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this is HAPPENING

Lair '22
vol. 56

DRAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

12550 W. 52nd Avenue
Arvada, Colorado 80002
drake.jeffcopublicschools.org
303.982.1510

Principal: Mindi Feir
Staff: 84
Sixth Grade: 295
Seventh Grade: 331
Eighth Grade: 326
Total Enrollment: 952

GIVE HIM A LIFT. On the 8th grade orchestra field trip to the Colorado Symphony, Jayden Maerz (8) lifts Ben Belmear (8) on his shoulders as Belmear holds the school ID sign. "Ben wanted to hold the sign up high. I had to give him a chance. I had to make him feel tall," Maerz said.



Photo by enguinn

SISTER STRONG. Siblings Ellie Wallace (6) and Nora Wallace (8) cross the street on their way to their first day of school. "School was good at the beginning, but I liked it more after masks came off," said Nora.



MAKING HIS MARK. During the NJHS Induction Ceremony, Joey Lucerna (8) signs the pledge book.



HO-HO-HOPING FOR THE BEST. Jaydn Goins (8) waits to perform with the 8th grade band during the holiday school concert. **SING IT OUT.** Jack Hoxie (8) sings with the Acafellas in the Fall Acanata Concert. **GETTING REEDY.** Iley Cathcart (8) prepares her instrument before the All-Area Band Concert.



NOTE BAD AT ALL. Clarinetist Evelyn Armandariz (7) plays in the All-Area Band Concert. At the beginning of the year, she most looked forward to the seventh grade trip to IDRAHAJE. **HUSTLE.** Cole Eisenreich (8) drives toward the hoop during the Hoops for Heart Tournament. When asked, he described his year as "surprising." **IN THE SPOTLIGHT.** Stella Eames (8) opens the show as Rafiki in The Lion King, Jr. "The most important thing I've learned this year is that trying something new and working hard at it brings opportunities and new friendships and builds confidence," Eames said.



BIG ARM. Leo Given (8) tosses the football to friends during a break outside. He described his year as fun and said that he "was most excited about playing sports." **A LOTT'A HOOPLA.** Members of Mr. Mossell's sixth grade advisement class participate in a team building activity during the first week. **ALL WORK AND SOME PLAY.** Josh Nikoomanesh (6) narrates the Rosa Parks Civil Rights play put on by Ms. Lockwood's ELA class.

THIS IS our now.

It's our moment to shine; our second chance; our big comeback.



photo by wricle



photo by milhensky



photo by sandee

SPEAKING UP. In the first ever Slam Poetry Contest, Jude Creek (7) shares his entry. Taking second place was a highlight of Creek's year. **ART WE SOMETHING?** Roma Inscoe (7) and Abigail Croteau (8) work in Art Club. About the club Inscoe said, "It was interesting, and I met a lot of people." **FIRST DAY POINTERS.** Sixth graders Brady Walters, Max Ng, and Hunter Christiansen enter the gym on day one. "I've made two Honor Rolls," said Walters about his proudest moment.

"The best part of my year was making friends along the way."
-Avi Wilmes (6)

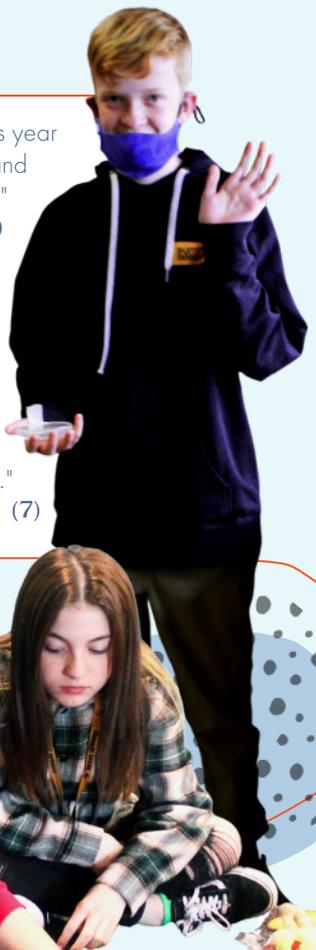
"Choir class had a lot of nice people in it, and Ms. Brinkman is really cool."
-Sunny Frey (6)



"I've really liked science this year because I like being creative, and being a doctor is one of my goals."
-Graeme Swanson (7)

"The best part of Drake is the people and all the friends you can make here."
-Mya Salome (7)

"For me, the best part of Drake is all of the electives that are offered."
-Kaia Gibson-Brown (7)



After all,
we've been
waiting.
Maybe we'll get it
right, because

this is

HAPPY

CELEBRATE! Kyla Warren (8) laughs with a friend after the NJHS Induction Ceremony. "It's been challenging coming back, but it's been good to get to know new people," Warren said.

PRESENT IT. Having learned about Oscar Schneider, a Nazi who saved many Jews, Bailey Noall (7) presents her final project in ELA. "I learned that there can be different sides to people," said Noall. **LET IT SNOW.** Maddie Floyd (8) and Kaitlyn Herald (8) play with "snow" they created in a science lab.



PEP TALK. Coach Donelson gives the volleyball team advice as Ella Lindholm, (8), Audrina Dries (7), and Mya Lee (7) look on. "Volleyball was fun because I got to meet new people and try something new," Lee said.

ALREADY BOOKED. Charlie Bonham-Fleming (6) reads his ELA reading assignment. One of his favorite parts of the year was playing young Simba in The Lion King. "I had a lot of fun with theatre," he said.





WELL NOTED. Tito Cisneros (8) and Wyatt Wilson (8) take notes during a lab in science. "Science has been fun every single day because of the way Mr. Underwood teaches," Cisneros said. **CLAY IT UP.** Riko Gomez (8) laughs with friends while working with clay in art class. "This year is impossible to describe," he said.



recreating it in any form.



CO2GO. Nolan Feir (8) prepares the CO2 race track in pre-engineering, one of his favorite classes. **ATTENTION!** Dressed as a soldier for Halloween, Parker Harteker (6) gives a salute. **SAY CHEESE.** Thea McWilliams (8) practices her photo skills in yearbook class. "Photography is my favorite part of the class," she said.



LOOK CLOSER! Evelyn Armendariz (7) looks at pond water through a microscope in science class. **MY POKER FACE.** Evan Shirazi (8) and Jayden Hughes (8) play a game of cards. "I've kept my grades up and have some pretty good friends," said Shirazi about the highlights of his year.



CRACKING UP. Ezra Tingue (8) and Dakota Duran (8) break character while narrating "10 Ways to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse," the play they presented in theatre arts class. "Ezra messed up her line, but she just made it funny," Duran explained.

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SCHOOL AGAIN.

Three hours short of sleep, we all drag ourselves to the doors of school. Except this time, there are no socially distanced lines, and strangely enough not a thermometer in sight. Weird. Even stranger, we're excited.

THIS TIME AROUND, IT'S COVID RITUALS WITH A TWIST.

We, middle school fashionistas, find the perfect mask to match our outfit, but, since we're not so enthusiastic about wearing them, there's about a million ways to get it wrong: Below the nose, on the chin, folded, and so many more! Then, when the holiest time of the day comes, lunch, it's all outside! It's an everyday picnic, like it or not. It won't be long before there are complaints about the trash left behind.

SO, SCHOOL IS SOMEWHAT NORMAL AGAIN, ASIDE FROM QUARANTINES.

Those especially hit our poor sixth graders who are too young for the vax, but we adjust and live with what is happening.

WE FIND SOLUTIONS TO HELP US GET THROUGH THE LONGER DAYS.

During our year at home, our Chromebooks turned into portable gaming computers exclusively for Fortnite, LOL Beans, and Tetris. Now, every chance we get, we find our way back to our old friends (which soon drives teachers insane). But let's be real: We got through last year, so

HOW BAD CAN THIS YEAR BE?



TAKE A SHOT. During a mask break in Mr. English's social studies class, Penny Appl (8) squares up for a shot. "Sometimes he lets us out at the end of class because the weather is really nice. It's good to get a break when you've been working the whole day," Apple said. **ANIMAL INSTINCT.** Dressing up as a giraffe during Halloween Spirit Days, Nolan Feir (8) still attends to his school work. "Me and my friends were doing a onesie theme. Caleb has a chicken onesie and Jacob has a cow onesie," Feir said.



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WE'RE GETTING THE HANG OF THINGS.

Kicking off November, the roars return to the stage when The Lion King makes its comeback, and everyone is here for it. Standing ovations for four sold out shows. Then we slide into Thanksgiving break. (Thank goodness!) Finally, more time to endlessly scroll through Tik Toks (soooooo productive).

COMING BACK TO SCHOOL BRINGS ANOTHER HUGE COMEBACK:

The basketball tournament! It's an event we all look forward to, only this time there's a light revolt when some classes don't make the list for attendance. "We can't all go to see it? Stupid COVID!" But there's still the Door Decorating Contest and holiday concerts. The pace has started to pick up.

IT FEELS LIKE WE KNOW HOW TO DO SCHOOL NOW.

Aaaand, then there's another break. TWO weeks off this time! (Whew!) Looking through Tik Toks, talking to friends (or that *special person*) and doing absolutely nothing school related until two days before New Year's. That's when we see it.

THE HEADLINES READ: MARSHALL FIRE.

This can not be happening! Things were just getting better! It's a little too close to home. When we return, everyone's talking about it, but in middle school life, there is no time to stop. Everything just keeps going. The pace picks up again. The work starts to build up. (Oh, have mercy!)

THEN IN FEBRUARY THE BIGGEST NEWS: NO MASKS STARTING FEBRUARY 12TH.

"Woah, no way! That's what you look like?!" It's strange, but our smiles return to the halls. It feels like things are starting to happen, in a good way this time.



CUT IT OUT. Wielding scissors, Jereimyah Berry works in robotics class. "I liked building robots and getting to drive them on the boards," said Berry. Thanks to his work in the class he "learned a little more about math, too." **TASTE TEST.** FACS student Ben Blair (8) stirs pretzel batter as his partner, Keegan Millikan (8) sneaks a taste, even in the face of the standing mask policy. Family and Consumer Sciences was one of Millikan's favorite classes. "I loved it! Ms. Herrin's amazing, and I learned stuff. If I wanted to, I could cook something now," Millikan said.



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OKAY, 12 WEEKS LEFT.

Three more months of school and then summer. (And we thought it would never come.) Without any masks or any restrictions, things are finally feeling normal! (Except for that Pavlovian response of wanting to pull our masks up when we walk into the building. That's still there.) There was snow almost every week per our usual spring, but still only one snow day. (Shh, don't tell, but we didn't even get eight inches that day!)

WE'RE ALL COUNTING DOWN 'TIL SUMMER.

(Even teachers are getting that look in their eye.) Students rush to register for classes and teachers are in a crunch to submit grades on time. Before we know it, spring break is here. Some travel to warmer climates; others stay local and visit the Denver zoo, and a whole bunch of us head to the mountains to get in those last runs of the season. We begrudgingly return after a week. Now it's the long stretch to the last day.

APRIL AND MAY. NOT A SINGLE DAY OFF.

We gear up for the final push. Our eighth graders (not so willingly) get ready to say goodbye to their middle school years. High school will be right around the corner. For a change we're stressed about normal, mundane things instead of worldwide pandemics. That is, until we watch, horrified, as Russia invades Ukraine.

DO WE REALLY NEED BAD NEWS AGAIN?

Kids are asking, "Could this be World War Three?" And yet we're laughing at Will Smith slapping Chris Rock at the Oscars. The gas prices rise from \$2.00 to \$4.00 in a day. CMAS is coming, baseball has started, and we're three weeks away from the spring musical. All of it, all at once. It's a jumble that's hard to dissect.

BUT THAT'S LIFE, AND IT'S HAPPENING.



WELL REHEARSED. The cast of High School Musical, including Stella Eames (8), Roen Casari (8), Sadie Weberg (7), Emma Parton (8), Ahna Smith (8), and Shasta McCuen (8), rehearse a classroom scene. "Doing theatre this year has helped me discover what I want to do in my future" McCuen said.

SPRING IN COLORADO. During lunch recess in mid March, Hannah Thexton (8) kicks a soccer ball through the slushy snow. "I always like the snow at first, but once it melts, it's really annoying on the field because everything gets all soggy, and your shoes get soaked," Thexton said.



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PEOPLE

WE DON'T GO TO SCHOOL FOR TESTS OR HOMEWORK OR ANY OF THAT BORING STUFF.

We go for two reasons: One, because we're forced to. And two, because our friends are there. Ask anyone what they like most about school, and it's pretty certain they'll say, "My friends." That's probably even more true this year, since last year we only got to see our friends on the same half of the alphabet, and to make things worse, we had to sit in every other seat! (Dumb, stupid, annoying COVID.)

CAN WE ALL AGREE TO NEVER SAY "SOCIAL DISTANCING" AGAIN? LIKE, EVER?

Anyway, that was last year, and now things are normal, so we can have our friends back. Group projects. Asking each other for help. Eating in the lunchroom, at a **real** table. No more eating our sandwiches on the ground. We can even pass notes in class without getting caught. Seat next to seat. None of that stupid cohorting. (Cleansing breath.)

WE'RE ALL TOGETHER AGAIN.

With our friend groups and with our crushes. Five days a week (except for block days. *annoyed*) We're back together.

THAT'S ALL WE WANTED. WAS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?



TARGET PRACTICE. 6th grade band member Zoe Atkins takes her turn throwing a shaving cream filled balloon at a target. Teacher Kim Wilson prepared the activity to celebrate the end of their Scales of the World Tests. Classmates Luke Hamilton, Sam Klug, Asher Kaplan, Delilah Gargano, and Jamey

Sederberg with Wilson look on. **RACING THE BELL.** Lily Schatz (8) is all smiles during passing period. When asked about the best part of her year, her friend Karsyn Kline jumped in and answered for her. "She would say, 'Seeing Karsyn every single day in every single class. I love her,'" said Kline; Schatz laughingly agreed.



PEOPLE SECTION
PEOPLE SECTION
PEOPLE SECTION

REFERENCE

FOR A LOT OF US, OUR CLUBS GIVE US A SENSE OF BELONGING AND COMMUNITY.

It's one of the things we missed most last year. Some of our clubs and activities limped along, but they just weren't the same. Last year half our sports weren't offered, and we had to do this weird thing where half the group had to come in at a time, and even then we still had to sit apart. Some functioned remotely. Remember our Zoom knitting club? How about our play that was recorded over Zoom?

EW, LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT ZOOM ANYMORE...

With all of us back, we don't have to do any of that! Clubs happen every day of the week. Not remotely, not canceled, but all in person, and finally, this spring, with full faces. It's a gift from the gods that the masks came off.

ALMOST EVERY DAY AFTER THE FINAL 2:20 BELL, THE HALLS ARE STILL BUSY AND NOISY.

Athletes are off to practice, anime members might even be in cosplay costumes, singing pours out of the auditorium from musical rehearsal, they're building and painting in the tech ed and art rooms, the orchestra and band rooms are a cacophony of sound, up in Schmelzer's room kids are finding their zen, and robotics takes over the cafeteria. It feels alive and interesting.

WE'RE FINDING OUR PLACE AND FINDING OURSELVES. WE'RE HAPPIER. WE'RE HEALING. IT'S HAPPENING.



FAST TAKES. Kyle Schultess (6), Marshal Katzman (8), and Ronan George (7) are coached by Léon Vasquez during a sprint for track practice. Track club competed with other clubs throughout the district. "I went out for track because I thought it would be fun. I knew people who were going to do it, and I like Mr. Vasquez and Ms. C. a lot," George said. **CLEAR AND FOCUSED.** Ms. Schmelzer leads Kendyl Gillette (6), Elizabeth Willis (6), and Cadence Donovan (6) through a yoga flow. Willis summarized her reasons for joining by saying, "I like that I get to see my friends and chat with them after school. It also helps me focus."

Health - A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and NOT merely the absence of disease.

Wellness - an active process to reach your fullest health.

Mindfulness - pay attention, in a particular way, in the present, and without judgment.

Mindfulness Practices

Finger Squeeze - (While in a kneeling position) squeeze your fingers together, palm to palm, and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

Belly Breathing - (One hand on top of your belly) breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth. Repeat 5 times.

Finger Slide - (Laying on your back) slide your fingers up and down your arms. Repeat 5 times.

Butterfly Breath - (Butterfly feet) lay on your back with your feet together and knees out to the sides. Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth. Repeat 5 times.



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GET 'ER DONE. Kaylan Lessen (7) works on her social studies assignment. For her, the key to doing well in school is "turning work in on time," she said.



LITTLE DRUMMER BOYS. Performing in the 6th Grade Band Concert, Daymian Dominguez (6) and Andrew Teeters (6) communicate about percussion. **RIDING DIRTY.** Caleb Gabel (8) dirt bikes on the Western Slope during spring break. Though his hobby for two years, he doesn't get to ride as often as he'd like.



FOR THE GIRLS! In ELA, Clara Smith (6) defends her choice of research topic: Equal opportunities for girls. **LUNCH LADIES.** Roma Inscoe (7), Bailey Nguyen (7), and Elle Thomas (7) share a laugh over lunch. **LATER, ALLIGATOR.** While visiting her best friend who moved to Florida, Megan Martin (7) holds a baby alligator.



PLAY YOUR PART. Lee Metzinger (8) plays Sam in her theatre class play. "I enjoyed learning that I could actually act really well. It got me interested in going into drama in high school," Metzinger said. **ALL SMILES.** Sophia Doles (7) chats with a friend during the prospective WEB leader meeting. "I want to be a WEB leader because middle school is really hard, and it will help a 6th grader to have a friend," Doles said. **A BIT OF A STRETCH.** Corrine Stratton (6) and Ada McGregor (6) try a yoga move during club time. Ada signed up for the club with a specific purpose in mind. "I'm doing yoga club so I can release all my anger, so I don't snap on my mom," McGregor said. "Yoga club is very calming and helpful and fun."

SQUATS. JC Vasquez (7) participates in an icebreaker activity at the prospective WEB leader meeting. "It will help me be more social," Vasquez said. **IT'S SCRIPTED.** Natalie Webster reads from her script as they block a scene for High School Musical. "Not only is the experience magical, but so are the people in the production," Webster said. **QUIET TIME.** Taking a break from the busy day, Abby Benallo (8) visits Ms. Lockwood's room to do a little reading.



PASS TIME. Friends Riley Roozing (8) and Kayla Jenkins (8) chat before lunch. About her favorite part of the day Roozing said, "I get to be with my friends without getting in trouble for talking."

NATURE STUDY. Piper Becker (6) looks into her homemade terrarium. "My favorite part was seeing how the ecosystem worked," Becker said.



ALL SET. As part of set crew, MaKenzie Cornelsen (8) and Isabella Urban (8) help build the onstage platform for the spring musical. "It's really cool to see everyone working towards a common goal and bouncing ideas off each other," Cornelsen said. **ROCK ON!** Teachers Susie Murnan and Adam Donohue in costume.



ARMS UP. Aven McFarlane (6) performs "Status Quo" in High School Musical on "Full Send." **ONE COOL CAT.** Evelyn Donaldson (8) plays Jacki Scott, the school broadcaster in High School Musical. "Jacki is totally my character, so I just get to be my goofy self on stage," said Donaldson.



SUPER WHITE SNEAKS. Borrowing Abigail Croteau's (8) stain removal pen, Taylor Harteker (8) cleans her new shoes. Croteau carries the pen for the "unexpected event." **MAKING MUSIC.** Band and Orchestra teachers Kim Wilson and Ruth Ann Coy show off their musical skills to entering fifth graders.

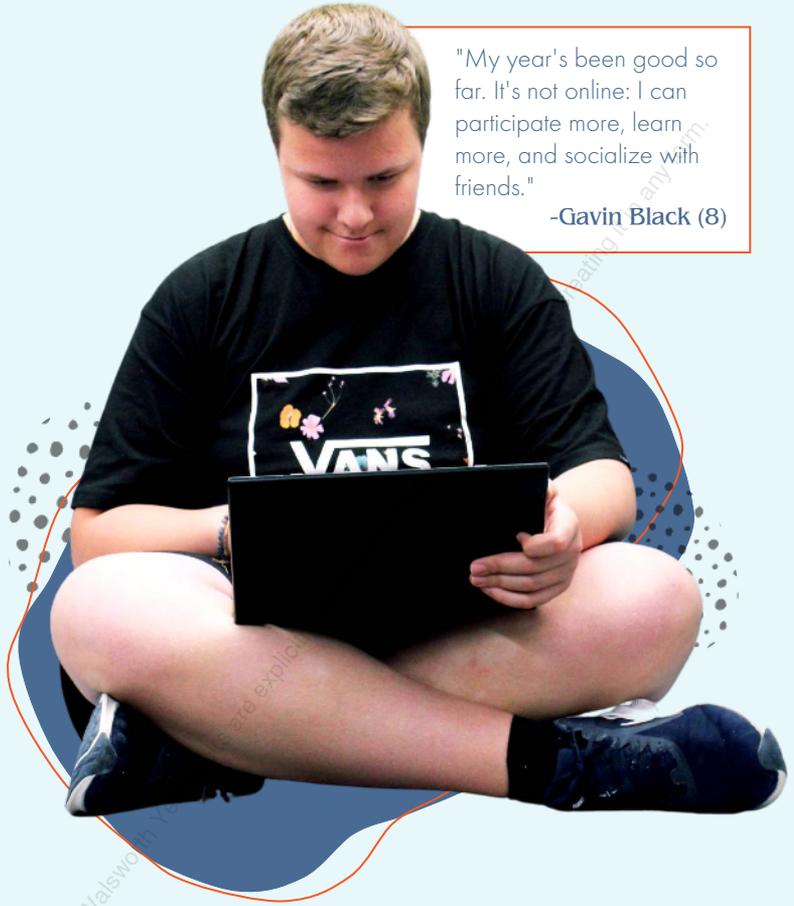
HAPP



SETTING INTENTION. Choosing something she'd like to see more of in the world and herself, Blakely Erickson (6) paints a "virtue rock" in health and wellness class. This class helps her "get negative thoughts out of my brain," she said. **BOOK BUDDIES.** Seventh graders Julia Lee and Briella Kiefer hang out in the library. While she likes to read, Kiefer's favorite part of the year was performing in the musicals where shes made many new friends.



SKATE G.O.A.T. Band member Blake Lawrence (7) takes a break from skating during the Band/Orchestra Skate City Party on April 5. **PAYING ATTENTION.** Chris Hopkins (8) listens closely during Mrs. Hoefft's instructions during math. **A SCIENCE GUY.** Matthew Gutierrez stands during science class. "It's a fun class," he said. "I have a lot of friends in there."



"My year's been good so far. It's not online: I can participate more, learn more, and socialize with friends."
-Gavin Black (8)

No matter what they throw at us, we will always rise.

This is our shot, our chance, our life, and

it's always

FINING



Front row (left to right): Thea McWilliams, Kelly Spraggins, Caitlyn Nguyen, Sienna Burford, Madison Lhotsky, Noah Ramsey, Kaiden Henson. Second row: Carolynn Dominguez, Brooke McLaughlin, Gabby Knappé, Kayla Pavlich, Isabelle Barela, Olivia Davis, Aleah Bettes, Tess Dreeszen, Laurel Wicke (advisor). Back row: Luke Foss, Rebecca Mundell, Karsyn Kline, Sadie Weborg, Kathleen Van Devener, Tara Donelson, Nicolette Lozsi, Laina Wood, Audrina Dries, Ella Engel, Charlotte Jones. Not pictured: Hannah Thexton

FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF:

This year has honestly been super fun. The people who helped make this book come to reality made the stress, struggle, and tears all worth it. It started off pretty slow, but as the newbies started to learn more, the pace started to pick up, and I was impressed by the skills of some people I'd never met. Me and the other editors started in the summer (school during the summer, disgusting) and worked through the first few months of the summer to get a theme nailed down. With plenty of advice and feedback from Andrew (our Walsworth Rep.) and Mrs. Wicke (our adviser), we had a pretty good idea for what we wanted.

Only about five people (including myself) know about what the original theme was supposed to look like. A bright colorful book full of punch (try to imagine that). This original theme and design idea is what we came out of summer with. Well, that all fell apart at Elite Weekend, but the feedback that we got is what put us on the better track to get us to where we are. It felt heartbreaking to have what we had turned down, but honestly it was for the better. A great experience overall. The editors got to know each other more (like, maybe a little too much) and our book was turned onto the right path. With all the help from Mrs. Wicke and Andrew, we've been able to make our scratch work into a whole book. This book stands out from others and would say the design is different, which is what I was aiming for.

Hannah Thexton, Thea McWilliams, Kayla Pavlich, and literally everyone else, you guys made this job as Editor-in-Chief so much easier. Yes, I was technically "your boss", but we all ended the year as friends and with countless memories. It's an honor that I got to work with each and every one of you.

This book turned out better than we could have imagined. Countless hours and a ton of effort got us to this point. We hope you enjoy the book as much as we do! Thank you, Dragons!

-CAITLYN NGUYEN

colophon
created by - CAITLYN NGUYEN

book details

(if you're into that)

LEADERSHIP: Editor-in-Chief: Caitlyn Nguyen; Photo Editor: Olivia Davis; Design Editor: Karsyn Kline; Copy Editor: Tara Donelson; Section Editors: Thea McWilliams, Hannah Thexton, Isabelle Barela, Kathleen Van Devener; Advisor: Laurel Wicke
PRINTING: Walsworth Yearbooks, 306 North Kansas Avenue, Marcelline, MO 64658; 600 copies were printed.

STYLISTICS: Trim Size: 8.5x11; 152 Pages; Paper: 100# Legend Matte Paper Stock; Cover: Printed 4-Color with Matte Lamination, Clear Silkscreen, Custom Sculpted Embossing wrapped on 120 pt. binders board; Endsheets: Printed 4-Color on 100# White Endleaf, different designs front and back.

COLORS: Cinnamon/Orange: F0701; Lightest Blue: F4350; Medium Blue: F4660; Dark Blue: F4740; Navy: F4695; Grey: F0030; Black: F6200; White.

EQUIPMENT: 4 Canon T6 Rebel Cameras; 25 Google Chromebooks, 4 Lenovo Think Centre computers.

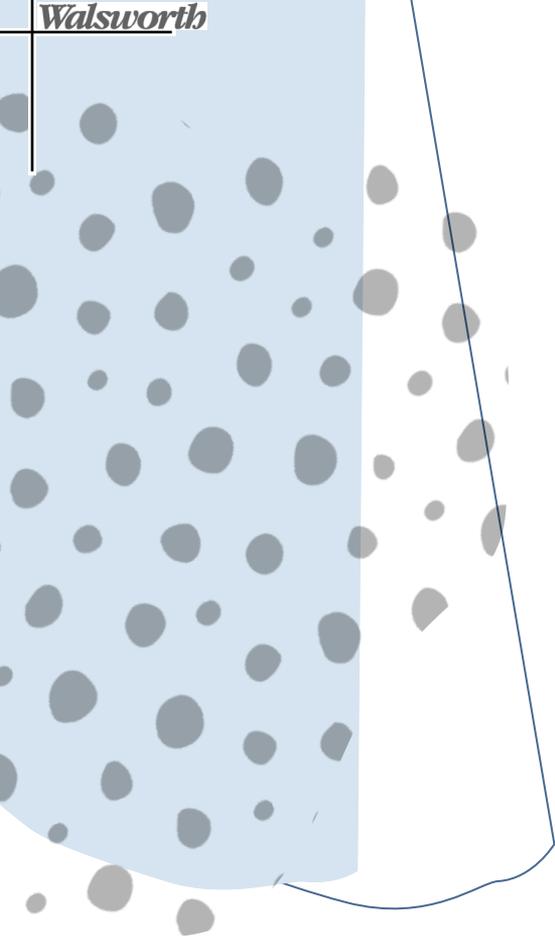
FOUNTS: Function Pro, Benguiat

COST OF BOOK: \$45.00

SOFTWARE: Walsworth Online Design; Photoshop CC 2021

MEMBERSHIPS: Colorado Student Media Association; National Student Press Association
RECOGNITION: All Colorado 2021, 2020, 2019; 2021 CSMA Middle School Journalist of the Year: Kayla Grenwis; Pacemaker Finalist 2021, 2020; CSPA Silver Crown Winner 2021; JEA Rising Star Award: Laurel Wicke

The 2022 Lair was produced using student generated content and was a completely student driven initiative.



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