

The Commentator

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Douglas Southall Freeman High School

October 2019



A New Freeman

Left to Right: Timothy Sanders, Laura Hollowell, new Principal John Marshall, newly appointed administrator Beverly Steele, and new Vice-Principal Richard Butler all stand in front of the school.

Balazs Kaszala
Design Editor

Same school, new schedule. For returning students, the new year has brought a lot of changes, both to the schedule and culture of Freeman. With the addition of the new block schedule, the school's administration has had the opportunity to make plenty of adjustments to the way the school

day runs, from the way classes are organized to an improved tutoring hub.

Even with the addition of a block schedule, teachers have been given the opportunity to have a planning period every day. "Teachers still teach their same [number] of classes, we did put into effect some parameters such as making sure a teacher has an off period, planning, or duty each day, so they don't teach all the way through,"

said Principal John Marshall.

The addition of broken-up blocks also eases the workload of teachers, especially those who teach multiple different sections each day. According to history teacher Laura Jones, who teaches preparatory as well as Advanced Placement classes, "since I teach three classes a day instead of six, my individual days are much easier than last year."

However, students in the Career

and Technical Education Centers (Tech Centers) also benefit greatly from the changed school day structure. According to Principal Marshall, the blocks will "give these students more time in class and less time riding between schools, maximizing their learning time". New opportunities, "like internships" are also something made available to Tech students via the new schedule.

Another big change this year is the addition of Freeman Focus, an independent study period that replaces the study block which took place during fourth period in previous years. But this class is not just for study; a class-free period makes it "so [students] don't have to stay late to make up a test or come in early for tutoring," said Principal Marshall.

The addition of Freeman Focus has also given rise to a newly-revamped tutoring hub. National Honor Society students are assigned to the library for Freeman Focus, creating one centralized location for students to go to if they need tutoring help. According to National Honor Society sponsor Gretchen Sweat, "The tutoring hub is a single location for anyone to go to who needs tutoring, and it also makes it easier for NHS students to get their volunteer hours." The administration has also ex-

panded the advisory program to the entire ninth grade class. Every Wednesday during Freeman Focus, freshmen meet with their advisory class to learn life skills. Principal Marshall said this is an overdue addition which will give the freshman class, and eventually every class in the school, useful life and school advice.

"We discovered that there's some pieces missing in the general high school curriculum," Principal Marshall said. "We teach history, math, and science, but we don't spend enough time teaching how to be a good student, how to overcome obstacles and have grit, and how to take care of yourself socially and emotionally." The emphasis is for students to have a "trusted mentor, advocate, and guide" to turn to throughout their high school education.

"So far, my advisory teacher has taught us how to use helpful [school-related] websites like Rebel Hub, where it's easy to find stuff like bell schedules and [the] counseling [website]" said freshman Ben Coker.

As for the general vision, Principal Marshall "believe[s] [these changes] will allow for a more active, deeper learning [experience] overall."

Henrico County Says Goodbye to Midterms

DRAWING: ABBY TAYLOR

Maggie Sheerin
News Editor

This year, students will no longer have to frantically refresh the Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) Twitter feed, hoping that midterm examinations have been canceled. The exams are definitively not happening, regardless of any inclement weather that may impact the school's schedule.

In September, HCPS announced that students will no longer be taking midterm exams during the week of December 16. This is a change to the proposed schedule at the beginning of the year, as that had the pre-Winter Break week designated as half-days for high school students taking exams. Now, the week will be full days of instruction for all teachers and students across the county.

While the cancellation of exams is nothing new to Henrico County students, as they have been canceled in five out of the past six years, this year it is not the result of an impromptu blizzard. HCPS has decided that as a county, it no longer will administer midterm examinations.

This decision came after the formation of a committee of teachers, administrators, and central office instructional staff who studied

the issue, according to Director of Communications and Community Engagement Andy Jenks. "The committee received feedback from high school teachers that suggested that, when they were administered, midterm exams resulted in the loss of valuable instructional time," said Mr. Jenks. "Convinced" that this cancellation will be a benefit to the entirety of the teaching and learning process across Henrico Schools, Mr. Jenks and the Division Leadership Team of HCPS is committed to progress, without the presence of exams.

Unlike years past, this is not a one-year cancellation. "It will be our approach moving forward," said Mr. Jenks.

For students like freshman Emmitt Battle, this means a high school career without midterms. "I have never had to take a midterm and now I never will," said Emmitt.

Here at Freeman, there is no shortage of rejoicing over the county's decision. English teacher Jeff Wooten is excited that he will no longer be forced to deal with the "chaos" of midterms canceled last-minute and can plan ahead. "This decision gives teachers more instruction time and it gives us a little more flexibility with how we assess students before the break," said Mr. Wooten

This sentiment is mirrored in many students throughout the halls

of Freeman. Junior Jessie Lindeman is "glad" about not having to worry about a week of assessments. "I probably wouldn't have studied anyways," said Jessie.

However, not every Freeman student agrees with this change. Sophomore Robbie Acree fears how this change will impact the futures of high school students. "This generation is too soft for midterms; we're not being properly trained for college," said Robbie. Fellow sophomore Zach Wachtel shares this dissatisfaction, but for a different reason. "I really liked the half-days during exam

week," said Zach.

While there are varying emotions circulating about this decision, there are also logistical adjustments that must be made by faculty and staff, without the influence of personal feelings. "There are lots of pros and cons for having exams," said associate principal Richard Butler. "One thing that we're doing is encouraging teachers not just to have regular tests, but also [to build] assessments that cover a greater amount of material," said Mr. Butler.

Additional adjustments for teachers include making the decision

as to whether or not they want to administer their own form of a semester progress assessment. While they are not permitted to give midterm grades from an examination, they still are allowed to create some form of a mid-year evaluation, whether that be in the form of a test, project, or another medium, and assign a quarter grade to it.

Regardless of whether teachers do decide to create mid-year assessments, the students of Henrico County can take a collective breath come mid-December and enjoy their snow days without midterms looming over them.



Like a Good Neighbor, Freeman is There

Lowell Smith
News Editor

Construction to replace J.R. Tucker's school building has left their football and volleyball teams without home turf. To help mitigate these issues, Freeman has approved Tucker's use of its stadium on two occasions.

Tucker volleyball is moving from place to place for practice and games, using schools like Glen Allen for space to practice. Meanwhile, Tucker Football is travelling for practice and playing only away games.

Freeman Director of Student Activities (DSA), Suzanne Criswell, reached out to Tucker's DSA Chris Brown and offered their football team Freeman's stadium and field to host two games on nights that the Rebels were not playing.

"He took me up on two of those opportunities. One of them being our bye week and one being at the very beginning of the school year." Mrs. Criswell said. Additionally, without home games Tucker's booster club could not make money off of ticket sales for



Freeman faces off against Tucker at home.

games. When Tucker hosts games at Freeman, they get a portion of ticket sales and concessions.

Mrs. Criswell voiced her concern for Tucker's student body and their experiences, particularly the seniors. "Their senior

class isn't going to be able to have things like senior nights, so we have offered to have them do their senior nights with us," she said. Tucker senior Stephanie Marra said, "Sporting events are a big thing for a lot of high school stu-

dents and not being able to play on our home turf is quite annoying."

Varsity football captain Will Reid said, "I'm glad that we could offer a space for their senior football players because they missed out on having a field for their senior year."

Criswell also noted that "We don't want to detract from what our seniors have either. We want them to feel entitled to being a senior at Freeman High School, but we want to make sure that seniors over there don't miss the entire experience too."

"I think it is very important to treat them as we would hope we would be treated... I also felt that it was really important to help out our neighbor," Criswell concluded.

Highland Springs is getting a new building as well. Henrico County Public Relations stated, "The two-story, 265,101-square-foot buildings will be accompanied by new field houses, concession stands and synthetic turf athletic fields. Each project is budgeted at \$95 million." Construction is estimated to take two years and is anticipated to open in the 2020-2021 school year.

You're Invited!



Freeman's homecoming dance will be held in the big gym on Nov. 2. Tickets are \$10 and will be sold during lunches on Oct. 30 through Nov. 1. The theme is "Out of This World." Guests should dress in semiformal attire.



The Commentator

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EL Back to School Night



Ms. Jones's English Language students gather outside of Freeman.

Holly Doustoust
Staff Writer

Freeman has the second largest English Learners (EL) population of all nine high schools in Henrico County with 136 EL students. To account for the large EL population, Freeman held its second-ever EL Information Night on Sept. 25 to inform EL families in their first languages about Freeman's rules of conduct and resources.

"[We] saw a need for us to reach out to the English Learners and their families to make them feel like they're part of the Freeman Family," said Paverick Nicolas, Spanish teacher, who coordinated the event with Lauren Lightfoot-Clare, the department chair of Exceptional Education.

Mr. Nicolas said the goal of the night was "to provide [families from other countries] with information that, for someone who had been going to school in the United States their entire life, would be kind of intuitive."

Alexandra Torres, mother of sophomore Adonay Uzcategui-Torres, was unclear on what school would be like for her son at Freeman and said that the EL Night was a great help to her. "I was unsure of what my son would see during the year and what the goals of the school were for his education. I was very lost and thank [Mrs. Carroll] who has helped me tremendously."

Attendees of the EL Night were served dinner in the library and welcomed by speeches from principal John Marshall and sophomore EL student Maaida Farhad. Afterwards, the attendees separated into groups, based on what language they spoke, with each group having either a Dari, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, or Nepali translator.

The groups traveled to different classrooms for ten-minute information sessions on attendance requirements, discipline, graduation, and PowerSchool. That information was then relayed to the attendees by the translators.

Norma Ryan, the stepmother

of junior Christian Atencio, described how beneficial it was to talk face to face with the teachers, counselors, and students. "It was very very helpful to be tutored through navigating PowerSchool" and the "review about discipline and what to expect with attendance; all of those things will really help me to support my student," said Mrs. Ryan.

Volunteers also lent their hands at the EL Night by setting up for the event, welcoming guests, serving dinner, and translating for parents.

Freeman's EL Night had a total of 12 families consisting of 15 parents and 17 students. Mr. Nicolas said he was happy with the turnout. "Next time we do it, I hope the turnout grows until every single [EL] family is there."

Overall, Mrs. Lightfoot-Clare said that she too was content with how the EL Night went. "If we helped one family, then it was a success, so I'm hoping that we helped all twelve of those families," said Mrs. Lightfoot-Clare.

Marshall's New Vision for National Honors Society



Senior Nicholas Cavallo tutors sophomore Tyler Hagan.

Joseph Harrell
Staff Writer

The 2019-2020 school year is one of many firsts for Freeman. Along with new faces, new schedules, and new goals, the new school year brings a reconstructed tutoring system.

National Honor Society Tutoring, a peer-tutoring effort, is a new take on learning. Rather than sitting with a teacher or lecturer, students are taught by fellow classmates. These peer tutors are often the same age and in the same classes as the students receiving tutoring.

New Principal John Marshall noticed students were qualified to help, "We have [students] in the building -- experts in the building -- that have just been through it and are sometimes more engaging, frankly, than other kinds of teachers. Now students can connect in Freeman Focus and don't have to match up lunch blocks," said Mr. Marshall.

This year Freeman is reinvigorating the National Honor Society Tutoring to be more energetic, active, and important within the school. Mr. Marshall and Gretchen Sweat, special education teacher

and NHS sponsor, are spearheading the effort to make tutoring more accessible and engaging for students.

The tutoring headquarters has been moved from upstairs to the library, where NHS members receive their tutoring assignments, collaborate with fellow learners, and develop tutoring techniques.

"[I]t used to be housed upstairs and out of the way.... Now we're putting tutoring front and center in our school, in the library, at a larger scale," Mr. Marshall said.

This year's tutoring program has also been designed to be more interesting for the students involved. Students are having more peer interactions and more diversified tutoring schedules.

"It's awesome to be hanging out with friends and having a good time, while also knowing that what we're doing is a good cause and helping other students throughout Freeman," senior tutor Brian Angel testified.

All of those involved with NHS Tutoring from students, to teachers, to faculty, firmly believe in the effectiveness of the program.

"We make a difference in kids' lives. We really do," said Mrs. Sweat.

New Faces at Freeman

Aaron Todd
Chorus



College: JMU

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Cookies 'n' Cream

Amanda Clark
World Language



College: Mary Washington

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Butter Pecan

Andrea Nachman
Exceptional Education



College: VCU

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Mint Chocolate Chip

Brandi Eacho
English



College: Randolph Macon

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Mint Chocolate Chip

Caitlin Roberts
Social Studies



College: University of Alabama

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Mint Chocolate Chip

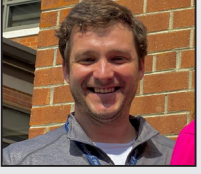
Chapin George
Social Studies



College: Hampden Sydney

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Gelati's Just Ask

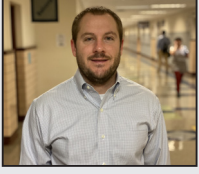
Charlie Williams
School Counseling



College: William and Mary

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Black Raspberry

Chris Spencer
English



College: St. John Fisher

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Chocolate Almond

Dona Bailey
Exceptional Education



College: VCU

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Rocky Road

Ingrid Heiberg Convey
Math



College: William and Mary

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Mint Chocolate Chip

Jeff Wooten
English



College: UVA

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Coconut

John Compel
Health and PE



College: Bridgewater

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Strawberry Cheesecake

Kaitlyn Pullin
World Language



College: Randolph Macon

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Turtle

Kim Jordan
BLISS



College: VCU

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Neopolitan

Molly McManus
Art



College: VCU

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Chocolate

Richard Butler
Associate Principal



College: JMU

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Salted Caramel

Liz Puckett
School Counseling



College: Roanoke College

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Coffee

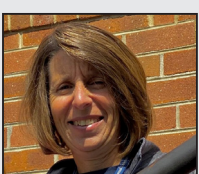
Steven Gromling
CTE



College: State University of New York at Oswego

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Cookies 'n' Cream

Susan Good
Guidance



College: Longwood
Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Mint Chocolate Chip

Whitney Beaton
Math



College: Virginia Tech
Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough

Richard Orr
CTE



College: State University of New York at Geneseo
Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Mint Chocolate Chip

Trash in the Courtyard



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Freeman's Own Rock Climber



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Students from Around the World



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New Coaches and Star Players



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Artist of the Month



The Back Page

Trash in the Senior Courtyard



Annie Stephens
Opinions Editor

Let's Make the Senior Courtyard Great Again™. Lately, our lunch getaway has been trashed. It is time for a make-over done by the senior class. The senior courtyard needs a facelift and I have the perfect vision of what it should be.

First things first: bouncy castle. Take down that decaying tree in the middle, and put in a bouncy castle. How chaotically fun!

Around the bouncy castle, let's put real chairs. Real, four-legged chairs that are comfortable enough to spend a half hour in. Possibly a few recliners? Eating lunch while reclined is a challenge I'm willing to accept. Along those lines, maybe we throw in some couches in case students want to nap during lunch. I mean, why not? It's our "free" time.

Let's also put in some marble tables to spice the place up. Just imagine how satisfying it would be to eat lunch on marble tables. While we're at it, take out that one random, moldy, broken table that just sits there in the corner. Looking at it makes me sad; it was once

a useful table, but now it can be classified as trash. A glow-down.

On the walls, there should be projectors that can show anything that the students request. We can log into my Netflix account and binge watch any show we please. We could also figure out how to stream sports; just think about March Madness...that would be insane.

Instead of pebbles that are hard to walk on and sometimes used as weapons, let's put down a hardwood floor. A dark hardwood floor is extremely aesthetically pleasing. But really, we're down for whatever. Anything is better than those pebbles.

Heaters should be installed during the winter months so that the seniors don't have to sit with the inferior underclassmen in the cafeteria. Even better, we should build a wall to block out the other underclassmen who dare to sneak into the courtyard! Your time will come, but for now stay in the cafeteria.

All of these changes would make the senior courtyard a better place to eat lunch. We would have the greatest senior courtyard in all of Virginia, actually, in the world. Seniors from across the globe would flock to us, on their knees, begging for entry. It will be all over the news. I can see the headlines now: "Freeman High School has the Most Spectacular Senior Courtyard Ever."

Or, we could just clean it ourselves and throw away our trash. That might be easier.

HE SAID

Davis Buckbee
Opinions Editor

Emoji or toucan suit?

Vastly underrated

I have these lucid dreams, where I can't move a thing.

Sweeeeeeet Caroline

"Rebels in the fro--"
"WE JUST FUMBLER"

We should have
November 1 off.



Homecoming

Pitbull

Emotional Males

3rd Quarter Band

Cheerleaders at
Football Games

Halloween

She Said

Annie Stephens
Opinions Editor

That's an ugly suit.

Mr. Worldwide <3

Oh, you actually have feelings?

I'd die for the band.

WE!! CAME!! TO!!
HYPE THIS PLACE
ALRIGHT

MONSTOBER.

FRESHMAN ADVICE

1. RESPECT THE BAND.
2. BE LOUD AT GAMES.
3. HEAD TO THE ROOFTOP POOL AFTER SCHOOL TO COOL OFF.
4. WALK FASTER IN THE HALLS.
5. DON'T BLOCK THE HALLWAYS BY STOPPING OR CLUMPING TOGETHER.
6. TRY OUT FOR THE TEAM; JOIN THE CLUB; MAKE A NEW FRIEND.
7. HAVE A GREAT NEXT FOUR YEARS—ROLL REBS!

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Letters to the editor are encouraged. They must be signed before they can be printed. Because of variety and space, only a limited number of letters can be published. The Commentator reserves the right not to print a letter.

The Sadie Hawkins Problem



Davis Buckbee
Opinions Editor

Homecoming season is in full swing. Students are browsing websites for dresses and suits in their classes, and organizing groups at lunch.

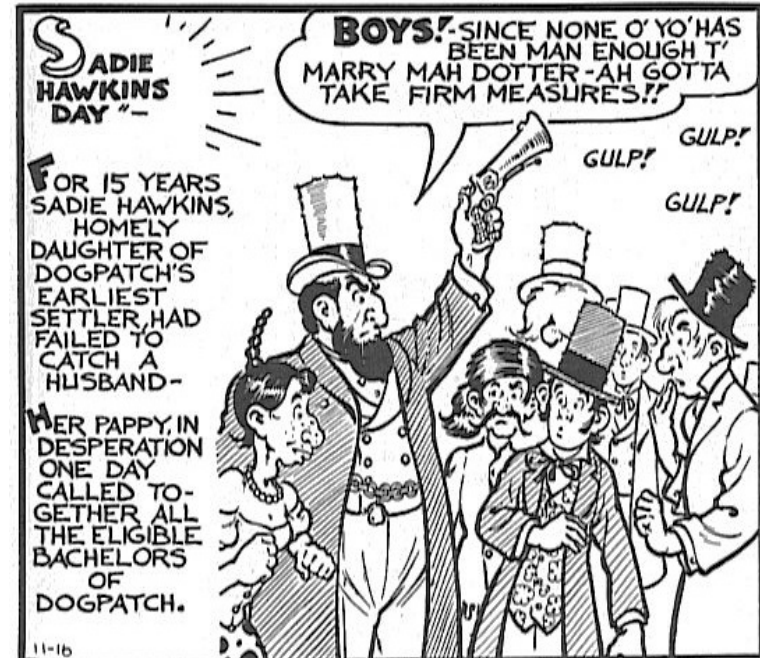
But there is one main difference that separates this year's homecoming: it is a Sadie Hawkins year.

Freeman traditionally holds a Sadie Hawkins homecoming every four years. At these dances, girls ask guys to the dance, instead of the traditional proposal where the guys asks the girls to the dance. Sadie Hawkins dances became popular in high schools across the country during the late 1930s, supposedly as a means to break down the stereotype that it is a guy's role to propose to the girl.

Breaking down gender norms is a noble cause. The only problem is that Sadie Hawkins actually does the opposite. A quick search on Google will lead to the discovery of the concerning history behind the Sadie Hawkins dance. I expected the origin story to be an inspiring one of a feminist who declared the social norm of guys asking girls to dances as demeaning, and starting the tradition of girls asking guys.

Instead, what I found stained my impression of the Sadie Hawkins dance.

Sadie Hawkins was the brainchild of misogynist cartoonist Al Capp in 1937. In the series of cartoons, Sadie Hawkins is the



One of Al Capp's original sexist Sadie Hawkins cartoons. CARTOON: AL CAPP

ill-favored daughter of the richest man in the fictional town, Hezekiah. Sadie is unappealing to the other men in the town, and cannot find a husband. In response, her father brings together all of the town's bachelors and creates a race where Sadie chases the men. If Sadie catches a man, he will be forced to marry her. The fictional town rebooted the race every year, and Al Capp (having received attention and success from the comic) would create a new race comic every year to commemorate the fictional town's tradition.

Within a few years of the cartoon's initial release, hundreds of high schools and colleges began having "Sadie Hawkins" dances.

Aside from its disturbingly sexist origin story, the Sadie Hawkins dance itself still fails in its attempt to promote equality. Despite girls asking guys as their dates, the responsibility of paying for tickets and dinner often falls back on the males' shoulders.

This year, having been asked by girls to homecoming, many of my classmates are still planning on

paying for their date's ticket and dinner. Some feel a responsibility to, some want to, and some of their dates expect them to. Don't get me wrong--I'm no different, I will be paying for my date's dinner and homecoming ticket. It just feels wrong not to. And that sense of responsibility or chivalry is what perpetuates gender norms both in the school dance process and on a broader scale.

The way to break the mold? Eliminate Sadie Hawkins dances, but also end the social norm of the guy asking the girl. Students should be encouraged, regardless of sex or gender, to ask whomever they want to the dance. And the students themselves should make it routine for the person asking their date to pay for their dinner and ticket.

Until we change these gender norms within the walls of Freeman and acknowledge the Sadie Hawkins dance's disturbing past, we cannot look to the practice of girls asking guys to homecoming as a beacon for gender equality.

Overheard Freeman

"Overheard Freeman" is an experimental student-submitted representation of the funny and amusing quotes heard around Freeman, and will be included in the Opinions section of the DSF Commentator next edition. Submit funny and anonymous quotes you overhear to overheardfreeman@gmail.com

Twirling to Success On the Field and Off

Leo Lombardi
Staff Writer

Ishita Bakshi is no newbie to baton twirling. The freshman in the Leadership Center has been baton twirling since third grade. She twirls for the Freeman Band as well as her club, the Florettes Majorettes. "My friend and I saw a girl baton twirling during a talent show in middle school, and we were hooked," said Ishita.

Baton twirling is essentially "a hybrid of dance and gymnastics, but with a baton," said Ishita. There are a variety of baton twirling routines. At the high school level, single baton routines are most common, but two and three baton routines are mixed in on occasion, as well as fire batons. However, Ishita mostly participates in single baton routines with Freeman, while mixing in double, triple, and fire baton routines for her club.

For baton twirling, the competition season is from January to July. "The competition season with my club is much more challenging than twirling for Freeman," Ishita said. Although baton twirling isn't a sport, she treats it as one because of the time and money put into it. She practices around ten hours a week in addition to traveling for tournaments as far as South Bend, Indiana on the campus of Notre Dame. For this reason, her parents aren't necessarily strict about the results she gets, they just want to make sure she's making the most out of her time.

When Ishita is not twirling for

I kind of treat it as a chance to practice and make up new routines."

-Ishita Bakshi

the Florette's Majorettes, she's doing so for the band. Twirling with the band is the perfect opportunity for Ishita to represent her school. "I kind of treat it as a chance to practice and make up new routines," Ishita said.

Ishita's audiences for club competitions and football games drastically differ in terms of pressure.



PHOTO: ISHITA BAKSHI

Ishita Bakshi (left) with her friend before a competition in Baton Twirling.

"Football games are more nerve wracking because there are way more people watching that will see if you mess up," said Ishita. Club competitions only have three judges grading your performance. Ishita's first home performance at the Freeman v. Atlee game "... went well. It was a mistake-free performance, and I had a fun time

performing with the band."

One such mistake that can be made during a performance is dropping the baton, which Isita said "actually...happens a lot. When it happens I just have to play it off and follow the drop with a bigger trick to make up for my mistake."

Lisa Cirillo, Ishita's coach for

The Florettes Majorettes, sees "a definite college twirling future" for Ishita. As Ishita's constant critique and teacher, Coach Cirillo acknowledges that Ishita has the natural physical talents for twirling. "You must have clean body lines as a twirler and this comes naturally to her." She added how Ishita headed to Notre Dame this

past summer to compete at the Baton Twirling nationals. "She placed very well against many twirlers from across the country," said Coach Cirillo. Coach Cirillo loves to watch Ishita grow as a twirler. "She has great presentation during all her twirling routines and you can't help but want to watch her to see what she does next!" said Coach Cirillo.

Junior Helps Senior Citizens

Mary Cooper Frank
Staff Writer

Balancing a busy schedule is often hard, but junior Kala McGehee "can handle it." After school, Kala heads to her job at the Lakewood Nursing Home. Kala works about twenty hours a week, working from around 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. every day after school. She "goes straight after school and usually doesn't get off until nine" which she described as "tough and hard to manage, but very rewarding for a number of reasons."

Kala's parents believe her job is a great opportunity for her. They worry about her academics and her working schedule but "love that she gets to work with the older generation of people because she can learn a lot from them."

Kala became involved in Lakewood because her grandparents had recently moved to the Nursing Home and she was looking for a job. She was drawn to this job because she "loved all the people because they were so nice." Kala also enjoys working there because she is able "to see the people many times a week," which she likes because she can make connections with each one.

One of her main responsibilities is serving food in the dining room. Being a server allows Kala "to talk and have relationships with all the different people" which she described as her favorite part

"People come into work if someone calls out just because they care about their job [of] keeping the residents happy."

-Kala McGehee

of the job. While her primary responsibility is serving, Kala also tries to make it her job "to make



Junior Kala McGehee poses in between classes at Freeman.

people happy and make them feel like they are home because this is their home." Different from most jobs, Kala said that "people come into work if someone calls out just because they care about their job [of] keeping the residents happy."

Since she is able to have conversations with all of the residents during their meals, she can also get to know them pretty well and learn from them. Kala used to serve a man named Mr. Fielden who told her about his career in the chemical world and she also met a lady who lived in the Netherlands for twenty eight years that has flown across the Atlantic twenty-one times.

Apart from her job, Kala is taking "AP U.S. History, AP Physics, AP Calculus, and Honors English" at Freeman and attends the ACE center at Hermitage. On top of that, she has also been playing softball for six years and made Freeman's varsity softball team as a freshman. Kala described junior year as "challenging because the

AP classes are different from regular honors classes" and she has had "to make a lot of adjustments" to her studying.

As she is learning how to manage it with other activities, Kala said her job is "most definitely helping" prepare her for future jobs and her future in general. She is developing a "good work ethic" and will have "a job considered as service" to put on her college resume. She is also learning "communication skills" because she is able "to talk to an array of different people" and "to learn to adapt to what they need in a conversation." Everyone in the nursing home has various levels of necessary care; some people have poor or sensitive hearing which requires her to adjust the volume of her voice.

The personal growth Kala has experienced since beginning her job at Lakewood has largely driven her decision to "work at Lakewood for a while, especially through high school," despite her exhausting schedule.

Guess Who:



Who am I?

- Born in Lakeland, Florida
- Junior
- Wrestles and rock climbs
- Has one dog and two cats
- Has three sisters, one at Freeman
- Likes Pizza

Junior Climbs to New Heights with Peak Experiences

Sarah Echols and Emma Johnson
Features Editors

Many people set high goals for themselves. For sophomore, rock climber, Kieran Wall, this has a more literal meaning.

"I always liked to climb things when I was younger," Kieran said. His mother, Jill Wall even had to tell him to stop and come down on several occasions because, "I worried that the top tree branches would break," she said. Kieran first discovered his interest in rock climbing specifically after completing the Passages Camp at Belle Isle where he rock climbed and kayaked in elementary school. "He attended Passages Camp for several years and decided he wanted to climb year round, so he joined Peak's Jr. Training Team, then the Training Team, and now he is on the Competitive Team," said Mrs. Wall. Peak Experiences is an indoor rock climbing center in Midlothian, Virginia. It's wide array of climbing walls offer challenges for every class of climbers from beginners to competition level.

Kieran owes his growth and advancement as a climber to his two coaches Matt Londrey and Ian Chavis. "They have been instrumental with coaching Kieran to improve his climbing and further encourage his love of climbing," Mrs. Wall explained. However, Kieran also looks to big names in the rock climbing world. "Adam Ondra and Drew Ruana are well known rock climbers in the United

Adam Ondra and Drew Ruana are well known rock climbers in the United States that I look up to."

-Kieran Wall

States that I look up to," Kieran said.

While Kieran started climbing as a sixth grader, he didn't start com-



Kieran Wall climbing outside at the New River Gorge in West Virginia.



Kieran Wall climbing at Peak Experiences where he is a member of the competitive team.

peting until last year. Now he regularly competes in rock climbing competitions across the country. "I attend the competitions and drive

him to many of the closer competitions," Mrs. Wall said. The closest competitions are usually still a few hours away. These competi-

tions include Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. Kieran hopes to travel to Oregon this spring for Nationals. "Qualifying competi-

tions start soon," said Kieran.

Kieran's climbing is not restricted to indoors. Despite Virginia's lack of ideal rock climbing locations, Kieran has found some top spots in the region that offer him a chance to put his outdoor climbing skills to the test. "My favorite spot is the New River Gorge which I try to go to as much as possible," said Kieran. The New River Gorge is in West Virginia, so it's close to

I fell about 30 feet down and almost hit a tree, so that was fun."

-Kieran Wall

a three hour drive, but this doesn't stop Kieran from traveling there on weekends to get in some extra practice outside of Peak Experiences.

Kieran spent a week at the New River Gorge this past summer for a camp by Passages. "It was a full week of outdoor climbing and tent camping," Mrs. Wall explained.

In all his time spent rock climbing, Kieran has had some nerve-racking moments. In one instance, Kieran was climbing outdoors when things took a turn. "I fell about 30 feet down and almost hit a tree, so that was fun," Kieran said. However, this fall hasn't stopped Kieran from pushing himself to even greater heights. Kieran's greatest accomplishment is scaling a 150 foot climb.

Despite his fall, Kieran tries not to take unnecessary risks, so he doesn't push boundaries when it concerns his safety. "I've climbed without a harness before, but never more than 25 feet because I confidently know I can climb that height," Kieran said.

In addition to his time spent at Peak Experiences, Kieran looks to outside sources for more information on rock climbing. "If he's not climbing, he's watching videos about climbing or reading books about it," Mrs. Wall said.

Kieran is only a sophomore, but he is already exploring what his future in climbing will be. "I hope to continue rock climbing for as long as I can," said Kieran.



Whitney Williford and her River City Crew team competing in a regional competition last year.

Richmond River City Rebels Row

Emma Burton
Staff Writer

Richmond's rowing team, River City Crew, has a few Freeman Rebels in their boats. Rowing, also known as crew, has been an Olympic sport since 1896. Essentially, it involves racing in a boat of one to

eight people who row themselves across varying distances.

Junior Whitney Williford first started rowing in a camp at River City Crew the summer before her freshman year and joined the novice team that fall. Whitney is on the varsity team now, "I row on an eight person team in seat 2 which is at the back of the boat," she explained. Junior Parker Hill, an-

other member of the varsity team, started rowing her sophomore year. "I started doing it because my friend, Whitney, said it was really fun," said Parker.

Freshman Lily Davis and Sophomore Rachel Gordon are both members of the novice team. On Lily's novice team, "there are four people in the boat, plus the coxswain," she said. The coxswain

sits in the front of the boat facing the rest of the rowers and is responsible for coordinating all of the rowers.

The fall season started on the first day of school with practices each day after school. All of the girls are preparing for the first few competitions this school year. "There are three this fall, and the first one is in Occoquan, Virginia," Lily said. In

the fall season, the teams row three mile races, but in the spring they will switch to 2,000 meters.

Even as an accustomed rower, having rowed in about sixteen total competitions, Whitney admitted that rowing can be strenuous. "Sometimes it's hard to stay with it, like when you're half-way through a piece, you [have to] keep pushing through it because it's a team sport," she said.

With practices everyday after school, the constant time commitment can also be a challenge. "It's all about time management and focusing on rowing while you're there but once you get home, getting to your homework," said Rachel.

Despite the challenges that come with crew, the girls look at it as an opportunity to get outdoors. "It's nice to be on the water, and no matter what the weather is, it's never too uncomfortable doing it," said Whitney. Lily has similar views on crew, "I like being on the water with my friends," she said.

While rowing isn't as conventional as other sports at Freeman, it offers the same team experiences. "During the season, you get to know everyone in your boat, and you get really close to them," explained Parker.

Junior Strives to Impact Richmond Community



Amy'a volunteers for the Salvation Army Angel Tree program.

Riley Wilkes
Staff Writer

Junior year is often considered the hardest year of the high school experience. However, this general-

ity has not stopped junior Amy'a Matthews from helping her community and working to make the world around her better.

Amy'a began her charity work by buying and giving out food to homeless people she met on the street. This experience taught her

the amazing feeling of helping out others, and she knew that she needed to continue to do so. "It felt good to help these people, I realized how many people need my help, and I have the means to be able to help them," she said.

When Amy'a was nine years old she started to get involved in other charities. One of the very first events she held was an easter egg hunt with the Salvation Army. She went to the store along with her friends and purchased baskets, candy, Easter eggs and small gifts to take to the children.

Shanon Matthews, Amy'a's mother said was incredibly proud of the initiative Amy'a took with this event. "They did arts and crafts with the children and gave out sweet treats to the people who were there. The smiles on the chil-

dren's faces at the shelter made my heart melt," Ms. Matthews said.

Amy'a then went on to create her very own nonprofit, known as the Women Helping Others (W.H.O) volunteer organization. W.H.O hosts annual back to school supply drives to help those who can not afford proper items for school. Amy'a's organization also partners with the Salvation Army, one of the largest charities in Richmond. W.H.O also works with the Ronald McDonald House to set up easter egg hunts for the children staying there.

"One of my main goals is to make W.H.O a more widespread organization. I hope to get a website or some form of social media in the future," Amy'a said. At the end of the day, her mission is "to help the greater Richmond area."

Amy'a credits her mother for her drive to give back to her commu-

One of my main goals is to make W.H.O. a more widespread organization."

-Amy'a Matthews

nity. "Ever since I can remember she has always influenced me to help others and spread kindness," she said. "Amy'a has a genuine heart and enjoys giving back to the community...I am so proud of Amya for making a difference in the world at such a young age," said Ms. Matthews.

DSF Cheerleader Shares Her Roots

Megan McDonald
Editor-in-Chief

Middle school can be tough for everyone. It means no more recess, a new school campus, and a lot of homework. Sophomore Vivian Garcia's challenges when she started school at Quioccasin Middle School were far from typical.

Vivian moved from Villanueva, Honduras, the summer before seventh grade. She described this transition as "a big part of [her] life."

"My parents moved to Virginia for a better life," Vivian said. While her parents got settled, Vivian and her four siblings stayed with their grandmother in Honduras. Vivian explained that the biggest difference was the language.

Vivian started school without speaking any English. "Quioccasin was difficult because I did not speak any English," said Vivian.

However, Vivian learned quickly and found high school to be much easier now that she has strong English skills. "[Freeman] is different because I already spoke English and Spanish, so I can help other students," said Vivian.

Vivian's World History teacher Laura Jones complimented Vivian's commitment to helping her peers. "People passed that

class because of her," said Ms. Jones.

Vivian has touched many people at Freeman with her "authentic energy and spirit." "Vivian has a zest for life... that makes it hard to be mad around her," said Ms. Jones.

Vivian's friend and classmate sophomore Dennis Ramos, who is also from Honduras, described Vivian in a similar way. He said Vivian is a "kind and caring friend."

One of her favorite pastimes here at Freeman is cheerleading. This is Vivian's first year on the Freeman JV cheer team. "I like to cheer at games, and I like talking with my teammates," Vivian said.

Whether she is in the classroom or out on the field, Vivian is always cheering on her Freeman family.



Vivian (left) enjoys a DSF football game with her cheer squad teammates.



Senior Puts Family First

Addison Gorenflo
Centerspread Editor

One of the first things senior Saad Hassan noticed about America is something that most of us would never question. Saad was at a McDonald's, applying for his first job in the United States, when he saw a customer use a credit card to pay for her meal. Saad was astonished by this: "I never saw that before, and I was so confused!" Saad said with a laugh, "I thought to myself, 'is there little monies in the card I can't see?'"

The ten months since Saad's family moved to America from their native country Pakistan have been filled with experiences like this. Things that appear mundane to an American, like credit cards, bank accounts, and widespread internet access, are brand new to Saad. And things that are integral to Pakistani culture, like cricket, a sport Saad played for 12 years, have little importance in America.

While he misses the familiar comforts of Pakistan, Saad believes the economic opportunities available in America are well worth it. "It's hard to be away from home," he said, "but it is much easier to make money here, and I have to support my family." Saad has not hesitated to take advantage of America's economic opportunities since moving. He works at Walmart from 4 p.m. to 12 a.m., Monday through Saturday, and on Sunday, Saad spends his day off from Walmart doing food deliveries for DoorDash. Though this schedule would be grueling to most, Saad keeps

his focus on what matters most to him: his family. "Living and working here in America is the best chance for my sisters and extended family back home to have bright futures," he said. "I put that before everything."

Saad's determination to make the most of his opportunities in America is a trait he learned from his father. "I cannot explain how hardworking my father is...Some people have religions or mottoes they live by, but I just think 'do what my father does'" he said.

Saad's father, Farhad Hassan, grew up in extreme poverty. Forced by his parents to prioritize employment over education, Mr. Hassan chose to attend school without ever telling his family. "Education has always been very important to me," Mr. Hassan said, "which is something I support for Saad, too."

Mr. Hassan managed to balance working multiple jobs with his secret education and graduated with high marks. Shortly after Saad was born, Mr. Hassan landed a job as a gardener for the American embassy in Pakistan. Though he was never meant to do anything other than manual labor, he proved his aptitude and rose to the rank of Dispatcher of the Motor Pool Section. "As Dispatcher, I was responsible for scheduling all local and out of district movements for all American officials...as well as for handling all maintenance and fuel," he said. It is because of Mr. Hassan's work with the embassy that his family received the offer to live in America on Special Immigrant Visas.

As soon as the Hassans accepted the offer from the embassy, Saad devoted himself to learning English. "The day I found out we were moving, I came

home and told my family, 'No more speaking Urdu, Pashto, or Hindi to me. It's just English from now on,'" he said. His determination paid off, as he graduated from the English Language Learner program and passed all of his math and science SOLs within his first four months at school.

In the future, Saad hopes to become a doctor, as his education in Pakistan was based around medicine. He is also considering going into the business field because he finds economics to be a fascinating part of American culture.

Wherever he ends up, Saad knows one thing for sure. "One of the most important parts of Pakistani culture is supporting your family," he said, "Whatever I do, I just hope I am able to make happy lives for my parents and sisters."



SPECIAL FEATURES

Freeman Family from Around the World

Villanueva, Honduras

Vivian's hometown of Villanueva is known for its production of sugar cane. The production of sugar cane tends to cover the area in what people call "el nieve negra" or "black snow".



PHOTO: LA PRENSA

Tromsø, Norway

Maja's hometown of Tromsø is located above the Arctic Circle and is a famous viewing point for the colorful Northern Lights that sometimes light up the sky.



PHOTO: DESTINATION NORWAY

Peshawar, Pakistan

Saad's hometown of Peshawar is the oldest city in Pakistan and one of the oldest cities in South Asia. The city has also long been associated with the Buddha and Buddhism.



PHOTO: TRAVELJUMIA.COM

Astana, Kazakhstan

Nurbol's hometown of Astana, renamed Nursultan in March 2019, is Kazakhstan's capital city and is known for its futuristic buildings and architecture.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

From Tromsø to Richmond

Maddie Sherman
Centerspread Editor

It was a year ago this past September that junior Maja Bakken Giever first applied for the exchange program that would bring her 3,955 miles from her hometown, Tromsø, Norway to Richmond, Virginia.

She had always known about the exchange program through her older sister. "I think I've always thought about it - my sister was supposed to go, or wanted to go, but she didn't and she always regretted it. I just didn't want to have the same regret."

Maja noted that the process takes a really long time, so she didn't leave her home town of Tromsø until August 20th. She

then made her first stop in America on August 21 in New York City, and finally made it to Richmond on August 24. It was then that she first met her host family, the Carters.

Grace Carter, Freeman senior and Maja's host sister, feels the experience has been amazing so far. "I really knew nothing about Norway before," said Grace. "But now I hear how she talks about her family and the things she does, and I understand better."

Maja expressed a similar sentiment about her first five weeks spent in Virginia. "I expected to be really homesick in the beginning just because every single thing here is so different - even the light switches are different - but I've been having a really



Maja poses in front of the harbor in Tromsø.

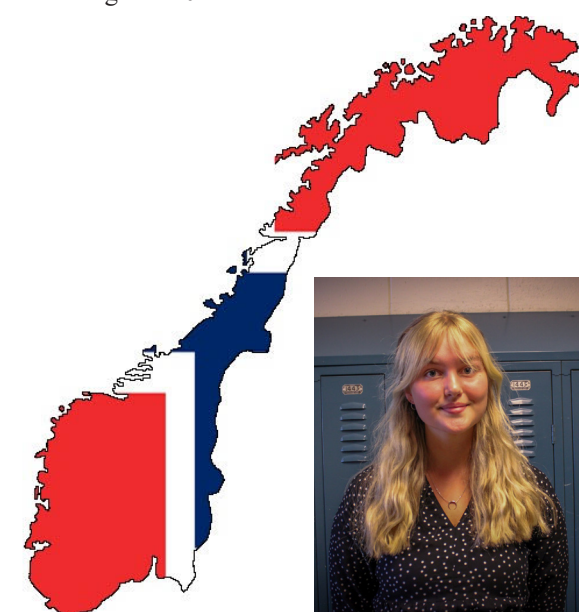
great time." Richmond is notorious for its hot, humid summers and Tromsø is located above the Arctic Circle, but the differences between the two cities don't stop at the heat. After joining Freeman's cross-country team, Maja observed, "The way people interact with each other is so different here, even with strangers. I feel like people here are really open."

Maja was also quick to point out the vast differences between her two school experiences: "In Norway, you kind of just go to class and go home. Here a lot of people are more involved in school and there's a lot more school spirit."

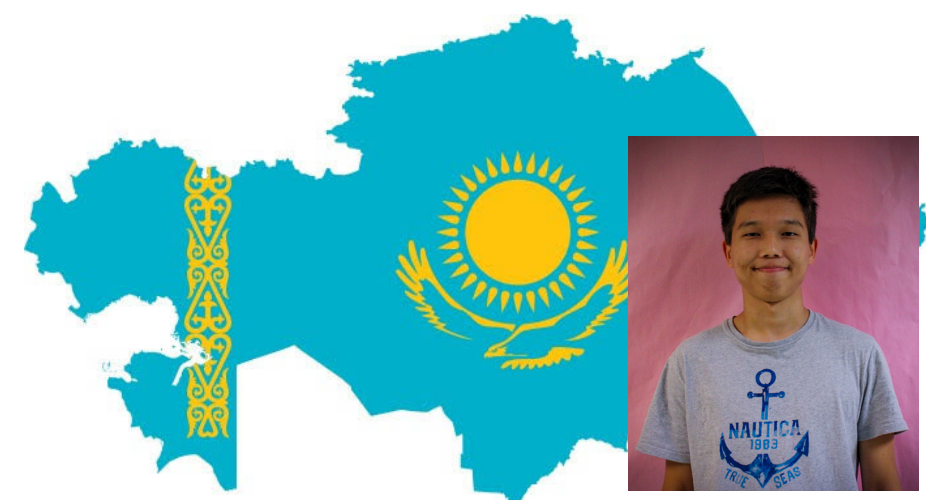
Another significant difference between education in Norway and America

is the size of the student body. Coming from a school with around 300 students, Freeman's approximately 1,800 students came as quite a shock to Maja. However, she has enjoyed the opportunity to meet new faces as back home, "Everyone has already made up their mind about everyone."

As a whole, Maja has really enjoyed the experience that the exchange program has given her thus far and is glad she jumped at the opportunity when she had the chance. Maja also appreciates the global perspective that the experience has given her. "To just overall be more understanding and aware of other cultures is such an important thing and I can definitely feel myself getting a wider perspective already," she said.



6,021 Miles Away...



Gretchen Neary
Online Editor-in-Chief

Astana, Kazakhstan and Richmond, Virginia are separated by 6,021 miles, but for junior Nurbol Dusenbek, the distance is the only difference between the cities.

Two and a half years ago, in 2017, Nurbol moved to Richmond and began 8th grade at Quioccasin Middle School. There was not a specific reason for the move, "just the US had better opportunities," said Nurbol.

Once Nurbol moved, he didn't notice many changes. "It was the same as my home country. There wasn't much of a difference. I went to school, and did my homework, and had fun with friends. I made a lot of new friends and that's it," said Nurbol.

As far as anything he misses about his former homeland, Nurbol loves the fact that people in Kazakhstan "love to have fun," and he misses that, "Everyone was Asian and you didn't have to get the Asian stereotypes," he said, laughing.

Prior to coming to the United States, Nurbol did not hold any negative

stereotypes about the US. "I knew that Americans were like mixed with a lot of other cultures and nations," he said.

"Nurbol did a great job adjusting to life in the US, but he didn't like Quioccasin Middle nearly as much as Freeman. He really wasn't used to big classes of 30 kids," said Nurbol's step-father, Steve Lampert. Mr. Lampert himself is a Freeman graduate of the class of 1985.

"His last school was dedicated to the best stu-

dents in Kazakhstan," said Mr. Lampert, and it seems as though Nurbol is continuing these standards at Freeman. Science teacher Marisa Vest is Nurbol's favorite teacher. She described Nurbol as "Dedicated, always willing to embrace the next academic challenge, and really sweet-natured."

Nurbol's favorite activities with his friends are "definitely cross-country and going to lakes," he said.

Nurbol runs cross-coun-

try in the fall and track in the winter and spring, where he runs the "800s, 1600s, and 400s."

During Nurbol's freshman year, he met one of his best friends, senior Danny Pellet, during cross-country. "He's kind of quiet, but once you start talking to him, he's definitely a nice, outgoing guy," said Danny.

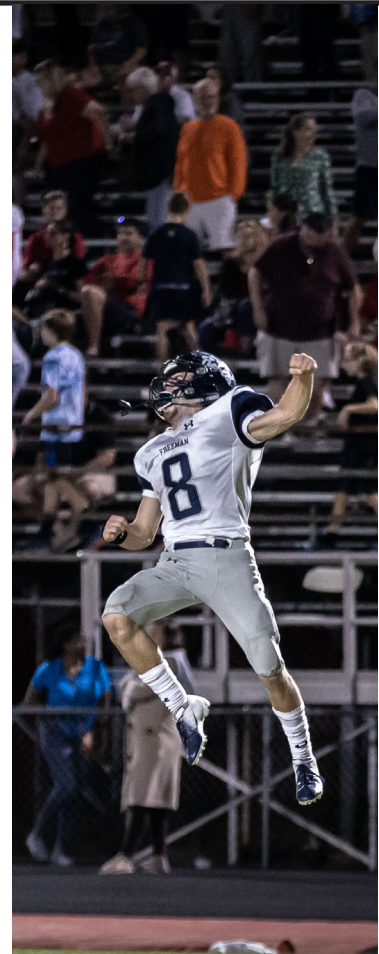
While Nurbol is fairly shy around new people, "At home Nurbol is a typical teen, he spends too much time on his iPhone and if we let him, he would live off junk food and soda. But when it's time for school work, no one can fool like Nurbol," said Mr. Lampert.

Nurbol and his family are quick to rattle off the normalities of life in America, serving as a reminder that many commonalities can be found between different backgrounds.



PHOTO: NURBOL DUSENBEBEK

Nurbol (left center) presents alongside classmates at his old school in Kazakhstan.



Picture 1: Andrew Bland and Luke Jennette celebrate a good play. Picture 2: (from left to right) Luke Jennette, Seamus Moore, Andrew Bland and Jackson Fellows pose for a picture during a game. Picture 3: Andrew Bland celebrates a touchdown pass.

Junior Quarterback Leads Varsity Football Team

Kendall Betz
Staff Writer

Junior Andrew Bland has been playing football for as long as he can remember. The varsity starting quarterback started playing at age five, and “ball” was one of his first words.

In third grade, Andrew played for the Western Wildcats, a local club league, and his team won the championship. Since then, Andrew said “last year’s [Freeman varsity] team” was the best team he’s been on, but he said “I want

this year’s team to be the best team I’m on, and then next year I want next year’s team to be the best team I’m on.”

This year, Andrew’s father is Freeman’s varsity head coach, but Coach Bland says “this is nothing new as he always has known me as ‘coach.’” The father-son duo share a passion for football and enjoy “working together to achieve team goals,” Coach Bland said. “I just want the football team to do well, keep winning games,” Andrew said.

This season is Andrew’s third playing football for Freeman.

“[Football’s] really fun because you get to play with 40+ guys and it’s different from any other sport because you’re working all summer,” Andrew said. “Everything about [playing football] is awesome,” Andrew said.

“On the field, Andrew is very intense and laser focused,” Andrew’s mother Clare Bland said. “He is a competitor in every sense of the word... he will never back down or ‘quit’ fighting until the end,” said Mrs. Bland.

Andrew’s teammate, wide receiver Seamus Moore said, Coach Bland agreed that Andrew

Having such a good quarterback makes it a lot easier when you’re a receiver.”

- Junior Receiver
Seamus Moore

is a valuable asset to the team with his “competitive nature, energy, and work ethic.”

In addition to football, Andrew looks forward to playing varsity baseball for Freeman this spring.

In the future, Andrew hopes to play football or baseball in col-

lege and coach younger kids as an adult. For next year, Andrew is looking forward to his final season on the Freeman football team and hopes to “win as many games as [the team] can and build good relationships with the guys.”

From a young age, Andrew’s competitive spirit and determination put him “in his element” on the field, Mrs. Bland said. Seamus Moore described Andrew as “a great quarterback and a great teammate.” Andrew is always looking to improve, and his “competitive spirit makes him a pleasure to coach,” said Coach Bland.

Respect the Band.



Will Dornik
Sports Editor

While roughly 200 sweaty high schoolers compressed on a small segment of the bleachers is far from favorable, one factor salvages these conditions into undeniable amusement: “Sweet Caroline.” In past years, Freeman’s band played a supporting role for the student section during the football season. This year, however, the band has become the backbone of the 12th Rebel Man in the third quarter.

This year’s band is filled with standout senior performers such as Cole Thomason, Sam Phillips, Justin Ntomy, Bryden Mollenauer, Zach Edwards, Brian La Rosa, and Seth Casey.

Each leader brings a new way of upgrading the experience this



The third-quarter band celebrates with the student section during the October 4th Tucker game after a touchdown.

year. Cole plays the drums upside down and lets other students hit the drum. Junior assistant drum major Abby Kuptas also joins in the band antics. She continuously dances at every football game to the tune of “War”, “Sweet Caroline”, or “CW”. Sam spent most of the third quarter against Atlee on September 20th jumping between fellow bandmates with an individ-

ual dance routine. “While the band was mostly focused on music, this year it’s more of a performance, and we try to make it as interactive and fun as possible,” Justin said.

The third-quarter-band has a domino effect on the entire game. “We hype up the student section, and they hype up the band. It’s not the same as it was in the past either. The student section and the band almost work together, and

the louder we get, the louder they do,” said senior drum major Zach Edwards.

The attitude is hardly one-sided. Senior Rebel Man Will Coker thinks the band is a perfect answer to the almost “drained” student section post-halftime. “They do the heavy lifting in the third quarter. As soon as Zach walks down, we immediately start jumping on top of each other, and losing our

voices,” Will said.

However, there are potential downsides from the noise between the band and the student section. Senior wide receiver Thomas Laughlin said “Although the football team loves the energy, while we’re on offense, sometimes we can’t even hear coach call plays.” However, Thomas feels as if they’ve already answered a previous problem. “To be fair we can’t get mad at the band for being the loudest they’ve ever been, because that’s all we’ve ever asked for.” In response to this, Bryden said the band is taking “the steps in ensuring that its changed in the future.” Although the band is perceived by the students as something already truly special, Zach says “we’re only improving. Now that us seniors finally have the reigns, we have the opportunity to do something truly special for the entire school,” Zach said.

As the 2019-2020 football season progresses, the students section has howled the same phrase at every game: “Respect the Band.” Junior drummer Brian La Rosa says “It is finally time we give the student section the band they will love.”

Lacrosse Star Wins Player of the Year for the 2019 Season

Timmy Dillard
Staff Writer

On the first day of the 2019 school year, junior lacrosse player Kerry Nease received a special plaque from the athletics director here at Freeman, Suzanne Criswell. Kerry was awarded player of the year in the 5B region as recognition for her achievements this past 2019 lacrosse season.

She compiled 101 goals and 29 assists last spring for the Rebels, doubling her goal output from her 2018 freshman season.

Kerry was chosen through a vote by the girls lacrosse coaches of the 5B region in order to win player of the year. The award, which is usually only given to one player, was co-awarded by VHSL this year to Kerry and Kate Miller of Atlee. Kerry also received 1st Team All-State honors this year and 2nd Team All-State honors as a freshman in 2018.

Kerry knew about the award long before it was given to her, but it wasn’t a goal of hers to prove her status as a player. “I always want



Kerry cradles the ball under pressure from Godwin defense

to compete to be the best, but for me it’s all about helping the team,” said Kerry. Winning is Kerry’s top priority, and player of the year is an afterthought for her.

Kerry, who has been on varsity since her freshman year, has been playing both lacrosse and soccer for as long as she can remember. “I’m playing lacrosse all the time,” said Kerry.

Thanks to the help of her father, Kerry can practice her skills even when she’s not on the field. “My dad built a cinderblock wall for me in our backyard and I throw on that all the time,” said Kerry.

Freeman’s head coach for the varsity lacrosse team, Christina D’Angelo, has hopes to turn the program around as well. D’Angelo has a special chemistry with

Nease, as she has coached her ever since Kerry was in 5th grade.

“The relationship that Kerry and I share transcends the sport of lacrosse,” says Christina. “Her desire to compete and win is tangible and she makes us all, including the coaching staff, want to compete.” She is also Kerry’s club team coach, so they see each other 6 or 7 times a week during the spring.

Nease has also dedicated a lot of time to soccer for Richmond United (the most competitive soccer in the area for high schoolers) but just recently had to make the decision between soccer or lacrosse.

She decided to hone in on lacrosse and play year round in order to do her best for the Freeman lacrosse team.

Kerry hopes to play both lacrosse and soccer at the collegiate level, but if she can only choose one, lacrosse will definitely be in her future in college. Her biggest goals are to play for the recently formed Women’s Professional Lacrosse League (WPLL) and even compete in the olympics, which may recognize women’s lacrosse by 2028.

As a top national recruit, Kerry has stood out during her time at Freeman so far, and she doesn’t plan on stopping now. The first goal in Kerry’s sights this year is a state championship. Nease says that winning the award is something she is proud of, but its not nearly as important as giving her all to the lacrosse program at Freeman.

PHOTO: JOE MAHONEY

New Faces in Rebels' Athletics:



Varsity Head Football Coach Bland poses for a picture.
PHOTO: RTD

First Season as Head Football Coach

Caroline Tyler
Sports Editor

The Rebels' new varsity head football coach is no rookie to Freeman football. As Coach George Bland enters his twentieth season coaching football and his fourth year with the Rebels, he recalled some of his first memories of the sport.

"My first memories of Friday Night Lights were with my grandfather. He would bring me to Freeman games as a five year old," Coach Bland said.

Sports continued to be a focal point of the Richmond native's life. While in high school at St. Christopher's, Bland immersed himself in athletics.

"I was quarterback for the football team, point guard for the basketball team, and pitcher for the baseball team," Coach Bland mentioned.

I was quarterback for the football team, point guard for the basketball team, and pitcher for the baseball team.

-Coach Bland

He remained in the region to play both collegiate football and baseball at Randolph Macon College.

Even after his own athletics career was over, Bland returned to St. Christopher's to begin his high

school football coaching career in 1999.

"I try to coach how I learned from Coach Kemper, my head coach when I played at St. Chris. He developed me as a young man, not just a quarterback."

Bland also added he "loves a team atmosphere," and hasn't stopped coaching football since. He joined the Freeman football program four years ago, initially coaching defensive line, running backs, and special teams.

"I sought out coaching here because of Coach Henderson and his leadership," the head coach said about his predecessor.

Bland added, "Henderson and I share a similar offensive strategy. We believe running the ball and a physical presence are important."

When he's not involved with his coaching responsibilities for the Rebels, Bland serves as director of RockIt sports, a local organization for sports development.

Through these years of coaching many youth sports, Bland has had the opportunity to coach his son Andrew all the way from Little League to varsity starting quarterback.

"I have been coaching high school football since before he was born, and I have been coaching him since he was born. It is all we've ever known," Bland said about the father-to-coach dynamic.

Coach Bland emphasized, "I am thrilled to be here with this dream job, and I have immense pride in the Freeman community that supports us."



Ms. Sam tapes junior Damian Balsom's ankle before practice.



New Weightlifting Coach Art Blanchard teaches advanced PE in the weight room.

DSF Welcomes New Athletic Trainer and Weightlifting Coach

Jacob Brann
Staff Writer

In addition to a new head football coach, Freeman has added two new members to the athletic department: Sam Herbert, the new athletic trainer, and Art Blanchard, the new advanced physical education teacher and weightlifting coach.

Ms. Sam developed an interest in sports medicine when she attended Lynchburg College with the intention of becoming a physical therapist. However, while working in a local high school during graduate school, she became interested in athletic training.

When she finished her master's degree, Ms. Sam worked as an athletic trainer at a high school in Virginia Beach and later Varina High School. She left her position at Varina to work in a physical therapy clinic, where she was able to confirm that her passion is in athletics.

"I left to work at a PT clinic, and then I realized I wanted to get back into the high school setting. I missed working with all the sports and seeing people get back in the game, as opposed to being in the PT clinic getting them ready," she said.

When Dennis Spurrier announced his retirement last year, she applied for the position at Freeman. "I really liked the Freeman community that Dennis always talked about... It sounded like a good athletic training culture to get into," she said.

One of Ms. Sam's main duties

is to create rehab routines for athletes to recover and prevent further injury. Ms. Sam sees athletes with all types of injuries. "Everyday is something different and something new," she said.

Ms. Sam helped junior Damian Balsom recover from an ankle injury. "Ms. Sam gave me treatments, and after I did it, I was back the next day," said Damian.

Ms. Sam has been a huge asset to the football team this year. "Ms. Sam does a lot for the team. She gets all the injured guys healthy very fast," said Damian.

Unlike Ms. Sam who is new to the Freeman family, Coach Blanchard went to high school here. He returned to his own alma mater this year to become Freeman's newest physical education teacher and weight training coach.

After graduating from the University of Richmond, Coach Blanchard worked at Thomas Dale High School in Chesterfield, where he taught PE and coached football.

At Freeman Blanchard teaches Advanced PE and conditions student athletes for all Freeman sports. Advanced PE is a personal fitness class focused on weightlifting.

"We're trying to do sports specific training for kids who are in there. For those who [don't play a sport], we're looking at general fitness at [their] different levels," Blanchard said.

Coach Blanchard likes the freedom his Advanced PE classes are given, and believes it provides a great opportunity for students to stay fit and train in a more advanced setting.

Coach Blanchard commented that "the students can take full advantage of the class, particularly those in school sports."

This PE elective gives students a unique chance to stay fit even during their busy school schedules. "We have kids that are in season now, who can come in, get their workout done, go to practice, and go home to get their homework done," Coach Blanchard said.

Coach Blanchard has also added some new elements to the class. "We've started to do some yoga on Fridays, which is something new I don't think that's been done in years past," Coach Blanchard said.

Another element of his job is coordinating strength training for school sports teams. "I worked with Coach Jason Elkin from Elkin Sports Training to develop new workouts...and also design individual workouts for each student," he said.

Coach Blanchard has also joined the football program to assist coaching and create workouts for the team in the weightroom. "[Coach Blanchard's] coaching abilities are top notch," said Damian.

As a Freeman grad, he looks forward to working for his former school. "As a student here, I had a lot of great teachers who gave a lot to me. Now I'm looking to give back to the community and to the students," said Coach Blanchard.

Both Ms. Sam and Coach Blanchard are helping Freeman athletes stay healthy and fit. Damian described them as "very good people" that the football team "loves."

Golf Team is Runner Up at State Competition

Keya Pokhriyal
Staff Writer

On Oct. 15, the Freeman golf team placed second behind Deep Run in the state competition.

Social studies teacher and golf team head coach, Ben Williamson, said the team had set "a goal for the season...to win the state championship," but they were still happy with their performance.

Senior Cole Diers explained, "We felt pretty proud of ourselves because we came in 5th last year, and it was great to improve."

The golf team also won second in the regional tournament on Oct. 3, which qualified them for the state championship.

During the regular season, top scorers, sophomores Luke Bitsko and Grant Miller, and seniors David Andrews, Cole Diers, and Sam Dornik led the team to win colo-



PHOTO: BEN WILLIAMSON

Luke Bitsko and Grant Miller tee off during a tournament this year.

nial mini-districts. "We have played very well this season. We haven't lost a head to head match, but we did lose to Deep Run in a quad match with Cosby and Hanover," Grant Miller said.

Cole said that despite their high achievements, the team "always thinks that [they] can do better."

The team's success has also been

in spite of a few changes from last season.

"We definitely have had better regular season results... despite losing our number-one player [Trevor Elliott] from last year," Coach Williamson said. Trevor was named to the all-region team last year.

Coach Williamson explained how underclassmen have filled

this role. "Our two really accomplished sophomores, Luke and Grant, have stepped in."

With this young leadership, the team has had a competitive season. "We beat Deep Run in the colonial districts. We came in third place out of 12 teams in the Lake Chesdin tournament. We've had a great season," Coach Williamson said.

Looking ahead to next year, the team predicts even more changes to navigate. "We are going to lose some really influential seniors. We're losing three starting seniors who have been starters since they were freshmen and sophomores. David Andrews, Cole Diers, and Sam Dornik are going to be a huge loss," Coach Williamson said.

Cole thinks that Freeman golf "will still be pretty great next year." "We have some really good sophomores...that can carry the team," Cole explained.

Luke Bitsko agreed with Cole.

"I think we have a good future because we have a lot of sophomores on the team who can play well," Luke Bitsko said.

Coach Williamson added, "Our top two players are sophomores, so that's great; but, for a team sport, we have to have at least two or three other players that are really playing well."

With that said, Coach Williamson sees increasing potential on the team. "We have junior Travis Moore who is really stepping up and playing very well. We have sophomore Brayden Coleman who has really shown a huge improvement," Coach Williamson said.

With sophomores Luke and Grant as the top two players, and rising leadership from Travis and Brayden, Coach Williamson said, "I feel strong[ly] about the next couple of years. We should compete well within the region and state for sure."

Noteable Fall Stats

Field Hockey



PHOTO: DEBBIE MCDONALD

Charlotte Browder:
Scored a hat trick against Manchester on Sept. 30

Volleyball

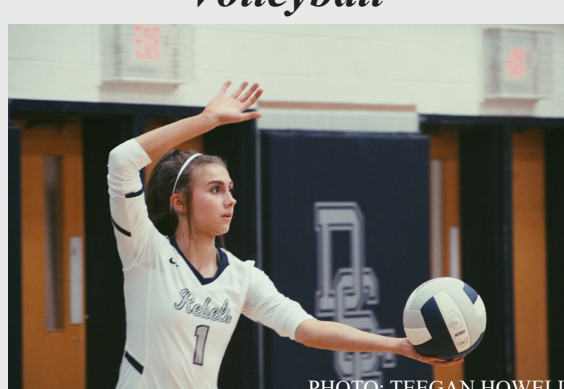


PHOTO: TEEGAN HOWELL

Teegan Howell:
Over 90 kills and 60 assists this season

Football



PHOTO: JACKSON FELLOWS

Jackson Fellows:
8.25 yards per rush through six games

Freshman Runner Makes Strides

Lanie Moore
Staff Writer

Freshman Kieran Berry currently ranks as one of the fastest runners on the cross country team. Special ed teacher and cross country coach Brian Reutinger said that from the first practice, "it was evident [Kieran] had some talents, and we couldn't hold them back but ... for so long."

During the team's race on September 21, Kieran was the only freshman to race with the varsity runners. Senior Danny Pellei, one of the captains of the boys cross country team, remarked on how uncommon this is. "Most of the time it's upperclassmen [running varsity], and then we'll usually get a few sophomores, but not often freshmen," explained Danny.

Kieran began running when he started playing soccer at the age of three. "We knew from this playing soccer that he could

run," said Kieran's mom Paige Berry. Over time, Kieran started to go on runs with his dad, who ran track in high school. Kieran continued his father's legacy by running on Tuckahoe Middle's track team last year and on Freeman's cross country team this year.

In addition to attending daily cross country practices, Kieran also plays soccer, basketball, and wrestles. "Two times a week I go to cross country, and then I have to go straight to soccer practice," he explained. Kieran also said that he has "done school wrestling in the past, and so that's every day." Additionally, "basketball is normally [a weekly] practice."

Kieran says that playing numerous sports is "how I find my energy. If I don't play too many sports, sometimes I don't get my work done." Kieran has ADHD, so he finds it difficult to focus "if I'm not forced to work hard."

Kieran also runs by himself "normally every weekend," both in his neighborhood and on the trails around Brown's Island. Danny said that Kieran must be "pretty dedicated," since he runs in his free time. "A lot of people don't do that," said Danny, "and that's pretty important."

The schedules of Kieran's family members are equally as busy as his own. "We are a family of six, so there is always a lot going on, often in different directions," explained Mrs. Berry. It's difficult for the Berrys to keep up with each other during the school week, so Mrs. Berry said that they "catch up on weekends and time away from home." The Berrys enjoy everything from hiking and biking to kayaking and paddleboarding.

As for Kieran's other activities, he said that "the cross country team is a great environment." Kieran explained that everyone is welcome: "You don't have to be the best runner in the world to come in here and make a difference on the team." He furthered this statement, saying "A work ethic is enough to make you a good runner: working hard every day, coming out to practice."

In regards to this work ethic, Mrs. Berry explained that, "Fortunately for him, Kieran has always been a hard worker."

This principle can be clearly seen while Kieran is running during meets. Kieran said that, when racing, he finds motivation in "beating the opponents one at a time" And of course, "wanting to win."



PHOTO: PAIGE BERRY

Freshman Kieran Berry competes in a meet earlier this season.

Cross Country's Competitive Team Culture



Anastasia Branch
Staff Writer

In most sports, the top seven athletes of a varsity team are just a statistic. However, on Freeman's cross country team, the top seven performing athletes make up the varsity team.

This lineup is always changing, and it is not uncommon for the best JV runner to break through to the seventh spot on varsity. In fact, this recently happened to sophomore Ben Mayes. He credits his accomplishment to the cyclical nature of varsity cross country.

"I am more competitive and I work harder in practices...[in order to meet] my coach's and my [own] expectations about my potential," said Ben.

Senior varsity runner Campbell Collett agreed saying, "it's fun to sort of push yourself to be the top guy."

Senior Rylan Pearsall described the flexibility of the team as motivation for runners to "just keep going higher" in the team's ranking. Rylan Pearsall enjoys how cross country allows her to have "more opportunities to be where you want to be" in her running career.

The constant rotation of cross country impacts the JV and varsity group dynamic. According to Brian Reutinger, the head coach

of cross country, the combined practices of JV and varsity create a "very cohesive team."

As a result, it is not unusual for underclassmen to be running alongside upperclassmen.

"All of the upperclassmen have always been really helpful for the younger runners, everywhere from [giving] racing advice to giving rides," said sophomore JV runner Riley Spoenlein.

Ben said this relationship fosters a "strong, motivated team" between all the different levels of athleticism.

Based on the runners' perspectives, the team shares a bond built upon the substantial amount of time spent together at practice during the fall season.

Before big meets, the team always comes together for a pasta dinner. Riley said the dinners she shares with her teammates are "always really fun." This is yet another time for the team to get to know each other.

The competitive nature of the varsity top seven creates "a ripple effect that goes all the way through the team," said Coach Reutinger. This motivates runners to perform their absolute best all the time.

Although the atmosphere is fierce, the comradery is plentiful in this year's cross country team, just like the pasta. The cross country team will compete to qualify for the regional meet October 26.



PHOTO: BILL MCCLURE

Daniel spikes a ball in the September 3 home game against Hermitage.

Senior Boys Volleyball Captain Spikes Team Growth

Ashton Doll
Staff Writer

Daniel Bazianos, captain of the volleyball team, takes seven Advanced Placement (AP) classes, leads multiple clubs, and manages it all in the limited time of a day. According to junior teammate Weston Martin, "He's dynamic. He can do a lot of things."

The team is led this year by their coach, Dave Calvert, who is in his 11th season guiding the boys volleyball team. Running the team this year is senior Daniel "Baz" Bazianos along with Peter Hughes, Timmy Dillard, and Carr Cox.

Daniel has been playing volleyball for Freeman since his sophomore year. Daniel's older brother, Steven Bazianos, played volleyball for DSF. Daniel first became interested in volleyball while practicing with his brother at the University of Richmond sand pit.

According to Weston, Daniel is "one of our best hitters" and "one of our best passers when it comes to serve/receive." On the volleyball team, Daniel plays outside hitter.

Last year, the boys volleyball team lost against Godwin in the Virginia High School League Class 5 Region B regionals. This

year, they are trying to, "find their edge to win close games," according to coach Calvert. "The main thing is to make playoffs, hopefully win a few games, and just keep having fun with it," Daniel said.

Whenever a volleyball player needs help or motivation, Daniel is ready to pitch in. "He always makes sure everybody knows what they're doing. He always assigns tasks to people to make sure they're on the right page," Weston said.

When Daniel isn't at practice or playing in a volleyball match, he works to stay ahead of his schoolwork. "You [have to plan] day to day, cause if I start worrying too much about all the stuff I have to do in a week, it's too much," said Daniel.

The captain of the volleyball team is also the president of National Honor Society and a leader of Hola, Freeman's Spanish club. He takes seven AP classes, while being involved in many clubs. "I'm in Beta club, Mu Alpha Theta, History and Human Rights Club, and Spanish National Honor Society," Daniel said.

Despite his many responsibilities and leadership positions, Daniel expressed that, "Ultimately, even if you're a leader of a team, you're still just a player. You can't think that highly of yourself." When

asked about Daniel's leadership, coach Calvert replied, "Daniel is a very humble leader. He isn't flashy, but he does his job well."

During the most tense moments, the matches, Daniel helps his team keep their cool. When talking about their game on September 18, Daniel said, "a lot of the players were getting a little nervous, so you've got to put a smile on your face and make sure everyone knows it's all relative. We're there to have fun, so let's try to get a point and not worry too much about it."

After one of the games, Weston said, "one of the alumni was like, 'this might be one of our worst

Ultimately, even if you're a leader of a team, you're still just a player. You can't think that highly of yourself.

-Daniel Bazianos

teams we've had in recent years."

Weston described how Daniel defended the team, "Daniel was like, 'I don't think that's true. I think that we can stay together, we can focus, and we can have a good year ahead of us,'" said Weston.

New Coach's Style of Play Beginning to Mend UVA



Joshua DuPuis
Sports Editor

It's been fifteen long years since the feat was last accomplished, and this may be the year that Bronco Mendenhall fulfills the unspoken contract requirement of every UVA football head coach: beat Virginia Tech.

Three years ago, Coach Mendenhall took over after former head coach Mike London finished his fourth consecutive losing season. Mendenhall's track record at Brigham-Young University led fans to believe that the school would experience a quick turnaround.

Although Mendenhall's first season started with a terrible loss to University of Richmond ending with a 2-10 record, the two seasons since have taken a positive turn. In 2017, UVA finished with a 6-7 record after playing in their

first bowl game in six years. Last year, UVA posted a record of 8-5 and brought home their first bowl win in thirteen years.

But there's one aspect of the game that Mendenhall is bringing new life to. When UVA steps on the field, they play to win instead of not to lose. They take chances to win games decisively instead of playing conservatively to maintain a small lead. As a result, momentum has swung in their favor.

For so long, UVA football fans have hung their heads, looking back on games they could have and should have won. Over the past seven years, Virginia has lost an average of three games per season by eight points or fewer. No one will forget the lost opportunities in games such as Virginia Tech last year, where UVA seemed to have the game won before allowing the Hokies to score on a fumble recovery late in the game and steal the victory.

Now, Virginia is becoming a team that doesn't buckle, but thrives in the second half of games. Take the Old Dominion game from this year as an example. UVA was favored by over 20 points going into the game, but trotted into the halftime locker room down 17-7, having been dominated by ODU on offense and defense in the first half. UVA proceeded to win the game 28-17, clamping down on

both sides of the ball. They kicked their offense into high gear and didn't allow a single point in the second half.

The question now is whether Mendenhall will finally bring a sense of pride to Cavalier football fans' hearts that's been absent for so long. Will this be the year that UVA finally ends their drought against Virginia Tech?

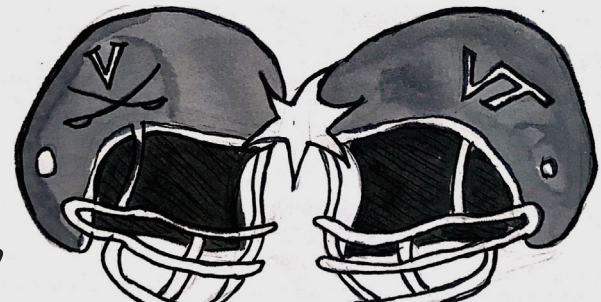
The simple answer is yes. UVA outweighs Tech in several important statistical categories. Virginia scores over seven points more than Virginia Tech per game and allows five points less per game. UVA has gained 60 more yards on the ground than Tech this season and has allowed almost 175 less rushing yards than Tech. In total, UVA allows 60 less total yards of offense per game than Virginia Tech.

The problem is that history has not sided with UVA in recent years. In the game against Virginia Tech last year, UVA was much more capable on paper than Virginia Tech, but Tech still pulled out the victory after a UVA mistake.

The reason UVA has done so well this year is because they have lost their uncanny ability to make a mistake at just the wrong time. Their new culture could create an opportunity to snatch victory out of the jaws of defeat, not the other way around.

DRAWING: ABBY TAYLOR

*Will UVA beat
Tech this year?
Vote online at
dsfcommentator.org!*



Students Embrace Confidence Through Body Art

Abby Taylor
A&E Editor

Part of what makes a person unique are the marks they show on their bodies.

Some people are splashed with freckles, a testament to the time they spend in the sun. Others show off their scars; remnants of past surgeries or childhood bike accidents. But, in an age where expressing oneself authentically is becoming the norm, a growing number of people are choosing a different way to display their uniqueness: with ink.

Tattoos are becoming increasingly common in the modern age, and this cultural revelation can be seen in the student body at Freeman.

According to the Henrico County Code of Conduct, the rules for visible tattoos are in accordance with the dress code policy: as long as the tattoo does not depict "obscenity, profanity, or violence" or "cause... material disruption in school activities," then it is allowed to be shown.

On a state level, the legal age to receive a tattoo is 18. However, if an adult or medical professional is present, tattoos can be done as early as 15. That is exactly what senior Alexis Field did. "I got my first tattoo on my 15th birthday," she said.

She emphasized that "[her] parents were always present for [her] first tattoos."

Since then, Alexis has gotten 10 tattoos, ranging from roses to inspirational quotes. "My mom actually knows a tattoo artist, so I can get mine for cheaper prices and get more," she explained.

Senior Unique Touch grew up around others with tattoos, and agrees that being inked is "just another form of art."

Unique has two tattoos, a peace sign on her arm and SpongeBob on her ankle, and they both mean a lot.

"As I get older, I want to hold on to some of my childhood innocence, and SpongeBob was a big part of my life growing up," she said.

As for her peace sign, she explained, "I think it represents who I am as a person... I am very calm and peaceful." While she loves her current tattoos, Unique plans on getting more in the future.

"My parents each have at least 25 tattoos, so I definitely see myself with more tattoos one day," Unique said.

As for the stigma surrounding tattoos, senior Alec Sigmund believes that "it is definitely becoming more positive."

Having eight tattoos himself, Alec considers being inked a great way to express oneself and tell a story. "Even a tattoo that has no initial meaning when you get it ends up having a meaning in the end. They are so helpful in letting you become more comfortable in your body" he said.



PHOTO: UNIQUE TOUCH
Senior Unique Touch shows her Spongebob tattoo on her ankle.



PHOTO: ABBY TAYLOR
Senior Alec Sigmund has a tattoo dedicated to his dog on his shoulder.



PHOTO: ABBY TAYLOR
Senior Alexis Field shows the quote tattooed on her arm.

More Renovations to Reinvent Regency Mall



PHOTO: SABEREH SALEH

Popular chains like Chipotle and Mod Pizza have been added to Regency.

Alexa Mosley
Staff Writer

Nearby Regency Mall is undergoing drastic renovations. Real estate company, Thalheimer Realty has purchased the property and plans on revitalizing the once-

barren shopping mall. Freeman students are ready for a change to the crumbling mall.

"Regency's been kind of dry for a while," senior Lawrence Mensah said.

These renovations will transform Regency into a multi-use community center, complete with stores, restaurants, entertainment venues,

office spaces, and apartments.

"Repositioning Regency as a mixed use community place is the ultimate goal. It will become a live, play, work environment which will appeal to many," said

It will become a live, play, work environment which will appeal to many

*-Steven Bonnevillie
General Manager of
Regency Mall*

Steven Bonnevillie, general manager of Regency.

Restaurants such as Chipotle, MOD Pizza, and Panera have already opened their doors to customers. NOVA Aquatics, Surge Trampoline Park, and First Watch are not far behind. Even more businesses are coming, but have

yet to be announced.

Freshman Abby Kirchoff hopes to see "retail stores that aren't at Short Pump" open at Regency. In recent years, Short Pump Mall in the far west end has dominated the shopping scene. Both students and teachers hope that the mall's makeover will bring better shopping closer to the Freeman.

"I'm really excited to see all of the new stores and businesses open around the mall. I think it's going to bring a lot of new business in the area," said world history teacher Anne Trexler.

Initially, community leaders expressed technical concerns about the effects of the renovations. According to the Richmond Times-Dispatch, people were worried that the mall would attract an unmanageable influx of consumers that would create excessive traffic. There was also the worry that new apartments would bring in more children and lead to overcrowding in nearby schools. However,

Bonneville believes that, "There should be minimal impact to the surrounding schools from Regency," and that the surrounding area "is capable of handling the improvements we are planning."

In fact, the renovations are expected to make the area more friendly to Freeman students. "We want to support improvements beyond Regency [by] adding sidewalks which will make our site and others around more walkable and inviting to the neighbors and students in the area," said Bonneville.

Thalheimer Realty has already begun implementing these changes, but the community should not expect to see the finale anytime soon. Depending on the success of business that have already opened, new business will continue to stream in. According to Bonneville, students can look forward to Regency bringing "entertainment and excitement for everyone."

Play Preview: "The Crucible"

Ella Mortimer
Staff Writer

Theater teacher and Freeman play director Mary Spears's annual statement that, "We have a show," never fails to incite a wave of thunderous celebration from the satisfied thespians at the conclusion of a late-night play practice. These four simple words have come to symbolize a culmination of months of rehearsals, signifying that the cast is nearly ready for opening night.

According to Senior Tristen Lowrey, "when Spears says, 'we have a show,' it's like we made it, we did it." When Ms. Spears finally believes the cast is almost ready for opening night, Tristen and the other actors are "so happy" and "there's cheers going up through the house," Tristen said.

The cast and crew of this year's fall play, "The Crucible," still have a few more weeks of rehearsals before they reach Ms. Spears's long-anticipated approval. In order to ensure that the actors have enough time to tackle what Ms. Spears describes as an "intense and emotion-driven" play, auditions for "The Crucible" began far earlier than usual, starting the second week of school.

Set during the Salem Witch Trials, "The Crucible" focuses on a series of wild accusations of witchcraft that fly through a Puritan town, which then falls victim to the rampant hysteria and suspicion. "The Crucible" explores what can occur when a desire for self-preservation and a disdain for the unusual intertwine.



PHOTO: ALEX ROEVER

Part of the crucible cast rehearses a scene after school.

Reverend Samuel Parris, played by Tristen Lowrey, discovers a group of girls dancing in the forest with a servant named Tituba, played by sophomore Breana Brooks. Fearing exclusion from the community, the girls, led by senior Caroline Ferguson as Abigail Williams, claim that they were bewitched. In an act of self-preservation, the women spout off names of innocent villagers, initiating a long chain of accusation and betrayal.

"The Crucible" is filled with emotionally "complex characters" and scenes, according to junior Charlotte Cooper. Charlotte, cast as Mary Warren, is excited to take on the "serious, but fun, challenge" of embodying a character "that has so many personality traits that oppose my own." This year, Ms. Spears said that she is dedicated towards the actors "getting to that kind of authentic, emotional life" in every moment and character of the play.

Stage Manager Alex Roever is excited to watch "everyone grow

into their character" and master such a historical and emotional play. According to Ms. Spears, this year's production of "The Crucible" contains a considerable amount of upperclassmen, bringing a "great talent pool" to the production. Ms. Spears stated that she "probably could have cast [the play] twice" with the amount of "experienced, seasoned" actors who auditioned for "The Crucible."

Tristen calculated that he and his castmates spend around 200 hours preparing for each Freeman production, be that through late-night tech rehearsals, run-throughs, or blocking sessions. Caroline said that the actors dedicate hundreds of hours rehearsing scenes in the hopes that the show will be "perfect for opening night." Until the curtains open on Nov. 21, however, Freeman thespians will continue to work hard until they are confident that they "have a show."

What Costume Should You Wear Based on Your Zodiac Sign?

Aquarius
(Jan 20-Feb 18)
Spongebob



Leo
(July 23-Aug 22)
Cleopatra



Pisces
(Feb 19-March 20)
Mermaid



Virgo
(Aug 23-Sept 22)
Michael Jackson



Aries
(March 21-April 19)
Batman



Libra
(Sept 23-Oct 22)
Judge Judy



Taurus
(April 20-May 20)
Bob Ross



Scorpio
(Oct 23-Nov 21)
Edward Scissorhands



Gemini
(May 21-June 20)
Hermine



Sagittarius
(Nov 22-Dec 22)
Dora the Explorer



Cancer
(June 21-July 22)
Sporky



Capricorn
(Dec 22-Jan 19)
Candy Corn



Book Exchange Brings All Books to the Spotlight



The Book Nook is located on the front lawn of Freeman's campus, directly in front of the flag poles.

Megan McDonald
Editor-in-Chief

Rebelettes 2019 three years ago. The Freeman Little Free Library is not affiliated with the county and is run under a separate organization. Whereas, the Book Nooks are a county initiative to ensure that schools are encouraging the community as a whole to read for pleasure.

Freeman librarian Laurie Kaplan explained, "It's just like the little free libraries you see in people's yards."

The program is run by Library Services System Specialist Mary Beth Joyner and was started by Dr. Patrick Kinlaw, former Henrico County Superintendent. "[Dr. Kinlaw] added it to the HCPS literacy plan before he retired," Ms. Joyner said.

Freeman drafting architecture and engineering teacher Steven Gromlin was one of the teachers that helped build the Book Nooks, and he expressed the importance of the Book Nooks. "It gives the ability to people and children that don't live near public libraries to

have access to new reading materials throughout the entire year," said Mr. Gromlin.

Restocking the book nooks is the responsibility of each school's librarians. Ms. Kaplan buys books at Goodwill and restocks the Freeman Book Nook with those. "I go to Goodwill four to five times a year," Ms. Kaplan said.

Looking for books at Goodwill is a long process. "They have huge boxes that are probably four and a half feet tall. I get in and dig to the bottom for three hours," said Ms. Kaplan.

Goodwill donates the books to Ms. Kaplan and any other teachers that look through their stock. "We can keep anything we find," Ms. Kaplan explained.

The Freeman Book Nook was put in last summer and has since seen a fair amount of attention. "People are definitely using it because we are restocking it," said Ms. Kaplan.

Compared to the Little Free Library, the Book Nook is used more frequently. "People are at the bus stop there, and it is more visible. That's why I figured that one probably goes faster," said Ms. Kaplan.

Thanks to the county and the Freeman librarians, the community has all the more reason to pick up a book.

Artist of the Month: Sabah Eissah



Sabah with one of her pencil pieces, showing a good example of how she emphasizes the eyes in her artwork.

Sabereh Saleh
A&E Editor

Freshman Sabah Eissa can be found working on her assignments and helping her peers in any of Freeman's art rooms.

She began to draw at seven years old while she still lived in Egypt, where she was born. Her family came to America in 2012 where she continued pursuing art.

Her mother would take her to a "little art studio for kids to paint in," according to Sabah. Her early start in art is reflected in her schoolwork. "She comes with some skill outside of school that she's brought to the classroom," said art one teacher Molly McManus.

Ms. McManus also described Sabah's approach to her art as trying "to make it as realistic and creative as possible. She's going for it, [and] she's focused..."

While she is working, she said she "loves to listen to hip hop." Sabah also said art "distracts me from the world and lets my mind go free."

She enjoys drawing eyes the most because "an eye can hold so many emotions... You can see so much in a person's eyes," she said. "She applied way more skill when drawing her eyes, making sure they're detailed and adding excellent value gradient to make it look realistic," said Ms. McManus.

Ms. McManus stated that Sabah "showed a lot of skill right from the beginning," as she asked for different mediums like blending tools and varied drawing pencils not needed for the value scale and gradient exercises. "She just shows extra dedication and she's focused," said Ms. McManus.

She also participates in Art Club at Freeman. "In the future I want to do something that includes designing..." said Sabah. "I am still learning new things everyday, but hopefully I can improve on my skills."

Ms. McManus expressed her interest in Sabah by saying: "She seems really promising... I think when you show care and attention, it shows in your work. I think she's got it down to the core."

Two Reviews For It: Chapter II



<https://bloody-disgusting.com/movie/3580352/chapter-two-banners-unite-past-present/>

Sabereh Saleh vs Gina Bonomonte

On the "scare" factor:

S: "The scenes where Pennywise should have instilled fear and discomfort in the audience simply lacked and felt like a weird filler."

G: "The dragging out of the sequences of graphic scenes made the movie lose a lot of momentum that it had developed in the story."

On how sensitive subjects were handled:

S: "The portrayal of real life homophobia truly shook up the viewer, and was treated with respect, not simply used for a shock factor."

G: "The reliance on themes [of homophobia] made it extremely insensitive and overbearing to viewers."

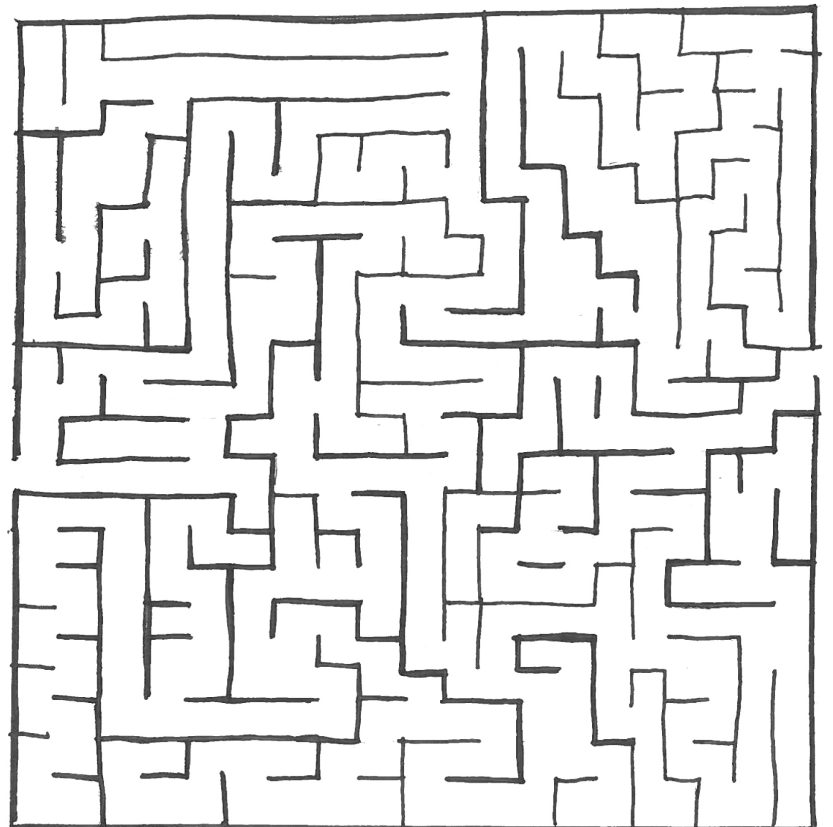
Overall thoughts:

S: "Honestly, I found myself checking the time to see how much longer the movie was going to last."

G: "IT Chapter 2 was way better than the first [movie]."

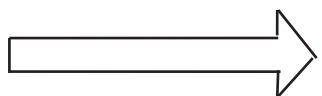
To see the full reviews, check out the Commentator Online!

Help the Lost Freshman Find Their Class!



DRAWING: ABBY TAYLOR

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