finance, and professional development. Two of our classes give you core credits for high school," Chief Gardner said.

This course covers a wide variety of topics important for students' success after high school. Students are encouraged to take the class if they have any interest in being a leader in their future careers.

"I think every student in high school should take one or all four years of our program," Chief Gardner said.

The class has much more to offer than students believe, and can teach students more than just skills used in the military.

"Yes, we do wear a uniform in our class but many different careers wear a uniform. The uniform is a tool to help teach responsibility," Chief Gardner said.

Students who have taken the course have also given great reviews, mentioning the community it builds and the overall excitement gained from experiencing the class as a whole.

"My favorite part about JROTC is that everyone is so close, and because it's an easy, fun class," Owings said.

Overall, the JROTC program is a fun-filled course with many life-long lessons to learn. Open to all students, the class will continue to be available for years to come.



JROTC presents the colors at a home football game  
Photo Courtesy of Senior Sigmon



JROTC marches at the Veteran's Day Parade  
Photo Courtesy of Senior Sigmon

# SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER!

By: Morgan Hill - Assistant Editor-in-Chief/Sports Editor

The 2026 school year marks the end of the teaching journey for several staff members at LSN. This year, 11 teachers will be signing off on their time at LSN. Each has made an important impact on LSN and students for decades. These staff members have been a significant part in making LSN a better place, and have all enjoyed getting to see their students succeed inside and outside the classroom and eventually in their post-high school plans.



Retirement ceremony  
Photo Courtesy of Jessica Brown

## Kim Baer 29 years

As Mrs. Baer retires, she looks back on the many fond memories she has had teaching kids Spanish and life lessons in between.

"I hope that students will know that I cared about them....not just Spanish and not just grades," Baer said.



## Donnie Campbell 40 years

Donnie Campbell retires after four decades of teaching. He leaves behind so many memories and is very grateful to have been able to teach students and leave an impact on so many.

"I don't expect students to remember much of the math years from now, but I hope they remember how I made them feel: supported, encouraged, and capable of being their very best," Campbell said.



## Cam Clover 29 years

Mr. Clover retires after almost three decades of teaching, all while inspiring the next generation of shop class students.

"One thing I am proud of is that I have had six former students that have gone to college to become shop teachers," Clover said.

Mr. Clover leaves behind many fond memories, specifically speaking at the 2025 graduation, and hopes he helped as many students as possible during his time teaching.



## Eric Davis 28 years

Mr. Davis retires and leaves behind so many great memories as a social studies teacher. He has loved teaching and impacting the lives of his students and how they view the world.

"[My favorite moments are when] I feel like I've changed the way one of my students sees the world, expanded their understanding in some way," Davis said.



## Stefan Frank 28 years

Herr Frank has enjoyed teaching students and impacting the world through teaching German for almost three decades. He has enjoyed helping students become global citizens by teaching them German and hopes that inspired them to do good in the world.

"I always enjoy hearing from them [students] when they tell me that German was the one class they looked forward to and they miss it after they left high school," Frank said.



## Tonya Hall 27 years

Tonya Hall has been a speech and learning specialist at LSN for the past decade. Throughout her time teaching, she has strived to put supporting her students first and to empower them to be able to advocate for themselves.

"I loved working with students, often staying after school to provide extra support and tutoring—because helping them succeed, in any way I could, has always been what mattered most to me," Hall said.



## Perri Laterza 31 years

Mrs. Laterza retires from LSN after many years as a business teacher. She always strived to support her students and show them that she cared about them, no matter what.

"I hope that I have impacted students by encouraging them to do whatever their passion is," Laterza said.



## Michell Owens 35 years

Ms. Owens finishes her time as a science teacher at LSN and finishes her career teaching students science all across the globe. She has taught 35 years in many states and even overseas in Seoul, Korea.

"When a small population of students can see a daily reflection of themselves in a positive way it's empowering," Owens said.



## Michael Russell 23 years

Mr. Russell retires as the longest-tenured librarian at LSN. He leaves behind a lasting legacy and the honor of students and staff entrusting him with his views over literature.

"I love ordering new books and talking about books that have just been published. I will definitely miss sharing that with students and staff," Russell said.





# Basketball Shoots For Success

By: Emerson Godfrey - Assistant Copy Editor

At Lee's Summit North, the Boys Basketball team has been making successful strides throughout their season so far. Beginning their season in late fall, they have built their team around community and hard work.

"We like to think of ourselves as a family. We support each other and spend time together off the court so that we can really build that connection we need on the court," Tre Paulding, senior, said.

That connection within the team has led them to progress in their skills at both practices and games.



Varsity Boys Basketball  
Photo By: Reagan Hill

"Practices usually start with our warm-up and then a quick drill to get everyone moving. Then we start working on whatever Coach Hughes thinks we have to work on that day, along with some individual skill work, and then some live play at the end," Paulding said.

The team has had many triumphs over the course of the season, starting with Varsity defeating William Chrisman High School on December 3rd.

"I think as the season goes on, we will become even more comfortable on the court together and gain the additional experience we need to make a state run," Paulding said.

Ray Hughes, varsity head coach, has enjoyed seeing the team's work this season.

"We're beginning to find the power of working together, and the power of caring

for each other, and the power of force that comes together with working as a unit," Hughes said.

Even with many achievements assured for the season, the team is not letting up. Their games continue for the next few months, with their final one scheduled for early March. Students and fans alike are filling the stands for these high-energy games.

"We appreciate the fan support. We had some really good fan support at our last game. And the more they can come out, the better we are," Hughes said.

For Paulding, the culture and love for basketball runs deep.

"I got to watch my dad play growing up, and now I have the amazing opportunity to play in college and have my education paid for. It is a great resource that I can use to set me up for life, while still



JV Boys Basketball huddles during game

doing something I love," Paulding said.

Basketball has been a crucial aspect of Hughes's life as he has grown with the game.

"It's just something that from a young person, I always have been endeared by the game and just fell in love with the game at a very young age," Hughes said.

The adoration for the sport has helped build driven team members, and further, a driven team.

Boys Basketball will be making its way through the end of February with post-season aspirations.

# AN INSIDE LOOK AT: *Girls Wrestling*

By: Isabelle Flood - Editor-in-Chief/Social Media Editor

Winter sports at LSN are in full swing, and the girls' wrestling team has started strong. They have grown their team exponentially in recent seasons.

"Over the past few years, I've seen the girls' team go from four girls my freshman year to 12 this year, so there's definitely a lot more girls," Avery Edwards, sophomore, said.

With the sport growing in popularity, many people are learning more about wrestling and what it demands of the athlete.

"A lot of wrestling is not giving up when things get hard. It's also very hard on your body, and I feel like everyone overlooks that," Edwards said.

Wrestling is not an easy sport, but perseverance and dedication can be the most rewarding parts in the end. Another thing that athletes have to prioritize is their mental health and confidence, and wrestling is no different.

"Personally, I think my biggest challenge is keeping my confidence up," Grace Cronk, junior, said.

Being a student-athlete is a big responsibility, and it requires a lot of focus and dedication.

"As a three-sport athlete, I have to be really careful with how I manage my time, so any spare moment I get in school, I am working on some sort of homework, so all I have to worry about after practice is studying," Cronk said.



Grace Cronk keeps a good stance while defeating her opponent

Photo By: Malaykah Mbeche

As the girls' wrestling program continues to grow, the support and understanding of the sport will increase as well. With their positive start, the athletes are hoping to keep the momentum to finish out their season.

# *Boys Wrestling*

By: Malaykah Mbeche - Feature Editor

Wrestling is often seen as a physically demanding sport, but it requires much more than strength alone. Athletes must combine discipline, mental toughness, and constant effort to succeed, which is why wrestling continues to challenge and motivate those who take part in it.

"It's a mental strain, it's a physical strain, it really makes you a better person," Mick Cronk, boys varsity wrestling head coach, said.

Cronk also emphasized the importance of continuous growth.

"You can't rely on how good you were at one point in time, you have to constantly get better," Cronk said.

Wrestling demands constant movement, conditioning, and endurance, keeping athletes in peak physical shape

while pushing them to improve every day.

"The idea of always improving, always trying to get better, always trying to be better than people you're competing against and you constantly have to push yourself," Cronk said.

Although wrestling is an individual sport in which each athlete competes alone on the mat, it is also strongly supported by a team environment.

"I think the best part of wrestling is that you get what you put into it so it's just about you, it's a team sport but it's reflected by the amount of work that you put into it,"

Barrett Lawless, senior, said.

Growth is built on the hard work and progress of every individual however, growth is also built on how well the



Wrestlers waiting as a team for the duel to begin

wrestlers work together.

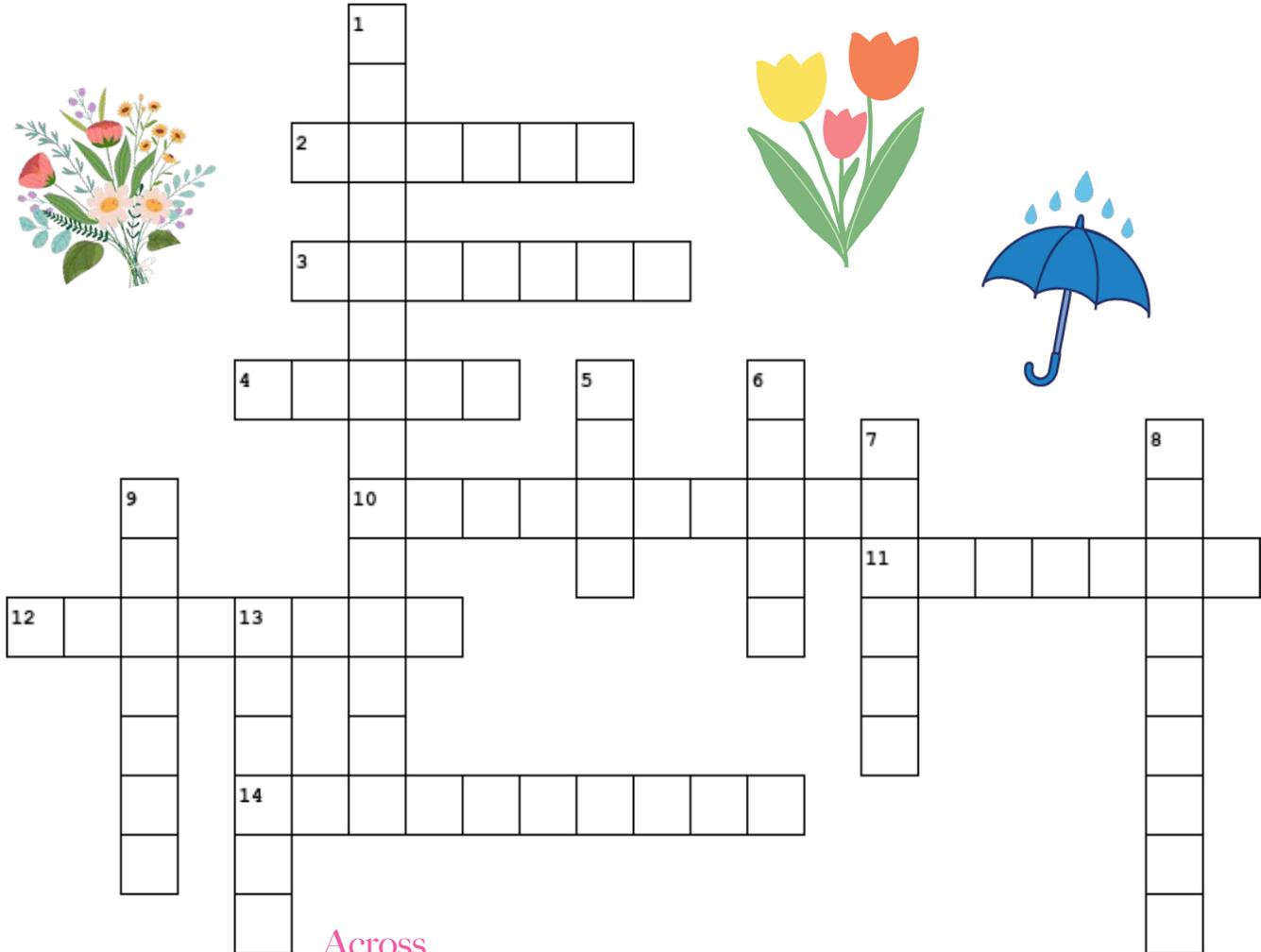
"Every single day you're fighting with your teammates, you're wrestling with your team mates and that brings you a whole lot closer together," Tanner Vance, boys varsity wrestling assistant coach, said.

Even though most of the focus is on the success and personal growth, the time spent with the team is just as important.

# Let the *Spring* Madness Begin!



By: Morgan Hill-Assistant Editor-in-Chief/Sports Editor



## Across

2. What is the end of game signal of a basketball game?
3. These can be found on an apple or cherry tree.
4. What is a well-known symbol of Valentine's Day?
10. What is an unexpected successful sports "story" called?
11. What is the month of April known for?
12. What is the March Madness tournament winner called?
14. What is the holiday of tricks?

## Down

1. What is a plant symbolizing good luck?
5. What is a basketball team's starting rank in the March Madness tournament called?
6. What is a popular spring bulb flower?
7. What is the scoring target at a basketball game called?
8. What is the break called that splits up second semester?
9. What do people fill out for the March Madness tournament?
13. These are parts of a flower.

1. fourleafclover 2. buzzer 3. blossom 4. heart 5. seed 6. tulip 7. basket 8. springbreak 9. bracket 10. cinderella 11. showers 12. champion 13. petals 14. aprilfools

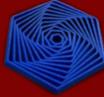
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