Neon Leon pep rally cut short

Cristina Williams
News Editor

The Sadie Hawkins dance was revived last year by junior Victoria Carroll, and returned once again with new additions. For the first time ever, Sadie Hawkins had a spirit week, including dress-up days and the Neon Leon Pep Rally on Friday, Jan. 20.

Although the pep rally organized by senior Amanda Willis cost much time and money, students and faculty were greatly awaiting it. Unfortunately, the pep rally was cut short when several students broke the rules that Principal Billy Epting announced before the rally began.

Right after the marching band performed their first song, Epting came out to the center of the gym and announced that the school day and pep rally were over due to several mosh pits in the junior and senior sections.

Epting was concerned for the safety of surrounding students that were not participating in the mosh pit. Senior Jennifer Huynh, who had just been in a car accident that resulted in her breaking her pelvis, was knocked down the stairs. Epting had to call an ambulance for Huynh who ended up fracturing her pelvis in three additional places. The band, cheerleaders and dance team were not able to perform after Epting shut down the pep rally.

“We all had been practicing and getting outfits for months and when Principal Epting ended the pep rally, it really made us feel almost broken because we could not dance,” dance team member Kaki Kirk said. “After spending that much money on costumes and time practicing the dance, it was unfair.”

The dance team purchased special outfits for the pep rally that glowed under the blacklights. The cheerleaders also dressed up and put glow-in-the-dark handprints on their legs so that they could be seen during their performance.

“Honestly, we were all pretty mad that we couldn’t perform,” cheerleader Madison Barfield said. “It was the competition team’s first time performing in front of the student body and we were excited to show off our hard work.”

Although the pep rally ended early, it was a huge success. Many students even thought it was the best pep rally they have ever had.

Please see SADIES, page 12

School choice alters regulations

MarySylvia Hinnant
Staff Writer

With superintendent Rocky Hanna’s fresh entrance onto the school board, several new school calendar options have been weighed. The choices for this year are:

Option 1: Keeps same basic calendars for school year 2016-2017, (including Fall Holiday), (ends first nine-weeks one week earlier to better balance first two-nine weeks grading periods.)

Option 2: Begins school year earlier in Aug. (on earliest allowed date), includes Fall Holiday, provides a full week (for teachers and students) for Thanksgiving Holiday, and ends school year (for students) after Memorial Day Holiday.

Option 3: A blend of option 1 and 2. Keeps same calendar as 2016-17, include Fall Holiday, provides a full week (for teachers and students) for Thanksgiving Holiday, and ends school year (for students) on June 1st.

Please see CALENDAR, page 4

Alumnus appointed to Florida Supreme Court

Bryson Gonzalez
Guest Writer

On Dec. 16, Governor Rick Scott announced his appointment of Leon alumnus Alan Lawson to the Florida Supreme Court. Lawson, class of 1979, is only the second Leon graduate to serve on the Florida Supreme Court.

“Judge Lawson has a 20-year track record,” Scott said. “He follows the rule of law; he’s already serving with honor and integrity [and he] builds good relationships. He’s not going to legislate from the bench.”

Lawson served for the past ten years as a judge on the Fifth District Court of Appeal in Daytona Beach. He was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush and served most recently as Chief Judge. He previously served as a Circuit Judge in Orlando, Florida as well.

Lawson was born in Lakeland, Florida, but grew up in Tallahassee. He recalls many fond memories of his years at Leon, including Friday night football with legendary head coach Gene Cox, pep rallies, Student Government Association and working on The Leon High Life as co-editor his senior year with Todd Smith.

According to Lawson, he had unique experiences as a Leon High Life reporter and journalism student of Judy Stevenson.

“Alan took advantage of the fact that Leon stood almost in the shadow of Florida’s Capitol, so he became a frequent visitor to legislative offices where his interviewing skills were widely respected,” Stevenson said.

Lawson recalls how in the 1970s there was little security at the Capitol and he could walk right up to the press secretary in the governor’s office and have access to the governor for interviews.

“I remember catching Governor Bob Graham for an interview,” Lawson said. “He invited me to get dinner at Whataburger and ride in his limousine.”

Lawson wrote about issues in the legislature that directly impacted Leon such as funding for education. He also reported on hot topics of the time including the death penalty.

Lawson’s reporting on Florida government did not happen by accident. He spent many nights working alongside his classmates and Stevenson who continually challenged her reporters.

Stevenson recalls how much integrity Alan had when writing stories. On the Please see LAWSON, page 12
The burden of the phrase “acting white”

Caroline Kirk
Editorial Writer

Sitting at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dreamers and Doers awards ceremony a few weeks ago, I realized that I was one of approximately five white students being recognized. This was probably one of the first times in my life that I have felt like I was in the minority.

I was honored to be nominated by Leon as someone following in the footsteps of King, but as the day went on, I couldn’t get out of my head how many racial divides I still encounter. This award ceremony across Leon County celebrated such a variety of students. Why am I still not seeing that diversity represented in my many communities and activities?

Even in the Leon Student Government meeting, I look around at the leaders representing the student body and see just six black representatives.

Six out of 64 members. 9 percent. I believe that the 40 percent minority population that attends Leon should be represented by a 40 percent minority population across all areas.

This phrase has been used ample times to describe my experience with racial divides I still encounter. This award couldn’t get out of my head how many racial divides I still encounter. This award ceremony across Leon County celebrated such a variety of students. Why am I still not seeing that diversity represented in my many communities and activities?

I’ve been deemed “acting white” because I speak in a manner that utilizes correct grammatical structure and pronunciation of words rather than “ethnics.” This phrase has been used ample times to describe my experience with racial divides I still encounter. This award couldn’t get out of my head how many racial divides I still encounter. This award ceremony across Leon County celebrated such a variety of students. Why am I still not seeing that diversity represented in my many communities and activities?

...even as students around me. This transposed to being loud, rambunctious and using slang as opposed to correct English.

I finally came to the realization that I am more than what I am compartmentalizing myself to be. Friends who don’t support you in your endeavor to be greater each day aren’t truly your friends and so long as I allow this stigma of acting “black” or “white” to define me, the existence of this attitude in society will never dissipate.

At that juncture, I set out to prove that you can be intelligent, classy, cool and still have melanin in your skin.

It is times that I have endured this that I am reminded of a quote by President Barack Obama: “We can judge our progress by the courage of our questions and the depth of our answers and our willingness to embrace what is true rather than what feels good.”

The question in my mind is, why do we associate intelligence, acumen and a sense of formality with being white and ineptitude, incivility and impoliteness with being black?

This attitude is an ignorant folly. And ignorance is not a virtue. I wake up each day with a subconscious determination to prove that an African American can be so much more than the confines that we place upon ourselves.

I had a former senior at Leon “realistically” tell me that I had only a small chance of being elected junior class president because the students would most likely elect the white girl.

I was nearly warped into believing this. I proved that notion wrong. I was told that you form longer lasting relationships through playing sports. I proved that notion wrong. I was told that I could only “act white” to go far and I have boldly proved that notion wrong.

I don’t allow any walls to confine me because there are no walls nor ceilings, your only restraint is yourself.

I, however, have hope that all students will realize that being yourself is how we move forward.

Personality is not black and white

Landon Coles
Guest Writer

As an African American student and junior class president, I’ve habitually pondered why I strain myself to be involved in any activity that I can allot time for. I have devoted myself to anything that I am tasked with and I’ve always prized my ability to be unapologetically, boldly black and exceptionally intelligent.

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There have been several points in my life where I’ve been deemed “acting white” because I speak in a manner that utilizes correct grammatical structure and pronunciation of words rather than “ethnics.” This phrase has been used ample times to describe my experience with racial divides I still encounter. This award couldn’t get out of my head how many racial divides I still encounter. This award ceremony across Leon County celebrated such a variety of students. Why am I still not seeing that diversity represented in my many communities and activities?

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At one point when I was a younger child, I attempted to “act black” which was in accordance with the standards set by students around me. This transposed to being loud, rambunctious and using slang as opposed to correct English.

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The following quotes are from African-American upperclassmen who voiced their perspectives concerning racial stereotypes.

“How many times I’ve introduced myself to a teacher in the beginning of a school year, their first reaction was ‘Oh, you are so well spoken,’ as if I was supposed to talk in slang and Ebonics. I don’t feel that speaking proper is synonymous with being white. Being described as ‘ghetto’ doesn’t have to mean you’re black. Often times in the black community, people act like they are either for you or against you. This may be because they feel like we are leaving them behind because we value intellect, or because they don’t feel as comfortable as I do.”

Caldwell Harris, Class of 2017

“This statement intrigued me. I believe they are in lower level classes because they feel like we are leaving them behind. Often times in the black community, people act like they are either for you or against you. This may be because they feel like we are leaving them behind because we value intellect, or because they don’t feel as comfortable as I do.”

Tiannah White, Class of 2018

“The burden of the phrase ‘acting white’ feels very offensive, like people are trying to criticize me for wanting to challenge myself in my academics or for conversing with a wide spectrum of ethnicities, not just with the black kids. I was taught not to separate yourself based upon past racial encounters from when I was little.”

Arianna Rollins, Class of 2018

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‘In middle school I was bullied and called ‘Oreo’ because everyone thought I was black on the outside and white on the inside. I think the distinction between ‘acting white’ and ‘acting black’ is more a distinction between people who have been protected and privileged throughout their lives and those who haven’t.’

Doherty Guirand, Class of 2018

‘I’ve been told ‘I act white’ because of how proper my speech is, some of the songs I like and because I don’t fit society’s description of your average ‘black kid’. There are some people—including my friends—who have preconceived beliefs about others before they even get to know them. In passing conversations, some of my peers are shocked at how well my grades are and even more shocked at the fact that a black kid can achieve that.’

Justin Peter, Class of 2017
Sadie Hawkins dances do not empower women

Maya Levy
Editorial Editor

There are numerous American traditions I would like to get rid of, and the Sadie Hawkins dance is just one of them.

On one hand, the dance is just a fun way to spend time with friends and significant others.

In that sense, I have no issues with it. Where I draw the line is when it is stated that Sadie Hawkins somehow contributes to the empowerment of girls in our society.

If anything, dedicating an entire dance to the act of girls asking boys places a distinct separation between Sadie Hawkins and other dances.

The goal is for girls to feel comfortable asking boys to any dance not just Sadie Hawkins.

From the start, Sadie Hawkins was not created for empowering women.

Sadie Hawkins originated from a cartoon called Li’l Abner where Sadie was the unbecoming daughter of a settler. By the age of 35, Sadie still had no suitors so her father organized a foot race and invited all the single men in the town. Whoever was caught by Sadie first had to marry her.

The writer of Li’l Abner, Al Capp, according to the biography Al Capp: A Life to the Contrary by Michael Schumacher, was actually accused of being a womanizer and misogynist (as evident from his offensive cartoon).

According to Life magazine, over 200 colleges held Sadie Hawkins events two years after the introduction of Capp’s cartoon. By 1952 over 40,000 venues were holding dances, according to westernhemisphere.org.

Eighty years later, we still celebrate this dance which stemmed from the mockery of unconventionally attractive women.

Then since the purpose of the dance has definitely changed, but the stigma has stayed the same.

I am not saying we should get rid of Sadie Hawkins, but before it can be called a modern dance it needs to be restructured.

“Today, gender roles are being broken so it’s losing its use,” sophomore Lily Snowden said.

In our culture, it has now become more acceptable for women to step up and complete tasks that men typically perform.

Holding an entire dance just to give girls the opportunity to ask out others is not empowering and totally unnecessary. Women have made changes in society through pushing limits and surviving challenging situations, not by participating in 80 -year-old dances with sexist origins.

Furthermore, Sadie Hawkins’ girls-ask-boys theme does nothing to include gay couples.

This forces gay couples to assign themselves to gender roles which does not contribute to progress in this society where being straight is still considered the norm.

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The idea of a Sadie Hawkins dance may have been remotely progressive back in the mid-twentieth century, but now its ideals are very much behind.

Why limit the expectation of girls asking others to one dance?

Instead, we should encourage girls to do this at any dance and not just when they are expected to do so.

We should convert Sadie Hawkins dances into neutral dances with no strict expectations or limitations.

Students would be able to ask whoever they want, regardless of their gender.

This way the dance would be more inclusive towards non-heterosexual couples.

The limitations that come with Sadie Hawkins just mimic the social limitations we are so used to living with.

Getting rid of any sort of expectations, would truly be modern and progressive.

In the end, we have bigger problems to worry about in our country, let alone in the world, than Sadie Hawkins dances. The gender wage gap is just one example.

Nevertheless, I believe that every oppressive situation for women, no matter how minute or trivial, is somehow related to each other.

By abolishing one of those practices, we are making it easier to overcome others. Our society has advanced significantly since the 1930s, it is time our traditions start reflecting that.

The crutch life is not for me

Hannah Rodriguez
Sports Editor

I recently sprained my ankle at volleyball practice pretty badly. I walked on crutches for almost a week and I can honestly say it was a terrible experience.

Not only did my shoulder, back and neck hate me, but getting around Leon isn’t exactly an easy thing to do.

There also is no elevator in the Nettles building, which means students have to walk around the building to get to the second floor, which isn’t the most convenient thing to do when it’s raining outside.

The elevator in the main building is so far from a large part of the main building, getting to class on time is nearly impossible.

It becomes easier to just try and hop up the stairs on one foot or crawl.

However, Leon does meet all the federal guidelines for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

That is not to say, however, that Leon is set up to be the most handicapped friendly school.

The building was built in 1937 where there was no guidelines for handicap accessible.

We are built on a hill, and the school being three stories tall doesn’t help.

Not to mention, financially, it is almost unreasonable how expensive it is to make structural changes to the school.

The ramp connecting the parking lot to the old gym cost the school $50,000.

There are many things Principal Bill Epting would like to do to make the school more accessible.

“I would love to put an elevator in the Nettles building,” Epting said.

“I would also put one in the main building so it’s not such a far walk to the elevator from the other side of the building.”

Epting must also consider the fact that there isn’t an abundance of handicapped people at Leon, so it is hard to try and make changes for the possibility of students getting hurt.

“A school like Gretchen-Evenheart is obviously better equipped and more accessible than Leon,” Epting said. “There is a very small percentage of students here who are handicapped.

“However, the district has made every effort to make the school as accessible as possible.”

The building was built in 1937 where there was no guidelines for handicap accessible.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WINTERFEST
Feb. 3

GRAD BASH TICKETS ON SALE
Feb. 6

BLACK HISTORY PROGRAM
Feb. 7

TEACHER TALENT SHOW
Feb. 9, 6:30 p.m.

LEON DANCE MARATHON
Feb. 11, 5-11 p.m.

CANNED FOOD DRIVE
Feb. 13-March 3

BLOOD DRIVE
Feb. 20

Write a Letter to the Editor.

Have an opinion? Get it in the paper.

Bring letters to Room 226 or write to us online at www.leonhighlife.com
Senior experiences new culture in Sweden

Cristina Williams
News Editor

Over winter break, senior Faith Bruner took her first trip out of the country. Experiencing the culture and traditions of Sweden led Bruner to questioning and introspection about her life and the speed of America.

Making a quick transition from the rush of New York City to the leisurely pace of the cities in Sweden, Sunne and Stockholm, Bruner experienced culture shock. Sunne is a more rural town where Bruner and her two friends, Laura Johnson and Erin Peace, stayed with Bruner’s sister Sally Höjer, Höjer’s husband and their family.

“I specifically relate to the atmosphere in Europe,” Bruner said.

“We could take some ideas from how they live in Sweden and slow everything down a little. Its not fast everywhere over there like it is in America.”

Bruner later visited Stockholm, which is the capital of Sweden that spans across 14 islands. She went with Höjer to sightsee and visit a family friend.

“We went to the Nordic Museum, seeing all the Swedish customs and traditions,” Bruner said.

They also had their friend show them around Gamla Stan, which is the old town of Stockholm. It is a popular tourist spot that has lots of museums, restaurants, and stores.

While in Sweden, Bruner encountered many aspects of the Swedish culture that she wouldn’t have thought would be different from American culture.

According to Bruner, even the children in Sweden knew at least some English, as it is common for people in Europe to know English as well as their native language.

Something else that surprised Bruner about Sweden was how everything was smaller in comparison to America. She said that their everyday items such as refrigerators and juice cartons were smaller than they would have been in America.

While in Sweden, Bruner got to experience and learn about all of the different traditions they had.

“My favorite part about the trip was being able to experience all the Swedish culture,” Bruner said.

Bruner especially liked the traditional Christmas dinner and noticing how different it was from her own.

“CALENDAR,” from page 1

The school board sends out a survey of these options to get feedback on what works best with everyone’s schedule.

“I’ve sent it out to our staff members and parents and the district advisor will meet and make a recommendation to the school board,” Principal Billy Epting said. “This is a standard procedure for every year, and so far, option three has gotten the most points in favor.”

The only downside to the third option is that Winter Break would be shorter.

“I lean towards the third option because for me teaching seniors, I don’t have that many days in the spring, so I’m constantly having to push work faster,” government teacher Polly McAuliffe said. “For me this would make teaching the fall term and spring term the same amount of time.”

“I prefer not to start too early in August because I think students and teachers need the entire summer,” McAuliffe said.

As for school choice, the state legislator enacted a law that allows students to go to any school they want. Students are even allowed to switch if they live in a different district if that school has room. This has forced districts to come up with a plan to identify what is the maximum number each school can hold.

For the past five years, Leon has been over capacity. “We have more people chose to come to Leon more than any other school in the district,” Epting said.

School choice started due to students who felt that where they live limits their education opportunities. Some believed that it was unfair to have to attend local school because of their school zone.

Those who are currently at Leon due to school choice are able to stay. Now, Leon will have less space for new people to transfer in due to school choice. However, students that are zoned for Leon will be able to attend regardless of how many students are enrolled.
Senior embraces marital tradition

Nadaley Jones
Staff Writer

Marriage is a part of life that may seem uncertain for some, but not for senior Ramlah Mahboob. In fact, this monumental decision has been set in stone since even before she was born.

After the completion of her high school or university education, Mahboob will marry a man of her parents’ choice.

Four months ago, senior Ramlah Mahboob immigrated to the United States from Pakistan, where she lived with her mother and father.

After coming to the United States, she moved in with her grandmother and grandfather on her father’s side of the family and began attending Leon High school.

A “degree-seeking student” at FSU.

have to apply separately and currently be

Nate, who has joined the circus, preparing them for their various performances throughout the year.

when the competition of her education, her parents will look through a pool of suitors and other males who are ready to be married off.

They will then choose the best match they see fit for her. Mahboob and her match will become engaged, and may stay that way until they decide to officially marry.

If they do not decide to marry, the engagement is broken off and another match is searched for.

To the surprise of many people, Mahboob is enthusiastic and a supporter of the tradition.

“It’s exciting,” Mahboob said. “I’ve never been in a relationship before. My parents don’t allow me to date. It’s honestly exciting to me and I look forward to it.”

According to Mahboob, she is such a huge supporter of arranged marriages because she believes they last longer and are truly more successful.

Divorce is frowned upon in Mahboob’s culture, so there is incentive to stay in the marriage rather than face disapproval from family and the whole community.

“In an arranged marriage it is not based on something as petty as the emotion of love,” Mahboob said. “People fall in and out of love every day and that is not something strong enough to base a commitment like marriage on.”

“Arranged marriage is the only plausible choice,” Rabia Mahboob, Ramlah’s mother, said. “It appears, to many people, in their passionate years so they grudgingly accept it.

“However, if search and attainment of happiness is the major reason to marry, then go by the following principles: Happiness is only real when it is shared. Arranged marriage decisions are shared decisions to a greater degree than love marriage decisions.”

Mahboob also said that she does believe her parents know the decision.

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Senior Triston Stapp is accustomed to aerial acrobatics and lighting people on fire. These are only some of the thrilling performances that Stapp participates in due to being a part of the Florida State University Flying High Circus.

He works and performs at a camp located in northern Pennsylvania called Camp Lohikan and has previous circus experience practicing with his family.

When asked about how he found his way into this type of performance, Stapp credited his family. He also said that there’s no real official program for circus, and that it’s just one of those things that you have to find yourself in.

According to Camp Lohikan’s website, the camp is “directed by circus professionals who have the experience and training to teach the skills to safely perform all of the circus activities” that are available.

Stapp certainly fits the bill with his previous experience and training. While referring to his various experiences in the circus, Stapp reflected on some of the things that he has done.

“Setting people on fire is one of the few things that I can say in my job description,” Stapp said.

“Setting people on fire is one of the few things that I can say in my job description,” Stapp said.

“Nate coaches those who have joined the circus, preparing them for their various performances throughout the year.

“The deal with the administrative side of running the program and the coaching,” Nate said. “I also hire employees and physically run the summer camp here.”

According to Triston, Nate coaches a lot of the more dangerous acts. These acts often take place high up in the air, varying from the trapeze to the teeterboard.

Similarly to what Nate coaches, Triston’s specialties, teeterboard and adagio, partially take place in the air.

“A teeterboard is like a seesaw on steroids,” Triston said. “One person will stand on one side of the board and on the other side of the board you have an another person jump. The person who was standing will get launched into the air where they’ll do flips.”

“Throughout the performance, the base will hold the flier up as the flier is balanced in the air.”

Triston recognizes the difficulty of these types of acrobatics but said that performing in the circus is about ability. If you’re able to do the performance your size and strength will not hold you back.

When he gets back, he plans to attend Full Sail University’s Trapeze Act which has traveled to places as far as England.

Throughout the Flying High Circus’s history, they have travelled all over the world, gaining recognition and prestige.

Triston also travels with his family during the summer to work other circus jobs. He runs and teaches rock climbing at Camp Lohikan.

“I teach kids how to climb on artificial rock walls but I prefer real rock walls myself,” Triston said.

After he graduates from Leon, Triston plans on hiking the Appalachian Trail.

After working for part of the summer, he’ll begin his hike. They will start in northern New York and end in Georgia. He plans on beginning college in January so he will have plenty of time to finish his hike.

Triston says that ‘people here are preparing for this for his whole life, having gained plenty of experience in the mountains and woods at Camp Lohikan.

While hiking, he expects to have limited contact with people back home and limited usage of technology.

When he gets back, he plans to attend TCC to get a paralegal certification, which could eventually lead to law school.

When asked if he would participate in the circus program at FSU, he said, “I’m going to be in it when I attend FSU. I’m not sure if I’ll do it afterwards as a career.”

Photo courtesy of Triston Stapp
TESTING THE STUDENT BODY’S CONSCIENCE
A collection of social experiments

Toilet Paper Incident

If the idea of having toilet paper stuck to the bottom of your shoe seems embarrassing, try having it come out of your pants. This experiment tested how bystanders would react when a person is placed in an embarrassing situation. Leon High Life staff member Caroline Dempsey hung toilet paper out of the back of her pants and perused through the halls between classes to test whether or not her fellow students would stop to speak up about the toilet paper.

Holding the door for others

Holding the door for others is thought to be a polite gesture that people should naturally do out of civility. In this experiment, we tested how many people would respond with a simple “thank you” to staff member Caroline Kirk, who held the door for them. Kirk ran multiple trials to discover just how politely the students at our school would react.

Out of 223 trials, 31 of the students said thank you and 192 students did not respond.

I find myself naturally holding the door for people. I love watching the people pass and greeting them with a smile, but until I decided to participate in this social experiment, I had never considered the impact I often make and the lack of thanks I receive.

This project was based solely on whether I received a “thank you” or any verbal response while standing and holding the door on the first floor level exit from the main building, leading to Tennessee St. and the bus ramp.

I was surprised to receive only nine “thank-you’s” out of the 58 people who walked through the door I was holding. I didn’t just sit there holding it all nonchalantly. I stood up straight, facing each person with a huge grin.

I am not offended by this lack of response and thanks. I understand that we don’t always pay attention and we can even become desensitized to acts of kindness. Personally, I choose to hold the door whenever it’s convenient for me. And when I am not participating in this experiment, I probably don’t even do it very often.

I do think it is important that we each show thanks for the simple kindness that is shared around campus. My role model, Rachel Joy Scott had a theory that “if one person goes out of their way to show compassion then it can start a chain reaction of the same.”
TESTING THE STUDENT BODY’S CONSCIENCE

Taking a fall in the hall

It’s happened to the best of us; the stairs of Leon provide a perfect opportunity to make a fool of yourself by taking a clumsy fall. Leon High Life staff member Sella Kinch faked multiple falls throughout the halls, while dropping all of the books and papers that she held. The goal of this experiment was to discover if someone, if anyone, would take time out of their walk to class to help Kinch pick up her fallen school supplies, or if the bystander effect would take place.

Over the past few weeks, I have spent my time flinging myself up and down stairs at Leon. Throughout my four years at this school, I have noticed how disastrous a binder explosion can be on the narrow staircases. I thought of a special segment in this social experiment in which I fell and dropped papers right when the bell rang.

The goal was to test whether students would stop and help me or simply rush past me in order to make it to class on time. The first time I did this, rather dangerously on the main stairs at lunch, I had five students ask me if I was okay. However, my Spanish notes from freshman year suffered from a multitude of dirty footprints as I struggled to pick them up by myself.

The second trial’s outcome was similar. Three students helped me get up, while another picked up some old issues of the Leon High Life.

The last trial, I threw myself across the stairs right at the end of the school day. I was surprised to have seven people help pick me up and gather my papers.

All in all, I was pleasantly amazed to find how caring the students were.

Several people immediately went to my aid, something that strangely has not been expected of people my age.

-Drella Kinch

Dropping Dollar Bills

Finding money on the ground is a pleasant surprise for many high school students, but when the money clearly belongs to someone else, it becomes a matter of honor. Staff members Caroline Sipple and Christina Hoffman decided to figure out just how many people would return the money they dropped. During lunch, Sipple and Hoffman walked around campus dropping dollar bills where other students could clearly see them.

Out of seven trials, four students gave the money back, and three students did not.

In our experiment, we dropped money on the ground to see how people would react.

Our goal was to test whether people would pick it up and give it back to us, take it for themselves or just ignore it.

The results surprised us overwhelmingly. Almost every time we conducted the experiment, the money was returned back to us. People even ran to catch up with us to give us the money.

Honestly, what was most surprising was comparing other peoples’ reactions to our response.

If we saw someone drop money in the hall, we would most likely pass by and continue on our way to class, which is what we expected others to do.

The experiment opened our eyes to the fact that students and people in general are more helpful than we originally thought. It made us want to lend a helping hand whenever possible.

Many adults like to say that we are the rudest generation, but we would like to disagree. These trials have shown us how kind and honorable our generation truly is.

We encourage everyone to make an effort to be more helpful. Even something that may seem insignificant, such as picking up a dollar bill when someone drops it, can make someone’s day a little bit better.

-Christina Hoffman and Caroline Sipple
Junior chases career in animation

Ava Jackson
Features Editor

Highly intrigued with the science of animation, junior Eli Murphy recently finished an internship at Sachs Media Group where he learned about designing logos and publications.

“The internship was my first time really working with other people,” Murphy said. “So participating in that collaborative work flow was different and enlightening.”

To further his experience, Murphy got a $2,000 scholarship to attend a camp over the summer by entering one of his demo reels.

“It’s interesting to get to talk to people with the same interests as you,” Murphy said. “It’s such a nice feeling that you don’t often encounter to deeply connect with the people who do the same thing as you daily.”

Currently, Murphy is creating videos and animations as a freelance job.

“I like to sell myself so I’ll do demo reels and video montages for advertisements,” Murphy said.

To create a character, Murphy has to draw the animation in multiple perspectives and use it as a model while he’s designing a 3D object.

Once he has the object, he can make a “skeleton” which is the base of the character.

“Basically you have to start from scratch if it’s a complex character,” Murphy said. “You could also do it entirely from memory and go straight to the 3D space and sculpt something.”

Murphy’s favorite thing about animating is seeing the finished result.

“At first you just start out with a simple static object which is cool but when you see it come too life it’s incredibly gratifying,” Murphy said.

When he was younger, Murphy dreamed of designing newspaper cartoons.

“I remember I was reading Calvin and Hobbs and decided that was what I wanted to do,” Murphy said. “But then I realized I wanted to find new way to tell stories. It happened to be animations.”

Murphy’s inspiration is John Lasseter, the Chief Creative Officer for Pixar. His favorite animated movies are Wall-E and The Incredibles.

“The Incredibles had great visual storytelling,” Murphy said. “Wall-E was really interesting because Pixar pulled off something that’s almost unheard of in filmmaking. The whole first half hour had no dialogue but still told a story, which made it interesting to me.”

Murphy does 3D motion and design with a software called Blender.

He learned how to use this software by trial and error and also by continuously watching multiple YouTube videos.

With his mom being a graphic designer and his dad specializing in audio engineering, Murphy’s parents are very supportive of what he does.

“My parents guided me in the right direction but animation is pretty much my own thing now,” Murphy said.

In elementary and middle school, Murphy used to get in trouble for drawing and doodling in class.

“It’s been interesting to see his illustrations evolve through the years,” Murphy’s mother, Laura Pichard-Murphy said. “Especially now as his pencil and paper drawings take 3D shape and movement.”

Murphy hopes to attend the University of Central Florida to get his Bachelor degree and then the Savannah College of Art and Design for his Masters degree.

Murphy created an animation video for freshman orientation.

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Head coach Cokely resigns

Hannah Rodriguez
Sports Editor

After four years coaching the varsity football team, head coach Tim Cokely officially resigned on Tuesday, Jan. 24. Cokely will be taking on the football program at White County High School in Cleveland Georgia, which ended last season with a record of 1-9.

Cokely will be hoping to turn their program around the same way he did for Lions four years ago.

“I have confidence,” Cokely said. “I just think if you go through the process the right way good things will happen.”

His last day at Leon will be Wednesday, Feb. 1.

“It’s always emotional,” Cokely said. “My daughter graduated from Leon.

“Telling your team and separating yourself from valu- able relationships is always diff- ficult.”

Cokely will be leaving behind many seniors who grew through the program alongside him.

One of those is senior kicker Jack Driggers.

“It’s definitely sad to see your head coach leave,” Drig- gers said. “But just like I’m making the best decisions for myself, he has to make the best decision for his family and I re- spect that.”

He has been his kicker for three years and we’ve estab- lished a relationship in which he gives me advice, not only about football but in life. I look up to him and see him as a role model.”

Cokely is, however, confi- dent of the team’s success in his absence.

“High school students are resilient,” Cokely said. “They are even more resilient than adults. I know they are going to push and get through this.”

Under his coaching the Li- ons have gone from a record of 2-6 to 6-2. They have also made it to the playoffs three out of the four years he has been the coach.

“When you coach high school football you have to be prepared to move around,” Cokely said. “But when we came here we talked about the memories you make with your team and your coach.

“You love your teammates and respect your coach. When you’re losing your coach, your not losing your teammates or the relationships you have.”

Principal Billy Epting is confident the team will keep progressing under the guidance of a new head coach.

The school has not picked anyone, but is currently review- ing resumes from some well qualified candidates.

“We’re in good shape and I like the direction we’re head- ing in,” Epting said. “We will be missing a few seniors who were a big part of our success this year but there are a lot coming back.

“There will be a good foun- dation for whoever the new coach is to build on.”

Epting said he wants a coach who not only is knowledgeable about football, but fits the cul- ture at Leon and is aware of the tradition both the school and the football program encompass.

“They should have strong discipline and high expectations but have the personality to relate to teenagers,” Epting said.

Senior finds confidence

Hannah Rodriguez
Sports Editor

As a track runner who com- petes in seven different events and is the Leon High School Wendy Heissman winner, many would look at senior Justin Pe- ter and believe he has an abund- ance of confidence.

While this may be true now, it took Peter some time to build his mental game to where it is now. The physicality of his op- ponents intimidated him as a young runner.

“I have always been the smallest guy in my class,” Pe- ter said. “When you’re lining up next to guys who are a foot taller and 60 pounds heavier, it’s intimidating. I could win this race.”

He not only accomplished that, but he broke his previous personal record by a significant two seconds.

“I hit the ground as soon as I crossed the line and I couldn’t stop smiling,” Peter said. “I ac- tually fought back and didn’t back down.”

This confidence has now become apparent to his team- mates.

“When Justin, you can just see this look in his eye that you know is pure determination,” junior John Riley Bohnstengel said. “When he gets that look, you know it’s over.”

He also looks to his role models for inspiration to push himself everyday.

Olympic athlete Trayvon Bromell is an inspiration for Pe- ters who broke both of his legs in middle school. Bromell over- came his injury and made it to the Olympics his first year out of college.

“I just watch every Youtube video of him possible,” Peter said. “I try to make myself bet- ter by watching what he does.”

It is because of his past that Peter now looks to the future, hoping to run collegiately at ei- ther Troy University or South- ern Mississippi.
Moraes inspires future trainers

Certified athletic trainer, Alan Moraes, is considered the unsung hero of Leon’s sports teams. Moraes serves at all Leon home games, for both home and away teams, as the first responder to any injury that may happen. He also is responsible for the evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation for all the injuries that happen to Leon students.

“It’s a career that gives me a lot of variation,” Moraes said. “I get to see a lot of stuff firsthand from the initial evaluation of an injury to the treatment and rehabilitation.”

While at other high schools Moraes has worked with, he has had student athletes as a program Moraes brought with him to Leon.

About 12 students work with Moraes after school to learn more about athletic training and rehabilitation.

“I encourage any student who is interested in sports medicine to come learn more about it and decide if it is something they really want to do or not,” Moraes said.

“I enjoy teaching them and building relationships with the athletes.”

With Maddie having the reputation she does, teams approach Leon with a different game plan.

Junior Maddie Powell was selected as the best soccer player in the District for her freshman year.

Junior Tanner Powell and seniors Maddie and Parker Powell are both starters on the boys soccer teams.

The boys team beat Gainesville, 1-0, in their first district game and so advanced to play Lincoln for the district semi-finals.

Last year, the boys team did not make it past districts, but with their number one standing in the district leading up to playoffs, Parker hopes to lead his team much farther this year.

The boys team beat Gainesville, 1-0, in their first district game and so advanced to play Lincoln for the district championship.

The girls team, on the other hand, has just recently received their third consecutive district championship title and is hoping to make it as far as the state final-four this year.

Maddie sees this as an achievable goal, as the team has more leadership this year with 10 senior captains. Last year, they fell a few games short, with a loss in the regional semi-finals.

This is the first year since 2006 that both the boys and girls soccer teams were number one in their district prior to post-season.

Trio shines in soccer program

Powell siblings make a name for themselves with their exceptional skill set

Caroline Dempsey

With two being starters on the boys team and the other being the reigning All Big Bend Player of the Year for the girls, the Powell name carries significance on the soccer field.

Junior Maddie Powell was selected as the best soccer player in the entire Big Bend area as a sophomore and has returned her junior year hoping to achieve the same.

Teams around the district know that when they have to play the Leon girls soccer team, they will be having to face the speed and talent that is Maddie Powell.

In the first 19 games of the season, Maddie was leading the team in goals with 23, which is almost twice as much as the second leading scorer.

Sophomore Tanner Powell and junior Parker Powell lead the boys team by being both starters and key elements to the team’s chemistry.

As one of the team’s three captains, Parker leads his team by example with the communication he brings. Parker is currently the fourth leading scorer on the team in goals, with 11 in the first 24 games of the season, and second in assists, with 12.

Having an older sibling on the team has definitely pushed Tanner to improve his performance. The siblings describe their relationship as “very competitive,” which is evident to the rest of the team as well.

“Tanner and Parker are in constant battle for the best Powell boy and that just brings the best out of both of them,” senior soccer player Greg Raymaker said.

With Maddie having the reputation she does, teams approach Leon with a different game plan.

Senior Taylor Barnett is hoping to be a nurse one day and got involved with the athletic training program during her freshman year.

“It’s a never-ending learning experience,” Barnett said. “Working with Mr. Moraes is a lot of fun and I’m always doing something different.”

Athletic trainer Alan Morales serves at all Leon home games as the first responder to any injuries that may happen.

After working together for so long, Moraes and his students have formed a special bond.

“He’s very protective and he’ll stay on top of you to make sure things are getting done,” Barnett said. “He’s like a second father to me.”

The students trainers get to experience first hand what it is like to be an athletic trainer. They attend practices and games for different sports and are they to help the athletes with any injuries they may have.

“If someone needs their ankle or wrist wrapped before practice, I do that,” senior Jasmine Howard said. “Or if someone gets hurt, I go out there and do what I need to do to make sure they’re good to go.”

Howard wanted to be an athletic trainer before participating in Moraes’ program, but working with him assured her that this was something she wanted to do as a career.

“It’s fun to work with him,” Howard said. “He’s a really good person, and is like a mentor to me.”

Moraes knew he wanted to be an athletic trainer when he was studying in college and it was a career that combined some of his favorite hobbies.

“It allowed me to be with people and actually watch sports,” Moraes said.

The University of Florida graduate has been working as an athletic trainer for more than 20 years and has spent the last 12 at Leon.

He has worked everywhere from the Chicago Cubs Minor League team to Florida A&M University to high schools across the East coast.

Photo by Caroline Dempsey
Senior masters track and football

Christina Hoffman
Sports Editor

Alonzo Waheed has paved the way for his college career with both his football and track skills.

Waheed is the wide receiver on the varsity football team and runs the 110 and 300 hurdles in addition to running the 4x4 relay in track.

Waheed credits his success in these sports to his family and teammates, who support and motivate him on and off the field.

His football career began as young as eight, because of his godbrother, who was a role model to him growing up.

Waheed says he hoped to be just like him when he was older.

Waheed attributes who he has become as an athlete to his grandmother.

“The way she has raised me has played a huge role in both where I am and who I am today,” Waheed said. “I only hope to be the type of inspiration she is to me to someone someday.”

The way his teammates motivate him, is something waheed believes in indescribable.

“My team’s are a really big part of my success,” Waheed said. “They always push me, especially by competing in practice every day.

While his success is evident now, his talent was not easy to come by. As a result of being slow on the football field, his coach recommended that he start running.

“He is a really great example for the other players on the team,” former head football coach Tim Cokely said. “He ran track last year to improve his speed and to make himself a better person.

“His hard work and dedication really showed on the field this year as our leading receiver.”

This hard work is evident to his teammates as well.

“Alonzo is a very selfless player who is very enthusiastic for the field,” running back and safety James Peterson said.

Waheed advances down the field with the ball in hand.

“We are constantly pushing each other and competing against each other to better ourselves as both players and people.”

Waheed’s hard work has led to three full-ride scholarship offers between the two sports. These include Arkansas Baptist College for football, and Webster University and University of Southern Mississippi for track.

Waheed admits that when he first received the scholarship offers he was not as surprised as he was overjoyed.

He now not only plans to continue his football career collegiately, but aspires to be drafted into the NFL.

“I’m planning on pursuing and mainly focusing on football,” Waheed said. “I enjoy both sports, but I truly love football.”

Girls basketball strives for state title

The Lady Lions train to achieve success in postseason

Christina Hoffman
Sports Editor

The Lady Lions basketball team has struggled this season, but is continuing to work hard in hopes of bettering their success rate for the postseason games.

“We came out this season wanting to challenge ourselves by playing the best teams we could from all over,” head coach Bruce Daniels said.

“Therefore, our record is not indicative of the kind of team we are.”

The brutal schedule that the Lions set up for themselves exposed them to every kind of coaching and playing they will face in the postseason.

Last season the Lady Lions started their season low in the ranks, but managed to achieve a 4-0 record in the beginning of the season, which was later followed by a seven-game winning streak.

In addition to notable wins last season, the team also won a regional playoff game for the first time since 1922, when the Lady Lions last won the state championship.

Unfortunately, the Lady Lions lost to Niceville High School in overtime in the regional semifinals, ending the road to the state finals.

This year, they have worked hard and challenged themselves in preparation for the postseason in hopes of continuing the road to the state finals that they embarked upon last season.

“We’re doing pretty good as far as leading our team,” said co-captain Amya Bryant.

“There are times when we have to encourage each other more and work together through the rough times.”

They constantly work on drills to improve their defensive and offensive skills and better their communication on the court.

“Offensively, we’re set,” co-captain Jala Williams said. “We can score. However, we need to work on communication, as far as defense goes.”

Williams is a junior and currently has the attention of Duke and North Carolina.

While Williams is extremely excited about the opportunities that are open to her, she is most interested in playing for Duke.

As a co-captain, Williams plays a vital role in leading the team.

“I motivate the team,” William said. “I’m like the mother of the team in the sense that they know they can come to me for anything...On and off the court.”

Bryant, who is also a junior, plans on playing collegiately as well. However, she does not yet know where she will play.

Williams and Bryant rely on each other to push themselves and their team to victory.

“We have each other’s back and we’re always looking out for each other,” Bryant said.
“SADIES,” from page 1

“I cried more when the lights turned off and when it looked how I wanted it to look than when he ended it early,” Willis said.

After school that day, Willis posted the pep rally video on YouTube and it now has over 800 views.

“We did that so people could see the positive part of everything, and I wanted to highlight all of the work that these kids put into it,” Willis said.

Epting later sent out a list serve stating that he was going to investigate who had started the mosh pits and that they would be punished.

The pep rally first started with the lights on. While the lights were on, all of the sports teams talked about their season so far and the football and basketball teams had their dance off.

There was also a drawing for two people to get free tickets for themselves and their date to the dance. The lights were then turned off and the class songs came on.

The robotics club also got to shoot off t-shirts into the crowd with the robot they made.

In preparation for the Sadie Hawkins dance, members of the Student Government and the junior class both helped Carroll set up the event. The profits were split evenly between the two groups.

The spirit week was from Tuesday, Jan. 17, to Friday, Jan. 20, and the dance took place on Saturday, Jan. 21, from 7 – 10 p.m. in the auditorium due to the weather. The dress up days where chosen by Carroll and they included Pajama Tuesday, Worldwide Wednesday, Throwback Thursday and Noon Leon Friday.

“I thought that the dance turned out really well,” Carroll said. “I was worried that the rain would affect the turnout, but we sold even more tickets at the door for a total of around 340 tickets.”

Carroll started brainstorming theme ideas for this year’s dance over the summer, but really began to prepare during October when she took the first step in organizing the dance by filling out the necessary paperwork to get the dance approved.

She first got the idea to do the dance during her freshman year when she realized that Leon didn’t have a Sadie Hawkins dance, unlike other schools.

During her sophomore year, she became involved in Student Government in which she first brought up the dance idea and was told that she could organize and put on the dance herself.

Carroll plans on doing the dance again next year and hopes that the tradition will continue after she graduates.

She hopes to pass the responsibility for the dance to someone else after she leaves Leon.

Carroll has already had people tell her that they are interested in taking it over.

“LAWSON,” from page 1

other hand, Alan remembers Stevenson’s significant impact she had while teaching writing, leadership and people skills.

Another classroom experience that significantly impacted Lawson’s legal and judicial career was a course in Logic and Rhetoric taught by Dr. Iona Smith.

“She brought in logic, such as Aristotle’s, and classics to teach really important values and lessons about life,” Lawson said.

This time at Leon was not always easy. Lawson admits that he had poor grades his first two years of high school because he lacked the proper focus and motivation.

However, his junior and senior years he buckled down and got straight A’s. Lawson had impactful teachers, but decided that if he were to be successful he had to work hard in school and his decisions had to be “prayerfully made.”

Lawson says his faith in Christ played the most important role in his choices and motivation to work hard. He believes a starting place to becoming successful is setting your goals high and associating yourself with people who are headed in the right direction.

He quotes King Solomon in the Bible when he says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

As Justice Lawson approaches serving on the Florida Supreme Court he says, “It’s such an honor to be in a position where you can make a difference. So try to live a life with no regrets taking time to reflect on whether you will be proud of your current actions. But have fun and live life to the fullest.”

Current Leon students view Lawson as a testament to hard work and the ability of students and teachers to have a meaningful impact.