

# THE BLOTTER

## Behind the uniform

ROTC cadets reveal emotions, experiences, lessons learned along the way

By Matthew McCoy

When students look at ROTC members, they see plain brown uniforms, close cut hair, and a straightforward military mindset, but there's much more.

Behind the uniforms, cadets say is a loving program, dedicated towards helping others in the New Albany area.

"In this program, you get as much back as you put into it," junior Jonah Young said. "I joined a year late, but because I put so much effort into the program, I ranked up quicker."

The program is nothing like regular school, allowing cadets to progress at their own pace.

Young says ROTC has changed him in ways he never thought he could.

"Prior to ROTC, I would've never imagined myself getting up at four in the morning, rushing to my feet from loud metal pots banging together," Young said. "It's taught me a lot of leadership skills, and one important thing about ROTC is the spirit."

Senior Mathew Batovsky agrees and says ROTC has changed him in many ways for the better, but has also allowed him to grow into a community, and have fun while doing so.

"By far, my favorite experience in ROTC ever, was last year, on a Sunday, we went somewhere around Cincinnati, and we did Orienteering," Batovsky said.

According to Commanding Officer Alton Belcher, orienteering is a sport where you are given a map and a compass, and then have to find certain checkpoints as fast as possible using those tools. If you don't get all the checkpoints then you will lose points. Whoever finishes the fastest and has all of the checkpoints is the winner.

"It was snowing outside, it was freezing, and they dropped us off in the middle of the woods, gave us a map and a com-

pass and said, 'find these points and find your way back.'"

Batovsky, Belcher, and Young all say they have fond memories of the Cincinnati orienteering. Young says the six inches of snow made it a merry time spent with fellow members, trying to find their way back to their unit.

"That was by far the most fun and exhilarating experience," Batovsky said. "I felt so free, running around in the cold. I ended up finding another member on our team, we ended up by chance having the same map, so we went and did it together."

Alongside entertainment, sentiment is an important part of every team member.

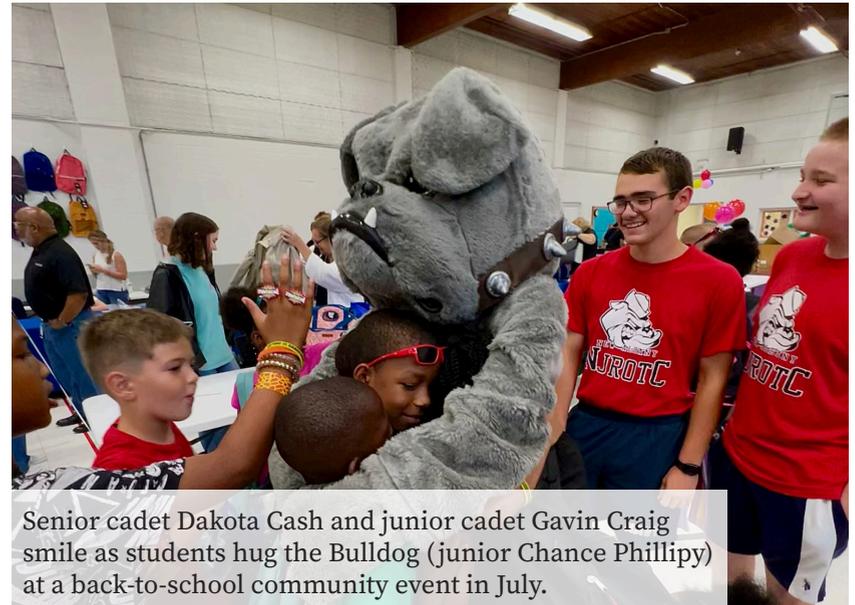
"I didn't think much would come my first year, but since I spent so much time working, and trying my hardest, I got offered probably one of the best experiences I've ever been given [in my life]," Young said.

The experience? A fully paid trip to Hawaii.

**"It was really surreal for me, someone who before ROTC, had basically done nothing, aside from schoolwork, this was the most surreal experience in my life."**

Jonah Young // 11

"We don't usually take first years on trips, since we don't know if they're trustworthy yet, but because I had worked so much they knew me," Young said. "That's a \$2,500 trip I got to go on for free."



Senior cadet Dakota Cash and junior cadet Gavin Craig smile as students hug the Bulldog (junior Chance Phillipy) at a back-to-school community event in July.

"I met so many amazing people, and experienced so many amazing things. We were on television, stars in the sky, marching down Waikiki street in Honolulu, giant buildings to my left, and the Pacific Ocean as far as the eye could see on my right, and there were just these people cheering and clapping," Young said. "It was really surreal for me, someone who before ROTC, had basically done nothing, aside from schoolwork, this was the most surreal experience in my life."

Young says ROTC transformed him into someone he was much more proud to be, and the night in Hawaii helped him in ways he never thought possible.

"Something, someone said in the crowd, 'you are the future' - it echoed while we marched, and it spread through the crowd, and that really hit home with me, because I had realized truly how much a person was able to accomplish,"

Young said. "Just one year of being in ROTC, the transformation was immense. I had to keep myself from smiling, because it's really prolific."

His experience didn't stop at the march, as Young says he was encountered by a man afterwards.

"After the march was done, we had a guy that came up to us, he was a really tall, buff Hawaiian man, and he comes up to us and starts to cry," Young said. "He had done ROTC himself, when he was young, and he said in tears 'I really want you guys to know, the amazing things that you do, not only for the country but the things that you do for the people in your community will shape people's lives.'"

Young says no one pointed or laughed at the crying man, because he was so incredibly sincere, he truly believed these men and women in the ROTC would change the world.

# Do more, care more, be more

From post-it notes to serving the less fortunate, no club does it like Anchor Club

By Jamie Sullivan

There are many clubs and extracurricular activities available at NAHS, but Anchor Club definitely stands out from the crowd.

Students' interest in the relatively new addition to the club roster has been exploding over the past four years, as there are many options for student involvement and participation.

"We have 150 members and this is our fourth year. Our first year we had 15, then 30, and last year we had 90," sponsor Stephanie Lone said. "We are growing exponentially."

Anchor Club began in the 2019-2020 school year, and Lone has been with the club since the beginning. Lone says she enjoys running the club because it is an opportunity to connect with students in a different way.

"I get to interact with kids that I wouldn't have been interacting with outside of my classroom so it's nice to meet some other students," Lone said. "It impacts me just as much as it impacts them to be able to do these sorts of things."

Because of the lessons it teaches students, Lone believes Anchor Club is an important addition to the community, particularly in a high school setting.

"Anchor Club is an international community service organization," Lone said. "We focus on making sure that we give

high school students the opportunity to serve in their communities."

Anchor Club not only teaches the value of community service, but it also teaches the value of responsibility. Junior Anna Sekula is the president of Anchor Club and oversees major club events.

"I became an anchor club member two years ago in my freshman year," Sekula said. "My older sister made me promise to join the club as an incoming freshman, and I did not regret that decision."

Sekula says she has a lot of responsibility as the president, and with the rising number of students she expects that responsibility to increase.

"I am in charge of leading meetings, setting a good example, creating agendas and other documents, organizing matters, attending most events, helping plan events, and contacting members about various matters," Sekula said.

In addition to giving students important life skills, Anchor Club provides enormous community support. The club is renowned for its accomplishments in volunteer work and for maintaining an overall upbeat atmosphere.

"We have community service events and lots of them," Lone said. "Some of them are silly small things, like putting chalk on the sidewalk and what not, and then sometimes

we do things like feeding the homeless."

Out of all the projects the Anchor Club has undertaken, Lone says that feeding the homeless is the one that students remember the most.

"My favorite service projects are the projects such as the work we provide with We the People," Sekula said. "It is not often that you get to directly interact with the people you are helping, and understand the harsh reality of our neighbors and community."

Since joining the club two years ago, Sekula says her favorite part of it has to be the connections and opportunities she has made on the way.

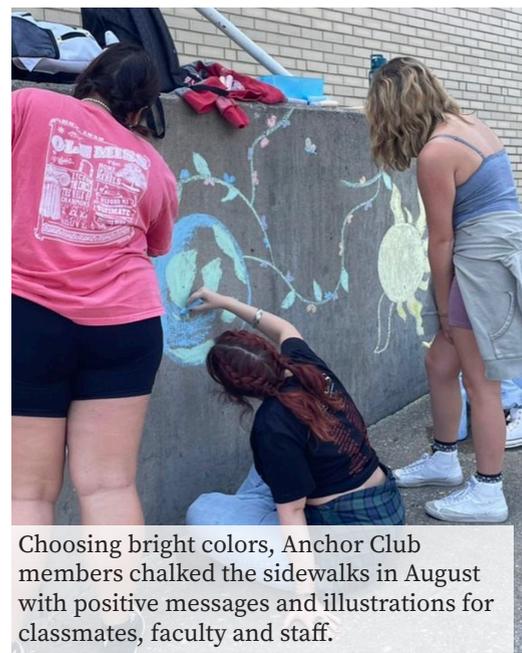
Anchor Club's numerous community service accomplishments are incredible, and the majority of them are done locally.

"We help teachers with various tasks, provide volunteer support for various organizations, such as Harvest Homecoming, and help run donations," Sekula said.

Lone says that she wants the organization to be enjoyable for the students while also teaching them about the outside world.

"I just really hope students recognize the needs of others," Lone said. "It is for us to help the community and teach students to do things for other people before they do things for themselves."

Students must complete community service hours in order to graduate from certain diploma programs at NAHS. Since Anchor Club offers this opportunity, many students have joined the club since its be-



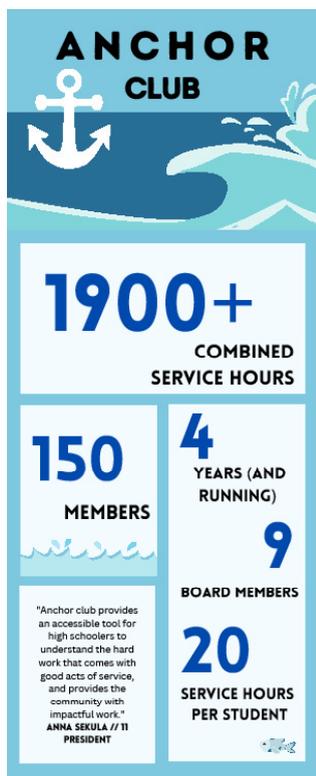
Choosing bright colors, Anchor Club members chalked the sidewalks in August with positive messages and illustrations for classmates, faculty and staff.

ginning in 2019.

"The size of the anchor club is amazing, as more and more people join opportunities at New Albany," Sekula said. "However, more people means more events to manage. It is a completely different club than I signed up to lead my freshman year."

Sekula says the sudden rise in members causes difficulties in staying on top of everything, but she still appreciates all of the help the club can get. More members means more services they can give back to the community.

"These hours change lives, a little at a time," Sekula said.



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# The man, the myth, the legend

Mr. Bobbitt is more than just the counselor students see bounding through the halls

By Haley Shock



Taking a minute out of his lunch period, senior Will Elenbrand shows Mr. Bobbitt information about Navy enlistment.

An alarm blares, it reads 5:15 a.m. Eddie Bobbitt awakens before the sun's even thought about rising, to begin his day of fostering academic and professional success among the Bulldogs.

"[When I] wake up, I take Gatsby on a walk, that is usually my time to kind of get my head on and figure out what I need to get done in my different phases of the school day," Bobbitt said. "Then I'll typically get to the building around 7:15 unless it's Monday, then I try to get here a little earlier."

Bobbitt is the post-secondary counselor and mainly works with seniors. He says that his day is packed full of working with students, submitting important college, military, and trade school forms and information, as well as getting to know the Bulldogs.

"So a typical day, a Monday for example, I'll show up, I'll go out to the car line, play my music, welcome our Bulldogs and start the week," Bobbitt said. "Then, I come in here and usually, whether it's college letters of recommendation or application forms that I need to get completed I'll start the day off with that and then I'll have individual appointments. Then, I go to the senior commons during lunch. Senior commons is always a lot of trouble shooting whether its scholarship applica-

tions, military enlistments, trade school contact information. Then the afternoon is a lot more individual appointments with students and then when the bell rings it's over and I start all over the next day."

Bobbitt says that his favorite part of his job is being a part of students' stories.

"It's gonna sound really corny but [my favorite part of my job is] just being a part of your story," Bobbitt said. "Just a small part of getting you to whatever is next, it's a blast. I love coming to work everyday and I really do feel bad for people who, come Monday morning, they're dreading coming in. I'm jacked up to come in and work with our students so I say being a part of those students' stories and helping them reach whatever goal it is, that's my favorite part. My favorite part on the micro level, on the day to day, is just the conversations with students and getting to know you all. Yeah, I want to know about your academic aspirations and yeah, I want to know about your professional aspirations but, I also want to get to know you and your stories as well."

Though he loves his job, it comes with its challenges, the biggest being the sheer number of students he helps on the daily.

"When you have 1,800 students and you want the absolute best for every one of them and you want to make sure that

they're all meeting their deadlines and they all know what's going on, that honestly can be kind of challenging," Bobbitt said. "It's one of the most difficult things. Then it can be challenging at times just learning all the different policies, procedures, requirements for all the different universities, especially the ones I'm dealing with. Last year's senior class filed 784 college applications to 187 different schools in three countries and one U.S. territory. That's a lot of different degree programs and the requirements for those programs can be challenging at times. Those are really the two biggest challenges at times. I want to make sure that I'm reaching all of my students and adapting to all the different changes that colleges make in their policies and procedures."

Bobbitt says he hasn't always wanted to be a post-secondary counselor. Originally, he planned to enter the Marine Corp.

"I thought that was my only option to get out," Bobbitt said. "But it was after when I graduated high school I wanted to be an English teacher and then at UofL I changed my major three or four times ultimately it was working with students and helping them navigate the college process and helping them get to graduation that really inspired me and then I was given a lot of great opportunities at UofL to work with students for over a decade. Throughout that process I just remember thinking that it would be really cool to do this at the high school level."

Post-secondary counseling isn't Bobbitt's only job. He also teaches classes at University of Louisville and runs a nonprofit organization called Camp Quality.

"Outside of here I serve as an adjacent professor at the University of Louisville," Bobbitt said. "I teach classes for the Honors Department and for the School of Public Affairs. Then, when I'm not working with the Bulldogs or teaching at UofL, I run a nonprofit for children and families who are impacted by pediatric cancer called Camp Quality. So every year our organization will provide a sum-

mer camp for kids who are fighting cancer in some way shape or form. So those three things typically keep me pretty busy."

While working three jobs, Bobbitt also finds the time to enjoy his hobbies.

"When I'm not working, I love to run, I love kayaking, I love hiking, I'm usually outside doing something and if I'm not outside doing one of those things I'm throwing the frisbee with our Aussie Shepherd whose name is Gatsby," Bobbitt said. "Gotta keep those steps up."

Bobbitt says he averages 15,000 to 25,000 steps every single day. He also says he goes through a lot of shoes.

"I want to make sure students know about their opportunities, whether it's dual credit, scholarships, military, or going a different route," Bobbitt said. "I want students to know their options."

BOBBITT'S FAVORITE...

...FOOD   
**TACOS**

...KIND OF MUSIC   
**ROCK**

...COFFEE ORDER   
**MOCHA**

...DOG BREED   
**BORDER COLLIE**

...OUTDOOR ACTIVITY   
**WHITE WATER RAFTING**

# 'A Fall Fairytale'

## Local festival offers

### HARVEST HOMECOMING DATES

PARADE  
OCTOBER 1

PUMPKIN DECORATING  
CONTEST  
OCTOBER 2

RIDES  
OCTOBER 4-9

BOOTHS  
OCTOBER 6-9

THE HAUNTING AT THE  
GRAND THEATRE  
OCTOBER 6-8

COSTUME CONTEST  
OCTOBER 8

Indiana isn't necessarily known for its festivals, but New Albany is home to one of the largest in the state.

Harvest Homecoming takes place during fall and typically welcomes over 600,000 visitors every year, according to Festival Net. There are booths, rides, and food at the festival and it is set up in downtown New Albany, Indiana.

"My favorite part of Harvest Homecoming is that it happens every year and everyone can participate and celebrate this local tradition," senior Jacqueline Renner said.

The festival began in 1970 and has been back every year except in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For 2022, Harvest Homecoming's goal is to create "A Fall Fairytale" for those that

attend.

Every year, people from all around the community get involved with Harvest. Whether it's working a booth, volunteering, or participating in the parade, there are always opportunities for anybody to play a part in the magic of the festival.

In fact, many students typically get involved. Some members of NAHS's National Art Honor Society are creating artwork on panels that will be hung up on downtown businesses' windows for display during the festival.

"What makes me want to get involved is that it is during fall break so I have some extra time. It is a great opportunity to meet different people," senior Lila Endres said.

Some people like Endres volunteer in the festival every year,

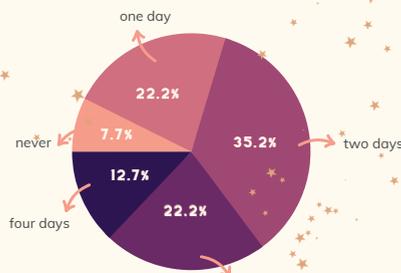
whereas new students are deciding to get involved all the time.

"I wanted to get involved because it's such a fun experience going to Harvest every year, so I decided being a part of the parade this year would be a fun way to mix it up," Renner said.

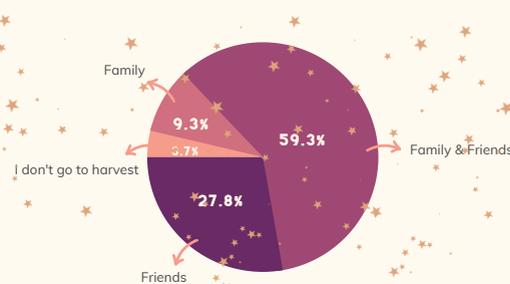
Each year the ROTC and Color Guard march in the parade. Some Bulldog athletic teams also take part in the parade.

Harvest Homecoming does more than provide a fun place to be for the weekend. It also sponsors scholarship pageants for young women, including Miss Harvest Homecoming and Miss Harvest Homecoming's Outstanding Teen. This year's Miss Harvest Homecoming winner was NAHS 2021 alumna Madeline Fisher. For her, the event has always been something she's

"HOW OFTEN DO YOU TYPICALLY GO TO HARVEST EVERY YEAR?"



"WHO DO YOU TYPICALLY GO TO HH WITH?"



# opportunities to get involved

celebrated.

"I grew up at the Harvest Homecoming office as a kid," Fisher said. "My dad was a member of the festival's board for a few years, so after school, I'd hang out and do my homework in the Harvest Homecoming office. I grew up around the people who made the festival so magical, and I'm so excited to be a part of the team that delivers the magic to all of our community."

The Harvest Homecoming pageant not only awards scholarships, but it gives these young women the platform they need to start making a difference in their community.

"As Miss Harvest Homecoming, I'm really excited to further develop my Social Impact Initiative, YOUsical Theatre. My mission is to advocate for the arts'

place in education across our southern Indiana community and throughout Indiana," Fisher said.

With all the events Harvest Homecoming currently has, such as a bicycle tour, a parade, a pumpkin decorating contest, and so much more, it's hard to believe it hasn't always been that way. Because the fair has been around for so many years, there are many southern Indiana residents who remember going as children.

"They had a lot of booths where you could gamble," Latin teacher Steve Prince said. "You put a quarter down on a color or number and they'd spin a wheel, and if it landed on your number or your color, you got to pick a prize."

Prince was born and raised in New Albany, and he has seen the

festival change over the years.

"Another fun thing is the Jay-Cs used to have a haunted house on Market Street and that was always fun because they'd actually get high school kids to work that and so we'd put on makeup and scare people," Prince said.

Because Harvest Homecoming is Indiana's fifth most attended festival, according to GoSoIn, and because it's been around for decades, it has been able to leave a lasting impression on the people of southern Indiana on a large scale.

"I think Harvest Homecoming being the same every year really instills nostalgia and makes people want to come back. You almost always see the same booths and the same food and the same rides, so going back each year just feels welcoming," Renner said.

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO WEAR TO HARVEST HOMECOMING?

"Clothes. More specifically a big shirt, orange striped knee-high socks, & black leather loafers."



Rylan Schrink



Sofia Rodriguez

"Usually something comfortable but also good for the hot weather."

"Normal clothes maybe a t-shirt with some shorts and hoodie for if it gets cold."



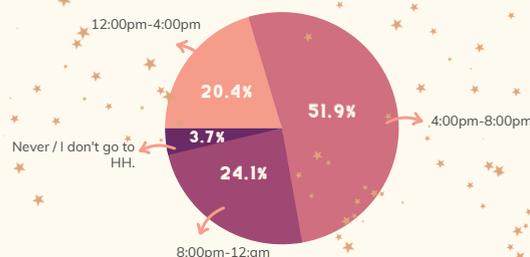
Quincan Hoard



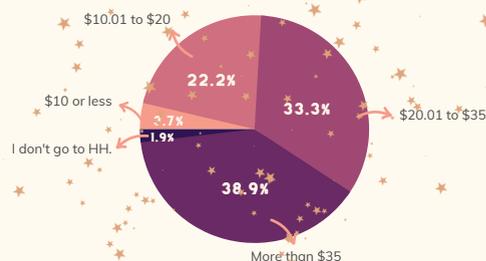
Mikaid Arley

"I follow the trends and really just wear a version of what everyone else is wearing."

### "WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF DAY TO GO TO HARVEST?"



### HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU USUALLY SPEND AT HH IN A DAY?



# Trendsetters

Latest brands aim to reach teens and be the next big thing

By Jack Moutardier

Every year new trends come and go. And many people are obsessed with following the trends. Whether it be a new shoe or phone, there is a standard for what you need to have to be modern.

But why do people really buy these trendy items? Are the products really that good? Or is it just because of its popularity?

When it comes to mega products that an abundance of people have, none stand out more than the Apple iPhone. Released in June 2007, the iPhone was an immediate must-need. And it hasn't slowed down since. With around 2.2 billion iPhones sold since their creation, according to Kommando Tech.

"I got my first iPhone in 2017," sophomore Holden Faith said. "Since then I haven't gotten another phone, the rest of my family uses iPhones."

Faith says that he has had multiple iPhones, but that won't stop him from getting them as replacements in the future.

"I have had a couple of iPhones in my life, but I think a part of having a phone is getting a new one every few years," Faith said. "When an overwhelming amount of people use an iPhone, it becomes a necessity for communication and apps."

For sophomore Henry Dixon, owning an iPhone is for necessity, and its trendiness.

"The iPhone is definitely popular for a reason, I personally think it's really high quality," Dixon said. "But I wouldn't have ever known about it if it hadn't been such a big trend and popularized by so many."

While the iPhone is a great example of a trend there are thousands of other products and brands similar to it, Nike

being one. Since the start of Jordan x Nike in 1985, the brand has sold millions of models and has a revenue of 46.9 billion dollars so far in 2022 according to Forbes.

"Growing up my brother always wore the new Jordan and Nike shoes, and I think that really made me want to get them too," Sophomore Jaden Sinclair said. "Last year I got a pair of Jordan 1s and I have really enjoyed wearing them almost every day."

When it comes to shoes, specifically Jordans, Sinclair doesn't care about the value of the trend related to them.

"I have worn a lot of different types of shoes, like Converse and Vans to Jordans," Sinclair said. "But I think Jordan 1s look really cool, and as a result, I had to get a pair."

## Setting the Trends

To become a trend, some-

one has to start it. Whether that be a famous athlete, media influencer, or just a normal person with a good idea, etc, something is always the root of origin. Dixon has aspirations of being a trendsetter.

"Earlier this year I wore these big feet shoes to school, they were really cool and I was glad to see people noticed," Dixon said. "While I found them online, I want to be the person who starts the big feet trend."

## What's Next?

There are many possibilities for starting trends. From simply creating a popular audio like Tik Tok user 'Tariq' who set a trend simply by loving corn to the famous BeReal app which grew in popularity this year.

What will be the next trend, and who is going to start it?

## Top Fashion Trends of the Last Decade

- UGGs**  
Ever since the late 2000s, the UGGs have been a staple shoe of an affordable price around \$100 for both men and women.
- Jordans**  
Originally released in 1985, Jordans have not stopped trending since. With so many different models, there's a pair for almost anyone.
- UltraBoost**  
When talking of trends, few had a higher peak than the UltraBoosts, but it seems that almost as quickly as they went up, they went down.
- Yezy's**  
Starting with Bepe, Kanye West has always had great shoes that have blown up. Yezy's are no exception, since the 2015 Adidas Yezy release they have been high demand.
- Supreme**  
Starting as a skate shop, Supreme has been a massive market of interest. With a variety of items such as shirts, slits, etc. Supreme seems to be a king of " hype brands."
- Lululemon**  
Very popular in girls clothing, Lululemon has been a hit product made popular by the rise in the height of COVID.
- Nike Tech Fleece**  
Originally released in 2010, the Nike Tech Fleece has always been popular, but has recently taken off and become huge.
- Birkenstocks**  
Considered a classic in the social game, Birks are a legendary product for all genders at an affordable price.
- OFF-WHITE**  
Created by the late great Virgil Abloh, OFF-WHITE is still hot for years now. OFF-WHITE has collaborated with many brands from Nike to Converse, and all their products are very expensive and in very high demand.
- TJ Maxx**  
When it comes to popular stores, there are like TJ Maxx. Admitted by so many for products for under \$10, it is a staple in the clothing game. With brands from Nike to Champion, there are so many wanted products.

# Fall'in on a budget

Thrift shops thrive as students look to save money, find unique items

By Nicole Richert

As the fall weather kicks in, sweaters, hoodies and cute jeans are in high demand, but high schoolers don't always want to fork over their hard-earned money.

Senior Madison Shimfessel is an avid vintage shopper and says she only allows herself to shop every four weeks because she gets paid every two weeks.

"It adds character to your style when you vintage shop and it also saves money so I would highly recommend it," Shimfessel said.

The US is home to more than 30,000 resale, consignment, thrift and antique stores, where customers spend about \$17 billion annually, according to Small Business Chron.

Senior Amanda Richeson is a local vintage shopper who likes to create her own unique pieces of clothing.

"I love vintage because I feel that I am able to find unique pieces that fit my wardrobe better than a store in the mall especially since I spend a lot of time decorating and creating my own clothes, and thrift stores typically have good pieces to work with," Richeson said.

On average, Americans buy 68 items every year from a vintage store, according to Vtcynic.

Freshman Lydia Cospers prefers vintage shopping at Goodwill and The Mustard Seed instead of retail shopping.

"I go about once a week, I

don't buy something every time though," Cospers said.

Demand for vintage clothing stores is estimated to be up to 400% over the past year in the United States, according to Fashion United.



"I would rather shop at a thrift store compared to a retail store because it saves me money and a lot of recent clothes in retail stores aren't very unique,

it's nice to find base layers like plain shirts and pants but the thrift store has one of a kind clothes," Richeson said.

Sixteen to 18% of people will shop at a thrift store during a given year and 12% to 15% of people will shop at a consignment/resale store during a given year, according to Narts.

Junior Kinnley Higgins says she works very hard to shop vintage a few times a month.

"I shop vintage because I personally prefer it, rather than going to the mall, I think it allows for a more fun experience especially when you find something really vintage for a good price," Higgins said.

The top three most popular vintage items at a thrift store

are t-shirts, jackets, and sweatshirts/hoodies, according to Vintage Rags.

Junior Kearney Wambold is a huge weekend vintage shopper who goes vintage shopping to find better, cheaper things.

"I mainly go to Goodwill to find vintage shirts and pants," Wambold said.

Vintage shopping is so popular now because of creative expression, according to LA Vintage.

Junior Chloe Bernhart is a long-time vintage shopper who loves Goodwill, Odd Shop, and 812 Vintage.

"Vintage, it's better for small businesses and my wallet," Bernhart said.

# Social media spreads bigotry

LGBTQ+ and people of color are targeted

By Crimson Baker

59 percent of the world's population is on social media, according to Digital Media Solutions. That's around 4.6 billion people.

Since the release of Facebook in 2004, social media has been on the uprise, becoming the main source of communication for most teens and constantly setting new trends. The average person spends around two hours and 27 minutes a day on social media, according to Influencer Marketing. That same person spends around 11.2 hours on Instagram per month.

But even with thousands of people joining these apps every day, they're not just fun ways to keep in touch with friends and family and let your followers know how your day has been for everyone. For people of color and the LGBTQ+ community, social media is not all fun and games.

As apps like Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram become more popular; so does cyberbullying. People are less afraid to say things when they're behind a screen, like calling someone a name, and less likely to face serious consequences when hidden behind a device. The rate of cyberbullying is 50 percent higher for LGBTQ+ youth than for non LGBTQ+ youth, according to Smart insights.

Discrimination on social media platforms has become a normal routine for queer people and POC (people of color) who use them. This is true even for influencers who have made social media a key part of their personal life.

When a white influencer gets paid \$135, a black

influencer, on average, gets paid \$100, according to the Los Angeles Sentinel. Along with this, 49 percent of BIPOC (black, indigenous people of color) creators reported feeling negatively impacted financially when they posted on issues of race, compared to just 14 percent of white influencers.

Racism and homophobia on social media run deeper than just its users.

When popular apps like these treat their POC and LGBTQ+ users like this, their white and non-LGBTQ users are more likely to encourage discrimination. The feelings of these groups are ignored and pushed aside. This creates an even worse environment for younger members of them using these apps. 84 percent of LGBTQ+ adults said that there aren't enough protections on social media to prevent discrimination, harassment, or disinformation, according to National Public Radio. Along with this, 49 percent of transgender and non-binary people don't feel safe on social media sites.

Peer acceptance in adolescents is one of the biggest factors of mental health. Social media has a big presence in teens' minds. When they see their peers post things that are homophobic or racist, even if it's not directed at them personally, it has a big effect on them.

Adolescence and early twenties are years in which you are acutely aware of the contrasts between who you appear to be and who you are, according to Child Mind Institute.

When teenagers scroll through these apps and see people who aren't like them, it isolates them and makes them wonder why they're so different. The lack of diversity on these platforms has gotten better as time has gone on, but it's still not good. This diversity problem only encourages harassment on these apps.

Along with harassment and discrimination from users on these apps, misinformation is commonly spread from user to user. Someone makes a post or a statement, and it spreads along that app, and then another app, and it circles around. When misinformation gets spread along these sites, it affects the way people view other groups, and it can be seriously harmful.

Yes, social media is toxic in general. But this is the problem. Because of social media's toxicity, racism and homophobia thrive on these platforms. And because of how big they are, smaller groups get lost in the crowd.

Consequences on apps like these do happen, but we've all heard the saying that once something is on the internet; it's there forever. Bigoted posts never go away. POC and LGBTQ+ people never stop seeing them. Social media gives people a place to blast their prejudice to the world.

There are positives to these apps. It can give POC and the LGBTQ+ community a place to speak up and be seen, and give queer kids and kids of color a place to hear each other. LGBTQ+ kids who grow up in certain areas (like small-

## Who's who?

 76% teen users

69% teen users 

 60% teen users

32% teen users 

er towns) may have no people in real life who are like them that they can look up to, social media can give them this. But because the root of these apps are so flawed, the pros will never outweigh the cons.

Social media has become such a big part of our world, and so many individual lives. When things happen on these apps, it spreads like a virus. New trends, drama, and celebrities move faster than you can really keep up with.

Social media apps need to encourage POC and LGBTQ+ creators, and fix the pay gap between POC influencers and white influencers. Social media creators need to work more on their apps being actively anti-racist. It starts at the root.

Social media users need to watch what they post, and think about who may see their posts. Don't repost something unless you know it's true. It's not enough to just not participate in harmful things people say, educate yourself outside of social media.

## Hold the pumpkin spice

By Oliver Dickman

Pumpkins started lining porches and other signs of fall appeared before the season even began.

Autumnal equinox officially arrived September 22 at 9:04 p.m. Eastern Time. The equinox occurs at the exact same moment across the world, according to the [parade.com](http://parade.com)

The tradition of using the fall equinox to decide when fall actually starts instead of just deciding when it starts dates back to the 1700's in Britain. Pumpkins, a staple of fall and Halloween, have been popular since roughly 9000 years ago.

At the start of September I started seeing fall decorations and pumpkin-themed foods and drinks. Starbucks released their famous pumpkin spice coffee August 30 this year. Little Debbie's fall desserts were released in mid-September.

It seems like as soon as school starts people rush summer and want to get to that fall break mark.

A few days ago I walked down just my street and counted - of the 15 houses, eight already had fall decorations out.

The fall season should definitely be celebrated, but wait to celebrate when it actually starts.

# Can you hear me? Student section impacts energy of the game

By Autumn Gullett

The crowd is cheering and screaming, the cheerleaders are smiling and staying sharp, while the football players are covered in sweat and getting ready at the line of scrimmage.

"I think for other teams the chants may impact them negatively as if a whole group of people is rooting against you it can kinda get in your head," senior student section captain Ian Hartmann. "I think for our players, however, they love the student section chants for the team and it helps them get hyped up and ready to play."

While the student section's chants can have a negative effect on players, it can also be positive.

"The student section being hype

could hype me up and make me wanna do better," senior football player William "Woo" Spencer said.

Feeling the support and encouragement from the crowd plays a big factor in Spencer's game.

"I definitely feel like I play better when the student section is in favor of me," Spencer said.

While many go to games to watch the main event, some go purely for the experience of being in the student section.

"I like the added intensity the student section can bring to a game," Hartmann said. "It also hypes up the players and gets everyone in the stadium amped up."

While the student section is great

at hyping players up, some notice a loss of energy when the game loses its excitement.

"A change I begin to notice in the student section when we are losing a game is that people start to leave before the game is even over," junior cheerleader Brianna Dailey said.

Overall, no matter what sport it is, the student section and their energy has a serious effect on the players and



Fans cheer on the Bulldogs at the home opener against Bloomington South.

how well they play.

"The student section being negative could throw the team off their game," Spencer said.

# Athlete superstitions Student athletes believe in game day traditions

By Luke Blair

Serena Williams has told reporters she ties her shoelaces a specific way and bounces the ball five times before her first serve and twice before her second. Athletes are also known for being superstitious; the Bulldogs are no different.

## Finn Railey • 11 • Soccer

"One of my superstitions is that putting tape on my left wrist will make me play better. I've worn it so much it feels weird without it," Railey said.

"When I was young and played basketball I never got more than two points," Railey said. "I got a bracelet from my dad that I wore and the first time I wore it I got 12 points. After that I wore the bracelet every game and never got two points or below. I do not have the bracelet anymore that is why I wear tape instead."

"I don't truly believe that it makes me play better but I feel like it is a motivation thing or like the placebo effect. If I think I am going to play better because of it, maybe I will work harder and play harder. So in a way I do believe it really does help."

## Riley Sawyer • 12 • Softball

"I wear the same ribbon in my hair every game."

"The ribbon I wear came from one of my lifelong friends, Pharan Gill."

"I wear the ribbon to support her but it also makes me feel better on the field because at the same time I know I have her support."

"The ribbon makes me look better when I play. If you look good you feel good. If you feel good, you play good."



Senior Riley Sawyer (left) wears the same ribbon each game.

## Chase Loesch • 11 • Football

"My superstition is my number. I wear the number 38 because the rapper NBA Youngboy also goes by 38 baby and makes several songs talking about 38."

"Wearing the number 38 does make me feel like I play better. If I play bad it is like I am disrespecting my king. NBA Youngboy is my king."

"He can make any kind of music. He makes sad music, hard music, and chill music. No matter what he always perfects it. He is a very inspirational person."

"One of my favorite things about Youngboy is how many different names he has. People call him Kentrell, Youngboy, 38 baby, Lil Top, and Slimeto."

## Kadin Bush • 10 • Basketball

"I believe that wearing a sleeve on my right arm every basketball game makes me shoot better. I feel naked without it."

"If I don't have on the sleeve I can't shoot."

"I believe that if you truly believe that something makes you play better, it does. I think it is just the mind set, it's like another reason to play."

"Everybody probably has some sports superstitions. Everybody believes something makes them play better. If they don't have a physical item they probably have something else like a specific routine for the day. Things like these makes people better athletes."