

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Camron Wayland

To celebrate the achievements and extraordinary resilience of the historic class of 2021, the Rappahannock News will feature one Rappahannock County High School senior each week until graduation on May 28. Students have been nominated by their teachers and mentors to be featured in the Senior Spotlight series.

BY RACHEL NEEDHAM
Rappahannock News Staff

The first time Camron Wayland sat in the sports announcers' chair, he was in seventh grade. It was January of 2015, Wayland remembers, and it was a girls' junior varsity (JV) basketball team.

"I said — my famous line — 'Mr. Burley, it's up to you. If you want me to do it, I'll do it.' And he said, 'Come on, I'll give you my script.' And sure enough, he said, 'You want to do it next game?' and I said, 'If you want me to do it, I'll do it,' and the rest is history," Wayland said.

Now a senior at Rappahannock County High School, Wayland has been accepted to James Madison University in Harrisonburg and plans to study sport and recreation management with a "possible minor in sport communications — maybe a history or coaching minor if I can double up minors."

And he's already got a job when he gets to Harrisonburg — Brandon Burley, the athletic director who started Wayland down the sports announcing path all those years ago, now works at Harrisonburg High School and has offered Wayland a position in



BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER

the athletic department. "I said, 'Sure, you know me, I'll take the opportunity,'" Wayland said.

"I might take over as the PA announcer for some of their sports, not too sure on that ... but I'm really looking forward to what's ahead. Networking has really helped me make decisions for my future and I'm grateful."

Wayland noted if it hadn't been for his family, he might never have found his passion. When he was in fourth or fifth grade, he said, he went to his twin sister Carrington's volleyball game. "She played all the sports," he said. "And my grandma — she sat

in the stands, she said, 'You need to go get the volleyballs and pick them up and go put them in the carts for them.' And I said, 'Grandma, I don't know if I can go on the court or not.'

"And she said, 'Just go do it and see if they tell you to get off or not!' And so I started picking them up. And after that, I don't know how, but I became the manager of the JV volleyball team. I started in sixth grade and I've been doing that to this day," he said.

Wayland now coordinates setup for all the home games and announces during football games, basketball games and volleyball games. He also writes the sports column for the MadRapp Recorder. "I've made so many memories," Wayland said. "Just being able to witness the strength of the [athletics] program building up and the mentality of the players and the coaches has been a sight to see. I'm glad I decided to stick with it."

Asked what advice he has for high schoolers who come up behind him, Wayland said, "Find something you're interested in, whether it takes two days, two weeks, two months or two years. If you have to take a gap year before college, take a gap year."

After college, Wayland said he has his sights set on a five-year goal: to become a high school athletic director himself.

"I'd like to be an athletic director here [at RCHS] but if that opportunity is not open, then it's not open. Maybe somewhere down the road, [I might] be a sportscaster — it's on the table," he said.

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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Rachel Weghorst

To celebrate the achievements and extraordinary resilience of the historic class of 2021, the Rappahannock News will feature one Rappahannock County High School senior each week until graduation on May 28. Students have been nominated by their teachers and mentors to be featured in the Senior Spotlight series.

BY RACHEL NEEDHAM
Rappahannock News Staff

While the rest of the world was grinding to a halt at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rachel Weghorst was starting a business.

"During quarantine, I was like, 'I don't have anything to do,' so I looked up a bunch of YouTube videos and articles about how to open your own Etsy shop," she said. "It was just the perfect opportunity."

"I've always been a crafty person and I love making different things for my friends and family. I love making projects and handing it to someone and saying, 'I made you this!'"

Now a senior at Rappahannock County High School, Weghorst runs her online jewelry and accessories store, ReachingForRays, in between cross country meets and academics at both RCHS and the Mountain Vista Governor's School in Warrenton. Weghorst won first place at Tuesday's regional cross country tournament in Danville, Virginia, helping to secure the team's spot at the state championships.

But the business, she said, is what keeps her sane. "When I'm not in school and I'm not studying ... I'll make some of my orders and package [them] or I'll just work on some new projects. ... I'm a big craft person so anything I can make with my hands, I just love doing that. I'm having a great time," she said.



BY RACHEL NEEDHAM

And Weghorst is a conscientious entrepreneur — she's passionate about the environment and sustainability, and she's made it part of her business model.

"I'm so excited ... I've just gotten compostable mailers because a lot of our waste is packaging, especially like Amazon orders ... getting stuff in the mail is a lot of plastic and it takes forever to break down. So I don't want to contribute to [pollution] especially when I want to go into conservation," Weghorst said. "So I'm like, well, let's just go all eco-friendly with my packaging."

Weghorst took a class earlier this year in ecology which has made her want to study environmental

science in college. "I've always been interested in science, and learning about how things work," she said. "I like problem solving — like, how can we make our life more sustainable?"

Asked what inspired her interest in nature and the environment, Weghorst said a lot of it had to do with growing up in Rappahannock. "We live in such a rural area and such a beautiful area that you just look around and think, 'I want to preserve this,'" she said. "Our community is just so deeply rooted in our environment that I just grew up with it."

Weghorst is bound for college in the fall, but she said she is still deciding whether to accept at the College of William and Mary or the University of Virginia. Whichever she chooses, she plans to keep up with her business. "I'd like for it to be my little side-gig, I guess," she explained.

If she could give advice to a younger high school student, it would be this: "Lead your life in a way that would make you happiest — because sometimes you have these big goals that you think you want to accomplish, but you realize

they're not really something that will make you happy. So as a freshman ... stay driven in your academics and your other endeavors, but also have fun with everything because high school is only a short period of your life and you want to look back on it as a really good time well spent."



During the pandemic, Rachel Weghorst started ReachingForRays, an online jewelry and accessory store hosted on Etsy.com.

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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Jesse Foster

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BY RACHEL NEEDHAM
Rappahannock News Staff

When Jesse Foster was nine years old, he started collecting scrap metal.

“People would bring me junk stuff and I would just pull it apart [and] try to put it back together,” he said. “Eventually I was able to put it back together.”

Since then, Foster has learned how to fix all kinds of things: weed eaters, farm equipment, and lawn mowers — one of which he souped up into a “racing” mower that topped out at a speed of 45 mph. “I did a pulley swap system,” he said. “So on the motor I put a bigger pulley. That way it had more rotations on the motor. And on the back I put a smaller pulley to get more rotations on the gearbox. ... It was actually a pretty neat experience.”



BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER

But the mower ended up in scrap, Foster notes, because it was too dangerous to ride.

Foster, known to his friends as Big Red, will graduate in two weeks from Rappahannock County High School. In the fall, he will head to Lincoln College of Technology in Nashville, Tenn. to

get an associates degree as a heavy equipment mechanic.

“I don’t want a job where every day I do the same thing,” he said. “I gotta have something where every day is something different — diagnose a new problem or do something simple, fresh tires, oil change, stuff like that.

But I also want to be able to turn to something that’s complicated and be able to put it back together and just say I did something different.”

Foster has grown up with deep roots in Rappahannock. His father is a farmer in the county and his grandparents used to run the Hillsdale Country Store on Route 211. The family traces its history in the county back to before the establishment of the Shenandoah National Park forced them to leave the nearby mountains.

“I want to do something nobody else in my family has done yet, and that’s go to college,” Foster said. “Nobody in my family has done that or trade school, so I want to be one of the first. I want to show [them] that I can do it.”

Foster says his dream is to work for Mopar, the parts and services division of Chrysler, or Cummins, a diesel engine manufacturer. The two companies have in common that they manufacture parts for Dodge.

“I’ve always been a Dodge fan,” Foster said. “I’ve done all the research on Dodge since they were a bicycle company.”

See **FOSTER**, Page 19

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It's graduation season

Here's a rundown of RCPS end-of-year activities starting this weekend:

- ▶ **Saturday, May 15:** Senior Formal Prom. Seniors only, plus one guest, to be held under outdoor tent.
- ▶ **Sunday, May 16:** Class of 2021 Senior Banquet & Slideshow at RCHS Practice Field, tent provided by Rappahannock County Sheriff's Office. Dress code casual.
- ▶ **Thursday, May 20:** Fourth grade cookout on the hill from 11:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. RSVP to teacher.
- ▶ **Saturday, May 22:** Alternative prom/bonfire/movie at RCHS. Sponsored by RCHS junior class and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD).
- ▶ **Sunday, May 23:** Virtual RCHS Class of 2021 Baccalaureate.
- ▶ **Monday, May 24:**
 - First grade graduation. All classrooms will have an all-day celebration with students only.
 - Sixth grade graduation at 1:30 p.m. by Zoom invitation only.
- ▶ **Tuesday, May 25:**
 - Early release for students (noon)
 - Pre-K Graduation (9 a.m. on the playground blacktop- RSVP to teacher)
 - Kindergarten graduation, Mrs. Knick's class (9:45 a.m. on playground blacktop, RSVP to teacher)
 - Kindergarten graduation, Mrs. Estes' class (10:15 a.m. on the playground blacktop, RSVP to teacher)
 - Second grade celebration, Mrs. Way & Mrs. Williams (9 a.m., Zoom only)
 - Second grade celebration, Mrs. Lopiano (9:30 a.m., Zoom only)
 - Third grade celebration (11:20 a.m. during recess, students only)
 - Fifth Grade (8:45 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Awards at the shelter, Zoom only)
- ▶ **Wednesday, May 26:**
 - Early release for students (noon)
 - Graduation practice at 9:30 a.m. at RCHS. Followed by Class of 2021 Senior Picnic at county park, 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 - RCHS Band Spring Concert at 6 p.m. in Panther Stadium. In case of rain, the back-up date is Thursday, May 27 at 6 p.m. Attendance by invitation only.
- ▶ **Thursday, May 27:**
 - Last day of school/early release (noon) for students
 - Kindergarten graduation, Mrs. Barron's class (10 a.m. on playground blacktop, RSVP to teacher)
 - Seventh grade graduation (9 a.m. on the hill, RSVP to teacher)
- ▶ **Friday, May 28:**
 - RCHS Graduation at 7 p.m. in Panther Stadium. Graduation rain date is May 29.

Important note about attendance: All RCHS and RCES celebrations and ceremonies are by invitation only due to COVID restrictions. If you would like to volunteer to assist with any of these celebrations or have questions, please contact your student's teacher or Class of 2021 sponsor.

RCPS names Seward as new high school principal

From contributed reports

Rappahannock County Public Schools is pleased to announce that Carlos Dwight Seward has been appointed as the next principal of Rappahannock County High School.

Seward brings a variety of experience to the role of RCHS principal. He has served as an assistant principal at Eastern View High School in Culpeper County for the last four years. Beginning his career in education as a high school history teacher in Virginia Beach City Public Schools, he quickly became a leader among his peers serving as the social studies department chair and curriculum leader. Additionally, he has served as International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program coordinator, Advancement Via Individual Determination coordinator, and dean of students, in Alexandria City Public Schools; and served as a middle school social studies teacher and grade-level chairperson in Henrico County Public Schools.



Carlos Dwight Seward

Seward graduated from Norfolk State University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. He went on to earn a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Hampton University. In addition, he earned his gifted education endorsement from the School of Education at the University of Virginia, and recently completed a graduate certificate in education finance from the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University.

At the Rappahannock County School Board meeting on Tuesday night, Seward addressed the RCPS community. "Tonight I stand before you humbled and honored to be appointed as the next principal of Rappahannock County High School. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our division superintendent, Dr. Shannon Lee Grimsley, for her trust and confidence in my ability to enhance the educational environment, the instruc-

tional core and the school culture at the high school that we all love.

"As we move past the fog of this pandemic, we have a lot of opportunities ahead of us and I look forward to leading you in those opportunities. ... To my future colleagues at Rappahannock County High School, those in attendance tonight: I wish I could start tomorrow," Seward said.

"We are beyond thrilled to welcome Mr. Seward to our leadership team at RCPS," said Dr. Shannon Grimsley, RCPS superintendent. "His depth of instructional leadership experience and ample educational qualifications as a successful classroom teacher paired with his inspirational personality and poise propelled him to the top candidate slot as unanimously recommended by the interview committee and the superintendent interview team. Mr. Seward will be an incredible addition to the Rappahannock family, and will be sure to continue and build upon the successes of RCHS as the new principal. We very much look forward to seeing what he will accomplish!"

Seward will begin serving as principal on July 1, 2021.

FOSTER

From Page 18

He even talks about his 1997 Dodge truck as if it were a member of his family. "I think of it like me," he said. "It's all beefy, it's kind of fat, but overall, just a big, hard working truck. It's ready to roll. It does everything I need it to do. I would do anything for anybody and that truck would do anything for me. I love that truck. Just something about it."

Foster is no stranger to hard work. Even now, when he's not at school he's working at Adams Property Solutions or at Adams Custom Slaughter or as a self-employed lawn mower repairman.

"I have a hard time sitting, I have a hard time doing nothing. I just enjoy to have projects," he says. But if he could give his younger self a piece of advice, he says he wishes he had pushed himself even harder.

"I wish I would have pushed myself harder just to see what else I could have accomplished — especially in school," he said.

But Foster is pushing himself now. "I'm pushing myself as hard as possible trying to get as many scholarships [as I can] because I don't have the most money. But [I'm] trying to make sure my scholarships are done to make sure I can pay for school."

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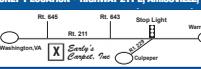
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Lee Reinboldt

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BY RACHEL NEEDHAM
Rappahannock News Staff

As soon as 18-year-old Lee Reinboldt learned about the Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) class at Lord Fairfax Community College, he enrolled.

Reinboldt, a graduating senior at Rappahannock County High School, found out about the Workforce Solutions program from Lisa Heiser, his college counselor. Plus, he had watched his friends, Logan Butler and Richard Jenkins, complete the program and become successful equipment operators right out of high school.

"Mrs. Heiser, she's awesome. Very nice lady. ... She got us into that [class], got us the grants — we only paid, like, \$100 or something bucks out of pocket for a \$5,000 class," Reinboldt said.

Heavy equipment operators are in high demand in Virginia, especially since the average age of operators in the state as of 2020 was 55, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation. The necessity for operators also means that the Commonwealth of Virginia will subsidize two-thirds of the education costs for students who want to enter the field.



BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER

The Headwaters Foundation, a local nonprofit which supports public education in Rappahannock County, also helps students to pay a portion of their tuition.

So during his junior year, Reinboldt went to school in the morning and went with his friend to night class at LFCC's Middletown Campus for the HEO program. "We had a work release, so it wasn't bad," he noted. And as soon as he finished the class, Reinboldt was offered a job. "I got offered by S.W. Rodgers and all those big companies, but I don't really want to work for a big huge company like that. You're another fish in the pond, and that's not what I really wanted to do," he said.

Instead, Reinboldt accepted a job with Sammy Butler, the father of his friend Logan and an independent contractor who owns SMB Unlimited Excavating. "Work started picking up for him with the housing boom and everything that's going on right now so we're staying crazy, crazy busy. I can work as many hours as I want, pretty much."

Even though Reinboldt loves being at school to see his friends and socialize, he says it's been amazing to get paid to work with machinery. "Everybody knew me in high school as the kid who hung out in shop class," he said. And with good reason — Reinboldt said he sometimes spent five hours in the shop, fixing four wheelers and tractors and even building a flatbed for his truck.

"I normally tried to set up my schedule to where I had one or two[shop] classes each semester," he said. "Towards the end I'd do two or three blocks ... I was in there constantly. I'd go to the lunch room, get my lunch and then come back to the shop class and eat my lunch in there with Mr. Hogan."

Reinboldt has been working on machines since before he can remember. "My parents have shown me pictures of when I was a kid I had a little tiny tool bag and little plastic hammers that I'd run around with. It's always been something I enjoyed," he added.

Asked what advice he would give his younger self, Reinboldt said: "Do better in school. ... Take advantage of more LFCC classes. I wish I had taken [a commercial driver's license] class and a welding class while I was still in school."

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World-renowned chef touts Pen Druid's brews

"Without a doubt, this is one of the best beers anywhere in America, people.... This is from my friends at the Pen Druid Brewing Company," says Chef José Andrés in a video post on his Instagram page.

Andrés, a celebrity restaurateur with more than two dozen restaurants in cities across the country, has 642,000 followers on Instagram. On Tuesday he tried Pen Druid's Three Cerise, a traditionally fermented beer with cherries. "Oh yeah, this is good," Andrés says.

Pen Druid commented with several hearts on Andrés' post.

— By Rachel Needham



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Matt Sisk

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BY RACHEL NEEDHAM
Rappahannock News Staff

Football was Matt Sisk's first love. Even though he has had a successful high school career as a wrestler, becoming a four-time state qualifier and making it to the state semifinals, football has his heart.

"I've played football my whole life," he says. Sisk played as a receiver throughout high school and is looking to continue progressing in college.

As a ninth grader, Sisk played backup for his older brother, Jake. "It didn't bother me. I knew I needed a year to learn and then I grew over that summer and just got bigger," Sisk says.

The pandemic has made this year a challenging one for high school athletes like Sisk. "I'm so used to going out and shaking hands after the game," he says. "None of that. I mean, I was on the sideline, but with the masks on I can imagine that must be kind of weird — because I mean, if you're out there and you come back [to the sideline] and you're out of breath ... I feel like it'd



BY RACHEL NEEDHAM

be a weird feeling.

"And sometimes you couldn't hear the refs and they'd have to pull down their masks. Yeah, it was interesting," Sisk says.

Now he's preparing for the future beyond Rappahannock County High School. Sisk plans to join the football team at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Va, as a walk-on athlete.

Sisk has chosen VMI because he wants to become an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. "My dad was in the military for a while, my mom trained people in the military ... so it's just a family thing, I guess," Sisk says. "I don't feel like I have to, but I want to be able to serve."

Growing up in a military family, Sisk was able to travel. As a child, he

lived in Bangkok, Thailand for two years and also lived on a military base near Williamsburg, Va. "I've always loved going places," Sisk says. "I just feel like that's going to be cool, to see places in the world I haven't seen."

Sisk was not always certain that he wanted to pursue a military track. "I feel like when it came to college, I never really made, like, a certain choice because I didn't really know exactly what I wanted to do," he says. "My brother went [to VMI] and I went to visit him. I know the first six months are going to be really hard, but it's something that I know I want to go through, something challenging to really push me

over the edge and make me stand out for the career path I want to go into."

Asked what advice he would give to his younger self, Sisk says he wishes he had understood that school is important. "I did not give a single care about my grades. Until last year, I had, like, a 2.5 GPA ... going into my junior year. My mom ... tried to get me to care about school, my dad always tried to stress to me that school was important. But I was like, 'No, it's not.' So I wouldn't try. It's important! It matters!"

"Thankfully, I was able to jump my GPA up to about 3.4 now, hopefully and get to 3.6 by the end of the semester by the time I graduate. But yeah — school's important. Get on to your grades. Now."

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Rappahannock News

FOOTHILLS FORUM

Agustin Garcia Prieto



BY RACHEL NEEDHAM

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BY RACHEL NEEDHAM
Rappahannock News Staff

Eighteen-year-old Agustin Garcia Prieto says joining the Sperryville Rescue Squad was the best decision he made this year. The recent Rappahannock County High School graduate has volunteered there for the past two months and is working his way toward becoming a fully independent emergency medical technician (EMT).

“I love the teamwork,” Garcia Prieto says. “I love taking care of a patient, I just love the whole thing. I even love washing the ambulance — just being part of it makes me feel happy.”

There are no shortcuts on the road to becoming an EMT, which works much like an apprenticeship. Garcia Prieto has already finished the 280-hour required

course and is currently “riding along” with Sperryville Rescue, but he still has to pass a certification exam to become a nationally registered EMT. After that, he will run calls with a supervisor until the supervisor releases him to be on his own.

“It helps to have a very good relationship with the supervisor,” Garcia Prieto says. “Ours is Brian Ross, he’s the paramedic and he’s very good.”

Garcia Prieto plans to continue taking classes at Lord Fairfax Community College and volunteering with Sperryville Rescue for the next year and then transfer to Virginia Commonwealth University to pursue a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

“As long as I can remember, I wanted to be a doctor or a nurse or something,” he says. “I really like medicine, I like taking care of people. Whenever I’ve had to go to the hospital ... the nurses have always been great, very helpful, and I was like, ‘I want to be just like that when I grow up.’”

For Garcia Prieto, school always came naturally. He always studied hard and earned good grades, and as a dual

enrollment student at LFCC this year he took lots of classes that interested him. His favorite, he says, was developmental psychology.

“Seeing the psychology of infants and the elderly, I thought that was fascinating. ... Knowing how infants behave, you can have a better sense of how to take care of them as a nurse and knowing how elderly people think and it helps a lot,” he said.

As he learns the ropes of administering emergency care in an ambulance, Garcia Prieto says knowing something about psychology has helped him talk to patients. “I’m taking as many notes as I can from [paramedics] Brian and Kathy, because they’re super calm,” he notes. “It’s something I need to really get good at, to speak with a patient and calm them down. ... We [responded to] a lady the other day [and] we comforted her, put her in the ambulance, we reassured her she was going to be alright. ... And then like her vitals got better. That was amazing.”

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Garcia Prieto learned some valuable things this year. “[COVID-19] made me slow down a lot. Because I was a 17 year old who wanted to get into the workforce, you know, start on everything. And then Covid hit and I was like, well, I can’t really do anything and I have to learn how to deal with that. And once I learned just to take a deep breath, step back and go, ‘Okay, let me reassess’ — it’s helped so much,” he notes.

Asked what advice he would give his younger self, Garcia Prieto says: “I think slowing down is my biggest advice. Slow down, have fun, you know, do things with your friends that you’re going to remember.”