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Long Beach School District leaders release reopening plans for fall

By Andy Kanengiser

Faith Hermann will soon enter her senior year at Long Beach High with worries, as the Gulf Coast school reopens in the midst of a pandemic.

“I have several at-risk family members, and so obviously safety is a huge concern to me,” Hermann said. “My dad works and coaches at the school, as well, so we need to be extra sure neither of us are exposed.”

A Long Beach High marching/symphonic band member, Hermann says the campus has good safety measures in place. But she wants school officials to do



Special to The Long Beach Breeze
Incoming Long Beach High School senior Faith Hermann

more. That includes, Hermann said, steps to make wearing masks mandatory in high school.

Hermann offers other suggestions. “Distance learning needs to be an option for everyone, not just those who

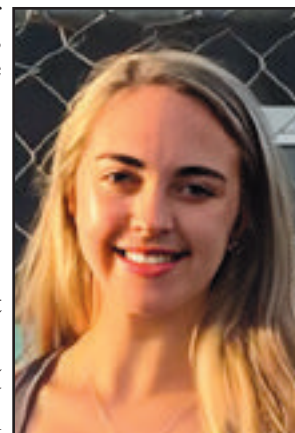


have a doctor’s permission, because people have family members who are at risk.”

Students say there are no easy answers for leaders in U.S. communities, as COVID-19 cases spike in

Florida, Arizona, Texas and more than half the nation in early July. Cases are rising in Mississippi, too.

“No one wants the state to close again. I want my senior year to be as normal as possible; and, if we close



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Class of 2021 member Sophia Fimiano

down again, that just won’t happen.”

Rising senior Sophia Fimiano, 17, wasn’t happy when many Long Beach district activities were suddenly cancelled in Spring 2020 due to the coronavi-

rus. As classes return August 6, the Lady Bearcats soccer player wants to see her senior year return to normal, if possible.

“It will be seriously disappointing and sad if the pandemic continues or is as disastrous as Spring 2020.”

Fimiano believes Long Beach School District leaders are “doing a great job helping to assure our safety.” She hopes district officials find a safe way for students to enjoy the Beta Club, Senior Prom and Homecoming and sports.

Savannah Hicks, 17, a student council and Beta Club member, notes Long Beach High leaders will

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Long Beach resident celebrates 105 years with wisdom and humor

By Lindy Sholes

When Long Beach resident Luanne Smith had a heart attack at the age of 63, her doctor didn’t expect her to survive much longer because she refused to undergo heart surgery, what was then a new concept. She has outlived several of her doctors, though. In fact, she celebrated her 105th birthday on June 19 in typical pandemic fashion. A line of around forty-five decorated cars and smiling friends, family, her current doctor and Mayor George Bass, paraded past her house where she waved and blew kisses.

She offered some words of wisdom that she has gained from her longevity: don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t cuss, and love people as Jesus loves people. She practices this, as she yelled, “I love you!” to every car that drove past.

Originally from Clarke County, Smith was a Gulfport resident since 1950, working at Brumfield Department Store for twenty years. Hurricane Ka-

trina flooded her home and forced her to move in with her daughter in Long Beach. It wasn’t a move Smith would have chosen, she said, as she has always considered herself to be quite independent.

Smith said some of her fondest and most impactful memories come from her childhood.

Her biggest influence in life was her grandmother, an Irish immigrant who was orphaned at a young age after a cholera epidemic and raised by her aunt.

“My grandmother would say not to slump my shoulders and to walk like a lady,” Smith said. “I still think of the things that she taught me. I miss her.”

During the Great Depression, her grandmother taught her to be kind and generous with people, as she would trade butter and eggs for sugar and flour. Smith was around fourteen years old when the stock market crashed.

“My dad lost his job as a lumber man,” she said. “I remember seeing him come up the lane and he went straight



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into the house, fell across the bed, and that was the first time I had ever seen my dad cry.”

But they never went hungry. She said people came together and helped each other during a time of need. Her family grew their own food, planting extra to give to the neighbors. Smith said when push comes to shove, she believes that people would do the same thing today.

“I have met some lovely people in Long Beach since I’ve been here: and when it comes down to the nitty gritty, I think the community would stick together and help each other out in a crisis,” she said.

For someone with 105 years of age, Smith said she feels okay physically, though busy days, like her birthday, wear her out quicker than they used to. She joked that if she lives to see 106, she will take her money from the bank and find a “hidey-hole.”

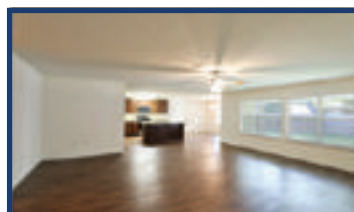
She shattered her femur at age 98, and because of her age she was not a can-

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