



The Lexington Concord

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Happy Holidays from The Lexington Concord
Team



Note from the IT editor

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CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH



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ELVES
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 GIVING
 GREETINGS
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 JOLLY

JOY
 MERRY
 MISTLETOE
 NOEL
 NORTH POLE
 REINDEER



The Christmas Pickle - Alissa

Have you ever seen a pickle on a Christmas tree? Have you ever wondered why? Well, the glass pickle ornament is said to be a long tradition from Germany. The tradition goes like this: on Christmas Eve the pickle is the last ornament hung on the tree, deep in the branches by the parents. In the morning the most observant child, would look at the newly decorated tree for the first time and find the pickle. As a reward, the child would receive an extra gift given by St. Nicholas.

But the story is rather flawed because in Germany, children believe that St. Nicholas comes on December 6th instead of Christmas Day.



Many Germans, in matter of fact have never even heard of the pickle tradition. But the true origin is unknown. There are different theories of where the tradition was started. The first of three theories is that a German glassblower, made pickle orna-

ments and sold them. The second theory is that a German prisoner of the American Civil War had only a pickle and gave it to the guard. The pickle ended up getting back to him and saving his life giving him extra power to make it through. The last theory is linked to a story that St. Nicholas found 2 young boys in a barrel that looked like a pickle.

Although the origin is unknown, the pickle being hidden is still popular adapted tradition of many people all around the world.



Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a celebration that happens from December 26th through January 1st. Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor and chair of Africana Studies at California State University who has two PH.Ds in political science and social ethics, created Kwanzaa as a way of uniting and empowering the African American community in the aftermath of the deadly Watt riots. He modeled his holiday on traditional African harvest festivals. He got the name "Kwanzaa: from the Swahili phrase, "matunda ya kwanza, which means first fruits. The extra "a" was added to accommodate seven children at the first-ever Kwanzaa celebration in 1966, each of whom wanted to represent a letter.

Many people celebrate both Kwanzaa and Christmas. According to Karenga, "Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, but a cultural one with a spiritual quality." Kwanzaa centers around seven principles. The principles are umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity), and imani(faith). Kwanzaa also has seven symbols; mazao (crops), mkeka (mat), kinara (candleholder), muhindi (corn), kikombe cha umoja (unity cup), zawadi (gifts), and mishumaa saba (seven canfles). The seven candles are traditionally arranged on a table. Three of the candles are red, representing struggle, three are green, representing land and hope for the future, and one is black, representing the people of African descent.

The Lexington Jazz Band—Sam

The Jazz Band, like Fire N Ice, does a lot of playing outside of school for different events. One of these events is that every year, the Lexington Jazz Band is invited to play for Gorman Rupp's Christmas Lunch for their employees. Another tradition for the Jazz Band is the Christmas tour to the different schools, like Fire N Ice does. This year the Jazz Band will be performing at the Junior High and Central Elementary during the last day of school before break. They will also be performing at the High School Christmas Assembly. You can listen to the Jazz Band play at every home Varsity Basketball game. They perform all the time afterschool and that is why they are the elite band that they are. Every student in the Jazz Band also must perform in one of the other instrumental ensembles. Most of them play in the Symphonic Band and that that band must do, and some also play in the Symphonic Orchestra as well.

Fire N Ice Holiday Performances—Sam

Most people know that Fire N Ice performs at different places during the holiday season besides the choir concert. I mean, it's kind of hard to miss when the members are pulled out of class, occasionally, to perform, but do you know the reason for these excursions? One reason is that Fire N Ice is recorded by WMFD every year to be shown on their TV station. Every year WMFD records different high school choirs from around the area, that way they have Christmas music they can play on their channel and it connects to the community. Fire N Ice was also recorded by Richland Source to be part of their online collection of high school choir Christmas performances. Meijer and Kroger also had Fire N Ice perform at their stores. The Kroger that had the group perform is the store on Lexington Avenue. Every year the group also performs at the Light Up Lexington event in downtown Lexington. Lastly, this year the group performed at Eastern and Western Elementary on the last day of school before break as well as at the High School Assembly.



Season of Concerts—Sam



Its December and that means that the season of concerts has arrived. Between the instrumental and vocal concerts throughout all the grades, there is something going on in the auditorium almost every night. Usually people only pay attention to either the concerts they are in, or all the concerts they must go to. It can be crazy keeping up with all of them. There are at least two concerts per school counting Eastern Elementary, the

Jr. High, and the High School, plus any winter productions Western or Central Elementary put on. The intense scheduling of concerts usually starts with the Jr. High Instrumental Concert on the first Tuesday in the month of December. This concert includes the Jr. High Orchestra, the 7th grade band, and the 8th grade band. The next concert is the High School Symphonic Orchestra concert.

This year the ensemble of 88 members, the group played pieces from the Nutcracker Ballet Suite, a medley of songs from the Christmas movie *The Polar Express*, and two Christmas carol medleys that included songs like “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas”, “Silver Bells”, and “Silent Night”. In the Nutcracker Suite medley, Daniel stepped aside from his cello for “Dance of The Sugar Plum



Fairy” and played the piano instead. The High School Bands concert was next with Concert Band with 46 members and the Symphonic Band with a total of 35 ensemble members. The Concert Band played a selection of songs that included the Lexington High School Alma Mater, and a favorite of the band “Sleigh Ride.” The Symphonic Band's selection included pieces like “With Every Winter’s Breath” and “Angels, From the Realms of Glory.” The Symphonic Band also played at the Light Up Lexington event in downtown Lexington in late November. Eastern Elementary choir concert was the day after that, featuring the fifth and sixth graders of Eastern Elementary. The High School Choirs concert followed the next evening with the Women’s and Men's Chorus’s as well as Fire N Ice. Women’s Chorus performed first with a total of 30 members singing songs such as “Homeward Bound” and “The Christmas Star.” The Men's Chorus followed singing songs like

“Benedicamus Domino” and “A Jolly, Jingling Carol Medley” with 10 out of 13 total members performing. Fire N Ice was the last solo group to perform. Fire N Ice has a total of 34 members and performed carols and the Fire N Ice holiday tradition “Fruitcake.” All three choirs performed at the end of the concert together and alumni were welcomed on stage to sing with the students. They sang two songs “Carol of the Bells” and “White Christmas.” The last concert of the month



of December was the Jr High Choir concert which was the day following the High School concert. There is one concert that was unable to fit into the December calendar, and that is the Eastern Elementary Instrumental concert which will take place in January.

What You Should Not Do When Attending A Performance—Sam

I go to many performances and I am still surprised at the people who don't know how to properly conduct themselves at a concert, or any performance for that matter. One of the most basic rules that people break is not talking while the performance is going on. Even if the person you came to the performance to see is not on stage, you should still be respectful of the performers and everyone else trying to watch. Even if you are sitting all the way in the back, whispering to each other about someone's hair color, or an image on someone's phone, is inappropriate. When you are at a performance you are not supposed to walk around the very front of the auditorium in front of all the people trying to watch the performance to take pictures. You shouldn't stand right up at the edge of the stage while the performance is going on. Flash photography is very distracting, not only to the audience, but also to the performers themselves on stage. If you are only at the performance to take pictures for an organization you are in; if you are going to walk around in peoples view during the performance; you should wear black or not a color that will stick out, so that you are not distracting from the performance. Every person that goes on stage to perform puts hard work into preparing for these performances, being respectful of them while they share with their audience what they have been working so hard on is the least that can be done.



Breakfast with Santa—Sam



On December 1st, the Lexington Kiwanis held the Breakfast with Santa event in the High School Cafeteria. There were hundreds of people that showed up to eat pancakes, sausage, have hot chocolate and coffee, and

get their pictures with Santa Clause. There were many volunteers helping organize and run the event. Of course, the members of the Lexington Kiwanis organized it and ran the event, but the Boy Scouts and the Lexington

High School Key Club also helped with setting up for the event early in the morning, flipping pancakes, helping the children with crafts, and bus-

sing tables. There was live music during the event. A couple of students from the Lexington High School Sym-

phonic Orchestra played Christmas Carols for the guests eating and doing crafts. There were also a couple of singers that came in and sang carols, keeping the feeling of Christmas in the air. The event was a huge success for the Lexington Kiwanis. They use this event as a fund raiser, so they are able to do all of the wonderful community service projects they do throughout the year.



The Historic Portrayal of Santa Claus in Europe

Santa Claus today is the picture of joy and innocence. His cheerful smile melted in to a red and white uniform gives the picture of a trustworthy figure that we all can look up to. Which is perhaps true, Santa Claus being a fictional portly of trust and stability, giving children someone to believe in. However, Santa Claus has had multiple other portrayal in history, many of which reflect the insensitive nature of the periods they originate from.



Zwarte Piet, being the Dutch version of Santa Claus has come across international scrutiny in recent years; mainly for the use of black face. The character first originated in 1850, in the writing of Jan Schenkman, who portrayal a black character, being a Moore from Spain, similar to Santa Claus. Zwarte Piet is said to arrive by boat and visit a verity of public areas such as schools to pass out treats and gifts. But unlike Santa Claus, the character has encountered criticism for its blatant, unfair portrayal of people of African descent.

Zwarte Piet is an abomination to European culture, being a persistent nail in the side of progress. The character is often played by a white actor wearing black face, a wig, and enlarged lips, furthermore they typically act foolish or silly. Black face was a common practice in minstrel shows, being prevalent in Europe and American which enforced racial stereotypes of People of Color. The practice was a tool for racial white supremacy, representing blacks as foolish, obscene and unintelligent. On occasion, black face was even used by minstrel actors to show a sexually provocative or inappropriate character. Enlarged lips and/or wigs similar to an afro were also used to further the negative stereotype of People of Color faced in the western world.

Father Spanker (Père Fouettard), a French character who is said to be the evil version or sidekick to Saint Noel (the French Santa Claus) on occasion is also portrayed as an actor wearing black face. However, the character has a verity of alternate designs and is not always seen racially; often times, he is simply an identical clone of Saint Noel, assuming we ignore the black cloak and evil sneer. Father Spanker, as the name implies, is said to punish bad children, often times with beatings.

These blatantly racist characters and traditions need to end. There a chain around the ankle of equality and shows a negative and foolish picture of African culture. The people of Europe need to cast these characters aside; instead favoring inclusive, compassionate and loving figures. A simple alteration to the characters would easily fix the problem, however it is likely best to simply start anew and create a character without the colonial baggage.

The Best Holiday Christmas Movies

Thanks to all of the students at Lexington High School, we got to crack down on the best holiday movies out there! Here are the results!

40% Of students liked the movie “ELF”

30% Of students liked “A Christmas Story”

20% Of Students liked “Home Alone”

10% Of students liked “Christmas Vacation”

Students in the junior class mainly voted the movie “ELF”. With popular star Will Ferrell they said he makes the movie for sure! Unable to shake the feeling he feels of not being able to fit in, Skylar says “It’s easy to feel like that through out years in high school but I would say here at Lex everyone tries to make sure nobody is alone. And nobody especially should be alone during the holidays.”

The senior class voted “A Christmas Story” . Isabelle says, “my family has this movie playing 24 hours as a tradition, its hilarious, corny, and sweet all in one, just my style!” There has been a lot of talk about taking this movie off some channels because of a bullying scene recently, which has made a lot of kids in the senior class comment on it. “A Christmas Story will always be a classic no matter what” Macy says.

There was a trend of a lot of kids in the sophomore class that enjoyed the movie “Home Alone”. There are a few of these movies but the first one is gold. “This is a good natured family film that both kids and adults will enjoy but it also gets you in the holiday spirit. It will always be a classic” Ciara says.

A few freshmen had commented “Christmas Vacation” was the best holiday movie of all time. “I love how Mr. Griswold pesters his wife so much because he wants a perfect Christmas but there are a few obstacles on the way. Its humorous and breaks the ice of what the holiday season can bring us” the class says.

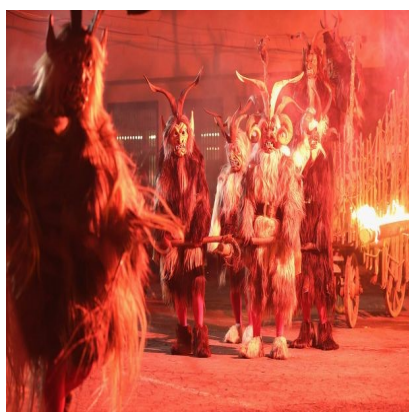
The Classic Christmas Commercials

Before the first Thanksgiving turkey is even bought, Christmas commercials put us in our holiday feels. They creep up on us, one by one, and soon that’s all we see in between our shows. The most common Christmas ad to be shown seems to be car sales for the holidays. With the multitude of different car brands, that’s a lot of commercials to sit through! Various brands choose different types of sales, for example, Chevy gives their customers the employee discount to create a “family” vibe. Along with crazy car discounts, Hershey’s Kiss and M&M put together festive ads to get viewers in the spirit. The Kiss’s become bells and create the tune “We Wish You a Merry Christmas”, while the red and yellow M&M’s discover that Santa Clause is real and Santa discovers that M&M’s are also real! These commercials are the staple to TV entertainment during Christmas time, but it’s the tearjerkers that really leave an impact on us. Apple has joined in with the emotional ads along with Amazon, Budweiser and many more; it seems that pathos is taking over the Christmas ad battle.



The Origin of Krampus

The mythical holiday beast, Krampus gets his name from the word “krampen,” meaning claw in old German. Krampus is European folklore, created to scare children into ensuring they make it on the “nice list.” This half-goat, half-demon creature portrays a chilling image with long horns, a mangled face displaying blood-shot eyes, and a furry black body. It is said that Krampus pays a visit to naughty children on the night of December 5th every year. This beast is called the “Christmas Devil” because his job is to punish children for misbehaving throughout the year. Carrying chains and birch sticks with him he is able to whip children into shape and a sack, in which to carry to the “underworld”. The start of Krampus was to represent the balance of good and evil within the Christian religion. Krampusnacht (Krampus Night) is celebrated in Parts of central and eastern Europe; Including Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic. The celebrations including exchanging Krampuskarten (Krampus cards), dressing up in costumes that represent the look of Krampus, and scaring children. In modern times, Krampus is still a tradition in Europe. The tradition made itself known in the United States when the movie, Krampus was released in theaters in 2015. Overall, the tradition has a good meaning behind it, just as the “boogeyman” does. It is a way to scare children into behaving kindly.



La-la-la Lies, la-la-la Lies

Parents preach honesty into their children. From soap in the mouth to a crackin' on the bottom, parents are the first to reap punishments as soon as they find out their child has told untruths. However, why do parents contradict this principle by speaking of Santa? What does Santa really teach children?

You will be rewarded for really no reason by a mystery man who breaks into your home.

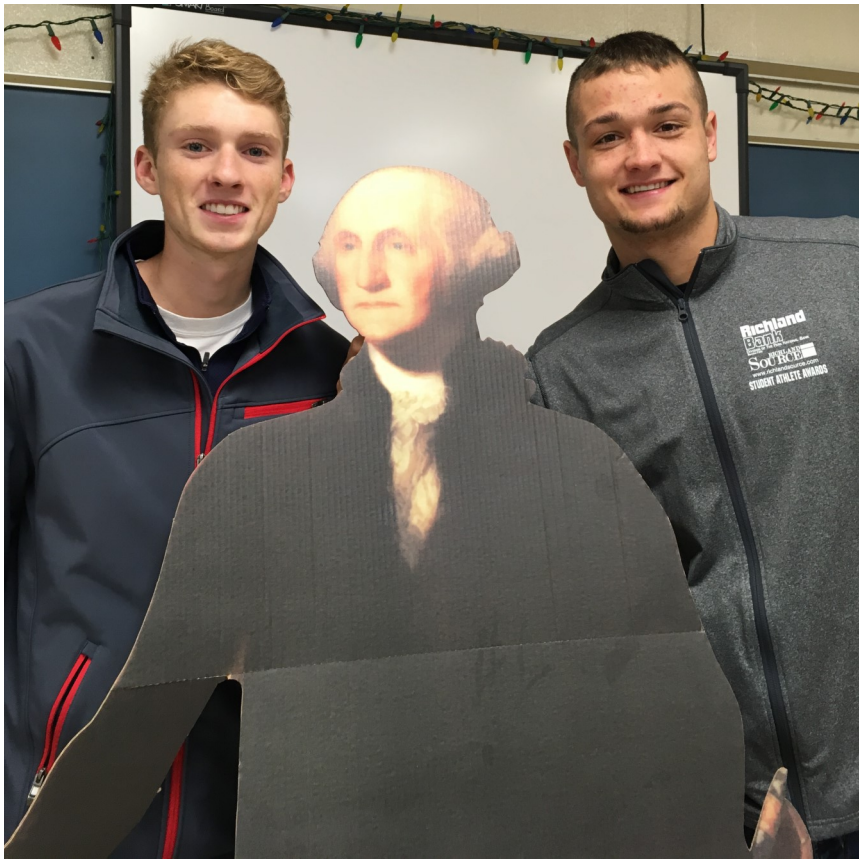
Let's break down what is wrong with this sentence. One, regardless of how awful a child 3/4ths of the year, a child's parent will still most likely get them their beloved Christmas gifts. How does this teach the child anything? We are teaching them their constant, atrocious behavior can be "redeemed" by acting behaved for a couple weeks and that's only by means of parents yelling into the backseat of their car on the way back from soccer practice, "I swear, Timmy, Santa isn't coming if you don't stop hitting your brother!"

Two, parents are not giving themselves enough credit by deeming these gifts as an act of Santa. From *Investopedia*, Gallup claimed adults will on average spend \$885 on gifts this year. Where does this money come from? Either precious savings parents have specifically set aside for THIS particular event or from groaning after each swipe on their credit cards. Children all the while will attribute this miraculous event from the big, jolly man and not the parents who have to sweat their rear ends off in order to pay back that looming credit card accumulation. Three, no one breaking into your home is going to be GIVING you things. This is just facts.

But what I find to be the most upsetting part of this whole thing is that **parents are setting their children up for their first heart break**. I think we all remember how we figured out for the first time. When it either clicked or that big kid on the playground was flapping his lips, we remember. We remember because it hurts us to realize our parents had been lying to us this whole time. The parents who preached honesty showed us the very act of dishonesty, and if we can't trust our parents to tell us the truth, who can we trust?

It may be faith that we wish to teach children. We want them to believe in something before their innocence is broken by the real, cruel world.



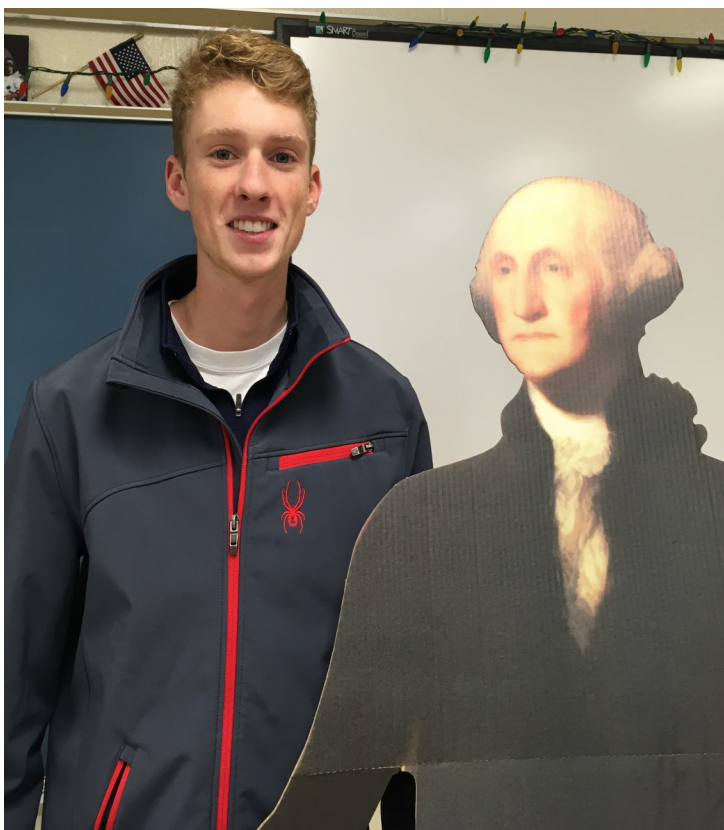


The Gentlemen and the Farmer

George Washington was known as many things. He was the “Father of the Nation;” he was the Commanding General of the Continental Army; he was the President of the United States. However, for me, he was the gentlemen farmer. Washington often said his most pleasurable moments were the moments he could spend sitting on his veranda watching the currents of the Potomac River. He didn’t have many moments to actually sit on the veranda. Washington was often called to action away from his plantation. Wherever he went people could expect the same thing from Mr. Washington. His stoic nature made him respected. His success on the battlefield made him revered. His persona made him a legend. I’m sure the tale of how Washington could not tell a lie to his father was nothing more than an apocryphal story. This story has been handed down from generation to generation to speak of the character which we all must display.

As a teenager, I endured many lectures from my father. Most of the lectures included the phrases “you don’t know how to work hard,” or “you don’t know how to show respect.” Little did my father know, that his father was my best friend. My grandpa and I spent much time together and when I would complain about my father’s lectures my grandpa would just smile. He was smiling because he gave his son the same lectures. Today, I listen to many adults complain about teenagers and the lack of work-ethic and respect. There could be a lack of respect and work ethic today compared to a generation ago. I’m not sure I believe this to be exactly true. At least two young men stand out as exceptions.

Kyle recently won the state championship in cross-country and that is an amazing accomplishment but this story isn’t about athletic accomplishments. Kyle logged over 50 miles a week in the off-season preparing to be a champion. In addition to his 50 miles, Kyle also went to open gyms, basketball camps and practices. No one becomes a state champion without a tremendous work-ethic. Kyle has been a student of mine for three years and when other students speak to me with a familial tone, Kyle still calls me Mr. Kathrein and sir. He gets to school at 7:10, always has his work done and treats his classmates with a great deal of respect at all times. In three

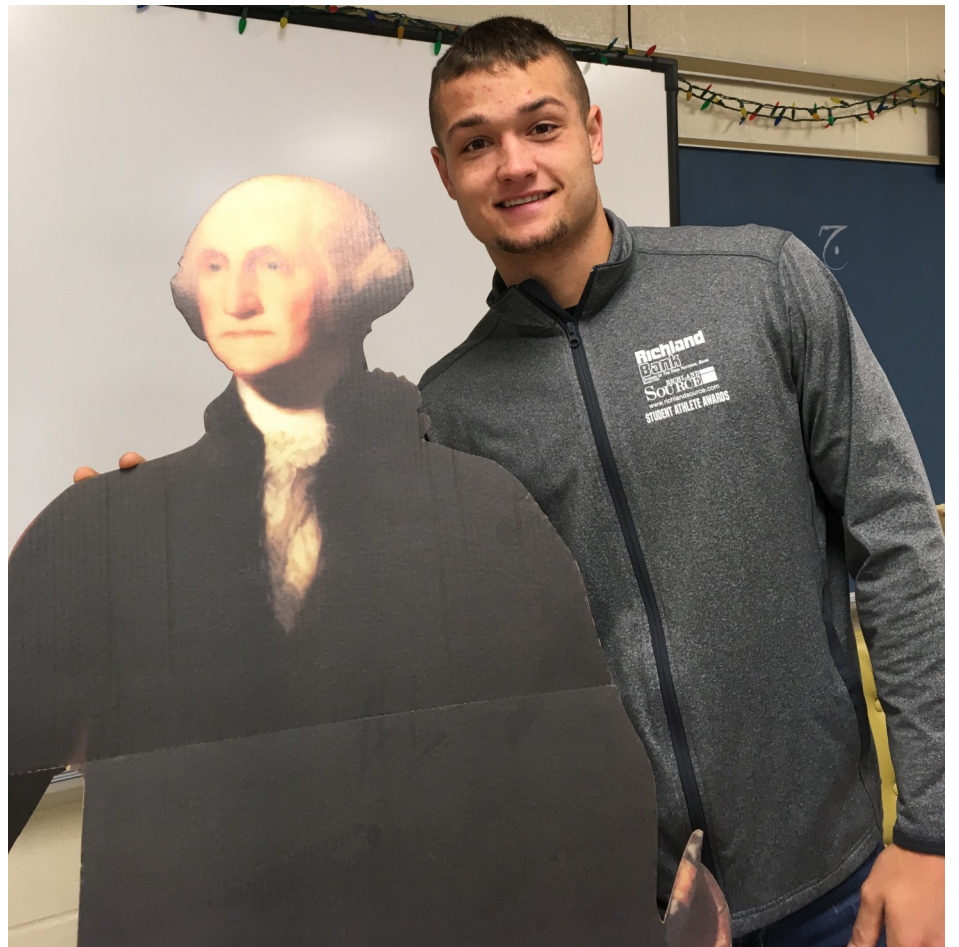


years I have yet to hear him say an ill word about anyone. Whenever I see a student conduct themselves poorly, or treat others poorly I often say where have all the cowboys gone? I’m not speaking of an actual horse riding, cattle herding cowboy. I referring to the spirit of the cowboy who always does the right thing and puts other before himself. Kyle is in the spirit of George Washington, and is that guy. Kyle is going to Louisville to study mechanical engineering and has a plan to one day own a farm.

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I recently was at a family dinner and Cade became the topic of discussion. I am a third generation Buckeye fan and my family likes to know all they can about the future Buckeye. I must have thrown out too many superlatives because my daughter said “you just like Cade because he plays football.” I looked at her sternly and told her that she was wrong. The fact that Cade is a good football player doesn’t describe who he is and why I was throwing around the superlatives. Like George Washington,



Cade is a great athlete. Like George Washington, Cade is a farmer. Before Cade gets to school in the morning he has to do some work around the farm. He then spends all six periods at school and then goes to practice. When practice is over he then goes back to the farm and does more work. The manner in which Cade was recruited could easily have given him entitled attitude, but that isn’t Cade. In the hallways and the classroom, Cade engages with everyone. Cade has earned many titles, including most recently, Mr. Football. A great title but first and foremost, Cade is a farmer and demonstrates the work-ethic requisite of a good farmer.

The spirit of the gentlemen farmer of the Founding Era is still alive. Unfortunately, it can be overshadowed by the negative actions of the few. We need more young people with a great work-ethic and conducts themselves with respect. Many high school students participate in athletics. To be a champion an athlete has to work hard. Greatness comes after you log the miles, do thousands of reps and success comes with wanting to compete. George Washington was very competitive. It is what pushed him to greatness on the battlefield and made him into more than a legend. I watch Cade and Kyle compete at everything they do, including review games. They never try to play it cool. They want to win and they make no apologies for wanting to win. It is refreshing to see young people with the work-ethic, the class and dignity combined with a competitive drive. You won’t see Cade or Kyle at parties. You won’t see them violating the code of conduct contract. In the spirit of Washington and the western cowboy, Cade and Kyle strive to do the right thing. They work hard and set high standards for themselves and they know success isn’t easy and it certainly isn’t a handout. I know there are more students like Cade and Kyle.