COVER: STEPPING INTO HER SENIOR YEAR, Genevieve Meyer 12 shows off her personality in her new Nike Dunks on the commons lawn. In Meyer's four years at Liberty, she's been involved in Cheer, Dance, DECA, and will be graduating with honors. With the experience gained in High School, Meyer has goals of attending nursing school and has been accepted into multiple universities. Additionally, Meyer has an obsession with shoes, which she gets from her sister. When discussing her experience of standing at Liberty, Meyer stated; "The first thing I think of when I think of "standing" is having a good foundation.. like how the shoes you wear are the foundation of your outfit that help you stand out." Meyer attributes her academic success to Liberty as a whole. "I think school teaches you an important lesson on creating a foundation of who you are, how to balance things in your life, and truly get to know yourself," Meyer said. "All of the staff, teachers and students here give me a really good foundation. The plans I have for my future, to go to nursing school, motivate me to be my best self. Balancing my current routine with the way I'm motivated in school will be good to keep up in college to be successful, so I think it's really important in order for me to achieve my dream.". photo by emily robertson, lighting by ava dawes, creative direction by ava lund.

RIGHT: STANDING IN HIS LEADING ROLE, Alexander Sledge 11 smiles out at the crowd as The Pride of The Lancers Marching Band completes their last home football game performance of the 2023 season on Oct 28. Sledge took on the role of color guard captain this year, getting to teach his teammates, earning a solo and hand making The Holy Grail, the most vital and thematic prop of this years' performance. "It's magical to stand on the field," Sledge said. "It feels like a place where I can show off what I'm actually capable of. I always come off the field and I just can't stop smiling. I think it's just a nice feeling that the performance I'm giving can put a smile on someones face.". ohoto by emily robertson



it's where





IN YOUR CLASSROOM academics

85 WITH YOUR COMMUNITY clubs

123 IN THE HUDDLE *athletics*

183 OUT FROM THE CROWD people

310 IN THE BOOK

<u>BLEED AREA: MOST OR AL</u>L OF THIS AREA WILL NOT APPEAR ON THE FINISHED PAGE

it's where

HALFTIME SHOW OF THE SEASON, Drum Major Alexis Mead 12, proudly stands as she watches the crowd from her podium on Aug. 24. The Pride of the Lancers Marching Bands' theme for this school year was "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" under new direction from Band Directors Joy O'Day and Caroline Aylward. "I feel like we've really stepped it up this year," Mead said. "I feel like doing new things for the band will be really great for the program and I'm excited to see where it goes this year." photo by paige miller

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL

8720 Scarborough Drive, Colorado Springs, CO LHS.ASD20.0RG 719. 234. 2200 @libertyhighschoold20

@libertyhighschoold2U @libertyofficialyearbook

Principal: Matthew Sisson

STUDENT POPULATION: 1567 SENIORS: 401 JUNIORS: 373 SOPHOMORES: 406 FRESHMEN: 387 STAFF: 180

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GLANCING BACK AT THE SCOREBOARD while speaking with Coach Grundvig, quarterback Elijah Rupcjko ¹² accepts that any hope of winning was slipping out of the team's hands. Liberty lost their third game of the season, against Sierra High School on Sep. 7, with a score of 20-3, "None of our plays were working," Rupejko said, "We really put ourselves in a hole at the start of the season. It was disappointing." Even though Liberty lost their first three games of the season, they would continue to win the next three against Gateway, Hinkley and Palmer. Liberty's Varisty Football ended the Fall season 4-2 in the league, photo by emily robertson.

Opening Pages By Ava Lund



s it where you stand on the field, stage or even behind the camera that helps you find your path? Or is it the connections you made along the way? Figuring out how you impact our school as a Lancer; makes it a place for you to be **YOU**.

From the moment you walk over all the freshly painted _____ parking spots, to the front doors you cant see through anymore, there are a lot of upperclassmen waiting to welcome you into **OUR HOUSE!** Don't be shy **Izabella Creekmore 11** and your other Link Leaders are here to help guide you to the new wing. Believe it or not they also had to ask Assistant Principal **Ms. Thiessen** for help a time or two.

The freshmen already ran through their gauntlet but **Seth Lippert** ¹² is ready to record the seniors as they receive a rather overdue entrance into the gym, where Bruno Mars is blaring "24K magic". Bittersweet tears fill seniors eyes as you hear the crack of the confetti cannons after the party cheer. Talk about a main-character moment. This is it.

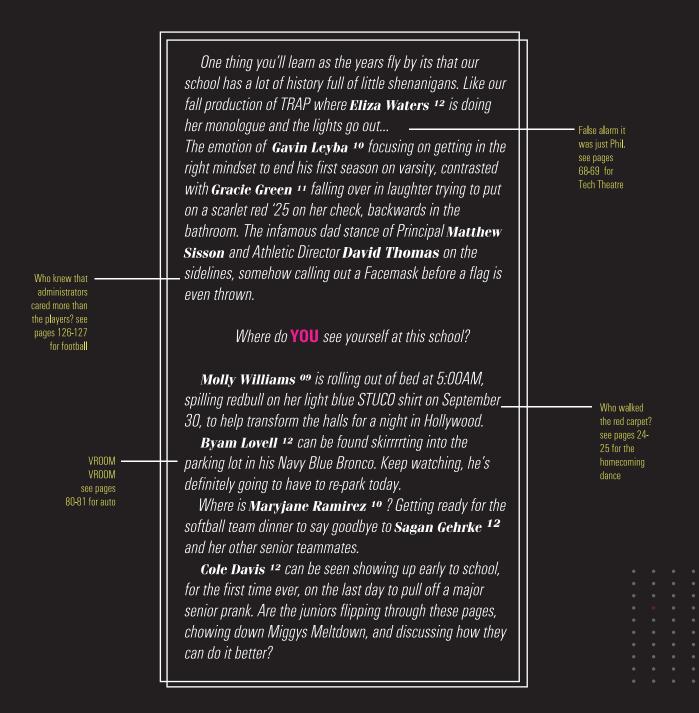
Junior year jitters creep up when you are finally warm in your car with your new drivers license. FINALLY you don't have to wait in the snow for the bus thats a block away. Well, you're running late, have to park in overflow and search for your ID.

First period begins with you and **Isabella Cardarelle** ¹² getting moved in Astronomy, but she brought Mr. Brown a Chick-Fil-A sandwich in order to try and get her old seat back. Hopefully it works... See pages 12-13 for a newly painted tradition

At least Doug is there to greet you with a "Good Morning" smile. see pages 192-193 for security

Can you hear the chants through the photos? see pages 10-11 for school spirit

But thats not all that makes us **STAND OUT...**



LAUGHING TOGETHER, Jayla Kulikowski ¹² and Jordyn Snipe ¹² share a moment at their last glow dance with each other. The Glow Dance is Liberty's back to school dance that was held on Aug. 18. With a different style from previous years, The Glow Dance was held outside this year in front of the school's view of Pikes Peak. See pages 14-15 for more Glow Dance coverage. photo by ms gill

We cant spoil all of that right now, so just keep looking for things that STAND out to



FLY ME TO THE MOON

Rowan Ractz ¹² gives a look into his aviation journey

"Through my JROTC program, I applied for a scholarship, which is the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and JROTC Flight Academy. I had to apply, have good fitness scores, and pass an aptitude test with a good score to qualify. Once I applied, I immediately got in. I started doing all the required paperwork and before I knew it, the next summer I was off to North Carolina at Elizabeth City State University. It was an 8-week

STANDING *for the stars* **AND STRIPES** JROTC, LIBERTY FACULTY AND STUDENTS PAY TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

intensive program where I earned my pilot's

license through an unbelievable amount of hard

work and dedication. It was both the best and

hardest thing I have ever accomplished in my

the whole country and only a few people get

selected for the flight academy, so it's a huge honor. I now get free flights with Civil Air Patrol."

entire life, and it was definitely worth the effort. It's a really rare thing, there are so many units in

Q&A with *Nickolas Kovacevich* ¹²

Liberty JROTC Cadet, led his unit at the District 20 Rah Rah on August 10, 2023.



U: Why is the military important to you and your family; what inspired your passion for it?

A: "The military has always had a special place in my heart because of my dad and older brother. My dad has inspired me through his dedication and he is the one who kick started my love for the military by providing me with endless opportunities."

0: During the District 20 Rah Rah how was the whole experience for you?

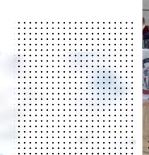
A: "The Rah Rah event was a big experience for me, I was surprised to see that many people were there, it made me feel pretty nervous when I signed up I never expected to ead in front of the whole district but when the time came I performed and think that we all did a good job."





Cessna Skyhawk 1721







(III)





2. IN REMEMBERANCE OF THE

FALLEN, the Missing Man Table is a key aspect of our Veteran's Day assembly. The table is set for only one, symbolizing the isolation of our absent service members. The white tablecloth shows the pure intentions of the service members who responded to our country's call for arms, a single rose in a vase sits on the table, symbolizing the blood that our service members have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of the United States of America. There is also a singular red ribbon in symbolization of the love for our country that inspired our service members to serve, photo by ashton rowlands

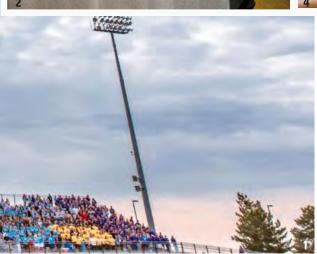
3. DURING THEIR FINAL

FORMATION, the Dance 4 class reenacts the famous photo of six United States Marines raising the U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi during the battle of Iwo Jima. photo by ashton rowlands

4. CLOSING OUT THEIR DANCE

TRIBUTE, Suri Williams 10, Katielin Brewer ¹², Zorenau Zonata ¹², Brandt Forsythe 12 and Emily Robertson 12, hold their hands up in salute to veterans as their fellow dancers represent fallen soldiers in battle. Mrs. $\dot{\mathrm{Will}}\mathrm{iams},$ the dance director, says that "The thought for the dance was a basic retelling of WWII, starting from the invasion of Normandy, France, we had paratroopers, up to the Battle of the Bulge, and then the final battle with the Allied push into Germany, and we ended in the Pacific with the reenactment of the statue from the battle of Iwo Jima. I think the dancers did a beautiful job." photo by ashton rowlands





5. LEADING THE CHOIR, Ben

Vitone ¹¹ was given the honor to lead the rest of his peers during the Veteran's Day choir performance. Vitone says "I was really proud I could be a part of it and be a role model for the new members. I practiced really hard and my director handed me a microphone and offered me the position. The last person to be selected for my job was Joseph Niles, a senior who graduated last year, and he was my role model when I started choir, so it is an extremely big honor to follow in his footsteps." photo by ashton rowlands.

6. ESCORTING THE FLAGS,

Jerimiah Brickens ¹¹ stands at the back of his unit during the Veterans Day Assembly with his rifle at the ready, protecting the sacred symbol of honor held by his comrades. Jeremiah is the American Guard, whose sole purpose is to protect the American Flag until it is placed in its post surrounding the Missing Man table. Liberty's Veterans Day Assembly on Nov. 10 was one of the biggest assembly's of the year, with most of Liberty's staff and student population being involved in military life. photo by zachary closser

LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS

MISS GILL'S STUDENTS SHARE THEIR MILITARY FAMILY LIFE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY





"I come from a family of all veterans. Every man in our family has served, or does serve for our country. Mental health of veterans and active duty is a topic myself and my family heavily support. 22 soldiers a day commit suicide on average, so a way my family likes to show support is doing 22 push-ups every day in remembrance of soldiers who have died from suicide. These photos show that no American veteran should be left behind in this world, especially after all they do for our country. - Jaydon Walter ¹⁰

"Having a family member in the military is not easy. I have experienced my dad mission out on so many holidays, birthdays, and big events in my life. The mental effect of the military on not only the soldier, but with their family, can be difficult to cope with. I struggle with having to be the "man of the house" while my dad is gone, not knowing if he is safe. These photographs show the effect the army has on a soldiers mental state, and their family members. I hope to spread awareness for these issues, and soldiers who have to leave home without a choice but to serve our country "

- Hunter Kelley 10

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR passionate OPINIONS FROM THE YEAR

it's where

Whether discussing their stance on AI in art or banned books, Liberty students are opinionated about a diverse range of topics. A few exceptionally passionate students were asked to explain where they stand on their chosen controversial topic relevant to the year, and why it's important to have hard conversations.

"I believe that we have a serious problem with school safety that could be solved through the FASTER (Faculty/Administrator Safety Training & Emergency Response) program. Essentially arming faculty members in schools. We have seen the threat of school shootings right in our own community with [an] individual planning an attack on Timberview Middle School. We must act and make aggressive plans to combat an active shooter situation before it is too late, because nobody wants the students at Liberty to become another statistic. Even if we only have an additional two or three armed staff members, that could lead to far fewer fatalities if a situation did arise on campus. While we are in the early stages of this program and there are many questions to still be answered, I ... advocate for FASTER [on] our school board. Obviously, this is not a conversation anyone wants to have, but we cannot ignore that there is a dire mental health crisis leading people to commit heinous acts. While we must address the mental health aspects of school shootings, we must also recognize that this is not a quick solution and that FASTER can greatly improve safety in our community.

Ryan Whalen ¹²

Banned books are a great debate. People grow up in different environments, different cultures, religions, and beliefs. What one person may believe is correct may be offensive and disrespectful to another. Personally, I believe books should be adjusted depending on the age level. You can't show an elementary schooler the communist manifesto, but you can give children a basic understanding in a way that is appropriate to their age. There shouldn't be censorship on curiosity.

Your morals and beliefs should be what lead you, not the opinions of others. With that being said, parents also have to be a part of the answer. When people are still minors, we mustn't undermine the position of parents. If they say that what their child is reading is not ok, we as a society should respect that. But not push that thinking on to another.

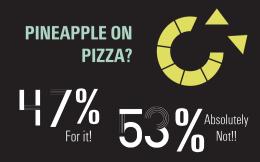
> You should always have the choice to not read something. Really what we need to focus on with the banning of books is if it's just for the appeasement of the public and censorship or if

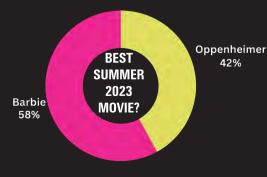
> > it's actual concern."

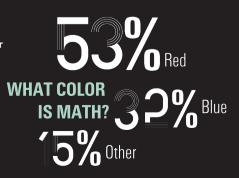
// Jillian Deeds 11

THIS or THAT

In a poll with over 160 responses, students and staff members voted on a variety of "Hot Takes."







Kacie Munger 11

Children should always be able to get gender affirming care, and this care 📄 can quite frankly save someone's life. What some people don't understand is that 82% of individuals who are trans have attempted or thought about suicide before. Giving these individuals care early on in their transition can make them feel more comfortable as they are growing up and can help to understand their true identity early on in life. While some people do have the possibility of regretting their choices later on in life, there is a much higher probability that they will not regret their decisions. It also provides the chance of spending less money on surgeries later on in life. Surgeries like facial feminization surgery and other plastic surgeries can become very expensive if you use a doctor that is highly reliable, getting gender affirming care earlier on in life can help minimize the amount of surgeries needed to feel like yourself. I believe that mental health is one of the most important things in life, and if providing your child with care that will make them feel more comfortable around their peers, then I believe that care should be more normalized for youth.

"I believe that AI in itself could be a great tool to ease and the lives of humans, however, under capitalism, it is faulty. Instead of improving human's lives by taking laborious and unpleasant jobs so that humans could focus on more enjoyable pursuits, companies are now paying to train

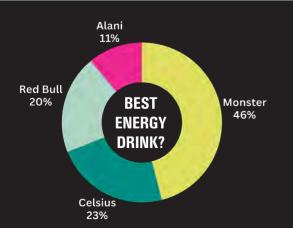
Al to steal enjoyable, art related jobs that people want, all so that they won't have to pay a real artist or animator for their work. Al art is not inherently bad, however people are training these machines on real artist's work without their consent. Since the machine cannot really create anything new from imagination, it is stealing from human artists; making money off that stolen art should be illegal. Machines should be created to aid humans, not to replace them. Not only this, but it can be used to create fake videos using a person's identity just from their photo. This is extremely dangerous as it could be used to create inappropriate or criminal videos in order to blackmail individuals or falsely incriminate them. We need laws to protect ourselves from people who would take advantage of this technology, and we need it now



Ashlyn Jenkins 12

WHERE YOU STAND ON HOT TOPICS

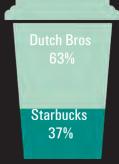
CLUBS





WHAT COLOR IS 22% Other ENGLISH?

5 %Yellow



STANDING WITH THEIR BROTHERS.

the non-seniors on the football team line up on the field for the traditional senior night football game. It is something they do to honor the seniors as they walk down the field for their last home game. "The seniors definitely had an impact on me," Gavin Leyba¹⁰ said. "they pushed me hard to do my best and it is sad to see them go as they are starting a new chapter in their lives." photo by emily robertson

> 2. UNDER THE STADIUM LIGHTS the boys soccer team lines up before a home game to get their names called out and throw shirts into the stands. "Everyone's excited or nervous to play," *Evan Jones* ¹² said. "but as captain I know I just need to get my team to settle down and play our game, it's just energy and at this point everyone is ready to get out to the field and leave the nerves in the locker room." photo by Tazlynn Prigge

3. HUDDLING TOGETHER, the cheerleaders bring more spirit into the student section at an away football game against Sierra. "All of the blood, sweat, and tears suddenly become worth it when you wear a sparkling uniform and perform for two minutes and 30 seconds on a nine panel mat," Anna Finkelstein¹¹ said. "It's really difficult seeing other teams at competitions knowing that you won't be competing like they will." photo emily roberson

4. COMING TOGETHER AS A TEAM the girls field hockey team gets together to celebrate scoring a goal, prioritizing being a team first and supporting one another. "It was a really good season," *Brooklyn Galvon*¹⁰ said."I learned a lot from it and had a lot of fun not only with the sport but with my teammates." photo by peyton fedorkowicz.



its where STAND

For most Lancer athletes, being on a team means being part of a family who stands together through everything.

"My favorite part of football is that it has given me a new family that I know I can always go to if I need anything," **Jacob Mesias** 10 said. "Its given me structure and a good way to end the day, plus friends that I know will last a lifetime, and who are more like brothers than anything else." Being a part of a team huddle is

one experience that every sport has.

No matter which ball you are throwing, hitting, or kicking, the huddle is common place to find **YOUR** strength.

"Being in those huddles is kind of surreal," **Alex Nolder** ¹⁰ said. "You look around and everyone in there loves and cares about you. Those huddles, at least for me, help me to feel really connected to the rest of the team. It helps to show that we are in fact, one big family."

Who do **YOU** stand in the hudde with?



it's where WOUB CROSS COUNTRY SPEEDS IT UP

ccording to Varsity Runner Isabelle Roberts, one of the most challenging aspects of cross country are running 5k's. A 5k is 3.1 miles long, and learning how to keep pace is the hardest part.

HOW TO RUN A 5K, BY ISABELLE ROBERTS

STEP 1: Get a warm up run in for 5 to ten minutes and stretch your legs **2ND STEP:** Get in a good mindset **3RD STEP:** Make your way to start line

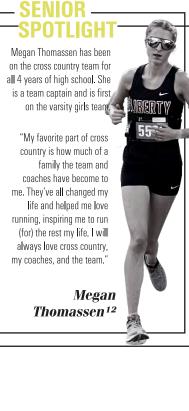
4TH STEP: Make sure you're relaxed

RACE IS ABOUT TO START 5TH STEP: Start off by running fast 6TH STEP: Settle into a steady pace 7TH STEP: Remember to keep your breathing rhythm

8TH STEP: Focus on anything but the pain

APPROACHING YOUR SECOND MILE 9TH STEP: Try to keep your pace 10TH STEP: Stay focused on finish line

APPROACHING THE LAST MILE
11TH STEP: Start to speed up
12TH STEP: Try to pass at least 5 people
13TH STEP: Once you get to the shoot start to sprint
AT THE FINISH LINE
LAST STEP: make sure you hydrate a lot and get lots of some sleep



5. STRIDING FOR

VICTORY, Stephen Tice ¹² feels determined to PR this race. He has been running for this team for 2 years Stephen said, "I felt determined. (My time) was right under 18 minutes I think." photo by zachary closser 6. WORKING

TOGETHER, Giavana

Suarez ⁰⁹ and Nadyah Flym ¹² push each other to improve on their bests. Liberty raced at the Air Academy Classic on Oct. 6. Giavana says, "Running with her really helped because she was faster and I would just have to keep up." photo by isabelle roberts









WHAT GROUND DO THESE SOPHOMORES STAND ON?

A unique aspect of cross country as a sport is never competing with the same conditions. Sophomore Cross Country runners were asked which terrain is the most efficient to run on. Here are their responses

CONCRETE



Jospeh Meadows 10 says, "It's easier on the knees and there is more variations you can run on.'



Ryan Graham 10 says, "I like concrete the best because you can almost bounce more on it and its harder so your feet don't slip out from under you."



Hayden Thomassen 10 says, "It builds better endurance for your knees and allows you to get use to different terrain.



Brinley Gasaway 10 finishes her first mile, of the Sept. 21 race at Monument Valley Park, Coronado's classic race. Brinley says, "I was discouraged because this was a hard race, it was really hot that day but I had a lot of fun doing it." photo by isabelle roberts Grady White 12 prepares for the

1. LOOKING IN THE DISTANCE,

upcoming hill. White finished with a time of 21:16; he recapped on the race saying, "The first half is good, and then the middle sucks. and then the last mile is down hill which is fun." photo by isabelle roberts

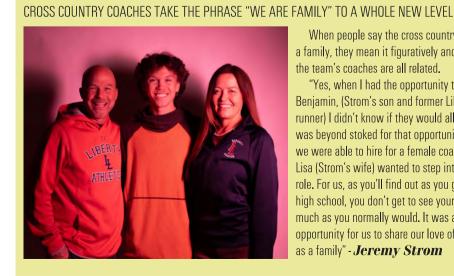
3. COMPETING AGAINST LEWIS PALMER, Zachary Closser 11 finishes his second mile. He's pushing so hard that he ends up throwing up at the end of this race. Zach said, "I made poor food choices so, I had to throw up." photo by isabelle roberts 4. PUSHING HARD, Eli Johnson 09 runs as fast as he can to get a new PR (19:48) . Eli says, "I felt pretty strong, this was the race I PR'd on." photo by zachary closser

SPREAD BY SABELLE ROBERTS and BRILEY CONTRERAS

ATHLETICS CROSS COUNTRY

143

CLOSELY related



When people say the cross country team is a family, they mean it figuratively and literally: the team's coaches are all related.

"Yes, when I had the opportunity to hire Benjamin, (Strom's son and former Liberty runner) I didn't know if they would allow it, he was beyond stoked for that opportunity. Then, we were able to hire for a female coach and Lisa (Strom's wife) wanted to step into that role. For us, as you'll find out as you get out of high school, you don't get to see your family as much as you normally would. It was a little opportunity for us to share our love of running as a family" - Jeremy Strom

It's where

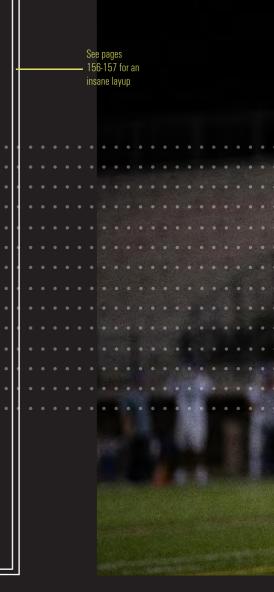
Approximately 269 days ago we came into this building as Freshman, Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors- leaving now as new people. We will all have different memories that we will remember in 10 years, but nobody can forget the feeling of **STANDING** in the gym on that first day.

As you flip through the book and reach the girls basketball page, you're taken back to that moment when the score is 39-35 and "I. BELIEVE. THAT. WE. JUST. WON." is being chanted in the background, you're hit with a rush of nostalgia longing to feel that just one more time.

Has everyone found where they STAND?

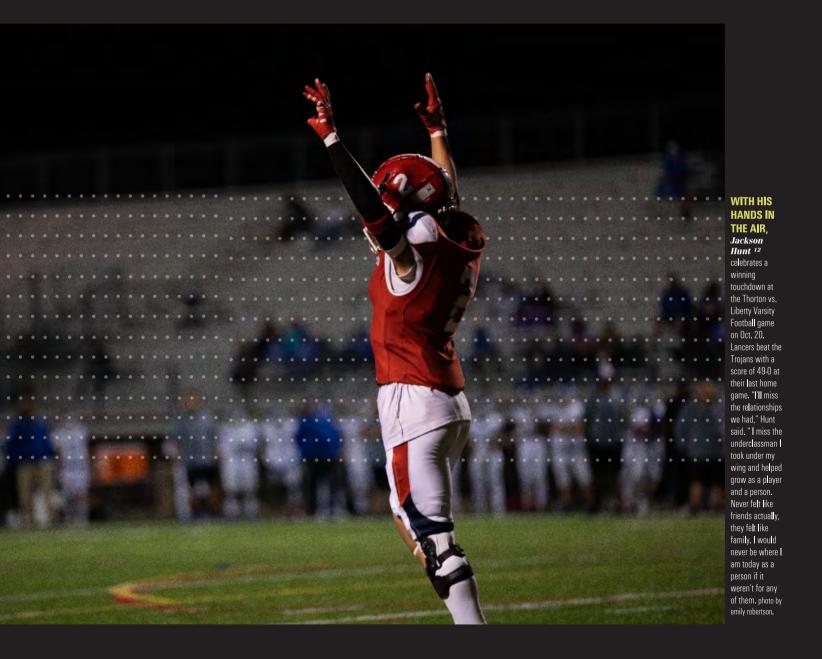
Brooke Steinberg ¹² stood with the Girls Basketball team. Amiyah Berry ¹¹ stood for the flag. Yullia Kuavska ¹⁰ stood for her home country. Creede Hunt ¹⁰ stood with his football team. Monroe Castle ¹² stood with the robotics team at state. Madeline Bendig ⁰⁹ stood at the DECA store to pick up her daily Monster. Kaleb Woodard ⁰⁹ stood on the field, catching his breath before playing the next line of our fight song on his trumpet. Haley Blackmon ¹¹ stood for saving our planet. Mia Garica ¹¹ stood next her their peers in GSTA, loving them for who they truly are.

This year, you all learned more about yourselves, leaving a legacy for many more Lancers to follow in the years to come...





... we gave you a place to stand, now YOU go and move the earth.



it's where



GLANCING BACK AT THE STUDENT SECTION behind

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her, Ashlynn Westover ¹² celebrates a 'Liberty first down'. Varsity cheer pumped up the energy from the sidelines as the varsity football team beat Gateway High School with a 17-6 win on Sep. 19. With this first league game win, the crowds continued to fill, with the cheer squad leading the engaged student section. "The support we get from the crowd really effects the energy of the entire game", Westover said. photo by tazlynn prigge.



