

Which President Hosted  
The First Barbecue At The  
White House?

# THE JAGUAR Journal

June 2021

Lyndon B. Johnson.

President Johnson held the first “formal” White House barbecue on the South Lawn to thank his supporters after announcing that he would not be running for reelection.

## End of Year D-Chat

By Nicholas Dell’Omo



Principal Kevin DiEugenio

The past year and a half has been full of new normals, sacrifices, and paranoia. The seemingly normal school year of 2019-2020 was derailed sharply by a “two week break,” which turned out to be almost six months away from the classroom. As we start on our road back to normalcy, I had the opportunity to meet with our principal, Mr. DiEugenio, to discuss what has happened throughout the past year and a half as well as what students should expect come September.

The first question I had for Mr. D regarded the expectations he had for the 2020-2021 school year and whether or not we met them. His first reaction/response was a thank you for the efforts of the students, senior class representatives, and student council for keeping alive the spirit and the culture that makes us who we are as a school. He mentioned that “coming into the school year nobody knew what to expect with the state of the world at the time and what that meant for students. It became quickly evident that remote learning was not helping the majority of students when first implemented.” Midway through the year “with improving Covid circumstances we were able to initiate a synchronous class structure with the computers from the recently dismantled computer labs.”

Now, finally “with the much improved state of

our country we have been able to bring group one and group two together for classes and return to a feeling of togetherness. Some students were seeing each other for the first time in over a year”. The last thing we have been able to add back to our school schedule have been in-person events, “such as Senior Prom, the AFJROTC Ball, the Senior Academic Award ceremony, and last but not least a full in-person Graduation for our Seniors.” Mr. D also gave a big shout out to all of our sports teams this year and stated that our spring sports programs were “very strong” this year having baseball and volleyball taking “top placements”. Well done y’all!! By and large he stated that his expectations “had to keep evolving day in and day out but in the end he’s happy with everybody having done all that they can to keep our school spirit alive” and hopes to reinvigorate that culture come fall with Friday night lights, pep rallies, and a full sense of togetherness.

My next question was if there was anything new to expect in the building come fall for returning students and incoming freshmen. Even as a senior his response took me by surprise with two HUGE changes for the next school year.

The first one is the introduction of a common lunch period where all 1,700 students go on lunch at the same time for an entire HOUR! “Students will be able to eat virtually anywhere throughout the building including the auditorium, fine arts atrium, in the gym, or wherever else they desire with their friends. The lunch will be split up into two parts A-lunch and B-lunch students can choose to eat for both halves of the lunch or choose to eat for one half and get work done or go for extra help during the other half.”

In addition to the common lunch period a select number of JUNIORS will be able to drive to school next year with three criteria. “One, you must be in good disciplinary standing with the school, two your birthday MUST be in the first semester of the school year, and three, if you meet the above criteria your name will be put into a hat and the first 80 names picked out of it in the drawing will be able to drive.” In ad-

dition to those big changes, there will also be a dual-event orientation in the fall. “This will not just be open to incoming freshmen but also sophomores, who never got a true orientation and some of whom have been virtual all year and still never stepped inside our school.” This is going to promote a restart in September which he deemed an integral part of the road to recovery.

Mr. DiEugenio shared a message for underclassmen, especially the current freshmen who haven’t experienced a full year of high school: “I need people to trust the decisions made for their safety and realize the normalcy of next year. Embrace the new full school year in the fall and get involved!” He states that it’s crucial for students to realize that, yes, it is normal to go to school from 7:20 am to 1:38 pm and it’s normal to be shoulder to shoulder with your friends under Friday Night Lights in the fall, and eating together in the building. All of these things are normal and shouldn’t make students worry or be anxious. These are events that make Jackson Memorial who we are and build the foundation of student culture and success in the future.

Finally, Mr. D has a message for the graduating class:

“Life is not fair, get used to it.” He continued, “your senior year was not fair, yet it’s not that which defines you. Rather, it’s how you react to adversity and move on from it that does. If this entire ordeal left you with anything, let it be to not take anything for granted. Learn to appreciate what you have before it’s no longer yours to appreciate. Even simple things you never thought you would miss like seeing the faces of your friends unsheathed by masks and eating together in the cafeteria all come as a bafflement of normalcy that so many wish to have back. And when it comes time to move into your new dorms and begin your college, or post high school careers just know that the butterflies you feel aloft in your stomach are very normal. In the end everything works out and only you are able to create your own future, so listen to yourself and trust your gut.”

## Have A Great Summer, Jags

By Mr. Apa

Well Jags, another school year is coming to a close, and like every school year this one offered up something different. Though, if we are being honest, this one was really different. Throughout the course of the school year, we’ve heard every variation of “pull your mask up” possible. We’ve seen friends quarantined. We’ve missed friends who would normally be sitting next to us in class. We didn’t have our traditional snow days, because virtual learning was possible. And, if we made new friends, chances are we don’t know what they look like because we resemble a school of ninjas.

To put it simply, this year has been tough on us all. But, as we have seen in the past, and I am sure we will see again in the future: We are

strong. We are family. And we will always make it through.

I’d like to applaud everyone who helped make this school year as ordinary as possible, especially under the extraordinary circumstances. I think we should all feel proud of what was accomplished this year. While the fight is not over, and we are not back to normal yet, things are inching in the right direction. So, for those who put out the effort to do their best, to be present (in person, or virtually), to participate and work as hard as ever, nice job. It may not feel like it sometimes, but your hard work will be remembered, and it will pay off.

Inside this special issue of the Jaguar Journal,

we will hear from our student body and faculty with their thoughts of the school year, and their hopes for the future. We will give some suggestions for safe and fun summer activities, and maybe share a recipe or two to enjoy over the summer break.

For our seniors, I’d like to wish you all good luck next year in whatever endeavor you pursue. For students returning next year, here’s hoping we are as close to normal as possible. For our staff thank you all for being there for each other and our students. For the entire school: WE DID IT!

Enjoy your summer break everyone. It has been a tough year, but we got through it together.

**See you in September, Jags!**

# We Made It!

By Dakota Calcaterra

Well, it has certainly been a year. That may be one of the only positives; time has passed. A lot of ink has been spilled over how nightmarish this pandemic has been, and how we, the youth, may be affected by it. From the inside looking out, however, I believe that we've weathered the storm well, probably better than most others, in fact.

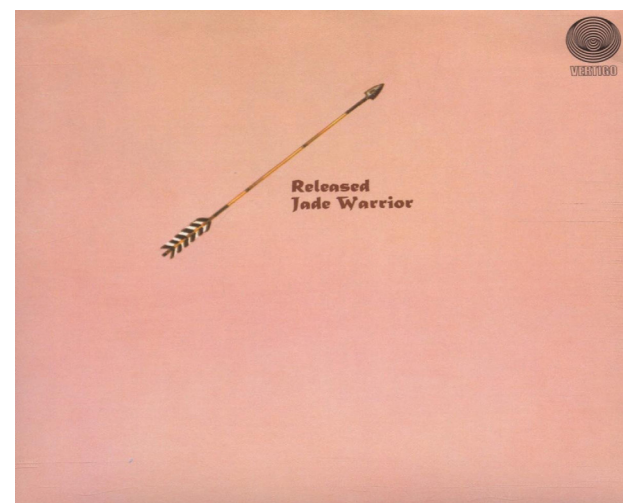
My proof for the above thesis, is the mere presence of us in schools. A great amount of people have chosen to put their all in, showing up to school despite the option of sleeping in an hour. We've recognized the point of it all, amid a natural event that can seem to be pointless. The point is to live, to smile, and to accumulate reasons to be happy. More than a year ago, I wrote in this paper that we clearly did not live in the best of all worlds, and the only true lens to view world events through was one of realistic pessimism. I find now that I may have been mistaken to believe this.

While we have certainly found reasons to be pessimistic, usually without searching for them, we have also found reasons for confidence, and optimism. This optimism may not be supreme, or even altogether convincing, but it is inspiring nonetheless. Think back to March 13, 2020. That, after all, is truly the year's beginning. Think of the events since. Yes, we've seen unity in the face of fear, and disunity among disenchantment. Within these rival commotions, however, there are now figures of undeniable grace and candor, like Dr. Anthony Fauci, a

symbol of science in a time where such an ideal has become lacking. We've seen many people, in the protests of the past year, turn their anger into energy, campaigning for their rights, and their beliefs. We may now be on track for the most radical civil rights reforms since the 1960s.

Beyond politics, we should also think of the way in which entertainment has itself come back from the brink. I remember watching competitive trout fishing in late March, as there was nothing else to put on ESPN. Now, we've seen as each major sports league have crowned champions and started anew. In JMHS, we've come back from nothing and now we're once again in the mix for a multitude of championships, the fruits of the hard work put in by coaches and players. Our student athletes, after a lost year, have more than made up for that lost time.

I will stop droning on; my thoughts, after all, are in opposition to the plentiful post-mortems of human civilization. However, it is important to remember that while the past year has seen immense physical, financial, and emotional loss, it has also added to the understanding that humanity is resilient. Humanity is, if not good, at the very least tough. Jackson Memorial opened this school year part-time, switching days, uncertain on a week-to-week basis. We're back in school everyday, and set up for a full recovery in the conceivable future. We will never forget quarantine. However, we should always remember how it feels to be one of many, resolute in the face of an inhuman adversity.



## Dear Jade

Dear Jade,  
I'm worried that this school year has set me back. I didn't do as well as I had wanted to. I just didn't feel motivated, and kind of lost. Can I come back from this?

Looking back at my freshman year, I wanted to give up. I had a 2.6 GPA, was depressed due to bullying I faced at school and other activities. So, I gave up on myself. I had always been told I was second rate for many years and I believed it. Being constantly told you are not good enough within society's standards of the "best", it can really affect the way that you view yourself and how others treat you. But after finishing summer school online and landing an 80 in the same class I just failed, I knew I couldn't give up.

When my Sophomore and Junior year started, I wanted to prove to myself that I could be the best possible version of the student that I could be. It came with many challenges and I am still dealing with the repercussions of my 2.6 GPA. I worked hard enough so I could feel comfortable applying to colleges. I still had my struggles with the application process due to my grades, but this did not stop me from applying to colleges. After the college application process ended, I knew that life was about to change in a way I was not prepared for.

As I step into these final moments of life before adulthood, I realize that even after the hard work, dedication, and time I put into school, nothing mattered more than knowing that I did it myself. Going from a 2.6 GPA to a 3.4 in a matter of three years is an accomplishment that I can be proud of. I am not only proud of myself for receiving scholarships, interviewing opportunities, and creating my own platform to showcase my voice, but doing it knowing that I was in a terrible position three years ago.

My final message is that you can do anything no matter what anyone says. It doesn't matter who believes in you; whether you're seen as an average student, or seen as second best, you can persevere. I want to say a special thank you to Mr. Apa and all the teachers that have come into my life over these last four years and created a space for me to thrive. I am proud to say that I am a graduating senior who not only faced bullying, racism, and depression but who's turned her attitude into her altitude and took it farther than I ever could've imagined.

-Jade

## Owen's Hidden Gems

By Owen Skidds

**Hidden Gem:** Released by Jade Warrior

**Type of Media:** Album

**Available On:** Spotify, Youtube Music, Apple Music, 12" Vinyl Record

**Genre:** Progressive Rock

**You'll Like This If You Like:**

Rock, Jazz, Bands like Pink Floyd or Tool

Jade Warrior is by no means a popular band. They were a part of the niched progressive rock movement in the early 1970's, and their Wikipedia page could probably be contained on a singular index card. Regardless, their 1971 album *Released* is an exemplary work from a band that truly belongs in the annals of progressive rock with giants such as Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Genesis, and Yes.

### Three-Horned Dragon King:

The album's first track, *Three-Horned Dragon King*, is a six minute long piece that leans more into the rock aspect of the term progressive rock. Deeper listeners to this track will notice the distinct lack of Western percussion instruments such as a traditional drum kit and symbols, instead replaced by bongos and the likes. This produces a very unique listening experience, as almost every rock composition in the history of the genre includes hi-hats, snares, and cymbals to give the music a strong backbone.

### Minnamoto's Dream:

Running at five minutes, *Minnamoto's Dream* is a surrealist progressive ballad telling of a revelation experienced by an ancient Japanese warrior while he slumbered. The opening of the track features almost ghostly lyrics that have had a reversing effect applied to them, followed by a slow, steady thumping beat more similar to traditional rock than progressive rock that goes into much more detail about the contents of the dream experienced by Minnamoto.

### We Have Reason to Believe:

Somewhat of an oddity on this album, *We Have Reason to Believe* is a progressive rock piece by association alone. It sounds much more like something from the 1950's, right down to the chord progressions, length, and lyrics. Regardless of this, it's a very fun song that is surprisingly danceable, and its chorus will stick in your head for the whole day.

### Eyes On You:

Returning to a more traditional rock lineup with a Western drum kit, *Eyes On You* is notable for its inclusion of saxophone and flute in tandem with a haunting guitar to create a jazzy rock track with hints here and there of Jade Warrior's traditionally Eastern sound that will captivate a listener's attention for the song's three minute runtime.

Congratulations to Deb Licciardi on her retirement! For the last several years, Debbi has been the glue that held the CST together. Debbi's hard work and dedication has made her an amazing team member. Debbi's optimism and love of music brought joy to the office each day. Best wishes for sunny weather and many beach days to enjoy her retirement!

-Melissa Conklin

Mr. Keshecki has been working for the Jackson School District for 12 years as a paraprofessional. He has been at JMHS for 7 of those years. Mr. Keshecki has been a pleasure to work with. He is reliable and caring. He always puts the students first. Mr. Keshecki will be missed in our classroom. He has a positive outlook everyday and enjoys seeing the growth in the students and is ready to help them reach their goals. As a colleague, we will miss his great sense of humor and his wisdom. On behalf of me and the rest of the Special Education team, we want to thank you for all you have done to help make our program a success. Also, enjoy your retirement! You've earned it!

Mrs. Alvarez has been an inspiration to her students throughout her years at JMHS. She always pushes her students to do their best and to continue learning the language. Her AP students adore her and it's easy to see why. Mrs. Alvarez always encourages her students with compassion and dedication in all she does. She is a collaborative partner with her colleagues. She will be missed by her JMHS family, but she should always remember, "Once a Jag, Always a Jag."

- Anna Cafara

Mrs. Mitchell is an extremely creative teacher. She truly brings the Spanish culture to life with all of her inventive and colorful projects. She inspires her students to think out of the box and find new, innovative ways to showcase their knowledge of Spanish. She is always sharing and collaborating creative ideas with the students and her colleagues. She will be missed by her JMHS family, but she should always remember, "Once a Jag, Always a Jag."

- Anna Cafara

**Released Early For Good Behavior: Bobbie Allaire; Michel Thompson; Lisa Gigliotti; Theresa Ventura; Helen Micchelli**

# TAKE SOME TIME TO SAY GOODBYE!



Congratulations to Debbie Schlau on her retirement! Debbie has made a difference in the lives of so many students over her years here at Jackson Memorial High School. Debbie was famous for her out of the box thinking and for always finding a way to help a student in need, no matter what the circumstances were. She truly cared about her students and advocated for them to make sure that they got the services they needed. Debbie will be greatly missed as she was a tremendous asset to the Child Study Team. Wishing you all the best in your retirement!

- Melissa Conklin

After 20 years of active duty Air Force service and 23 years teaching at JMHS, Charlie Latimer is finally losing airspeed and altitude on his final glidescope. He will be sorely missed! He is a friend, patriot, and leader! Good luck, Godspeed, and fair winds.

- Mike Macagnone

Mrs. Liebenthal has been a Spanish teacher here at JMHS for over 20 years. Her experience and knowledge of the Spanish language is matched by no other. She is a passionate and encouraging teacher to her students. She always encourages them to strive for success. She will be missed by her JMHS family, but she should always remember, "Once a Jag, Always a Jag."

-Anna Cafara

Mrs. Nancy Dauenhauer has been my neighbor in Clayton for fifteen years and a better neighbor I couldn't have asked for. Everyday I can hear her and her students' laughter filtering through the wall and it always makes me grin. I know she's a tough cookie with high expectations for her students, but she knows how important it is to have fun in school, too, and I am certain that there are hundreds or even thousands of JMHS graduates who will recall the education and joy they had in Mrs. Dauenhauer's classroom.

I join our JMHS family in wishing for her tranquility as she transitions into her post-retirement life of reading piles of books that she does NOT have to teach and playing with her grandchildren. She will be missed more than she ever knows.

-Kathleen Regan

Mrs. Tina Topleski has worked in the district in several administrative roles during her 18 years in the district including vice principal, Principal of the Johnson Elementary School, and District Science Supervisor. She worked to bring innovative programs to the district such as the STEM Academy, Authentic Science Research, hydroponics projects, and career-related experiences for students. She is a dedicated educator who always found new ways to support and inspire students to become immersed in science. She directed the Perkins the Grant which provides cutting-edge materials and internships for our district's in-house vocational programs. Her professional expertise and unwavering dedication to students and staff will truly be missed.

-Lisa DiEugenio

# WE'LL MISS YOU ALL!

# Our Students Were Asked to Reflect On the School Year

Owen Skidds- Senior

Everything was beautiful and nothing hurt.  
(quote shamelessly stolen from Kurt Vonnegut)

Isabelle Harrigan- Senior

This school year has definitely been different and more challenging than any other year. Although there was a lot of frustration and lack of motivation due to our circumstances with COVID-19, I am glad I had a positive mindset and made the most out of what we were allowed to do. The stress of maintaining good grades and applying to colleges had a significant impact on my performance, however I made sure to work on myself as a person and control the stress by finding new hobbies and activities such as painting. Also, it has been frustrating to deal with the global pandemic because we seniors are being limited when the most exciting time of our lives are about to happen. By coping with this, I have found ways to try to make the most of my senior year by staying active, working, hanging out with friends, and taking short trips whenever I find the time. All in all, reflecting on my senior year, it is one to remember for the challenges that I have faced and for the memories that I made.

Madison Nolan- Freshman

This school year was crazy for not just me but all of us. We all had to go to school wearing a mask or staying home learning while on a call with your teacher. I feel that it was much weirder for me because its my first year in high school and i've never got to experience what its really like. I also think that its kinda cool because in the future you have a cool story to tell.

Nia Johnson- Junior

This school year was fairly different and hard compared to anything I've ever had to live through. Although the beginning of 2020 seemed to go downhill we are finally starting to have life/school come back to normal again.

Chris Zona- Freshman

This year has been a wild ride, especially for me as a freshman entering high school. From being completely virtual, to going hybrid, days in, days out, to going full in school everyday, there was a lot to take in. Along with learning new subjects and partaking in new classes, freshmen had to adapt to going into school, possibly needing to change their schedules as a result. What we had to do this year isn't even what is typically required in a regular school year in high school, such as using lockers, having lunch during the day, and each class lasting 80 minutes. Regardless, the teachers and the people who decide the school schedules did a great job in ensuring us classmates are learning what is required, even if it isn't as much as they would usually cover. With this rollercoaster of a year coming to a close, I can safely say that I appreciate what the school has done to keep everyone safe and healthy, so students can learn even when they have to quarantine. Hopefully this brings forth a brighter year, where things slowly get back to normal at a steady pace.

Amber Strong- Freshman

This school year has definitely been a once in a lifetime learning experience. I mean, how often do you get to say that you attended school in a global pandemic? This year I learned that it's not always enough to just show up, but you have to apply yourself as well.

Kaitlyn McLaughlin- Freshman

This school year is most definitely one to remember, and with the many challenges and hardships i've been put through, i think i'm finally finishing as a stronger person. I've learned to deal with the circumstances at hand, and even though I've mentally had many ups and downs, I think I can finally say i've learned to truly be myself. I can finally say I accept who I am, and I can advocate for myself in a very mature way. A year ago I couldn't even speak in class, and I would sit silently constantly, and now I'm perfectly fine speaking and reading aloud. Safe to say, the past year and a half made me an overall better person no matter how many times I've downfalled, I have learned to cope.

Rebecca Weisselber- Freshman

This school year was definitely an interesting one to say the least. It was different, nothing how I expected to start my first year of high school. With that being said, it was not all bad. I did get to come in and physically learn, see my friends and have interactions in person, not just on a screen.

Julia Ruditsky- Senior

This school year was very twisted but considering it was my senior year, I decided to make the best of it. The whole mask thing was hard at first. I couldn't concentrate in class with it on and I felt alone at school while virtual. Most teachers were stressed out as well but honestly who could judge them for that. It's a brand new set-up and overall, they adapted to the limited school year very well. Of course somethings were modified for Covid safety or just cancelled all together but this year wasn't a total loss. I still applied to college for next year, got to connect with friends again, and got to say my final goodbye to the student life here at Jackson Memorial High School. Either way, I was satisfied with the year I had at JMHS considering the many unknowns there were. We did good. We made it. We're better because of it.

Taryn Hernandez Portillo- Sophomore

This school year has been very different in many ways, and is one for the history books. I decided to remain a remote learner this year and was home all day. Although many would not complain about this, and I do agree that there are pros to staying home, but I am a person who likes to be out even if it's just going to school. Honestly, if this school year has taught me anything it is that life may throw things at you but you just have to keep on going. In the beginning of the school year I was always stressing about everything and would be hard on myself over a situation I had no control over. Then, I realized a very valuable lesson which is not to have a negative mentality over things you can't control because it won't change anything.

Ava White- Freshman

This school was very different from what we were all used to. I have found that virtual learning did not come as easy as it seemed for all teachers and students. In the beginning, the A and B days were ok but I missed out on seeing all my friends so I'm glad we switched to all kids coming in. This made school more enjoyable as well as giving students their voice in the classroom again.

## Views From C-Wing

The best thing that happened to me this year was returning to school in person. I loved seeing my new teachers and my classmates. I also liked going outside and playing tennis in the gym. Finally, I liked learning poetry in English with Mrs. Flanagan.

-C.J Ovalle

The hardest thing that happened this year was remote learning because I did not like google meets. I miss being in person. I am glad to be back with my friends in school.

-Christopher Owens



My favorite moment this year is having Mrs. Wells as my gym teacher. I liked how she encouraged us to walk on track. She helps us get exercise. Mrs. Wells made this year fun.

-Holden Rieger

I like being in school, not remote learning . I did mail throughout the school year. It makes the year fun learning new skills.

-Michael Fries



My favorite moment this school year was playing kickball. I had fun with some good natured trash talking with the students on the other team. I hit a home run and scored for my team. I scored and drove in a run after hitting a double off the wall. Playing kickball with my friends in school made this school year fun!

-Ciro Panella



# Summer Recipes

## Creamy Avocado Dip



Recipe and picture courtest of Food Network

### Ingredients:

- 1 firm-ripe avocado, halved, pitted and cut into large chunks
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 3 tablespoons grated parmesan
- Juice of 1 lime
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt

### Directions:

Process or blend the avocado, sour cream, parmesan, lime juice, 1 tablespoon of water, cayenne pepper and 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a food processor or blender until smooth and creamy. Serve right away.

## BLT Pasta Salad



Recipe and picture courtesy of Good Housekeeping

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 red onion
- kosher salt and pepper
- 8 slices of cooked bacon, chopped
- 1 pint of cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 cups baby arugula

### Directions:

1. Cook pasta per package directions.  
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a medium skillet on medoim. Add onion and saute until just tender. Transfer contents of the skillet to a large bowl.  
3. When pasta is cooked, drain well and add to the bowl with onion and 1/2 tsp each salt and pepper and toss to combine. Fold in bacon, tomatoes, and arugula.



## Class of 2021



# Have A Safe And Happy Summer, Jags!

