



# The Liberty Ledger

MAY 2025

ISSUE 40

By: Hayley Smiley and President Elizabeth Allan- Matheson

## Liberty's Entrepreneur - *Jayla Copeland*

Jayla Copeland is an 8th grade Liberty Middle School student who is a small business owner of Lapis Lazuli Teas. They offer a variety of organic teas, caffeine free teas, special blends, and seasonal teas.



My grand-  
ma used to  
make tea all  
the time,  
and she was  
a very super-  
stitious per-  
son. Her  
making Tea  
all the time  
lead to me  
making my  
own tea-like concoctions from the spice  
cabinet.



LAPIS LAZULI TEAS  
*by Jayla*

In May of last year, Jayla and her mother did an interview for the local news TV station, *News 12*, for their segments of *NJ12 Spot Light* to showcase her tea business. We interviewed Kayla to learn more about her tea business and how she manages keeping up with her school work and owning a business at the same time.

### How old were you when you started your business?

The idea came when I was nine, but I started the business when I was twelve.

### What kind of products or services does your business offer?

Mostly caffeinated teas with a selection of de-caffeinated tea. They're specialized for problems such as joint pain, headaches, and we have vitamin teas. That came up because my



### What inspired you to start your business?

friend has a vitamin deficiency.

### What advice would you give to other students who want to start a business?

Don't let your ideas run out, because you have a really huge opportunity that you don't realize. If you don't take advantage of it, you could lose that opportunity forever. The beginning is very tough but once you figure things out it gets easier.



### Who helps you with your business? Do you have a team or do you work alone?

It's just me and my mom, although we have close news 12 since my mom works there so

we have close ties. We're friends with all of the small businesses in Newark, my uncle Gary owns a soul food restaurant called just fish.

### What is one thing you wish you knew before starting your business?

Definitely posting more and getting out of my comfort zone. I didn't realize that I had to be more extroverted and I had to talk to people outside of the company.

### Where can we find your store?

My Instagram, it's where we mainly post. LapisLazuliTeas . We have people who make our teas, and my aunt helped me wake the website. You can also find us at [LapisLazuliteas.com](http://LapisLazuliteas.com) .



## COMIC

Ice Man and Roll Go Shoplifting by DRN005

what should we get

idk maybe some hats?

ok sure that would be funny

maybe i can get rock a new helmet

ts is too expensive... lets just steal it then!

im not good at talking can u? ill steal the helmet.

ok lil bro

can i get uhh... are you going to buy something or not?

meanwhile...

lets go home now

thank god we got out of there before we got arrested like wily

**DISCLAIMER!!**  
LIBERTY MIDDLE SCHOOL DOES NOT CONDONE SHOPLIFTING! DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME, THE STORY IN THIS COMIC IS PURELY FOR ENTERTAINMENT.

# Getting to Know Mr. Leniar

By: Hayley Smiley, and Anya Hughes

## What college did you graduate from and what was your major?

I did my undergraduates program at Rutgers University in Newark. I did my graduates at Seton Hall University in South Orange.

## What do you like best about your job?

I like working with the students.

## If you had to pick another profession, other than teaching, what would it be?

If I had to pick another profession, it would be a psychiatrist or an oncologist.

## What do you like to do outside of school?

I like to go to the gym and play video games, enjoys *Minecraft*, *Fifa*, and *Rocket League*.

## Do you have a hobby?

As I mentioned before, going to the gym, playing video games as well as playing soccer.

## Do you speak another language?

I speak Portuguese and a bit of Spanish.

## What is your favorite book?

*The Bible* and *Coach Carter* by Jasmine Jones.

## What are your favorite movies and/or tv show?

My favorite anime is *Attack on Titans*. My fa-



vorite TV show is *Peaky Blinders* and my favorite movie is *Interstellar*.

## What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is anything carbonara.

## How was student life at Edison Middle School?

At Edison, I was on the yellow team. EMS helped me grow out of my shell, since I was a shy student.

## How was student life at Liberty Middle School?

Attending Liberty Middle School helped me grow even more out of my shell. It was here at Liberty where I played soccer for the first time.

## How was your high school life?

I enjoyed high school. I took many electives. The food and sports were much better and I had fun in art. I connected with the teachers more in high school. I was close with the Spanish teacher.

# THE SONIC FRANCHISE

By: Miles Payne and Myo Balines

## The Hardest Sonic Game

I believe Sonic Unleashed is the hardest game in the series. In this game, Sonic transforms into a "Werehog" at night, changing the usual fast-paced gameplay into a slower, combat-focused style. The daytime levels are extremely fast, but they require quick reflexes to avoid obstacles. One of the biggest challenges is that if you get hit, you lose all your collected rings. Rings are like life insurance—if you have at least one, you won't lose a life when hit by enemies. Because of this, Sonic Unleashed can be frustratingly difficult, especially in later levels.



## The Easiest Sonic Game

On the other hand, Sonic the Hedgehog 2 is the easiest game in the series. One big reason is the ability to become Super Sonic—a powered-up form that makes Sonic nearly invincible. To do this, you need to collect all seven Chaos Emeralds (special gems hidden in the game) and gather 50 rings. Once you do, Sonic becomes much faster, can jump higher, and is immune to most attacks. This makes beating the game much easier compared to other Sonic titles.

## The Worst Sonic Game

In my opinion, Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1 is one of the worst games in the franchise. It was meant to be a follow-up to the classic Sonic games, but it fails in several ways. The controls feel stiff, the physics don't

match the older games, and the levels lack creativity. Many fans were disappointed because it didn't live up to the legacy of the original trilogy.



## Sonic the Hedgehog: On The Big Screen!

The Sonic the Hedgehog movies have been a huge hit, bringing Sonic (Ben Schwartz) to the big screen in live-action. Sonic the Hedgehog 2 introduced Tails (Colleen O'Shaughnessey), a flying fox who loves to invent things, and Knuckles (Idris Elba), a powerful rival-turned-ally. Sonic the Hedgehog 3 features Shadow (Keanu Reeves) as the main antagonist alongside Dr. Robotnik (Jim Carrey).



## Final Thoughts

Sonic the Hedgehog has been around for decades, and while some installments are amazing, others don't quite hit the mark. Whether you're into fast-paced platforming, challenging boss fights, or even the Sonic movies, there's something for every type of fan.



By: Sanvi Bhatnagar

# Sanvi's Section

## ~ Spring Funfetti Blondie ~

Prep time: 10 Min

Cook time: 20 Min

Total time: 30 Min

Yield: 12-15 Blondies



### Instructions:

### Ingredients:

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup packed light brown sugar

½ cup granulated sugar

¾ cup melted salted butter

2 large eggs

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract

1 cup pastel colored M&M's

½ cup pastel sprinkles

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line all sides of a 9×13 baking dish with parchment paper.
2. Melt butter and let it come to room temperature.
3. In a medium sized bowl, combine the flour, baking powder and salt together.
4. In a mixing bowl fitted with a paddle attachment, combine the melted butter, brown sugar and sugar. Then add the eggs and vanilla.
5. Gently fold in the flour mixture, then fold in the M&M's and sprinkles.
6. Spread batter into the lined baking dish and smooth the top. Sprinkle more sprinkles and M&M's on top. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until lightly golden on top, rotating pan halfway through baking.
7. The middle will still be a little gooey but they will continue to bake even after you take them out of the oven.
8. Remove from oven and let cool before cutting into squares.

POEM

# Mirrorland: Will I Ever Be Enough

By: Claicina Ceus

My bed  
You remind me of the sea.  
But not exactly.  
You're just so much,  
Always filled  
With tears that should have come long ago.  
You groan and strain  
Under my weight  
Feeling troubled  
By the words that were spoken.  
Yet you move so smoothly  
Like the sun gently lowering  
To let the moon take its turn.  
My place of self-hate  
Gentle but harsh,  
Welcoming yet unkind  
I realize you can't hide the thoughts from me  
I twist and turn in these heavy blankets  
Until I'm exhausted and fall into a restless  
sleep.  
I really don't want to be separated from you.  
You're my way to feel free.  
It's a tough reality.  
The harder truths catch up with me  
When I walk away from you,

Starting adventures  
that aren't as cozy.

(You're the only one  
that stretches To  
make space for me)

Mirrorland is not a  
friendly place at all.

I stand in front of the  
flat surface,

Staring dreamily at  
the bright, shiny mir-  
ror

That I've been holding for way too long.

I scroll through and catch those quick glimpses,

Sparkling and shining, bouncing back at you.

Can you tell how my eyes get teary just thinking of  
you?

In the harsh darkness, all my attention is on you.

I follow, I envy, I like, I like, I dislike, I unlike.

Yes! Today

you can get this

and feel happy?

Happy, until you come across that post

That makes you feel like you're not good enough

(You'll be back tomorrow!)

Wish we could all be hashtag 'blessed'

Wonder how many 'best lives' truly exist

What horrors are hiding behind the screen?

Late-night-thinking of my next plot to make them



CONTINUE ... Mirrorland: Will I Ever Be Enough By: Claicina Ceus

jealous

A harmless little show

Something to remind them that I'm here.

(even though I'm drowning)

(should be sleeping but can't)

Mirrorland oppresses me,

Reminding me of everything

I don't have

I need to be.

Everything I haven't been

I keep going back

Pathetic.

(like a moth to a flame, you never learn)

Sigh.

I Wander lazily

From the digital to the physical

To that empty rectangular glass frame

Hanging on the wall

It's always there for me

Morning and night, we move together

I spin and twist away from who I am.

It stays quiet, like it knows everything.

Who is she?

I see my reflection in the light,

Looking for what I want to see

Looking for something different

A half-truth

Never enough

Maybe if I look  
long enough

I'll like what I  
see

Sigh.

Stare and stare

For what feels like a year

In mirrorland, everything stays the same.

It reveals everything.

(But you already figured that out)

I step away from my own reflection.

(Too much for me)

I let out a sigh.

I pull my weak body along.

I rise and then tumble back into you.

(You'll be back tomorrow)

## ABOUT

The poem looks at how my bed provides a temporary escape from my struggles with mental health and how social media bombards me with too much information and encourages unhealthy comparisons.

The title "Mirrorland" comes from Yrsa Daley Ward's book, *The Terrible*, where she discusses how mirrors can make us feel trapped and lead to negative feelings about our bodies and fears.

The title "Mirrorland/Will I ever be enough?" examines the differences between the comfort of my bed and the reflections in mirrors (like smartphones and regular mirrors) and how each affects my mental well-being.



# Spring Word Search

By: Myo Balines, Miles Paye, Isabela Salinas Cavagnaro



Search for the word below. Words can go in any direction.



G	C	O	N	C	E	R	T	N	N	E	M	E	N	B
K	H	P	U	P	D	S	I	S	S	E	Z	J	A	V
D	Y	L	D	W	O	A	P	R	A	O	D	S	J	R
Q	L	A	I	U	R	L	E	R	U	P	E	R	R	D
G	F	N	M	R	A	W	L	M	O	B	L	O	A	R
G	R	T	Z	P	O	A	B	E	A	U	I	I	E	G
B	E	I	H	L	Z	R	S	L	N	W	T	G	N	S
E	T	N	F	C	E	C	L	X	V	B	O	Q	H	G
E	T	G	C	L	V	U	I	E	S	U	D	R	D	G
Z	U	B	L	O	S	S	O	M	E	D	F	S	G	L
S	B	A	B	R	E	E	Z	E	I	W	N	S	W	R
F	U	D	L	E	R	O	K	N	N	K	U	D	R	M
R	J	A	C	I	Z	E	Y	L	N	C	X	E	C	J
L	L	A	B	T	F	O	S	W	U	Q	H	E	H	E
T	M	E	K	J	F	M	Y	N	B	D	Q	S	W	F



Blossom  
Sapling  
Bud  
Softball  
Garden

Bunnies  
Sprout  
Concert  
Warm  
Pollen

Flowers  
Baseball  
Grow  
Breeze  
Seeds

Planting  
Bee  
Rain  
Butterfly  
Umbrella

