

Dear Seniors,

BY JACE CAMPBELL
SNN Staff Writer

Walking into your first day of high school may have seemed like an exciting adventure. You were one of "the big kids." You had four years left to go and then you'd be an adult. You saw those vending machines and thought, "Man, we didn't have those in middle school."

Later, you may have come to find that all the hype around the high school experience was false and that it tends to be disappointing. Those first two years were exhausting and came with a large workload.

However, there was hope.

Moving on from the lower class to the upper class was a little more laid back. Teachers and students had a little more respect for you because you were almost out the door. You also had the ability to take part in dual enrollment and had the ability to drop classes you didn't need if you completed the credits.

However, there was a little more to moving on up, especially to being a senior. Some of us are ready to get out of here and enjoy the real world, but others are going to miss it. These last two years really are

our last. These are the years we must cherish because we really are never going to get them back.

These were our last high school football games, our last high school dances. Having a date for prom and taking photos that we are going to look back on in 60 years and say to our kids, "Yes, I really did look like that." These were our last high school Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring breaks. These were our last high school years to cherish.

For athletes, these were also your last years in high school to play basketball, football or run track. Some of us filled out our college applications, and others made plans to move into the work force.

Before we knew it, we were sitting in the gym filling out little forms asking how we want our names printed on our diplomas. Some of us might have been wondering, "What's next?" and some of us still are. And that's perfectly okay.

Community college is always a good place to start with English and math prerequisites. Universities will provide you with the classic experience of being on a college campus. And pursuing your trade may be

a path to fulfillment. You don't have to know right out of high school exactly who you want to be. Everything is going to be okay, we are all going to be okay.

So, sit back, relax and enjoy the ride. These last two years of high school life flew by. Hopefully, we took in every moment we could in our senior year. These were the fun years, and hopefully, didn't disappoint you too much.

Now we're ready for the next chapter of our life and saying goodbye to our formative years. It may be scary, it may be relieving but one thing is for certain, it is all new. When times get hard, remember the lessons you have learned.



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1. Senior Dalon Wilson dances at prom on April 27 in the Gulfport Casino Ballroom.

2. Seniors Katelyn Angelis and Jiana Johnson laugh before prom on April 27.

3. Senior Troy'von Johnson jumps for a volleyball during the senior Be Out Day on April 26.

4. A Firefly Events photographer takes a photo of seniors Desirae DeFazio and Anna Robertson at prom on April 27.

5. Front, from left, seniors Kendal Wood, Ja'Lissa Lyons, Jayda Watts; back, Brigit Bergmiller, Zahra Barrow, Matthew Hamilton, Stanley Moise, Kevin Lai and Raymond Wong pose for a photo on the football field after being named to prom court.

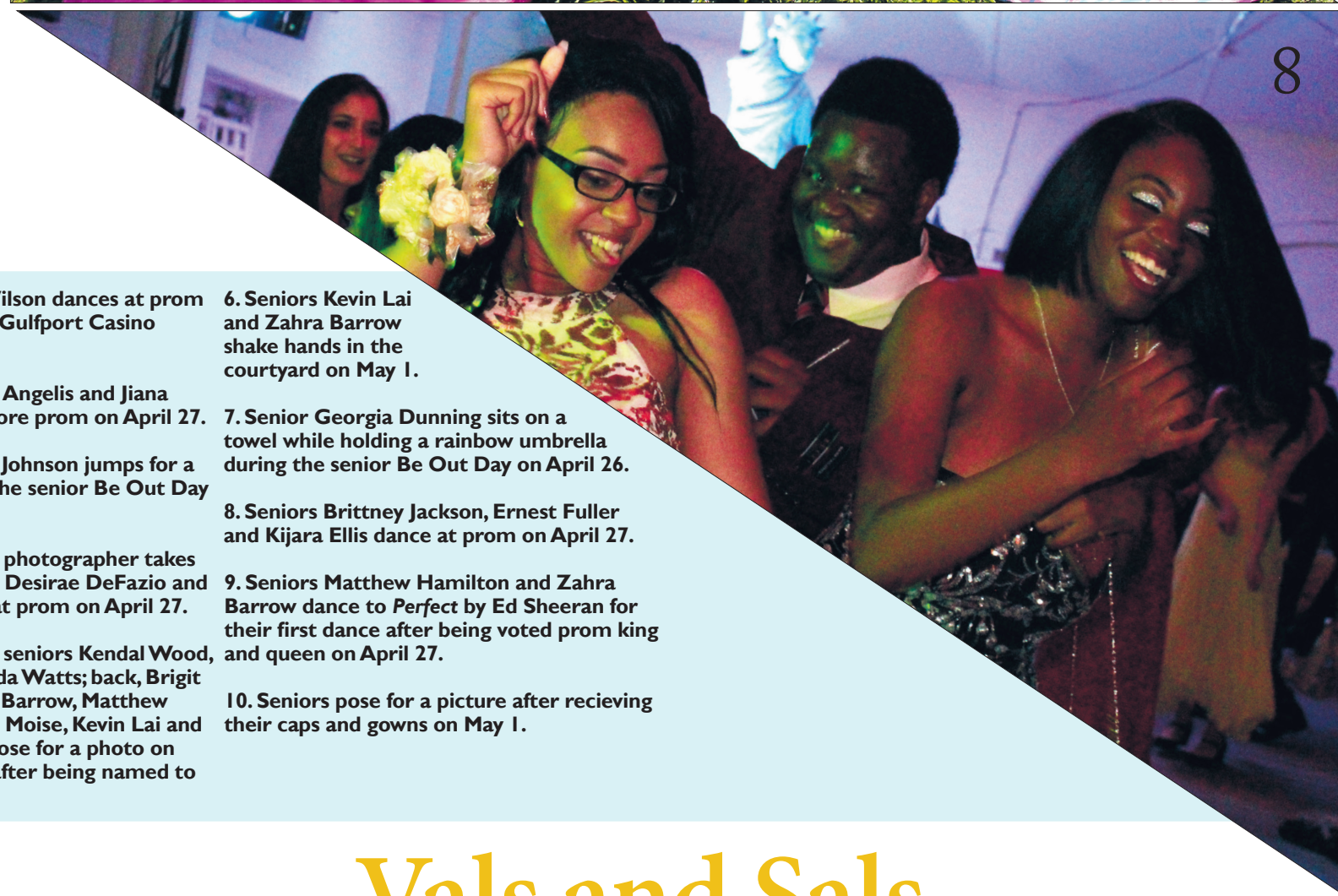
Cool Schools

BY JAYDA WATTS, O'MRION FLOWERS AND DAVID SILVERS
SNN Staff Writers



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Senior Zahra Barrow never thought she would get into the University of Pennsylvania; she was certain, in fact, that she didn't get in. On the day acceptances came out, her friend finally convinced her to go on the website and check. Barrow logged in, clicked on the link and was in disbelief.

"Music was playing and the screen said, 'Congratulations, you've been accepted!' When it all set in, I was freaking out," Barrow said.

Penn is one of the top schools in the United States with an acceptance rate of 9.4 percent and is considered an Ivy League school. Barrow will be majoring in business analytics in the fall.

"It has a good business program and a good atmosphere, mainly the city. It's in a big city but an urban campus, the best of both worlds," she

said. Penn is a private school, which is costlier, but with financial aid and the Doorways Scholarship, Barrow has 90 percent of her tuition covered.

CAT secretary Beverly Mitchell-Brown described Barrow as dedicated, committed and outgoing. Barrow told Mitchell-Brown personally about her acceptance to Penn.

"I was happy for her. I definitely think she deserved it," she said.

Senior Kevin Lai received a scholarship to Northwestern University in Chicago, Ill. Lai will be majoring in economics and said that he got accepted to the university because of his "good grades, high test scores and well-written essays."

"It was one of my first choices, because it was a good academic school, and I like the location," said Lai, whose grade point average is 4.5.

Spanish teacher Linda Santiago said Lai is one of her favorite students.

"Some of his best qualities are that he is hard-working, determined and diligent at almost everything he does," Santiago said. "He will do excellent and will be very successful at Northwestern."

Israel Graveran, a close friend of Lai's, said he's very enthusiastic and outgoing.

"He is willing to help others, and loves to try new things," Graveran said.

While Lai is excited to get accepted, he knows his family will miss him.

"When we got the acceptance letter, my mom was sad that it was so far away but she was happy anyways," Lai said.

Graduation will be at Tropicana Field on May 16 at 8:30 a.m.

Students should arrive at 7:30 a.m., and gates open for guests at 8 a.m. Parking fee for visitors will be \$10 per car. No balloons, flowers, banners, umbrellas, strollers or air horns will be allowed in the stadium. Each student will be checked for appropriate attire.

As the year comes to a close, seniors prepare to start the next chapter of their lives. SNN asked seniors:

Where are you going to college?



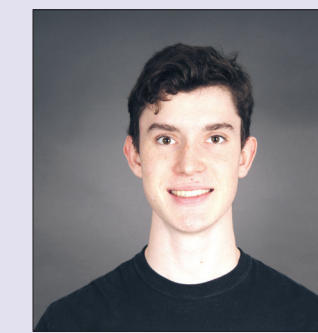
"I'm going to attend Thiel College in Pennsylvania. I'm excited to play football." Gabriel Jackson, 12th grade



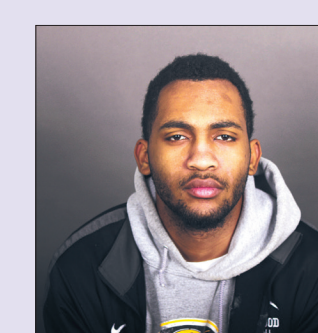
"I am going to University of Central Florida. I am definitely excited. It has a great computer science program and a double major in finance." Harry Saucers, 12th grade



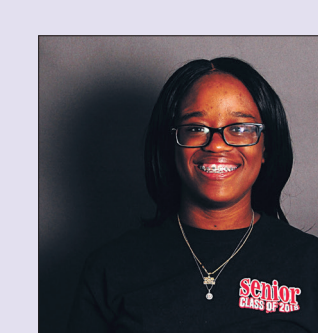
"I'm going to attend Georgia Tech to learn about industrial design." Hannah McAuliffe, 12th grade



"I'm going to Santa Fe College then the University of Florida. I'm excited for it... excited to see what life is like living on my own." Connor Voigt, 12th grade



"I'm going to be attending Garden City Community college in Kansas. I'm excited about different levels of football and the climate change." Adrian White, 12th grade



"I'm going to North Carolina A&T State University. It's a great campus... and they have a good political science program." D'Asia Waters, 12th grade

PHOTOGRAPHS AND QUOTES BY HIBA AITGRIF, KEONDRICK DAVIS AND GABBY SLIWOSKI | SNN Staff Writers

In memory of Bryson Welton-Williams



At the beginning of senior week, senior Bryson Welton-Williams was involved in a fatal car accident outside of campus. His loss was felt throughout the student body. SNN would like to dedicate this spread to him.

"He made people feel good about themselves. When they were down, he made them feel up. ... He kept his head together, and he was a smart kid."

Manny Sanders
Bryson Welton-Williams' uncle



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Carson Hamel
CAT Valedictorian
GPA: 4.79



Anthony Gruber II
CAT Salutatorian
GPA: 4.78



Martin Salamanca
Traditional Valedictorian
GPA: 4.25



Alexis Crawford
Traditional Salutatorian
GPA: 4.04

Photos by ALICIA LOPEZ, PARIS MCDOWGLE, DALLAS DAVIS, AUJONEE DUNBAR, TYLER GRAHAM and MIA MALDONADO.