

# Fauquier Times

May 25, 2022

Vol. 205, No. 21

www.Fauquier.com

\$1.50



## Embracing the moment

The Class of 2022 was triumphant, celebrating together at the end of “the toughest two years in the history of education.”

See pages 6 and 7 for more photos.

Hung Cao, of Purcellville, left, greets a voter outside the Gainesville Middle School polling place during the May 21 GOP “firehouse primary.”

PHOTO BY CHER MUZYK



## Hung Cao wins Saturday’s GOP 10th District ‘firehouse primary’

By Jill Palermo, Cher Muzyk and Colleen LaMay  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Retired U.S. Navy Captain Hung Cao came out on top of the “firehouse primary” Republicans held Saturday to pick their nominee to challenge U.S. Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-10th) in November.

Cao, of Purcellville, garnered 52.3% of

the vote in the ranked-choice contest – or the support of 7,729 voters after the 10th round of ballot counting.

Jeanine Lawson, a Prince William County supervisor representing the Brentsville District, came in second place with the support of 5,000 voters or about 34%.

See PRIMARY, page 8

## Judge moves ‘Trip’ Bopp murder trial to Loudoun County

By Coy Ferrell

FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF WRITER

Citing, in part, “the multitude of security deficiencies that exist in the current” Fauquier County Circuit Court building, a judge has ruled that the four defendants in the April 2021 homicide of ‘Trip’ Bopp of Remington will be tried jointly this September by a jury in Loudoun County. The trial is expected to last three weeks.

Two of the defendants had requested the change in venue, but Fauquier prosecutors argued that the trial should take place in same county where the homicide occurred. The Office of the Fauquier County Commonwealth’s Attorney will continue to

**“An overwhelming majority of those vulnerabilities [in the circuit court building] continue to be unaddressed with little or no action by the county.”**

20TH CIRCUIT JUDGE  
JAMES PLOWMAN

prosecute the case even though the trial has been moved to Loudoun.

See TRIAL, page 12

**SPORTS:** District tournaments intensify, district track results, Highland baseball wins states. Pages 23, 24, 26, 28.



# VIRGINIA NATIONAL BANK®

*It's all about people ... and always will be.*

www.vnb.com

MEMBER  
FDIC



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/COY FERRELL

A day before they received their diplomas, Fauquier High School graduating seniors walked the halls of their other alma mater — Brumfield Elementary School — as the young students cheer them on.

# Nearly 1,000 seniors graduate from local high schools

By Robin Earl and Coy Ferrell  
FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF WRITERS

## Fauquier High School seniors reflect on 'historic' path to graduation

In the school's first back-to-normal graduation ceremony since 2019, about 340 Fauquier High School seniors received diplomas Wednesday evening at Falcon Field as families watched and cheered from the packed stands. It was a refreshing dose of tradition for the young people whose high school careers were severely disrupted by a worldwide pandemic.

While noting the "historic" nature of their shared experience, which included long stretches of remote instruction during the worst of the pandemic, SCA President Reece Kuhns saw the funny side, too. Class over video chat, he said during his address to the crowd, "is all fun and games until the teacher tells you to turn on your camera, and you're in a bubble bath."

National Honor Society President Bindi Patel reflected along similar lines. "How could we forget our friends texting us during Google Meet,

telling us they could see us sleeping?" she said to laughs. "I think that was a bonding experience for all of us."

Appropriately, the choral ensemble performed Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" before the diploma ceremony began, a song about hard times followed by hope for the future. "Your time has come to shine," they sang. "All your dreams are on their way."

Likewise, the evening as a whole was focused on celebrating graduates' shared love for their school community, not dwelling on the lower points of the past two years. Class President Matthew Fischer, for instance, highlighted the decades-long tenure of social studies teacher David Smith, who is a Fauquier High graduate himself. "This just goes to show how special our tradition is," Fischer said.

After the ceremony, families flooded the field, and graduates found their friends in the crowd to embrace them — and to get a final high school selfie.

See **GRADUATION**, page 7



French teacher Nicole Goepper hugs a graduating senior during Fauquier High School's graduation ceremony.



The family of graduating senior Kiera Spencer show love from the stands during Fauquier High School's graduation ceremony.



Graduating senior Brianna Leach shakes hands with her fellow graduate, SCA President Reece Kuhns, on stage during Fauquier High School's graduation ceremony.



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/ROBIN EARL Elizabeth Wolfert and the other Liberty seniors were feeling the love Thursday night from their families and friends.



Olivia Stith gave her fellow seniors an appropriate sendoff with a short concert of top hits from the last four years.



Kaden Odom checks out the giant screens for a better look at Principal Sam Cox.



Admittedly, some of the audience members were more enthusiastic than most.



Megan James and other Liberty High School seniors file in under the tent at Jiffy Lube Live.



PHOTOS BY CARSON MCRAE/MCRAE VISUAL MEDIA  
Madison Canterbury, SCA president, addressed her classmates.

**GRADUATION, from page 6**

**Liberty High School graduates 340 seniors**

High school graduation isn't about one person; it's about a whole class of students who have worked and played together, learned and struggled together for four years. But for a few glorious moments, Liberty High School's graduation May 19 was all about Olivia Stith.

The vivacious senior interrupted Principal Sam Cox's speech to the graduates with a mini-concert that had the crowd on their feet. Clearly at home in front of the mic, Stith entertained her fellow graduates and their families, LHS faculty and administrators with several songs popular during their time at LHS -- "Never Say Never" by Justin Bieber, "Party in the USA" by Miley Cyrus, "Trap Queen" by Fetty Wap and "Can't Hold Us" by Macklemore.

A small band of LHS musicians backed her up.

The COVID pandemic seemed to be lingering in the air Thursday night at Jiffy Lube Live. Superintendent of Schools David Jeck spoke about "perhaps the most difficult two years in the history of education," and how proud he was of the students for making it through months of uncertainty, remote learning and isolation. He also reminded the audience about what a difficult time it has been for teachers and thanked students for their support of those tireless educators.

Cox joked about time management and technology lessons learned out of necessity and endless days spent in sweatpants.

Student Council Association President Samara Brooks celebrated each student's individuality and Liberty's inclusive approach to education. She used a stick to celebrate each student's individual "shtick" and encouraged students to continue to be their authentic selves, no matter what. Brooks lived this philosophy; she was one of the founders of LHS's Black Student Union, which she described as a "safe space" for everyone.

She also acknowledged that students would not encounter universal acceptance as they ventured out into the world, but said that they should remain true to themselves, nevertheless.

**Kettle Run seniors emerge victorious after a tough 2 years**

Kettle Run High School in New Baltimore graduated 291 graduates on May 18 at the school's Cougar Field. KRHS's chamber orchestra was on hand to salute the graduates, and the school's wind ensemble played "Pomp and Circumstance" while seniors filed in.

Senior class president Merrick Denomy quoted Kanye West in his speech to his classmates: "If you have the opportunity to play this game called life, you have to appreciate every moment. A lot of people don't appreciate their moment until it's passed." It was a good reminder, particularly when the pandemic stole so many moments from the Class of 2022.

Madison Canterbury, Student Council Association president, recognized "the many obstacles that we faced during COVID, strengthening our class bond and teaching us how to adapt to life challenges. Our class has continued to show how amazing and unstoppable we are."

Principal Meaghan Brill sent her seniors off with a flourish: "One thing is true – time and life pass quickly, and unfortunately, there is no option to rewind, pause or fast forward. So, it is up to us to embrace the moments, the experiences, the challenges. To learn from life and know that it is a gift. A chance to grow, gain knowledge, become a better version of ourselves and make a difference."

Brill concluded, "Today, we celebrate you, the Kettle Run High School Class of 2022. Your achievements, your milestone. We are appreciative of what you have done, how you have made a difference and the legacy you leave for those who follow."



Kettle Run seniors file onto the track at Cougar Field before graduation.



Annelise Borst, Emma Cockerill, Natalie Escobar, Medline Garretson and Elena Navin sang "The Star-Spangled Banner."



Some graduates were very excited to get their diplomas.



Kettle Run graduates celebrate their accomplishments with the traditional hat throw.