The Warrior WORD

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE UPPER SCHOOL



Mrs. Porter



MSU President's Visit



Marketing Interns Filming Commercials for Joy to the World

COVER STORY

Warrior Story: Mrs. Porter

by Anna Dunne, 12th

As a 2026-2027 senior at WCA, I'm already learning the hard way that knocking out my college to-do list is no small task. From filling out applications to finding the best scholarships and, eventually, picking the college that is the optimum fit, this year presents some daunting deadlines. Thankfully, the senior class is extremely blessed to have some incredible help with these tasks: WCA's wonderful college counselor, Mrs. Heather Porter! Throughout high school, I've always known that Mrs. Porter has been heavily involved with the seniors' college prep, but it wasn't until I became a senior myself that I was able to fully appreciate the extent of her involvement. Mrs. Porter truly does so much for each graduating class.

To begin with, she sends out a weekly College Corner newsletter, where she routinely updates us on service-hour opportunities, available scholarships, and upcoming deadlines. This newsletter provides overwhelmed seniors and their parents with some semblance of structure and organization.

Additionally, Mrs. Porter invites representatives from many colleges to come to campus and personally meet us. The list of visiting colleges includes, but is not limited to: Auburn, UA, UNA, Harding, UAB, and, all the way from California, Stanford University. These visits are especially influential in our search for the perfect college, providing us with face-to-face interaction with a member of the admissions team, while never having to leave school property. But it's not only admissions reps that come to visit the WCA seniors. Several higher-up members from colleges have spoken to the upperclassmen, including a recent visit from the President of Mississippi State University.

Continued on page 08

INTERVIEW

Q&A With The Hensons

by Abigail Good, 8th, & Sunday Ezell, 8th





How do you put faith into what you do?

Well, I believe it's how you present yourself. We retired and put it in God's hands, and He helped us figure out what we were going to do from public school to private school.

What is your favorite part about your job?

My favorite part is that we both love teaching people P.E. We love coaching basketball and find such joy getting to work with the girls on our team. It is extra rewarding seeing how eager they are to improve. We also really enjoy being at the same school and having the same schedule.

How did you meet?

Mrs. Henson: We started dating when he was 15 and I was 13. We dated all through high school and got married after we finished college.

Mr. Henson: We have 2 kids, Parker (28), Michaela (24) and a grandson, River (almost 1). We are both huge Braves fans and we have gone to 12 games.

Why did you choose Whitesburg?

Mr. Henson: I had already decided to retire and Jeff Bell called to ask if I was interested in coaching girls' basketball. I knew I would have to have a coaching assistant, so she (Mrs. Henson) decided to retire so that we could coach together.

When you give advice to players what is your favorite thing to say?

Have a good time playing, but play extremely hard while doing it. Work hard and do the little things.

How is it working together?

Us being able to be together whether it's teaching or working is a blessing, and we always had wanted to do that.

How do you handle the pressure of all the sports you coach and being the grammar P.E. coach?

It's precious and this is my 33rd year coaching, I love to coach! Through the competition and the practices, I just love seeing them get better.

Mrs. Henson said: "I think what I do is keep him grounded because it always works out, and it works out the way God's plan is."

INTERVIEW

The Not So Terrible Parable

by Anna Kolthoff, 7th, & Leah Chaviers, 7th

Did you go and watch the play the 5th and 6th graders perform? *The Not So Terrible Parable* was a parable about the Good Samaritan. It was a play that 5th and 6th graders did on Tuesday October 27th. The 5th and 6th graders worked hard to pull this amazing play off including doing rehearsals at 7 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To learn more about the behind the scenes action in this play, we interviewed the one who brought it all together: Mrs. Boniakowski!



How did you choose which students to have in the play?

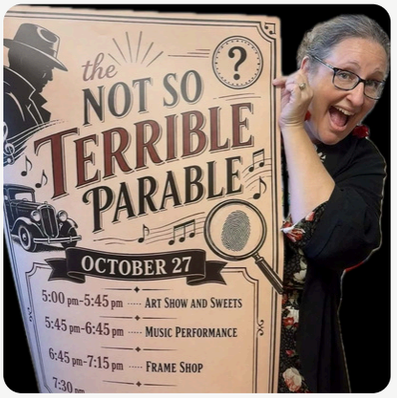
They had to audition at 7 a.m. and I used a rubric to narrow it down. As long as they were committed, whoever was left got the role. They worked hard 4 days a week to make the play come together.

How did the students get ready for the play?

The 5th and 6th graders learned the songs for the play. The cast worked hard at the 7 a.m. rehearsals. The students spent a lot of time in and out of practice memorizing lyrics and scripts.

How was the performance?

Our Performance was the culminating presentation of three months of hard work by the cast and choir. What a JOY it was to be a part of God's work sharing the Gospel with our school community through music, theater and art! I tell my students: Never underestimate the power you have in using your voice and sharing your gifts for Christ!



CULTURAL EVENT

The Biggest Game in Alabama

by Caroline McCarthy, 8th



We are entering into the middle of the football season, and that means we are nearing the Iron Bowl. I'm betting most of y'all know what this big event is, considering most of us are Auburn or Alabama fans, or just have an opinion. But if you look behind one of the most heated rivalries of all time, there is an amazing history. Alabama has won 52 out of the last 90 Iron Bowl games with one being a tie, and as an Auburn fan, the pain is real.

The Iron Bowl rivalry started on February 22, 1893, when Auburn beat Bama 32–22 at Lakeview Park in Birmingham. This kicked off one of the greatest rivalries college football has ever seen. The renowned game was given its name by Auburn coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan in 1953 against Paul "Bear" Bryant's Crimson Tide team.

The game has been played in many different stadiums over the ages, such as Lakeview Park, 32nd Street South/Claremont from 1893 to 1907, Legion Field from 1948 to 1988, and Jordan-Hare Stadium and Bryant-Denny Stadium from 1989 to the present day. Over the years, there have been many famous moments in this game, like "Milroe's Miracle" win in 2023 with a 4th-and-31 touchdown pass, or "Punt Bama Punt" in 1972, when Auburn stopped not one but two Alabama punts to win the game, or maybe the most famous of them all, the "Kick Six" by Chris Davis, who returned a missed field goal to run a whopping 109 yards. And I can bet you almost every Auburn fan remembers hearing the commentator Rob Bramlett saying, "And Auburn's gonna win the football game!" These moments are what make this game of football special.

In the spirit of competition, we asked our middle school who they thought was going to win this year. The 7th graders went all out for Auburn, with over half of them betting on the Tigers, while the 8th-grade Bama fans barely pulled ahead, saying that the Tide is going to win, which is fair because this year's game is on their home turf, Bryant-Denny Stadium, unfortunately. But, even if some people say "War Eagle" and some say "Roll Tide," there is one thing we can agree on: this is the biggest game of the year in the great state of Alabama.

THE FAITH EDIT

Are You a Good Enough Christian?

by Tallie Hase, 8th



A few weeks ago, I was looking at Pinterest and came across a quote that said, "If you got in trouble for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to prove that you are a Christian?"

The question was a simple, yet confusing question. I looked at it, and wondered to myself-

"Am I a good Christian, or an amazing Christian?"

What kind of evidence would prove you're a good Christian? Is it ways that you act, or the things that you say?

Don't just say that you're a great Christian because you want to make it seem like you're one. Say it because you truly live it, because otherwise, you're missing "part of the package." If not, you might want to really pray to God to help you become a better Christian.

"Not my will, but Yours be done." -Luke 22:42

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways, submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." -Proverbs 3:5-6

Prayer:

Lord, please help me to become a better Christian. To live my life out more for You, and Your honor. And to shine Your light in everything I do, inside and out. Help me to not just pray to You, and not just to read my Bible, but to meditate on it and act upon Your will. To use Your word to pave my way through life. Amen.

SCHOOL EVENT

Homecoming Royalty

by Carter Cochran, 8th





The Homecoming Court is a tradition at our school, along with hundreds of others, that celebrates student leadership and character. The highest honor is being elected Homecoming King or Queen during senior year.

This year, two fantastic seniors won: Brooks Cochran was elected Homecoming King and Laura Gilchrist was elected Homecoming Queen.

Character is an important quality that our school tries to instill in every student. A great way to build good character is to have someone to look up to who helps keep you accountable. When asked who she looked up to, Laura said, “I look up to my grandma the most because she is everything I strive to be. She is the most Christ-like person I know and loves everyone so well. She is also unapologetically herself, and that inspires me every day!”

Like Laura’s grandmother, Brooks emphasized the importance of being yourself. When asked what advice he would give his younger self, he said, “I'd tell him to just be himself. I know it's cliché, but no matter what you're interested in, you ARE cool. God made only one of you, and He created you to be yourself, not to be someone else. There's no time or situation where you have to be someone or something that you aren't, so continue to do the right thing, be yourself, and don't let anyone take that away from you.”

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

National Honor Society

by Stirling Turnbull, 10th

On Tuesday, October 20th, Whitesburg Christian Academy welcomed 60 students to the National Honor Society, and 47 students to the National Junior Honor Society. This may sound exciting, but what actually is the NHS?

The National Honor Society (NHS) is one of the oldest and most respected student organizations in the United States. It was founded on March 1, 1921, by Dr. Edward Rynearson, principal of Fifth Avenue High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Before the NHS, schools often celebrated athletic achievements, but there was no national organization to recognize students for academic excellence and positive character. Dr. Rynearson wanted to create a program that honored students not only for their grades, but also for their contributions to their schools and communities. From its beginning, the NHS was founded around four core values, referred to as the Four Pillars. The Pillars are Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character. These pillars remain the basis for membership selection today.

The first chapter of the NHS was established at Fifth Avenue High School, and the NJHS was introduced later in 1929. Today, NHS and NJHS have thousands of chapters across all 50 states, U.S. territories, and some international schools, and their mission of developing the next generations around excellence in academics, service, leadership, and character has not changed.

About the logo:

The NHS emblem includes a flaming torch, symbolizing the light of knowledge, and a keystone, representing the importance of strong character and leadership.



SPORTS REPORT

Spring Sports

by Deacon Loomis, 8th, & Logan Cutter, 8th

This spring, we have a lot to look forward to in Academy sports. The sports are tennis, golf, track, baseball, softball, and soccer. This year, our incredible spring head coaches will be **Chris Talaga for baseball, Melanie Henson for softball, Mark Marshall for track and field, Ashley Ward for girls' soccer, Tony Swaim for boys' soccer, Charlie Harriman for golf, and Mark McDaniel for tennis.** For this article, we interviewed both coaches and players about the upcoming season.

What are you looking forward to this season?

Kylie Lane states for girls' soccer, " I am looking forward to playing soccer with my friends, playing against new teams because we are in a new division, and hopefully making it to state!!

Campbell Cole, a senior on the golf team, is looking forward to playing in state this year, which is a time for the team to bond and head to the coast. She is looking forward to this season because she can use her experience from last year.

Elsie Franklin is the only senior on the varsity tennis team. She is looking forward to team dinners where they can bond and hope they make it to state this year.

Melanie Henson said, ¨We had enough players to try out this year to have a JV team and a Varsity team. That is exciting because more girls will get the opportunity to play.¨

Mark Marshall responded, ¨I'm looking forward to seeing both programs build on what they've started. On the girls' side, we have a chance to do something special with a fourth straight title, but what excites me most is watching our athletes keep raising their own standards instead of resting on past success. On the boys' side, there's real energy right now. The work they put in over the summer and during the offseason is starting to show, and I can't wait to see them compete with that confidence."

Chris Telaga said, "I'm excited to see our young players take that next step in their progression. We played some guys ahead of schedule last year, and I think that experience will pay off for them individually and for the team."

How do you think you will do?

Kylie thinks they will do pretty well this season because, even though they have lost players, they have also added players.

Campbell said, " I think the team will do great this year. Boys and girls both have finished in the state finals, so we are just looking to do better again."

Elsie said, "We did lose a bunch of players, but I think we will do A-OK because we have a lot of the younger people joining our team, and they have done really well."

Melanie Henson said, "I think we will be very competitive at the Varsity and JV levels. Even though we have a lot of young players, many of them have a lot of experience through the travel ball circuit.¨

Mark Marshall said, "We have high expectations, and we've earned the right to have them. The girls know what it takes to win a championship, and they have the depth and leadership to compete for another one. But nothing is guaranteed, and every team we compete against will be gunning for us. The boys have the talent to surprise some people. If we stay healthy and keep improving week to week, I think both teams can be in the conversation for sectionals and state. ¨

Chris Telaga said, "We are still a very young team, but we should be an improved team from a year ago. Hopefully some of the growing pains and lessons learned last season will help us play more consistently and ultimately win more games. ¨

What do you think is going to be different this year compared to last year?

Kylie said it is going to be different for the soccer team because they will miss some players, but will also be adding some new kids to the team.

Campbell said it's going to be different for the golf team because, even though they won the state finals, they're looking to do even better.

Elsie said that it is going to be different for the tennis team because there are younger people joining the team, and they will be practicing at a new place, the Huntsville Tennis Center.

Melanie Henson said, ¨Last year we only had 15 players, while this year we have 26. That is why raising money for lights is very important. During the spring, there is not enough daylight to play a Varsity and a complete JV game. So in order for the JV to play a complete schedule, we need lights. ¨

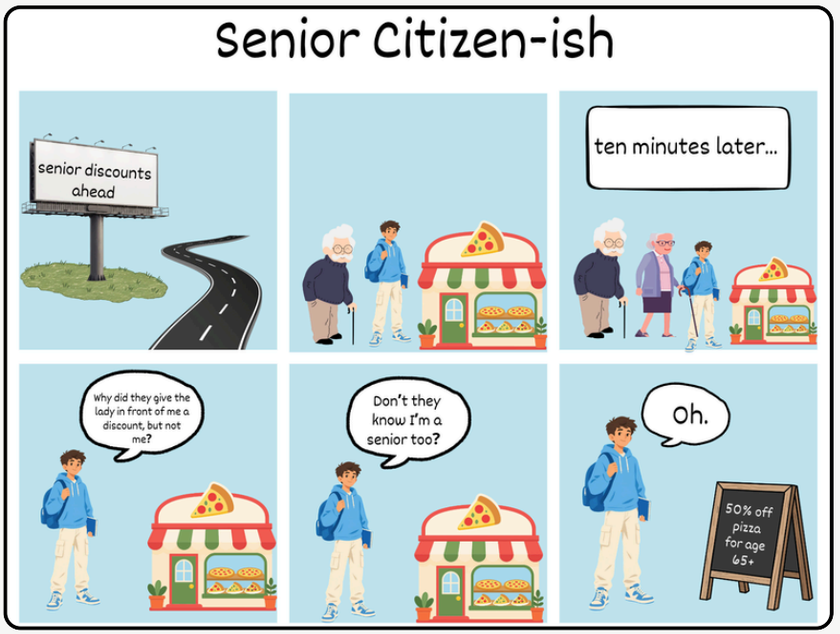
Mark Marshall said, "The biggest difference is the boys' team. That group has a belief that wasn't there before, and it's showing up in practice every day. For the girls, the challenge is different: we're replacing key seniors, bringing in new athletes, and carrying the expectations that come with three straight titles. Staying hungry is harder than getting there the first time, and I've been proud of how this group has approached that."

Chris Telaga said, "We are still a very young team, but we should be an improved team from a year ago. Hopefully, some of the growing pains and lessons learned last season will help us play more consistently and, ultimately, win more games."

COMICS



by Benjamin Douglas, 9th



by Mae Li Blankenship, 12th

WCA FINE ARTS

Creativity on Display

by Maddie Lowery, 10th

Art

Exciting events are happening this November for the Whitesburg Christian Academy art program. For starters, the Tinsel Trail will officially be opening at the end of November. More information about the opening will be shared as the date gets closer. WCA has its very own tree at the Tinsel Trail, so be sure to go to the trail and support our school!

Other exciting events are taking place in our grammar school this month as well! On November 17, the third and fourth grade will present a music program and art show, with a special theme of the *USA*. This is an amazing opportunity for our students to showcase their creativity and skill, so be sure to go and support our grammar school.

Band

The WCA Marching Band had an incredible opportunity to participate in the Milton Frank Marching Band Competition. This event challenged our talented band members in various ways, allowing our students to showcase their talent, teamwork, and dedication to the fine arts. However, preparing for marching band competition is no easy task. Our students dedicated countless hours on Tuesday evenings and Thursday mornings to rehearsals, alongside band class. Judges tediously score everything, every person has to step at the right time on the correct foot, or else everything will fall apart.

The WCA Marching Warriors competed against many talented schools with strict judges. The show was carefully evaluated on musical quality, marching technique, color guard, and overall presentation. Many students were nervous about performing, however, despite being under pressure, the WCA Marching Band stole the field and put on an amazing show, receiving many trophies and elite scorings. The WCA Marching Warriors received the following awards: ***Best Drum Major in the 1A Silver Class, Best Drumline in the 1A Silver Class, Best Visual Effects in the 1A Silver Class, Best Band in the 1A Silver Class, Overall Superior Rating, and Silver Class Division champions.***

These awards reflect the dedication, talent, and teamwork of our band, directors, and band parents who made everything possible. Due to competition, band members have had the opportunity to build friendships, grow in musical skill, and show off the months of hard work that they have put in. Valuable lessons were learned from the Milton Frank competition. Lessons about communication, trust, and the ability to rely on one another to put their all into the performance. Lasting memories are made during events like this, and so many kids grow as in character as the band grows in success.



Congratulations to the Middle School football team for their undefeated season!



SUDOKU

Rules:

- Use logic to fill out the entire grid with the numbers 1-9 (or 1-4).
- Each number is only used **once** for every row, column, and 3x3 (2x2) square.

Beginner

		1	3
	4	3	1
3			

Easy

4		9		8				5
2	8	5		6		9	7	
		1		9	4			
		6			5			
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1	5			7	2	3	4	9
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8					6		9	
5	9			3			6	

Medium

1						7	2	
	6			8	2	5		3
		5			7	1		8
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						9		
			8					6
6	8	9	2		1	3	5	

Hard

					4	6		
	1		3	8				
			6		1	8	7	
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1	6				2			
4						5	2	1
				3				
	2			4				
7				9	5			6

SENIOR ADVICE

Preparing for Applications

by Luke Tumminello, 12th

As 2026 comes to a close, most seniors at WCA are already thinking about what their next year will be like. Going to college is an exciting opportunity, but it comes with a lot of responsibilities. The most immediate responsibility is filling out college applications. By now, most of our seniors have probably spent several hours writing essays, checking boxes, and making their applications look as appealing as possible. However, even though college is several years away for the rest of the students, there are still many ways to prepare for the application process. Here's some tips from seniors who have been working on their applications:

Luke Tumminello:
"Make sure to write down everything. Keep track of every service project's time, date, and location, because senior year is busy and you don't want to have to try to remember every little detail from three years ago. You'll thank yourself later.

Also, say "yes" to as many things as you can. Colleges care about academics, but they care just as much about leadership and service. Take every opportunity you have available to you, such as clubs and out-of-school activities, and try to be a leader in whatever you end up doing. Good leadership experience can really make your application shine, so do your best to rise as high as you can go."

Joseph Newlin:
"College is important, but don't stress about it too much. Choose carefully and work hard, but remember that God is in control. He will make sure you end up where you need to end up, so trust in Him to get you where you need to go."

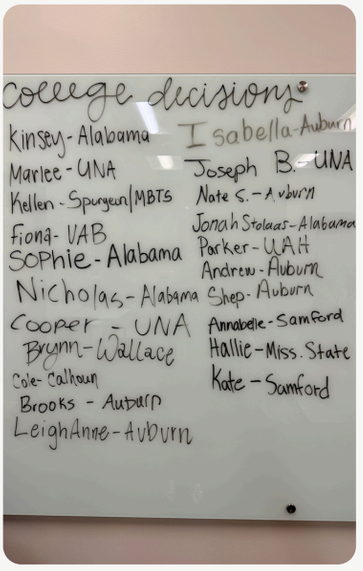
Nathaniel Smouse:
"Choose the major that you love, not necessarily the one that makes the most money. It's more important to pick a career that you'll enjoy rather than doing what everyone else is doing. Don't feel pressured into choosing a major too early, either, and don't feel like you have to stick with what you first decided."





Mrs. Porter's assistance is not only limited to college matters. She is also influential in aiding seniors in gaining real-life experience and adding items to their resumes, most notably with senior internships. Internships are one of the most exciting parts of senior year. The seniors this year are gaining hands-on experience in a wide variety of places such as Lighthouse Psychiatric, Madison City Hall, Bill Penny Toyota Dealership, SportsMED, Matheny Goldman Architects and Interior, and Innova Primary Care. And still some, like myself, intern on campus in fields like marketing, athletics, middle school, and grammar school. For many of the interns, Mrs. Porter was able to facilitate the student in obtaining the position while also maintaining communication with them as the year continued.

Mrs. Porter wears many hats, and yet still manages to find time to meet with us personally as we need. She is available throughout the day to any students who stop by or send her an email. She was even able to dedicate a block of Mrs. Pringle's class to aid them with their college agenda.



2027 College Decisions, More to Come!

WCA is known for being an exceptional college preparatory school. It prepares students throughout fourteen grades to make college seem like a cakewalk. However, all of that work would be for nothing if it were not completed by an outstanding college counselor. And, it just so happened, we have one that manages to live up to the hype! I am someone who has looked forward to college for as long as I can remember, and now that it's here, I feel slightly overwhelmed by the amount I have to do in advance. Gratefully, I have Mrs. Porter's continued help with the process.

I know I speak for the entire senior class when I say: Thank you, Mrs. Porter. Thank you for answering every question, no matter how silly they might be. Thank you for responding to every email, no matter when they were sent. Thank you for always having time for us. Thank you for loving us every step of the way. Thank you for watching, year after year, as each class fills up the board, something only possible with your help.

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Have an idea or want to join the team?
Email us at warrrior.word@whitesburgchristianacademy.org



Samson has the Soda! After reading the paper, please fill in the blanks. Bring your completed quiz to the lunchroom the **day after** the paper is released for a free **soda!**

How many students were inducted into the NHS and NJHS?

_____

What class did the Warrior Band compete in?

_____

How many years has Mr. Henson been a coach?

_____

What are the upcoming spring sports?

_____

Who were our Homecoming King and Queen?

_____

Where was Mr. Clark educated as a child?

_____

Where did Mr. and Mrs. Henson meet?

_____