



AN IMMERSIVE SUMMER AWAITS ABROAD FOR UWG STUDENTS

JANNETTE EMMERICK
Feature Editor



Photo: Jannette Emmerick, *The West Georgian*

It's not too late for students to apply for a summer trip abroad with UWG offering many diverse cultural experiences and a plethora of scholarships that lower the cost drastically. International Languages and Cultures (ILC) in particular allows students to receive credit hours on top of unforgettable immersive adventures.

"Within our program, there are three Study Abroad Programs, one to Vienna in Austria, one to Heredia in Costa Rica, and one to Tours in France," said Dr. Lisa Connell, French Professor and Program Coordinator for International Languages and Cultures (ILC).

"They're four weeks summer culture and language immersion programs, and students can earn up to 6 credits for the coursework they complete [abroad], and it also is a chance for students to really get immersed in the language, sometimes for the very first time, outside of the classroom," said Connell.

While the cost for Costa Rica and France may be beyond the average student's pocket capacity, UWG and other donors give out awards to lower costs. Furthermore, the application is free and takes no more than five minutes to complete. The only requirement is that the student take a 1001 course in the respective language.

"One of our students in the French Program, she [took 101 and went abroad], and it was a really great experience for her. She was in 1001 and then went to France, but she was also the recipient of the Coca Cola Scholarship, which is a \$5000 scholarship for first-gen students with under 60 credit hours and so that was a wonderful surprise for her to have earned that scholarship."

Students who have not yet taken a course in any languages, are still able to take 1001 in the spring and go abroad in the summer.

There are also national awards and many other opportunities that lower the costs of the programs. Students are even eligible for scholarships by simply checking a box on their application.

"I can speak for ILC in particular, about every year we give away close to \$10,000 in scholarships to support study abroad students," said Connell. "These come from a variety of donors and endowments, so we're really fortunate to have that support both internal and external. Also the Office of Education Abroad on an annual basis gives away a scholarship for students in any program going abroad.

"Students who are able to invest their time into the scholarship search process, generally compensated with some really fabulous opportunities," continued Connell.

The Vienna program in particular guarantees lowered cost for students with immense thanks to the Halle Foundation which has been granting German language students the opportunity to study abroad for nearly half the cost.

"For the German Program, Dr. Tweraser has been instrumental in gaining support from the Halle Foundation," said Connell. "And they have enabled students to participate in the German Program for— It's an exceptional opportunity— for basically less than \$2000 for an entire program, but that's because of what he's done with the Halle Foundation and what he's created for students for that program. It's an amazing opportunity."

The Halle Foundation in general has been instrumental to funding many Study Abroad programs, making them affordable for students who would not afford it otherwise.

In the name and legacy of Claus Halle, who fought in the Nazi army in WW2 as a teenager, after the war

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he wished that Germany would never repeat history, and so believed the best way to prevent another calamity was for America and Germany to build a bond— which he also believed was achievable through helping the younger generations. After his and his wife's passing, the foundation has been maintaining the goal of bridging across cultures and incentivising strong friendships between Europe and America.

ILC hopes that their students not only create bonds across seas, but also create irreplaceable new memories.

"I know that in Costa Rica this past year, they had some really incredible adventures and excursions through the forest and doing ziplines, and really taking advantage of the natural environment there," said Connell. "But they also had cooking classes students could take advantage of."

Students interested in a cultural adventure are encouraged to apply, even if they are unable to later there is still the possibility of scholarships. For questions, either contact Connell, or the program directors being Dr. Felix Tweraser for the Vienna trip, Dr. Karen Dollinger for the Heredia trip and Claire Ezekiel for the Tours trip. Applications and additional information for study abroad programs can be accessed here under their respective countries: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/education-abroad/study-abroad-programs.php>

WEST GEORGIA RECOGNIZES ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK ON CAMPUS

NEVAEH BROWN
Contributing Writer

College is usually the prime time for people in their late teens and early twenties to start drinking alcohol. With off-campus parties and college campuses being half a mile from liquor and package stores, the existence of liquor is inevitable. As a college student, it's imperative to know how to be safe with alcohol.

The week of Nov. 6 was Alcohol Awareness Week. On Wednesday, Nov. 8, the University Recreation's Health Education peer educators held an obstacle course where participants were instructed to wear a pair of goggles that emulated the visual effects of being inebriated.

The obstacle course was an extreme demonstration of how intoxication can limit the range of motion and sometimes an individual's mobility in general.

"We're raising awareness and advocating for safe drinking by showing the consequences of being intoxicated with these goggles," said Peer Educator William Jackson.

Participants were solo or in pairs. However, the obstacle course was not treated as a race and there was no timer or time to beat. There was just a self-imposed will to make it down that inflatable slide.

Participants said they were dizzy while wearing the disoriented goggles.

"[My vision] wasn't blurred; it was just, in a sense, disoriented just made it a bit difficult to do the obstacle course," said graduate student Ijore Trice.

Now, after physically bringing attention to the existence of college students'

consumption of alcohol and how to be conscious of the effects of alcohol, the same knowledge from an alcohol screening questionnaire is available on the University's health resources website.

With the screening questionnaire, these questions can be answered by an individual about themselves or someone they care about about the potential abuse of alcohol.

In turn, it gives suggestions on how to limit alcohol consumption for the consideration of safe drinking.

Alcohol consumption can cause issues for young adults, especially on college campuses, like academic issues, assault of all kinds, and a development of an alcohol

use disorder.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism states that 1 in 4 students in the age range of 18-22 report to have suffered academic struggles due to alcohol. In the guise of binge drinking, 40% of participants in this national survey had a nearly six times higher chance of experiencing a decline in academic performance such as a failing project or test.

Of the same statistic, 64% that are surveyed have engaged in binge drinking and have been five times more likely to have missed a class.

It's been asserted that around 13% of college-aged students have experienced physical symptoms such as shakiness or dizziness, and even behavioral symptoms such as compulsiveness and agitation.

UWG provides online resources that stress the aversion to underage drinking and for students 21 years old and older to be responsible with the amount of alcohol they consume.



Photo: Nevaeh Brown, *The West Georgian*

ETHICS BOWL POSITS THOUGHTFUL CONVERSATION

JANNETTE EMMERICK
Feature Editor

On Friday Nov. 3, teachers and students gathered in one of the Nursing Building's lecture halls to kick off Ethics Awareness week with a preamble event titled "The Ethics Bowl." Organized largely by Dr. Walter Riker, UWG Professor of Philosophy, the Ethics Bowl presented a debate-like structure, with a very broad discussion prompt hinged on each team selecting an unanswered question, or issue, facing the world today.

"Ethics is about what is ultimately worth doing," said Riker. "It has to do with right and wrong conduct, what it means to be a good person, and what sort of society we should have."

"I study and teach ethics and promote ethical thinking whenever I can," continued Riker. "I thought a Faculty Ethics Bowl event would be a fun way to help promote civil discourse, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving in the UWG community."

Indeed, the Ethics Bowl certainly stirred conversation and thought with Team 1, featuring Geography Professor Dr. Hannes Gerhardt,

History Professor Dr. Elaine MacKinnon and Sociology Professor Neema Noori, and Team 2 featuring Economics Professor Dr. David Boldt, German Professor Dr. Felix Tweraser and Nursing Professor Dr. Katie Morales. The judges panel also consisted of faculty and staff being Philosophy Professor Dr. Robert Lane, Political Science Professor Dr. Salvador Peralta and Librarian Dr. Beth Sheppard.

With the very vague prompt of finding a "big question" to world problems, Team 1 posed the inquiry of "Why can't we all just get along?" while Team 2 chose to pinpoint "poverty" as the greatest issue.

"The topic was broad on purpose," said Riker. "UWG faculty do a lot of jobs on campus, and one of them is to think about and write about big questions. We invited faculty from nine different fields on purpose ... I thought it would be interesting to have a lot of different people work on some big questions together."

With the faculty and topics set, the day of the Ethics Bowl, a large handful of students, faculty and staff

filled the Lecture Hall in the Nursing Building. Many students attended to support their professors and perhaps others stayed for the raffle, but in the end, the panel discussion seemed to hold audience attention.

When each panel had finished their back and forth, and after a Q&A session, the judges and the audience voted to see who "won" in terms of which argument and issue seemed more sound. Interestingly, the judges voted 2-1 in favor of Team 1, whereas the audience voted for Team 2 by a landslide of raised hands.

"I was pleased with how things turned out," said Riker. "This is the first time we've tried this, so I did not know what to expect."

The event certainly stirred conversation and readied UWG for Ethics Awareness Week the following week which featured panels and presentations each day including a "Chancellor's Panel" and an ethics-trivia on the Grassy Triangle which awarded prizes to students.

Every year UWG, along with 25 other institutions in the University System of Georgia, host Ethics Awareness Week to encourage students to think critically and engage in conversations respectfully.

Riker is hopeful to hold another Ethics Bowl in the future and to get more students involved, not just with the event and with ethical conversation in general.

THE WEST GEORGIAN

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NSSLHA WALK FOR APRAXIA

EMMA WORLEY
Contributing Writer

The National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association held an event on the 23rd of September at the University of West Georgia on campus to raise awareness for apraxia of speech.

The event that NSSLHA held was called “Walk for Apraxia.” The walk started at the education center building on the University of West Georgia campus at 9 a.m. The group of people that came out to the event began at the education center building and they continued around the front of campus.

The event lasted a little under an hour, and there were 10 people that came and supported. The NSSLHA club made signs to help advocate for the event, and they also made a post on their facebook page to spread the word.

“We put together this event to celebrate all of those who have overcome their struggles with apraxia of speech and raise awareness for those who constantly struggle with it

everyday,” said Mary Grace Casey, secretary of NSSLHA of UWG. “Out of all of my four years here, this walk has been my favorite event that we have done as a club.”

Apraxia of speech is a neurological disorder that is caused by a brain disease or brain damage. It affects the brain pathway that produces speech. Someone who has apraxia of speech has difficulty processing messaging that they are trying to get out. Some symptoms include babbling, using a limited number of consonants and vowels, speech is hard to understand, inconsistent errors in speech, distorting sounds, etc. Since the disorder is speech related, it is not until around the age of three years old that someone can be fully diagnosed with apraxia of speech.

“The walk for apraxia was my favorite event we have done because we were able to educate other people about what apraxia is,” said Casey. “Most people have actually never

heard about apraxia of speech. It is so special because we can celebrate the ones who have done well through having the disorder.”

Apraxia of speech can be a result from a stroke, tumor, dementia, a head injury, or an illness that attacks the brain. Those who have apraxia of speech can attend speech therapy to improve their abilities to process their speech. The amount of time someone has to spend in therapy just depends on the severity of their case, but it is a very intensive process. Each and every person’s circumstances can vary. Most of the time this therapy lasts for several years. This speech disorder can also be linked with other serious disorders like down syndrome and autism. They are not always linked together but they can be in some cases.

“Apraxia is considered to be a rare condition and it is something that children are born with,” said Casey. “It actually only affects 0.1% of all the people in our population which is about 1 or 2 people out of 1,000. We celebrate those who overcome and improve their speech because of how rare and serious it affects their life.”

FINANCIAL WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

CAROLYN MONCRIEFFE
Contributing Writer

UWG’s Center for Economic Educational and Financial Literacy continues weekly events titled “Financial Wellness Wednesdays,” which serve to direct and help ensure financial wellbeing for all UWG students choosing to attend the workshops.

This past Wednesday, in conjunction with Regions Bank and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Gary W. Collins College of Business the Center held a free webinar directed toward students titled, Road to Homeownership.

The webinar was hosted by Angela Aaron, Financial Wellness Educator of Regions Bank Next Step Program. Aaron’s is based with Regions Bank in the Little Rock, Arkansas area. With over twenty years of experience in mortgage banking, Aaron outlined a pathway toward the Road to Homeownership.

“It is important to know the mortgage process as well as the pros and cons of owning a home,” said Aaron. “Home ownership can be a very rewarding experience if the buyer is properly prepared. The buyer needs to know what is expected of the prospective homeowner.”

Attendees were educated on what a mortgage is and what is included in a monthly mortgage payment. If the purchase is a cash payment, there is no monthly mortgage payment. If not, the mortgage payment will include the principal, the interest, taxes and any homeowner insurance

costs.

“If the down payment is less than 20% Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) will be included in monthly mortgage payments,” said Aaron.

Attendees were advised to be mindful of the area or county they decide to make a purchase.

“Advising taxes could be a big mortgage issue depending on where the home is purchased,” said Aaron. “Homeowners are now the landlord as well and any repairs needing to be made become the responsibility of the homeowner.

“The homeowner becomes the maintenance person and stresses the need for all homeowners to have an emergency fund because things do pop up,” continued Aaron. “Whether a home is purchased brand new or not things do happen, and ready cash will be needed to address any unforeseen issues.”

Perspective homeowners are advised to have a money management tool in place to help with budgeting and basic money management skills. Credit scores are also an important tool when looking into homeownership and should be checked at least once a year.

It is equally important to check credit reports before initiating prospective homeownership. Credit reports should be examined at least twice a year to ensure that there is nothing reported that could impair the road to homeownership as well

as ensuring that your credit report is accurate.

“Some creditors do indeed make mistakes,” said Aaron.

Perspective homeowners must also explore what type of mortgage product is the right product to choose. The choices are the Fixed Rate Mortgage (FRM) or the Adjustable-Rate Mortgage (ARM). Fixed Rate Mortgage ensures the mortgage payment will remain the same for the life of the loan, not so much the ARM, this rate can either go up or down several times during the life of the loan. The mortgage loan originator can go over available options and help the buyer decide which mortgage choice is the best option.

Aaron discussed definitions of some common mortgage terminologies such as Pre-Qualification, Pre-Approval, and Final Order. Pre-Qualification is the lender’s estimate of how much you may be eligible to borrow. Pre-Qualification does not guarantee a loan will be granted. Pre-Approval means the lender has evaluated the buyers’ credit worthiness and has made a commitment to extend a loan up to a specified amount.

Final Order approval occurs when the property has been appraised, all documentation is in the hands of the lender and all contingencies have been met.

For additional information perspective buyers are empowered to visit:

<https://www.regions.com/next-step/next-step-webinars>

<https://www.regions.com/next-step/next-step-for-students>



Photo courtesy of Regions

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

ANNUAL "INFINITE WEIGHT/PRESENT HISTORIES" EXHIBITION RETURNS TO NEWNAN VAULT GALLERY

ALEX DUCOULOMBIER
Contributing Writer

Since its opening on Oct. 20, the University of West Georgia showcases its second annual juried photography exhibition with the Infinite Weight / Present Histories display at The Vault Gallery located in Newnan's Wadsworth Auditorium.

Returning for its second annual showing, this year's Infinite Weight/Present Histories photography showcase will be juried by Maria Kelly, an Assistant Curator of Photography at the High Museum of Art. She has also helped organize numerous photography installations during her time at the High.

The exhibit, organized by John Morris and Mark Schoon, among others, began as a conversation

about what could be done within the discipline of photography that would go beyond the classroom. Then, about three years ago, the university's art program began working in conjunction with the UWG School of the Arts in Newnan's Vault Gallery space. From here, Morris and Schoon saw the opportunity to bring their idea to life in the form of the contemporary photography exhibition.

The meaning behind the title of the exhibit lies in the infinite possibilities and approaches that can be applied to the medium of photography. Additionally, Kelly noted that there is an element of duality within the name that allows for a multitude of perceived meanings, allowing for many possibilities for the artist's submissions.

With this, some of the works on display aren't simply photo prints in a frame, but photos with other mediums included for added effect. For example, best in show winner Diane Meyer embroidered the Berlin wall into a picture of modern day Berlin to show where the wall once stood, making for a striking image with a powerful meaning.

Artists from around the country were encouraged to submit their work for the exhibition by mid August this year, with just 15 having their work displayed. Participants were able to submit up to six works to be considered for the exhibition with Kelly getting the final say on what would be displayed. From intriguing street photography to abstract work to captivating portraits, there is something for everyone in the exhibition.

A few hundred guests are expected to visit the exhibit over the course of its time in the gallery. If you have not attended, there is still time left to do so, as the exhibition will be at The Vault Gallery in the Wadsworth Auditorium until Nov. 17 at 6 p.m.



Photo: Alex Ducoulombier, *The West Georgian*

THE NUTCRACKER BALLET

GIANNA WILLCOX
Contributing Writer

The Carrollton Center for the Arts presents "The Nutcracker" ballet to celebrate the holiday season. The production starts on Nov. 17 with an abridged school field trip matinee, and the full production premieres that evening at 7 p.m. There will be four full-length shows in total from Friday, Nov. 17 to Sunday, Nov. 19.

The ballet follows the classic tale of a young girl, Clara, who receives a nutcracker from her uncle at her family's annual Christmas Eve party. When she falls asleep after the party, she dreams of a battle with the Rat King and adventures with a handsome prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy. However, this year, the production will feature a few new additions.

"This year, we are so excited to premiere our Spun Sugar variation, a dance in the second act that is not only brand new choreography and character but also includes a rare, historical piece of music," said Brii Tyson, the production's director.

The ballet's composer, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, originally wrote the musical piece to be part of The Nutcracker but ultimately discarded it before the final version of the ballet's completion in 1892. The production team at the Carrollton Center for the Arts was lucky that the

Tchaikovsky Foundation preserved this rarely-recorded English Gigue and that they were able to get access to it.

In addition to the new music and choreography, this year's production will include other additions.

"We have a brand new party dress for the main character, Clara, that our costume master, Craig Jones, designed and handmade," said Tyson. "We also have a brand new hand-painted backdrop and set for our Land of Sweets scene in the second act of the ballet."

With all these new additions, one would assume that the preparation process would be more extensive. However, the preparations are the same as they have always been.

"Our preparations for The Nutcracker Ballet are ongoing throughout the year," said Tyson. "Our first pre-production meeting is usually in early spring, and we typically have 2 to 3 meetings before auditions in August."

The entire production team attends these meetings, and they allow them to plan any new additions to the show, like the new choreography and costume for Clara. The meetings also allow the production team to discuss administrative tasks like volunteer coordination and budgeting.

The preparation process is essential, but a production is nothing without its players. So, the audition and casting process is just as significant, if not more, as preparation.

"Auditions take place mid-August spanning a weekend," said Tyson. "All casting is determined via the audition process, which is open to the community and all ages five and older."

"Auditions are essentially an abbreviated ballet class to identify technical ability and special skills, as well as an open division from those who wish to participate but do not have ballet experience," continued Tyson.

Two weeks after auditions, rehearsals begin and continue every weekend leading up to the performance, except for Labor Day weekend and Carrollton Arts Fest weekend in October. Now, the cast and production team's dedication, effort, and talent will pay off as the performances kick off this weekend.



Photo: Gianna Willcox, *The West Georgian*

SEASON'S GREETINGS CARD EXHIBITION SHINES BRIGHT

LANCE GOINS
Contributing Writer

With its highly anticipated Season's Greetings Card Competition and Exhibition, the Carrollton Center for the Arts is kicking off the holiday season from Nov. 2 to Dec. 14. An artistic celebration of the festive spirit, this event encourages participation from the community.

For many years, the Carrollton Center for the Arts has served as an essential center for local art and culture in the Carrollton community. It has long given local artists a stage on which to display their abilities and contribute to the community's strong artistic culture.

The Season's Greetings Card, Kuykendall, told us about the center's commitment to promote local art and culture in the Carrollton area during our conversation.

"The Carrollton Center for the Arts (CCA) was started about 21 years ago and allowed the city to have a permanent location to provide art experiences that the community

could enjoy and learn from," said Competition and Exhibition Organizer Marcella Kuykendall. "It supports regional art and culture in the visual arts area by supporting artists through exhibition opportunities, which also allows visitors to view and learn about different types of art and mediums, while also exploring the perspectives of the artists we display."

A clever idea to spread holiday cheer throughout the community and help out local artists at the same time was to have an exhibition and competition with Season's Greeting Cards. The idea for this event came to Kuykendall (who was introduced to it by a CCA staff member) as a way to enjoy the holiday season and give artists a venue to showcase their artistic abilities.

"This particular event was created by a staff member who had a similar program at a previous art center they worked for," said Kuykendall. "It allows everyone from the city a chance to

directly participate in an art competition and exhibit, no matter the age."

Selecting the judges usually came from city staff or other city representatives. Kuykendall made an effort to create a panel of artists with varying backgrounds in order to guarantee an objective assessment of the greeting cards. In order to provide a diverse viewpoint on the entries, the judges were carefully chosen to represent many areas of the art world.

"Judges are usually chosen from city staff and other city representatives, such as council members and the mayor," said Kuykendall. "A different judge is chosen each year, to allow for different aesthetic perspectives."

This event is essential in helping local artists by giving them a stage on which to showcase their abilities. The value of using artistic expression brings people together, and the occasion helps to close the divide between art admirers and artists.

"The show allows creative individuals to have an opportunity to share their work with others and maybe even win a competition," said Kuykendall. "It ties the community together, because people can share their creativity with one another."



Photo courtesy of Brooklyn Shannon

FEATURE

IMPACT WEST GEORGIA HELPS KEEP HOPE ALIVE

MICAH NOEL
Contributing Writer

If one has visited Carrollton's Square recently, they might have noticed a slight change in its appearance. Rather than its typical color pallet, the downtown area sports a hue of dark purple. This is no coincidence, as this color brings awareness to a daily battle.

The nonprofit organization Impact West Georgia defines homelessness as a lack of dwelling where one can rest or places not properly adequate for habitation. This local organization is leading the charge in bringing awareness and resources to those in need.

The faith-based nonprofit began its journey decades ago, starting in the late 90s in the back of a fast-food parking lot in Newnan. Then, its primary mission was to hold English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Shortly after being incorporated in 2005, the City of Carrollton approached the nonprofit to do something that CEO and founder Kathy Parsons said was outside their wheelhouse.

"The City of Carrollton came and asked us if we would open a homeless shelter for men," said Parsons. "We had never worked with a residential program."

Unsure of approaching the new

endeavor, Parsons visited other shelters around the state, searching for the best practices to take with her. The City lent a building for the organization, and the HOPE Center opened its door to its first resident in 2008.

"HOPE is a moderate to high barrier shelter for men to have the ability to live independently...to make a living wage," said Parsons. "We try to teach them soft skills."

The center houses ten men at a time, where they are taught how to properly cook, clean and become financially autonomous. The goal for the residents is that one day, they can move out of the HOPE Center to truly live independently.

Among the other services, Impact West Georgia provides warming centers during the colder months. These centers are provided all around the city when the temperature gets below 32 degrees. The organization has been trying to find a permanent location for its community shelter in recent years. Fortunately, a permanent establishment is in the works, hoping to open it soon.

"It will be a very low-barrier shelter.... We provide three meals a day," said

Parsons. "It will be open during the week for document acquisition, for them to be able to wash their clothes and take a shower."

Outreach Encampment is another program that services people experiencing homelessness, providing all that is needed for encampment, including what is called a homeless mat.

"They are made out of plastic bags.... It takes 1,000 plastic bags to make one of these mats," said Parsons.

The other two divisions cover other under-helped communities. DESERVE is a free Veterans program that provides transportation for veterans to their medical appointments. The Adult and Community Education division provides services like reading and writing classes for adults as well as numerous workshops on faith, culture, and lifestyle.

"We want to empower people who feel like they don't have a voice," said Parson. "In doing so, we make Carrollton, Carroll County, a better place to live for everybody."

Impact West Georgia has made great strides in tending to the community, but they hope they can do more. If one would like to get involved, visit their website, impactwestga.org.



Photo courtesy of Impact West Gerogia

SPORTS

CARROLLTON HOSTED STATE-WIDE CROSS COUNTRY MEET

TUCKER COLE
Contributing Writer

Carrollton High School hosted one of the biggest high school cross country events in the state of Georgia and in the nation on November 3-4, as the Georgia High School Association held their state championship meet.

Featured in the event were teams from all eight different school classifications in the state of Georgia. In total, there were 3,107 individual athletes that competed in the event on Friday and Saturday combined.

Highlighting performances for competitors in the Carroll County area was Bowdon High School freshman Averil Lowen, who won the girls' state championship in Class A Division-Two.

Lowen led the race through each checkpoint, and although Atlanta Classical Academy's Flora Tyler trailed closely behind after the first loop of the race, Lowen broke away on the second.

After rounding the final hill of the Carrollton course, which is well-known for its array of challenging hills, Lowen finished with a time of 20:10.03, exactly 34 seconds ahead of Tyler, who ended the race at 20:44.03.

The freshman Red Devil—who was also the only female running cross country for Bowdon this year—was working with a bit of extra motivation from the conclusion of her middle school career.

"I've worked so hard ever since

last year—in eighth grade I got beat at state—so I've trained for this," Lowen said. "It means a lot."

It is a bit out of the ordinary for a freshman to beat out an entire field of state-level sophomores, juniors and seniors. When asked what she thinks sets herself apart from others her age, Lowen pointed to the work ethic she sets out to display.

"My hard work, the effort I put in every day outside of school," Lowen said. "It's just hard work."

Lowen's head coach Molly Harper says she thought the race was going to be close, but she knew Lowen would have a chance of walking away with the title.

"I knew it would be a close race, but Averil is one of the most dedicated runners I have ever seen in my life," Harper said. "She came to us last year—she ran for me in eighth grade—so, I've never seen somebody work so hard in the offseason as Averil has."

Harper also pointed out the work Lowen puts in outside of organized team practices.

"She has put so much effort and dedication into this sport," Harper said.

And for Lowen, it ultimately comes down to one simple phrase, in Harper's words, "She loves to run."

As for her status as Bowdon's only girl running cross country, Lowen



Photo: Tucker Cole, *The West Georgian*

says she doesn't mind it, but she would like to have a team around her in the future.

"I kind of like training by myself, but I would love to have a team," Lowen said.

As for the high school teams local to the city of Carrollton, Carrollton High School's girls' team placed ninth out of 32 teams in class 7A, with Emily Whipple leading the way in 40th with a time of 20:27.86. The Trojan boys placed sixth out of 32 teams with Hagan Russell getting 12th with a time of 16:06.74.

Central Carrollton High School's girls' team came in seventh out of 28 teams in class 4A, and two runners ended in the top ten, with Lorelei Daugherty finishing sixth at 19:40.03 and Lucy Barker finishing ninth at 19:46.75. The Central boys team finished 14th out of 31 teams, and Casey Thornton led the way in ninth at 16:42.73.

This event concluded the high school cross country season in the state of Georgia, and many runners will now prepare for track and field season, with the earliest date for practice scheduled for January 8 and meets beginning February 5.

ATLANTA UNITED ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE

ALEX DUCOULOMBIER
Contributing Writer

Heartbreak as Atlanta United falls out of the MLS Cup Playoffs following a 4-2 defeat in Columbus. After clawing back a win on home soil following the return of their star Thiago Almada, Atlanta United was defeated in game three of the new best-of-three playoff series.

While Atlanta's home soccer team has been accustomed to winning since the club's establishment in 2017, the 2023 run is now officially over. In order to obtain insight into how fans feel across the city, I polled various fans from the game one watch party in Atlanta.

A lot of similar opinions were heard from fans about the season and the new changes. Following a rather disappointing summer transfer window and a bit of a turbulent start to the season, many felt that the club did the best with what they had. That being said, fans were still underwhelmed by

the fact that the team did not compete at the level that many have become accustomed to, as the team finished sixth in the east, and tenth overall in the Supporters' Shield.

With this, it is apparent that many fans have pushed for the head coach, Gonzalo Pineda, to be replaced at different periods throughout the year, including after the two playoff defeats in Columbus.

"Tactically, Pineda has been outclassed time and time again and usually makes the wrong decisions when it comes to formations and subs," said Arnav Agrawala, the owner of an Atlanta United fan page.

Harsh words from a die-hard supporter of the club, but he is not alone in feeling this, as a similar sentiment has been echoed by many other fans.

In the new format for the MLS Cup Playoffs, round one of the playoffs

is now settled by a new best-of-three series, with the higher-seeded team given two home games. This did not play out well for Atlanta, as they lost both away games in Columbus, despite having their MLS Young Player of the Year, Thiago Almada, return from suspension for games two and three. The 22-year-old led the league in assists during the regular season and proved to be an integral piece of the Atlanta side.

From here, the majority of fans hold that the new playoff format does not belong in the sport at all and should remain in baseball, hockey, and basketball. Though the change was intended to give the higher-seeded team more of an advantage through the playoffs, many feel that it takes away from the sport and should return to the tried and true two-leg series settled by the aggregate score across the two games.

As Atlanta United reflects on their season and considers the prospect of new changes around the team, it remains clear that the passionate fanbase will continue to stand behind their team despite the disappointing year.



Photo courtesy of Alex Ducoulombier