

THE COMMENTATOR

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HOLA's Record-Breaking Pulsera Sales

Ashton Doll
Opinions Editor

For the second year in a row, Freeman's Spanish club, Hispanic Organization for Latinx Awareness (HOLA), led by Spanish teacher Sarah Henning Snellings, has sold bracelets for the Pulsera Project. The Pulsera Project is a nonprofit organization that sells colorful bracelets to provide better opportunities for those living in poorer parts of Central America. These unique bracelets, crafted by Nicaraguan and Guatemalan artisans, help improve less fortunate communities in those areas.

The idea for the Pulsera Project began in 2009, when co-founder Colin Crane went on vacation in Nicaragua. "We ended up meeting a group of artisans that made beautiful hand-woven bracelets, or 'pulseras,' but unfortunately, they didn't have many places to sell them in their own country," said Mr. Crane.

According to Mr. Crane, "The Pulsera Project was created as an attempt to make the world a more just and colorful place through the exchange of art, culture, ideas, and knowledge between Central America and the U.S." The Pulsera Project ships bracelets to schools, which then sell them to students.

The Pulsera Project has had far-reaching effects, raising over



A student holds up one of the hand-woven bracelets sold by HOLA for the Pulsera Project.

1.5 million dollars for the people of Central America. The profits of the bracelet sales "provide a broader market for artists and aid in providing opportunities for small business creation, housing, education, and safe working opportunities for women," said Ms. Snellings.

Even though the Pulsera Project raises a good deal of money for its cause, that is only part of its mission. According to HOLA officer Emily Carder, "Their mission is also to educate. They sent... posters and trifold and flags in order to make students here involved in their mission and know more about their culture."

The Pulsera Project has reached all 50 states, with over 3,000 schools that have sold bracelets. The nonprofit itself has sold over 1 million pulseras. "The Pulsera Project employs nearly 200 artisans with full-time fair trade jobs and provides a wide range of benefits to these artisans as well," said Mr. Crane. This organization also donates much of its funds to other nonprofits, which help support and improve the communities of Central America.

In March of last year, HOLA, called Spanish Club at the time, collected around \$900 for the Pulsera Project. Its goal was to raise over \$1,000 for the cause.

This year, the club surpassed its previous goal, selling around 250 bracelets and 15 purses. "We collected \$1,400 dollars, and the coordinator said we sold the most of almost any school he has worked with," said Ms. Snellings.

Members of HOLA volunteered to help out with the bracelet sales. According to Ms. Snellings, "The volunteers helped set up the table, keep a tally of the sold bracelets, publicize the sale, and clean up at the end." Additionally, several teachers gave their time to help supervise the student volunteers, including Ms. Carroll, Ms. Szot, Ms. Carlson, and Ms. Watson.

Over time, the Pulsera Project

plans to expand, in both its sales and its impact. According to Mr. Crane, "Our goal for the future is to continue to expand the number of schools we partner with each year, as well as working to support as best we can the many artisans, communities, and programs that are part of the Pulsera Project's family."

In the end, HOLA's success in bracelet sales is due to the help of the Freeman family. According to Emily Carder, "It's both the faculty and the students who have embraced it and made it what it is today. Everyone was so interested in both the mission and the quality of the product."

Marshall's New Vision for National Honor Society



Senior Nicholas Cavallo tutors sophomore Tyler Hagan in the library.

Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

The 2019-2020 school year encompasses 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 around 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... [who] have just been

through [the same classes] 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 Principal Marshall.

This year, Freeman is reinvigorating National Honor Society Tutoring to be more energetic, active, and important within the school. Principal 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," Principal 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," said senior tutor Brian Angel.

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 Lunchroom Recycling Bins

Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

Over the past weeks, the Friends of the Earth Club has endeavored to improve the sustainability of Freeman by placing recycling bins throughout the school cafeteria.

The idea to place recycling bins in the cafeteria struck the co-presidents of the Friends of the Earth Club, Charlotte Browder and Clair Jenks, one day while casually chatting during lunch.

"We looked around and realized there's no recycling bins in the cafeteria, which was a big issue [for us]," said Clair.

The two girls then took their idea to the Friends of the Earth Club Sponsor and Science Department Head, Patrick Foltz.

"[Mr. Foltz] said that they had tried in previous years to get the recycling bins and nobody used them. The bins were just disrespected, and people trashed them," said Clair.

At this point, the two knew they had quite the challenge ahead of them. However, the club continued to push on through adversity in order to achieve a goal that they saw as "truly good" for the school.

Charlotte and Clair now assist with removing and placing the recycling bins every other day.

"The first few times we took the recycling bins out, they weren't

very full," Charlotte explained. However, "the longer they've been there, the more recycling we're getting."

The club is ambitious, but remains pragmatic. The club's leaders understand that changing the habits of Freeman students is a process, and a complete turnaround does not occur overnight.

"Although I'm sure that some people are still throwing away cans and bottles in the cafeteria, it makes me happy that at least some of it is recycled," said Charlotte.

Even though the club has already placed the bins, the fight to make recycling a success is far from over.

"We've made posters. We painted [the bins] green. We're trying hard to get people to use them. So, I hope they do," said Clair.

The club hopes that placing recycling bins in the cafeteria will not only create a change in the school, but also in the community around them. "By making people aware, hopefully they will start making changes in their own lives," Charlotte said.

Recycling bins in the cafeteria are just the first step to a cleaner future for Freeman. Charlotte said, "I hope that Freeman becomes much more environmentally friendly. There is a lot of room for us to reduce waste, and I hope that having recycling bins in the cafeteria starts the movement."



Club Vice President Clair Jenks (left) and Club Secretary Abby Taylor (right) pose while spray-painting recycling bins green.

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Freeman Project Plans Outdoor Classroom



Freeman Project students pose outside of Mr. Robjent's room.

Leo Lombardi
Sports Editor

The Freeman Project, a seventh-period elective that does community service projects around the school, is attempting to tackle their biggest project yet. A group of four juniors and two seniors is dreaming up a potential renovation on Freeman's campus.

Seniors Matthew Smith and Russell Swartz along with juniors Nial Hamilton, Josh Hansell, Matthew Moore, and Carter Barnes have been planning and are now proposing an outdoor classroom.

The specifics of the design have yet to be determined, but the group has a general idea of what the outdoor classroom would look like. "The outdoor classroom would be right behind the band room, to the

left of the annex," said junior Nial Hamilton.

Freeman Project members would begin the construction by pouring concrete to provide a solid base for seating. From there, they would build six rows of descending benches in a fashion "similar to the auditorium," according to Nial.

In each corner of the concrete, they would secure metal poles to support some form of roofing in order to make the outdoor classroom accessible regardless of the weather.

At the front of the classroom, they would place a podium with a white board and pull-down projector screen for online lessons.

How exactly this project would be carried out depends on approval from Freeman's administration. Principal John Marshall is aware of the plans and checks in with

the Freeman Project often. He said that "it requires a lot of input on the county level," and "we're excited they're dreaming big."

"We have looked into contracting out this project to a construction company," said senior Russell Swartz. Certain aspects of the job, such as pouring concrete and fitting the roof, require construction equipment not readily available to the Freeman Project, and would require professional construction help.

Funding for the outdoor classroom could come from a variety of sources. "In the past we have had partnerships with a few local restaurants that do occasional spirit nights to raise money," said Russell. Senior Matthew Smith added that "funding from the school itself or the PTA is also a potential option." In addition to these

possible donors, grant money has also been mentioned as a viable option for gathering enough funds to complete the outdoor classroom project.

As far as the project's length, there is no set time table as of now. "Simply because it's a big project, it's safe to say nothing will be fully complete until at least the fall of 2020," said Matthew.

However, Matthew hopes that a portion of the project will be done within this school year. As a Boy Scout in Troop 770, he would like to complete the project as a part of becoming an Eagle Scout, and believes that helping out with the building of Freeman's outdoor classroom will fulfill his requirements.

Matthew would lead his fellow scouts in building the benches that would be installed in the out-

door classroom once the foundation has been laid. "The plan is to make around 20 benches that can seat around four people [each]," said Matthew. He added that each bench may "be six feet long, made out of wood, and coated with a durable primer to handle the weather."

Because of Matthew's Eagle Scout requirements, he would have to complete his portion of the project before his 18th birthday, which falls on May 11. Although the specifics of the Freeman Project's outdoor classroom have yet to be locked down, a decision will be made by the administration. "As a group we are really excited about the potential this project brings to make learning more enjoyable for a large number of students," said Russell.

A New Twist on the Canned Food Drive

Ella Mortimer
Online Editor-in-Chief

Leadership Center Director Rob Peck assumed responsibility of the canned food drive this year. Mr. Peck was tasked with the challenge of organizing a drive that would simultaneously increase the amount of food items donated to the Henrico Christmas Mother and, as he said, "interest students in participating beyond just their instinct to help their neighbors."

With the help of his students, Mr. Peck reimagined the structure of the canned food drive in order to eliminate any possible "animosity that comes with [it]," such as competition and class rivalries, according to senior SCA member and Equity Ambassador Jordan Chucker.

The SCA and Equity Ambassadors contribute to the Freeman canned food drive each year by "making sure everything [is] organized, counting cans, [and] making sure they get on the truck," according to junior and Equity Ambassador Jianna Young.

This year, Mr. Peck planned to boost student participation in the event, as well as increase food drive donations, through the added motivation of "individual, plus class, incentives." The individual prizes offered this year included not only enviable parking spaces, but also "small things like Chick-fil-a gift cards," Jordan explained.

To promote inclusivity and equality in the can drive, the individual prizes were distributed with a lottery system rather than having the top few donors receive prizes. With "every ten cans you

[brought], you [got] your name entered," said Mr. Peck. The ten individuals who won the drawing were Midhat Ansar, Kendall Betz, Maddie Cassidy, Mia Garland, Addison Gorenflo, Abby Kupstas, Emma Melton, Matthew Metinko, Gretchen Neary, and Diamond Washington.

Mr. Peck hoped that this rewards system presented a "possibility for everybody to be entered in the lottery," given that every student that participated had a chance to win the grand prizes.

In addition to individual and class prizes, a competition between the Freeman and Godwin student bodies was held in the hope that this "healthy rivalry" would increase can volume, according to Mr. Peck. Ms. Miriam Ashworth, the sponsor of the Godwin can drive, predicted that this "competition motivate[d] more students to make donations" to the Henrico Christmas Mother.

Upholding the goal of including the entire Freeman student body, Jianna assured that every can has the capability of changing someone's life for the better. "If you bring in one can, that's great. Just bring as many as possible," she said. The purpose of the food drive is to raise the highest volume of cans "to help people in need right now," said Jianna.

The rivals gathered a total of 13,996 cans, with the Rebels collecting 6,073 and the Eagles gathering 7,923. The cans collected through the competition between Freeman and Godwin greatly benefited the Henrico Christmas Mother, not to mention bolstered some friendly competition for a deserving cause.



(Clockwise from top left) Raffle winners Emma Melton, Matthew Metinko, Abby Kupstas, and Diamond Washington



Seniors Kaitlyn Nguyen, Hunter Locher, Lizzie Danforth, Sarah Bender, and Faith Adams signing.

Fall Signing Day for Athletes

Alexa Mosley
Online Editor-in-Chief

On Nov. 13, Freeman student-athletes gathered in the library to sign their letters of intent to compete in various sports at the collegiate level. The athletes recognized were seniors Faith Adams, Sarah Bender, Lizzie Danforth, Hunter Locher, and Kaitlyn Nguyen.

For many of these athletes, competing in college has been a lifelong goal. Swimmer Sarah Bender, committed to the University of Notre Dame, said, "I've wanted to swim in college for as long as I can remember."

For others, the opportunity to compete in college came as a surprise. "I never thought that I could actually play on the collegiate level... I had no expectations going into the recruitment process, so when I received emails from some well-known colleges, I was really surprised," said Kaitlyn Nguyen, who committed to Roanoke College for track and field.

Regardless, reaching this point required lots of hard work and dedication from each athlete. Swimmer Lizzie Danforth, committed to Penn State University, described, "When I started going to practice in the morning is when I realized it was a lot more serious and that I needed to focus more, so then I just worked a lot harder." Sarah also recounted, "I have prepared to swim in college by swimming eight times a week for the past three years."

When it came time to choose a college, athletes weighed many factors before making their decisions. Swimmer Hunter Locher, committed to the United States Naval Academy, considered loyalty and the unique opportunities that a military academy provides. He described, "I never really knew what I wanted to do for college, but I always knew that a regular four-year college was not right for me. I got an email from the Navy coach and started talking to them pretty heavily, and after I took my visit I just knew that Navy was the best place for me." Others, like Lizzie, looked for a balance of academics and athletics. "I felt like I could succeed [at Penn State] academically and athletically," she said. Faith Adams said that for her, "It's all about the team."

Now that the athletes have chosen their colleges, they can look forward to the new opportunities awaiting them in college. "I'm excited about a new experience since I've been doing the same stuff for such a long time," said Lizzie.

"I'm really excited to be able to be on a team where we're all working towards a common goal and have the same amount of dedication to the sport," said Kaitlyn Nguyen. To the same effect, Hunter Locher said, "When I visited Navy, there was a really close bond between everyone on the team, and I am really excited to be a part of that bond."

On Signing Day, the athletes and their friends and family met in the library to take this important next step. The athletes were

commended by their coaches, who delivered both words of praise and playful anecdotes. Then, the athletes had the opportunity to say a few words and thank their families and friends for their enduring support. Finally, the time came where the athletes signed their letters of intent.

The emotions were high in the room, especially from parents and coaches. Mrs. Becky Milton, Freeman varsity softball coach, said that she knew that Faith would get to play in college "her freshman year, as soon as she walked out there on the field."

After years of hard work, coaches and parents are proud to see their children finally reach this long-awaited milestone. Mrs. Amy Sellers, family member of Kaitlyn Nguyen, said, "I think this has been her goal since she started track. This has been the thing that she's concentrated on."

On Dec. 20, senior Will Reid signed his national letter of intent to continue his football career at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). Will chose VMI because of his "family ties to the school, the proximity to home, and the recent success the new coaches have had that [he] hopes to continue."

Surrounded by family, coaches, and friends, all six athletes committed to their future colleges. As stated by Freeman athletic director Suzanne Criswell, the Freeman community supports Faith, Sarah, Lizzie, Hunter, Kaitlyn, and Will and is excited to see where their athletic and academic careers lead them in the future.

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The Wet Sock Dilemma



Timmy Dillard
News Editor

Imagine the perfect school-day morning: you wake up from a blissful dream, just one minute before your alarm can sound its horrifying wake-up call. You look out the window and the sun is shining warm, hopeful rays of love into your room, saying “Wow! Today is gonna be an amazing day for you!”

As you get dressed for school, you pick out a nice, clean pair of socks from your basket of clean clothes, fresh out of the dryer. The warmth of the socks as you put them on feels like the most loving hug ever from your grandmother – but on your feet.

After a safe and relaxing drive to school, you find an excellent parking spot and hop out the car to make your way to class.

However, as you walk past the teachers’ lot and towards the tennis courts, your perfect day is about to be completely ruined. You turn the corner of the walkway and see that almost the entire width of the path is covered with water from last night’s rainstorm.

Now hesitant to keep your stride, you look for a way to avoid the water without looking idiotic. You consider shuffling across the edge of the path like Indiana Jones on the edge of a cliff, but instead you must accept defeat and keep on walking through the water.

As a result, the dirty water in-

evitably splashes up and gets into your shoes. The cold water slowly seeps into your shoes and the comfort of your feet is absolutely destroyed.

When you arrive in class, instead of feeling comfortable, dry, and ready to learn, you are overcome with the depressing feeling of cold toes and wet socks.

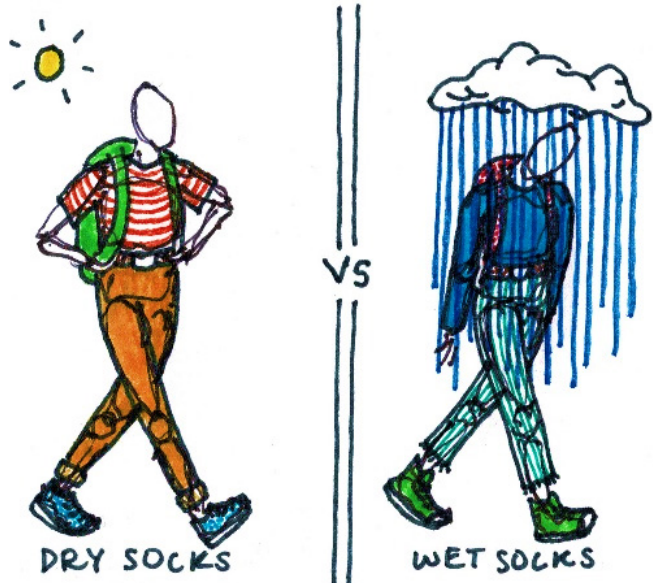
The walkway from the main parking lot to school needs to change. Too often are days ruined, moods worsened, and hopes lost, all because we can’t drain away a couple inches of water.

One might say that the easy solution to this dilemma is simply to wear rain boots. However, have you ever heard of rain boots that are breathable? All they do is stuff up your feet and make them smelly for the rest of the day.

How could we solve this problem? Add more drains. If this means jeopardizing the tennis courts, so be it. We could also make some renovations to even out the concrete blocks that make up the pathway. This would prevent water from blocking up in the crevices of the walkway and help it flow past into the soil of the baseball field.

This is an issue that has affected a great number of people at Freeman over the years. It isn’t just students who park down in the main lot – teachers, administrators, and other hard-working Freeman staff members alike fall victim to the pool of water.

Would a true Freeman Rebel prefer to have wet socks? Or would they take action, and keep their dignity as someone with comfortable feet? I think the DSF population already knows the answer – and what it will take to make a change.



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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.

He Said

Ashton Doll
Opinions Editor

He can call me by any name.

Rebel making Disney history.

Life on Mars is looking pretty good now.

Who needs summer anymore?

I’m a good babysitter @elonmusk

Just say no.

She Said

Keya Pokhriyal
Opinions Editor

Talented, brilliant, incredible, amazing.

Debby Ryan No comment.

Murder Hornets

Are you kidding-

“Outer Banks”

PaRaDiSe On EaRtH

X Æ A-12 Musk

Can I say no comment again?

Online AP Exams

Yeah <3

Have Pep Rallies Lost their Pep?



Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

Nothing builds school spirit like cancelling students’ study block, cramming them into a claustrophobic gymnasium, then pleading with them to remain focused and content for the next two hours of instruction.

Pep rallies are an institution that seems older than time itself. Grandmothers born before World War II will gladly testify about the grand times they had packing in bleachers and getting hyped up about the football game. Parents talk about gymnasium speakers blaring Nirvana’s, “Smells like Teen Spirit.”. As the world progresses forward, seemingly everything changes... except pep rallies. The only thing differentiating today’s spirited events from those half a century ago is our pep rallies have Cardi B and theirs had Elvis.

However, there is one major difference. Over the years, pep rallies have seemingly lost their pep. Before the last pep rally, I was talking to my friend and he said, “Yeah I don’t think I’m going to

go to the pep rally. I really gotta do my AP U.S History homework, so I think I’ll go to the library instead.” Pep rallies are supposed to instill excitement. Pep rallies are supposed to be a celebration of the school and its teams. Pep rallies are supposed to be interesting and something to look forward to. Pep rallies are not supposed to be something to be dreaded. Pep rallies are not meant to be an inconvenience. Most importantly, pep rallies are not supposed to be less interesting than the U.S History textbook.

Freeman has made a series of catastrophic decisions to detract from the pep rally experience. The movement of pep rallies to the Freeman Focus time slot was nothing more than a sheer disaster.

Freeman Focus has been a grand slam for the school. Overworked students have found time to complete some of their work in school to alleviate stress. Other students see it as a fantastic way to break up a long block schedule day into smaller sections. One would be hard-pressed to find a student who dislikes the free forty-minute study block. Stripping students of something they enjoy for an obligatory ‘fun’ event seems counterintuitive. It’s like going up to a child happily playing with a toy, taking that toy away, then handing them a toy that’s not nearly as good and trying to force them to have fun. Moving pep rallies up in the day

is quite the inconvenience. There’s nothing more rewarding than being dismissed from a pep rally, running to your car, blasting music, and getting ready for the big football game. Quite less rewarding is filing out of the gymnasium to go sit through two hours of class and watch the clock slowly tick on by. The goal of pep rallies is to get students hyped up and peppy for the big event in the evening. It is silly to get students hyped up then expect the restless teenagers to go sit in a lengthy block schedule class.

Finally, pep rallies need to bring back the traditions that make Freeman great. Earlier in the school year, I was introducing a few prospective students to the school and as an icebreaker everyone had to say their favorite Freeman tradition. Immediately, all twenty greeters’ minds went straight to, “The CW.” Nothing screams Freeman like the ruckus dance. The past few pep rallies have not included the tradition. What is America without apple pie? What is Christmas without Santa Claus? What is Freeman without the CW? These traditions make already great things, even greater.

Sadly, no amount of Cardi B music can make pep rallies more interesting than the AP U.S History textbook. In order to make pep rallies fun again, it’ll take serious changes to the schedule and activities.



Mr. Fabian hypes up the senior section at a pep rally.

Freeman's Got Talent:

Halima Abdulkadir

"Freeman's Got Talent" is a new column featuring a DSF student who displays a particular talent. This issue's column focuses on junior Halima Abdulkadir, who is currently in an Art Four class.

How would you describe your art and your style?

"I would describe my art as surrealism. I love to create illustrations that are different and have a message within them. My art style mainly consists of portraits. I love to draw the human form and figure; it's my favorite thing to illustrate."

What caused you to become interested in art?

"I think what caused me to become interested in art is the fact that it's really your own world in which you can create anything. You can let your thoughts and ideas come out on paper, and art is always open to one's interpretation."

What everyday events inspire you to create art?

"Everyday things that inspire my artwork would be nature and how beautiful it is."

Who is your biggest artist inspiration?

"My biggest art inspiration[s] would have to be Myriam Tillson and Aykut Aydoğdu. I love the combination of surrealism and portraits they include in their art and try to include aspects of that in my own art."

What mediums do you work in?

"I work with acrylic paint and color[ed] pencils to create my pieces."

What is your favorite piece of art you have ever created?

"'Bird Boy;' it's actually a recent piece that I created earlier this year. This piece is my favorite because of the risks I took when making it. It stepped me out of my comfort zone and I actually drew a male for the first time. I also just love hearing people's personal interpretations of the piece."

What is your process when creating art?

"My process for creating art is to start off with [a] theme or concept. Then I look at sites like Pinterest and Google Images to find photos to help illustrate my idea. After that, I put all the images on a PowerPoint and let my mind take over."

How often do you create/work with art?

"I create art every day, whether it's just opening my sketchbook and drawing a little sketch, or even getting out a big canvas and painting; I'm always doing something that involves art."

Where do you see your art taking you in the future?

"I see my art in the future possibly [leading] me into the graphic design field. I would love to become a graphic designer. I've always loved creating little things like posters and logos."



PHOTO: HALIMA ABDULKADIR

A piece of artwork created by Halima.

Senior Wins Local Election



Russell gives a speech to fellow Henrico County Democrats.

Keya Pokhriyal Opinions Editor

Most seniors can vote this year. Few, however, are also successful candidates.

Russell Swartz was recently elected as Assistant Secretary to the Henrico County Democratic Committee.

Russell said, "Last year, my fellow Freeman student, Salaar Khan, and I started and ran a high school program ["Take the Majority 2019"] for our local state senate and delegate races that helped over 200 students get involved in local politics."

Andre Tran, who also worked with Russell on local 2019 campaigns, was motivated by Russell to become more involved in politics. According to Andre, "Russell is an immensely talented individual who inspires me and others to make a difference in the community. His drive to work for what he believes in is incredible to watch."

As Assistant Secretary, Russell will be working principally to grow Democratic membership through outreach projects. Russell

explained, "I will also be advising the committee by advocating for students and youth. Our main focus for 2020 will be the re-election of Congresswoman Spanberger."

Russell said that "people like Salaar, Debra Rodman, and Rodney Willett urged me to run for this office because they saw my potential and wanted to see a youth voice on the committee."

Russell was also encouraged to get into local politics partly because of former President Barack Obama. He said, "Barack Obama has always been my greatest inspiration. I was awestruck by his eloquence and ability to bring people together."

Russell is the youngest person ever to be elected to the Executive Committee of the Henrico County Democratic Party. He recalled, "I was a little intimidated at my first meeting because I'm on the executive committee with accomplished lawyers, teachers, and a former House of Delegates candidate. However, we began talking, and I found out that everyone brings their own unique perspective to the group, and my perspective as a high schooler is just as valuable as the perspective of anyone else's."

Russell is also a member of Freeman's Young Democrats club. Mr. Abril, club sponsor, said, "In Young Democrats, Russell

"Russell demonstrates ambition, drive, and a passion for community service."

- Mr. Abril

demonstrates ambition, drive, and a passion for community service."

Russell plans to further his political ambitions in college. "I hope to study political science in college and later get my law degree. I want to become a public defender, because I feel like too many people are falsely accused and receive an extremely harsh sentence because they are not given a good lawyer," he said.

Russell encourages students to be politically active in their communities. He said, "If you want to change something, change it. Get involved in local politics, get involved in community service, get your hands dirty! Be the change you want to see in the world."

From Venezuela to RVA

Ashton Doll Opinions Editor

Although she no longer lives in Venezuela, junior Natasha Romero always remembers her heritage and sees its effect on her life in America. "I could only leave the house to go to school or dance. I wasn't allowed to leave the house after sunset because my life could be taken away from me at any moment," said Natasha. Now, Natasha takes every advantage given to her, because she could only do so much in Venezuela.

According to Luis Romero, Natasha's father, "We had a good life in Venezuela. We used to live in a 2,900 square foot apartment in Valencia, 30 minutes from the beach. We had a beach house and our own transportation company." However, the United Socialist

"I stay positive, keep myself organized, and tell myself... that I can do this."

- Natasha Romero

Party of Venezuela started to alter the laws, and even the constitution, to change Venezuela from a democracy to a socialist state. According to Mr. Romero, "As a consequence of many government policies that were taken to push the so-called Socialism of the 21st Century, medicines, food, and basic services like electricity, water, and communications started to become scarce."

Over time, the situation in Venezuela greatly escalated. "The government, using the Venezuelan military to enforce the socialistic policies, forced us to abandon our customers and to do anything according to their will," Mr.



PHOTO: NATASHA ROMERO

Natasha is involved in numerous clubs at Freeman.

Romero said. It even got to the point where Mr. Romero "was kidnapped by military personnel to intimidate [him] to make [his] company work for the government, and later on [his] two kids were followed," he explained. That was when Mr. Romero decided to move to a safer place to protect his family.

Even though Venezuela was going through a political crisis, Natasha did not understand how serious it was at the time. "I didn't know anything better than that. Once I moved here, I realized how bad it was," said Natasha.

After Natasha moved to America, she had to learn a completely new language: English. "I did not speak English at the time, so it was hard for me to understand what people were saying," Natasha said. It was also difficult for her to make friends, because she was not able to communicate with others.

This year, Natasha is in Future Business Leaders of America, French club, and is an officer in Spanish club. She is also an equity ambassador and a mentor in She is DSF. Natasha attributes her quick

transition to her new life to her work ethic. "I stay positive, keep myself organized, and tell myself over and over again that I can do this," said Natasha. According to freshman Abby Crowe, "[she] will do what it takes to get the job done."

Soon, Natasha will take the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages to receive the seal of trilliteracy. Natasha received the seal of biliteracy when she was a freshman after taking English classes for a few years. To receive the seal of trilliteracy, Natasha needs to be fluent in her third language, French.

Natasha is able to help EL students often because she is an officer of HOLA, Freeman's Spanish club. According to Natasha, "HOLA has allowed me to reach and help people that I didn't know needed my help." Natasha was in the same situation as them a few years ago. "It's like a full circle moment when I get to help them," said Natasha.

Twirling to Success On the Field and Off

Leo Lombardi
Sports Editor

Ishita Bakshi is no newbie to baton twirling. The Leadership Center freshman has been baton twirling since third grade. She twirls for the Freeman Band as well as for 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.

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

- Ishita Bakshi

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 the use of 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 that it requires. Ishita practices around 10 hours a week in addition to traveling for tournaments as far as South Bend, Ind., on the campus of Notre Dame. For this reason, her parents aren’t necessarily strict about her results; they simply wish to ensure that she’s making the most out of her time.

When Ishita is not twirling for the Florette’s Majorettes, she’s twirling for the DSF 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 differ drastically in terms of pressure. “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 twirlers’ performances. According to Ishita, her first performance at a home game “went well.” She said that “it was a mistake-free performance, and [she] had a fun time performing with the band.”

One mistake that can be made during a performance is dropping the baton, which Ishita 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



PHOTO: ISHITA BAKSHI

Ishita Bakshi (left) with her friend before a baton twirling competition.

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,” Coach Cirillo said. She added how Ishita headed to Notre Dame this past summer to compete at the Baton Twirling nationals. According to Coach Cirillo, “she placed very well against many twirlers from across the

country.” Ishita’s coach loves to watch her grow as a twirler. Coach Cirillo said that “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.”

Freshman Breaks Music Boundaries

Emma Burton
A&E Editor

Freshman Bridie Abbott has been playing the violin since she was five years old, and manages to play with a hearing impairment.

According to Bridie, she has dealt with her hearing impairment since birth and always has been 80% deaf. The impairment is “connected to the 25th chromosome,” Bridie mentioned, which can often affect the hearing if the gene is not formed properly. However, Bridie believes that her impairment doesn’t “really change anything,” except for “having to say ‘What?’ a lot.” However, that hasn’t stopped her from pursuing her love of music.

Bridie’s mother, Valerie Abbott, says that her musical ambitions began when she was very young. When Bridie turned five, “she begged Santa for a violin,” said Mrs. Abbott. Since then, the violin has stuck with her throughout her musical endeavors.

“I picked the hardest instrument for somebody like me to play,” said Bridie. The violin, more specifically the first violin, is known for its high-frequency sound waves. “[It] is the highest instrument you can go on string,”

Bridie said. This causes those who are hearing-impaired, like Bridie, to have a harder time detecting the notes.

Despite her hearing impairment, Bridie began to get involved with orchestras when she was nine years old. One of her first encounters with an orchestra was at the “Come and Play” event hosted by the Richmond Symphony. During this event, musicians are allowed to bring an instrument and

“I picked the hardest instrument for someone like me to play.”

- Bridie Abbott

play alongside the professional symphony. Bridie “was overwhelmed... being surrounded by 700 other musicians, but she loved the experience,” Mrs. Abbott said. Bridie has since been further inspired by the orchestra setting and has continued on her musical journey.

After Bridie’s “Come and Play” experience, she began to look into local Richmond orchestras, one of which was a small-scale orchestra, called a sinfonietta, that she joined at 10 years old. There, she expand-

ed her skills and “met the people” who are now her close friends. When she enrolled as a student at Tuckahoe Middle School, she joined the school’s orchestra and began to branch out into other instruments.

“In the sixth grade, I started playing the bass,” said Bridie. The upright bass produces a lower frequency than the violin, which allows Bridie to hear the notes more easily. “She loved her two years playing upright bass,” Mrs. Abbott said. During Bridie’s time experimenting with the bass, she simultaneously balanced both instruments, but eventually chose to play the violin full time. “She prefers playing violin, even though it is more difficult,” said Mrs. Abbott.

Once middle school ended and Bridie transitioned into the ninth grade, she auditioned for and was accepted to the Freeman Strings, an orchestra ensemble led by band director Rob Blankenship. “Teaching Bridie is an adventure. She’s giggling all the time,” Mr. Blankenship said. But even through the giggles and Bridie’s hearing impairment, Mr. Blankenship said that her playing “is always with us... she always knows what’s happening and what she’s supposed to be doing.” Not only has



Bridie has been playing violin since she was five years old.

Bridie’s “outgoing [and] bright,” personality affected her teacher, it has also made an impact on everyone else involved in orchestra. Bridie’s close friend, Monze Paz, who sits beside Bridie during Freeman Strings, said that Bridie “was the one that helped me out in strings.” But Bridie’s kindness does not stop when Freeman Strings ends

for the day.

Mrs. Abbott said that she “has become a peer leader for other deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Virginia,” and has inspired others with similar conditions “to dream big.” Although Bridie thinks that “learning to play an instrument is hard for anyone,” she continues to follow her passion.

Making a Splash at a Collegiate-Level Facility

Timmy Dillard
News Editor

For freshman Isabelle Broughton, going to practice is not just about getting better at a sport, but about conquering the fear of trying something new.

Isabelle is the only student at Freeman who dives for the Alexandria Dive Club of Richmond (ADC).

Before she became a diver, Isabelle was a swimmer for eight years and a gymnast for two, and her expertise in both sports contributes to her success on the diving board. “Diving is sort of a combination of the two sports,” she said.

The freshman got into diving with her friends just as a way to pass time, but for Isabelle, diving has become a way to hone her skills and conquer the fears that come with diving. “Every time you try something new, you have



PHOTO: ISABELLE BROUGHTON

Isabelle and her friends practice at the University of Richmond.

more reasons to be nervous, so it’s definitely scary when I’m diving,” said Isabelle.

The Broughton family has a unique familiarity with water sports, with Isabelle’s history both in the swimming pool and on the diving board, and Isabelle’s brother,

junior Anderson Broughton, being an avid swimmer.

Anderson is a swimmer for both Freeman and NOVA, and was a member of the DSF boys swim team when they won the state tournament last winter. Anderson said that his and Isabelle’s “parents had

both of [them] do summer league swimming from a young age, so [they] are very comfortable in and around water.” The two siblings often quarrel playfully over which of their sports is better. “I argue with [Isabelle] over whether diving is a sport or not,” Anderson said.

With four practices a week, Isabelle has a steady commitment to the ADC, which practices at the University of Richmond diving facility in their Weinstein Center. ADC has the unique opportunity of practicing at a collegiate-level facility because of their coach.

The ADC coach, Nathan Parker, is currently the head coach for the women’s dive team at the University of Richmond, so ADC divers are able to utilize a practice area that most amateur divers do not get to experience.

“It is a great feeling to be able to provide a safe and positive learning environment to young athletes interested in the sport of diving,” Coach Parker said. “It

helps to ensure a safe environment for them to push their comfort zones and face their fears.”

A major feature that the Weinstein Center holds is a dry-land practice area. “We can jump off of a diving board onto a huge mat, which makes it a lot less scary,” Isabelle said. “We can also do conditioning in their weight training area.”

Isabelle does not currently have her sights set on diving at the

“Every time you try something new, you have more reasons to be nervous.”

- Isabelle Broughton

collegiate level. However, she said that if she “become[s] good enough, [she] might consider diving in college.” For now, Isabelle is happy to grow her diving ability and work ethic at her elite diving facility.

Socializing in Quarantine



Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

In a time of isolation, quarantine and social distancing, it can be difficult to maintain a healthy social life. Everyday activities, such as going to the mall with friends, going to the beach, or enjoying a gourmet meal at Olive Garden, are now prohibited. This forces students to look elsewhere for entertainment and social interaction. Luckily, *The Commentator* staff has gathered some activities to fill the void caused by this pandemic.

Spending time with family is a great way to socialize and bond. Nothing brings siblings together

like a great game of Monopoly. A good way to show how much you love your sibling is calling them out on how they are a lying, cheating scoundrel who will do anything just to obtain a "Get out of Jail Free" card. Once the game develops into a full-on screaming match, see who can anger the other the most. Whoever calls the loser. Games like this can get very intense but they are always engaging and entertaining; plus, you can play every day! Games are even more spontaneous since the whole family is trapped together until June 10. Have fun and play responsibly.

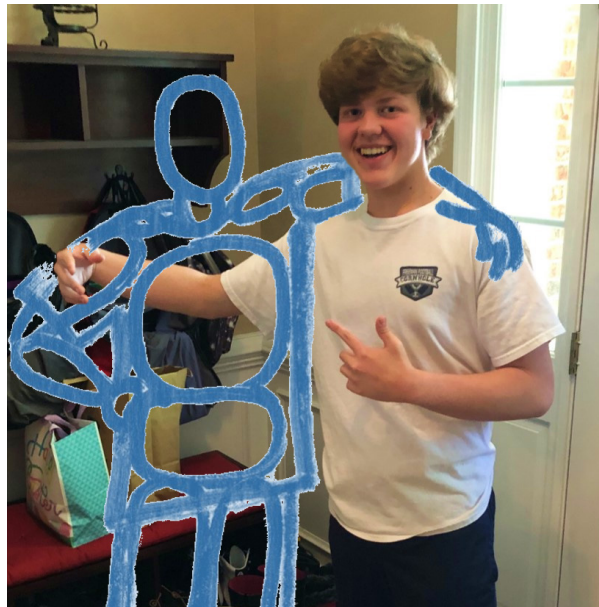
Calling your grandmother is a fantastic way to squeeze in some conversation. Your granny will be thrilled to see her phone ringing with your name. Grandparents are always excited to describe their last solitaire game in

painful detail. They will be sure to tell you every single one of the hundreds of moves throughout the game with in-depth commentary and analysis. These conversations can go on forever: a great way to kill some time! If you are really dying to watch the minutes tick away, try to teach your grandparents how to use technology over the phone. Nothing builds patience like teaching the elderly how to access Settings on their iPhone, and the satisfaction once this feat has been done is indescribable. There is no feeling as joyful as living out the saying "nothing is impossible."

Finally, making imaginary friends can fix any social-related quarantine problem. It can be sad to be unable to make physical contact due to social distancing ordinances; however, you can high-five, fist bump, or hug your imaginary friend whenever you'd like. Real friends complain and argue; imaginary friends will gladly watch eight hours of your favorite show without saying a peep. It is nearly impossible to decide what to eat with friends; however, miraculously, imaginary friends are always in the mood for whatever you are craving. Possibly the best part of having imaginary friends is that they assist with social distancing as a whole. Other real-life members of society will come nowhere close to a person talking to what appears to be thin air. Taking a stroll through the

neighborhood and laughing it up with your imaginary friend will ensure no one comes within a twenty-foot radius. If you and your imaginary friend are really talking up a storm and laughing loudly, people will see you two and literally walk the other direction. Imaginary friends provide unmatched social interaction as well as coronavirus protection, truly the best of both worlds!

Life is hard as a teenager in a coronavirus-stricken world. There are no more late-night car rides with friends, exuberant student sections at football games, or Shortpump shopping sprees with the squad. It is crucial that students abide by the safety measures in place, but we can still maintain our friendships and social lives. Don't let COVID-19 kill the fun; there are many ways to safely interact with those closest to you. Stay safe, and don't forget to tell us about the amazing adventures of you and your imaginary friends!



Joseph with an arm around his imaginary friend.

Quarantine Quotes: Isolation in a Word

"Boring" - Michelle Ntumu, 9th

"Ennui" - Gio Mazzeo, 10th

"Painful" - Charlotte Cooper, 11th

"Melancholic" - David Lim, 12th

"Calm" - Ginny Gerczak, 9th

"Snacks" - Andre Tran, 11th

"Outrageous" - Grayson Archibeque, 9th

"Stir-crazy" - Henry Donovan, 12th

"Reflective" - Lara Young, 9th

"Self-structured" - Emily Toler, 11th

10 Hobbies to Take Up

1. Biking 
2. Cooking 
3. Crocheting 
4. Embroidery 
5. Painting 
6. Running 
7. Gardening 
8. Journaling 
9. Sketching 
10. Walking 

How to spend CORONACATION

10 Ways to Stay Productive

1. Get dressed 
2. Make a daily schedule 
3. Maintain a healthy sleep schedule 
4. Eat healthy food 
5. Spend time outside 
6. Limit time on technology 
7. Stay informed with current news 
8. Spend time reviewing schoolwork 
9. Create accountability 
10. Communicate with loved ones

Vibrant Virtual Vacations

Who says you can't travel while stuck at home? With these virtual tours, you can visit anywhere in the world from the comfort of your couch! Below the name of each destination is a link to its virtual location.

- Yosemite National Park, California tinyurl.com/virtualvac1
- Swim with manta rays, Gulf of Mexico tinyurl.com/virtualvac5
- Machu Picchu, Peru tinyurl.com/virtualvac4
- Venice, Italy tinyurl.com/virtualvac3
- International Space Station, Outer Space tinyurl.com/virtualvac2
- Namib Desert, Namibia tinyurl.com/virtualvac6

"Tiger King" Review: Carol is a Killer



Anastasia Branch
Editor-in-Chief

Shortly after Governor Northam announced a statewide quarantine, Netflix released the instantly popular show "Tiger King" to relieve us binge watchers from our mind-numbing boredom. Our previous questions about Covid-19 and quarantine were replaced by the ultimate question: Did Carole Baskin feed her husband to the tigers?

The documentary introduces Carole Baskin as the founder of Big Cat Rescue, an exotic cat rescue center. Out of her three marriages, this exotic cat lady's turbulent second marriage to millionaire Don Lewis is the most questionable. Why? Because in the early morning of

August 18, 1997, Lewis mysteriously disappeared, never to be seen again.

So, what happened to Lewis? Baskin definitely knows, because I'm 100% sure that she was behind his murder.

Red Flag #1:

Perhaps the most obvious sign of foul play is when Baskin broke into the offices of Lewis and his staff to obtain her husband's will. Even though Baskin cryptically cut the locks and the power from

the offices, she did have a legal right as Lewis's wife to procure his will. Maybe I could have let her off the hook with the break-in, but then Baskin proceeded to drastically alter Lewis's will to make her the beneficiary of most of his money. I smell murder!

Red Flag #2:

Can we talk about how every time Baskin was asked about Lewis's murder she would nonchalantly laugh and crack a joke? Who on earth laughs about something that serious? That's right, no one. I'm not even a murderer and even I know that this would have been the time for Baskin to let her fake tears flow.

While I am sure that the "fed Lewis to the tigers" idea is purely a rumor, Baskin was clearly the mastermind behind her late husband's murder. It's possible that one of Baskin's obedient volunteers was a victim of her deception and executed the murder. Or maybe Baskin killed Lewis with her own



two hands. Either way, until new evidence points her way, this crazy cat lady will continue to trick all of her "cool cats and kittens" into believing her vile falsehoods.

Red Flag #3:

Don't get me wrong, Lewis was certainly no angel himself. His whole life seemed to be pretty shady business. However, when



PHOTO: BILL MCCLURE

Juniors Luke Jennette, Seamus Moore, Andrew Bland and Jackson Fellows pose during a game.

Junior Quarterback Leads Varsity Football Team

Kendall Betz
Features Editor

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 league championship. Andrew now plays for Freeman’s varsity football team, and 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 said that “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,” according to Coach Bland. “I just want the football team to do well [and] keep winning games,” Andrew said.

This season is Andrew’s third on a DSF football team. “[Football is] really fun, because you get to play with 40-plus guys, and it’s different from any other sport, because you’re working all summer,” Andrew said. According to him, “Everything about [playing football] is awesome.”

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

Andrew’s teammate, wide receiver Seamus Moore, said that Coach Bland agreed that Andrew is a valuable asset to

the team thanks to 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 college and coach younger kids as an adult. 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. Likewise, Seamus 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.

Cross Country’s Competitive Culture



Anastasia Branch
Editor-in-Chief

In most sports, the top seven athletes of a team are just a statistic. However, for Freeman’s cross country team, the top seven performing athletes of each gender make up the boys and girls varsity teams.

This lineup is constantly changing, and it is not uncommon for the best junior varsity (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 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 [she wants] to be” in her running career.

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

coach, 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 that 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 ripple effect motivates runners to perform at their absolute best all the time.

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

Golf Team is Runner-Up at State Competition

Keya Pokhriyal
Opinions Editor

On Oct. 15, the Freeman golf team placed second behind Deep Run High School in the state golf 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 fifth last year, and it was great to improve.”

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

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



PHOTO: BEN WILLIAMSON

Luke Bitsko and Grant Miller tee off during a tournament.

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.” He explained, “We have some really good sophomores... that can carry the team.”

Luke agreed with Cole. “I think we have a good future because we have a lot of sophomores on the team who can play well,” he 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.”

How do you stay active during a pandemic?

Freshman Claire Rankin:

“I am staying active by doing dryland training for swimming everyday since the pools are closed, which includes cardio, strengthening and stretching, and [I am] training for surfing like balance and surf skating [sic].”

Sophomore Madelyn Miller:

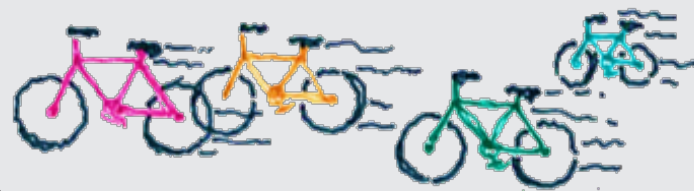
“I do 30 min. daily burn high intensity workouts [...] and I run multiple days a week. [...] My family also hikes, walks, runs, and plays games outside like ultimate frisbee and football [sic].”

Junior Matthew Moore:

“Quarantine has made exercising much easier for me. I’ve been on lots of bike rides and walks, simply to get out of the house. [...] I also have a home gym [...] so I’m very lucky to be one of few people who can still lift weights [sic].”

Senior Rylan Pearsall:

“My main sport is track, so I’m lucky I can still do what I normally do during the spring which is go outside and run. [...] I also like to play tennis and so I’ve been hitting with my brother when there’s a court available [sic].”



Mariposa Seitz Jumps to New Heights

Ella Mortimer
Online Editor-in-Chief

Standing at five feet and five inches tall, junior Mariposa Seitz soared over a high jump bar that was as tall as she is on Jan. 11, hurtling herself into the position of the top women's high jumper in the VHSL 5A division.

After becoming Virginia's premier high jumper at a varsity track and field meet held at St. Christopher's School this January, Mariposa has since "got[ten] bumped down," and now occupies the still-impressive title of second-best high jumper in the state.

Shifting to second place has only increased Mariposa's drive and dedication to high jump. "I want to regain that top spot," Mariposa said. Mariposa finds motivation in the wake of setbacks, accepting that "even when I fall on the bar, it's that conscious feeling of 'I can get up and do this again'" that drives her towards her next goal.

When asked to describe her favorite aspects of high jump, Mariposa simply responded, "everything." Mariposa's passion for the sport has driven her to dedicate extra training throughout the off-season towards jumping higher.

"I want to regain that top spot."

- Mariposa Seitz

Senior Maddie Roever, Mariposa's teammate, attests that Mariposa "works hard in the off-season and during the season so that she can achieve her goals."

It is this persistent mindset that helps Mariposa persevere after



Mariposa smiles for a photo in the hallway.

she developed "patellar tendonitis in [her] left knee" along with shin splints during her first season of winter track at DSF, which led to a continued struggle with the condition throughout her high jump career.

"My freshman season into my sophomore season was terrible" as a result of her injuries, Mariposa said. Because of her shin splints and knee inflammation, Mariposa was "only jumping four-four for the longest time because it just hurt so much to do anything."

Mariposa's mother, Elizabeth Micalizzi, can account for Mari-

posa's dedication to her recovery from injury. According to Ms. Micalizzi, Mariposa has learned the importance of upholding "the mindset to say it's okay to take a break for recovery" after recouping from patellar tendonitis.

Ms. Micalizzi continued that Mariposa's "self-motivation is inspirational," exemplified by her extensive cross-training regimen, including "volleyball, running, climbing, going to the gym, yoga, or roller skating." Whether at the track or on the volleyball court, "Mariposa trains almost every day throughout the year" and dedicates

time towards training for high jump daily, according to Ms. Micalizzi.

Brian Reutinger, the coach of Freeman's varsity winter track team, believes that Mariposa

"works as hard as anybody" towards the improvement of her skills and is "very invested in the

"I've worked this hard... why would I stop?"

- Mariposa Seitz

sport" of high jump.

For the remainder of the season, Mariposa's aim is "to jump higher," and break her personal record of five feet five inches. With her current record height, Mariposa "barely made qualifying for Nationals." Coach Reutinger said that Mariposa "must keep improving if she wants to reach her goal."

Mariposa's supporters shared confidence in Mariposa's capability for an outstanding postseason performance, with Maddie Roever attesting that "Mariposa could win big in States and even Nationals." Mariposa's mother also predicted that "she will compete at Nationals before the end of 2020."

Mariposa holds a similar optimism for the end of the winter high jump season, striving to repeat her success at the upcoming Regionals meet in February. Mariposa questioned, "I've worked this hard to get where I am right now, why would I stop?"

Freshman Runner Makes Strides

Lanie Moore
Managing Editor

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 Sept. 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 his 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 School'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."

All together, Kieran can play four sports in a year. He said, "It's 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 [he's] 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." According to Kieran, "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 seen clearly 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, in "wanting to win."

PHOTO: PAIGE BERRY

Kieran competes in a track meet earlier this season.

Junior Lacrosse Star Wins Player of the Year



Kerry cradles the ball under pressure from Godwin defense.

Timmy Dillard
News Editor

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

"Her desire to compete and win is tangible."

- Coach D'Angelo

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 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 being 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. Coach D'Angelo has a special chemistry with Nease, as she has coached her since Kerry was in the 5th grade.

"The relationship that Kerry and I share transcends the sport of lacrosse," said Coach D'Angelo. "Her desire to compete and win is tangible and she makes us all, including the coaching staff, want to compete." Coach D'Angelo is also Kerry's club team coach, so they see each other six or seven times per week during the spring.

Nease has also dedicated a lot of time to soccer for Richmond United - the most competitive soccer club in the area for highschool-

ers - but recently had to make the decision between playing soccer and lacrosse.

She decided to hone in on lac-

"I always want to compete to be the best, but for me it's all about helping the team."

- Kerry Nease

crosse 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 choose only one, lacrosse will definitely be in her future. 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 would be something that she is proud of, but it is not nearly as important as giving her all to the lacrosse program at Freeman.

Coaches' Corner: Coach Henshaw

Riley Wilkes
Sports Editor

Head wrestling and assistant football coach and equipment manager Matthew Henshaw has been surrounded by athletics and teaching his entire life. "My dad was a teacher and a coach, and my sister is an architect for the state and professor at [J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College]; it's a family thing," Coach Henshaw said.

Coach Henshaw said he "first started wrestling in seventh grade at Brookland [Middle School], and at Hermitage throughout high school." He also said he "ran cross

“Having both strength and confidence is important.”

- Coach Henshaw

country for two years in high school." Coach Henshaw then continued wrestling through high school and into college: "I wrestled at Hermitage all four years, and at Longwood [University] when I was there," he said. Coach Henshaw's total experience in wrestling has been "seven years as an athlete, coaching middle school for nine years, and high school for nine years," he said.

Coaching, and wrestling in particular, has also been an integral part of Coach Henshaw's family life. "I have a blended family with six kids, and all my step sons and my step daughter wrestled. That's actually how I met my wife," said Coach Henshaw.

While Coach Henshaw enjoys his time spent at Freeman and other high schools in the county, teaching PE for special education students, he said, "Coaching two sports takes a heavy toll on family. My wife understands that I will be late five days a week and most weekends are spent on coaching as well. My kids are all in college and or married. Spending time



Coach Henshaw supports the Freeman wrestling team.

with them is what I miss most."

Along with the massive assortment of "various moves, such as various set-ups, takedowns, pinning combinations, escape techniques, headlocks, under hooks, russians, trips, single leg and double leg takedowns, sweeps, cradles, bars, tilts, power halves, shots and re-shots, tie-ups, stalling methods, etc." Coach Henshaw said he has applied his life experiences "on and off the mats to make better men, physically, mentally,

“He bases his coaching around having a good set of morals and a positive attitude.”

- Matthew Moore

and morally."

He continued, "A big part of

wrestling, like in cross country, is the mental aspect, and there are so many strategies in wrestling like in cross country. A big thing is having the confidence."

Coach Henshaw went on to say, "[Wrestling] can have these big strong guys, and having both strength and confidence is important. And you also might have a wrestler with just that muscle memory and that strength, or a guy with all three."

Coach Henshaw said that one DSF wrestler "consistently beat a wrestler from another school three times last year, and then got beat twice this year. Mentally, if he had lost to him a third time, I think it would have really put him in a hole. But he beat him last match, and he beat him well," Coach said.

According to Coach Henshaw, "health is the goal, not just in physical and mental [ability], but in

overall health and fitness," he said. Unlike some wrestling coaches, Coach Henshaw "[doesn't] force anyone into a weight class. They get to choose their weight class, and that can help them have more chances to wrestle and perform better in competition. That's why we have 14 weight classes in high school wrestling," he said. Coach explained, "We give [wrestlers] a pound or two throughout the season on their weight goals, just to allow for growth and for health purposes. Because that's a big thing about wrestling, you have to make weight."

On the other hand, "wrestling lets some kids, who are 95 pounds and can't play football or can't hit a baseball over the fence, the chance to compete," said Coach Henshaw.

One of these wrestlers in a lighter weight class is junior Matthew

Moore, who said, "Coach Henshaw is unlike any coach I have

“Health is the goal ... overall health and fitness.”

- Coach Henshaw

had in that he bases his coaching around having a good set of morals and a positive attitude." Matthew continued, "Coach Henshaw has influenced me greatly on the mat, but furthermore in my everyday life."

Senior Connor Speidell, who also wrestles, said, "The main thing about Coach Henshaw: he's the nicest dude you'll ever meet. He's the kind of guy who will take the shirt off his back and give it to you no-questions-asked, and ask for nothing in return."

Athletes Pin Efforts on Two Fronts



Left: Caleb Jacoby (top) and Joseph Shibley (bottom) pose while wrestling at practice. Right: Joseph Shibley (left) wrestles at practice.

Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

As the weather has become cooler and the days have become shorter, a new sports season has begun at Freeman. However, for a few athletes, the official start of winter sports is far from the beginning. Athletes such as Cole Holtz, Caleb Jacoby, Jake Liberatore, Joseph Shibley, and Connor Speidell are trading in their football cleats for wrestling shoes.

Senior football player and wrestler Connor Speidell said, "The

“The hardest part is the constant grind.”

- Connor Speidell

hardest part is the constant grind, especially from football to wres-

ting." He elaborated, "We lift and condition for football starting in December, in the middle of wrestling season, and then have full football practice [beginning] in August. As soon as that's over, we go straight into wrestling and cutting weight until the end of the season."

Junior wrestler Simon Atsanyuk spoke of the work habits of dual-sport athletes. He said, "The work ethic for guys who do more than just wrestling is insane... [it] is more than 110%."

Coach Matthew Henshaw was nearly speechless when describing his football-wrestling athletes. He had just one word to describe them: "Tough!"

Of course, these athletes have their reasons for taking on the task of competing in two consecutive sports seasons.

Connor said, "I love going, going, going all the time with the boys. Going through tough practices with each other, and then celebrating wins, or suffering losses;



celebrating wins, or suffering losses;

“The...players understand that their success comes from hard work and dedication.”

- Coach Henshaw

it's always with the team, supporting each other."

Senior wrestler and football player Joseph Shibley had much the same thought, saying, "Since a lot of us play both football and wrestling, we support each other."

This heightened sense of teamwork and camaraderie has given the wrestling Rebels great hope for the season. During the wrestling off-season, football players cannot be in the weight room, as they are competing on the turf. However, their time away from the weights is not detrimental, as football and

wrestling have similar conditioning.

In regards to the relationship between football and wrestling, Coach Henshaw explained, "Both sports complement each other very well. They are both contact sports where one works with hand fighting, footwork, leverage, repetitive movements, and conditioning."

Senior and dual-sport athlete Cole Holtz elaborated on the connection between football and wrestling. He said, "Football is a big muscular-endurance sport, and that translates over to wrestling. Wrestling has a little more cardio in it, so we'll have to adjust to that, but muscular-wise, we're good."

Not only do dual-sport athletes have to be concerned with playing their sports and taking care of their bodies, they must also focus on their academics.

"The journey is always the hardest. You have to diet and exercise everyday for hours on end, giving all [you've] got, and at the

same time, you have to focus on school," said junior wrestler Matthew Moore.

Cole explained his struggle between balancing life and athletics: "The hardest part is definitely time management. Finding time to do work and sleep, that's a struggle."

Dual-sport athlete Caleb Jacoby told of this struggle, explaining

“It's the grind that really brings us together.”

- Connor Speidell

that "During wrestling and football season, I definitely lose out on some sleeping hours [by] doing a lot of homework late at night."

Even with this difficulty, the athletes make it through hard times and late nights by focusing on the brotherhood and bond they all share.

Connor Speidell said, "It's the grind that really brings us together."

The athletes hope to build on the success they enjoyed over the past football season. This fall's Rebel football team went 7-3 over the regular season, with huge wins over rivals Godwin High School and Tucker High School. The wrestling coaches are hopeful that this winning attitude will translate to the mats.

Coach Henshaw said, "The football team's success helps the wrestling team tremendously. The football players understand that their success comes from hard work and dedication; this is the same for wrestling."

When asked what their goal was for this wrestling season, senior athletes Cole Holtz and Caleb Jacoby had two simple answers: "To win more matches than we lose," and, "To win the state championship."

Student IDs: What's the Deal?



Sophomore Lilley Darden shows off her new student ID, which is labeled with her name, grade, and the DSF logo.

Lanie Moore
Managing Editor

This past fall, many Freeman students walked into their Freeman Focus classes one afternoon to be greeted with a brand-new student identification card. Seeing as many other Henrico schools use student IDs, this addition seemed logical enough, but students were left with a number of questions: “Where did the IDs come from?” “Why do we have them?” and most importantly: “What are they good for?”

In reference to the origin of the IDs, yearbook teacher Jason Abril explained that “Strawbridge distributes the IDs,” and according to junior yearbook student Nour Ahmad, “when yearbook pictures come, student IDs come with them.”

Last year, counselor Janet Smith learned that Strawbridge could send free student IDs along with students’ yearbook photos, and asked Mr. Abril to include them in the order to Strawbridge. Once the IDs arrived, the Counseling Department volunteered to help sort and pass them out. However, counselor Morgan Meadows said that this process “was definitely a mess.” According to Mrs. Meadows, “there were a lot of barriers,” such as some of the IDs having incorrect names or grade

levels.

Thus, though a number of IDs were passed out, the rest went to Counseling for students to pick up themselves. “I can say that over half of the students definitely received them in some way,” said Mrs. Meadows. She elaborated, saying that “we have over 1,800 students, so over half is a lot, but there were still a lot of kids who didn’t get them.” Hence, “we knew that it needed to be different this year.”

When Freeman received the IDs this fall, the yearbook staff, not counseling, handled them. According to Nour, “about two to three students” worked on sorting the IDs before passing them out. They placed them first in alphabetical order before realizing that “that was a huge mistake,” since “not everybody has [alphabetical] homerooms.”

After the “long process” to get each ID to its owner, Nour said that she wondered, “What are we gonna do with them?”

This seems to be a question that many other Freeman students asked. Sophomore Beth Anne Cortright commented that she “never understood why they gave them out,” and senior Nyla Grocholski said that “they just kind of gave them to us.”

Junior Luke Logan had an idea of their use; he explained he thought that IDs could be used for “dis-

counts, as well as being another form of identification.”

Lillian Wilson, also a junior, has personal experience with utilizing her ID for a price reduction, since she has “used it at El Cap[oral] before” for a ten percent discount on her meal. Additionally, according to both Lillian and Nour, students can use their IDs for reduced prices on movie tickets.

Nour explained that she uses her ID as a press pass, since this year’s yearbook passes do not have students’ photos on them.

According to Mr. Abril, “what some students don’t realize” about the reason for passing out the student IDs was that “Counseling wanted kids to have the opportunity to take the SAT even if they don’t have a driver’s license.” In other words, any DSF student with an ID can now display it as their photo identification when they take the SAT.

Nour said that since “nobody really said what you could do” with the IDs, the yearbook staff would try to send out more usage information next year.

Whether students end up using their IDs for discounts, for an SAT identification, or for a press pass, Nyla summed up what she thought their overarching purpose was: that “you can have something that’s part of your school.”

Places That Offer Student ID Discounts Near Freeman



PHOTO: VMFA

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts:
Discount on ticketed exhibits

Science Museum of Virginia:
Discount on ticket admissions



PHOTO: RICHMONDTIMESDISPATCH



PHOTO: TRIPADVISOR

El Caporal:
10% off your meal

H&M:
15% off your purchase



PHOTO: SHOPSQUAREONE



PHOTO: DIGITALTRENDS

Subway:
10% off your meal

Freeman Offers Three New Clubs

Kendall Betz
Features Editor

Are you interested in filmmaking or fishing? Do you want to volunteer with animal shelters around Richmond? If so, you’re in luck because Freeman now has a club for that!

This year, students have taken advantage of the opportunity to create new clubs. Film Club, Fishing Club, and Paws for a Cause are three new clubs at Freeman this year, and they are all looking for new members.

The Film Club was started at the end of last school year to give students who are interested in making films a creative space to create films and other digital projects, according to club sponsor and English teacher Jason Abril.

Mr. Abril has loved “the creativity that the kids are demonstrating” and thinks “visual arts are really important in our culture now.”

Senior Sebastian Peebles, a founder and co-president of the Film Club, said that “it has been

really wonderful to work with Mr. Abril,” especially given Mr. Abril’s “extensive knowledge” about the subject.

At the moment, meetings include talking about future projects and activities to do as a club, but junior co-president Grace Minson hopes for the club to become more active.

“I’m trying to make it more of an actual club and not just meeting and thinking about [future projects] but actually doing [projects],” said Grace.

Some of the goals for the club include “submitting some [filmed material to] a film festival for high school students,” and “[helping] other people who maybe want to [work] in film after high school build up their portfolio[s],” said Grace.

Meetings are usually held every other Monday in Room 117. Anyone who is interested in filmmaking can join, and there are no club dues.

Another club that is new to Freeman is the Fishing Club, which was started by sophomore Zane Gurkin

and some of his friends. Economics teacher William Seegar agreed to sponsor the club because he is an avid fisherman himself.

“Fishing is something that I’ve always enjoyed... I do all sorts of fishing,” said Mr. Seegar.

The club teaches tips and tricks and watches videos about fishing. At meetings, club members “talk a little bit about fishing and then get on with the main activity,” said Zane.

While the club isn’t allowed to go off of school property to fish, Zane explained that “you can just get together with your buds and go fishing unofficially.”

One interesting fact about the Fishing Club is that it has an Instagram account, and “you can submit any pictures from when you caught fish in the past and get [them] posted on Instagram,” said Zane.

Mr. Seegar has enjoyed “seeing the diversity” in the club. “You would think it’s just a bunch of guys, but I’ve actually seen a bunch of girls that have come and shown an interest in [fishing],”

said Mr. Seegar.

New members must attend a few meetings before officially joining the club, but there are no club dues. The Fishing Club meets every third Wednesday morning of the month in Room 213.

The Fishing Club brings the fishing community of Freeman together and is a great way to “get everybody talking and making new friends,” said Zane.

The third new club at Freeman is Paws for a Cause, which was started by club president and junior Emily Smith in January of last school year. The other club president is junior Kala McGehee.

Emily created the club because she “thought it would be a good way to branch out and do different things with animals.”

Outside of club meetings, Paws for a Cause volunteers at the SPCA and hosts donation drives.

“Last year we had [a donation drive] at Petco, and we raised about 250 pounds of supplies for animals,” said Emily.

Typical meetings are short and involve talking about upcoming

events, organizing fundraisers and donation drives, and discussing volunteer opportunities. Last year when the club walked dogs at the SPCA, the animals started out “really sad,” but they perked up after being with the volunteers according to Emily.

“They just get so bright and happy, and it’s really nice seeing the change shelter dogs can have with [a little] human involvement,” said Emily.

Meetings are held on the third Thursday morning of every month in Room 123. Anyone can join, and there are no club dues.

“It has been great seeing how passionate the students are about helping animals in need,” said teacher and club sponsor Belinda McGehee.

With over 50 clubs, Freeman is able to accommodate the many interests of the student body. Check out the Club Hub today to find a club that matches your interests.

Fishing Club!



PHOTO: BAGLEYBAIT

Paws for a Cause!



PHOTO: KSMCPA

Film Club!

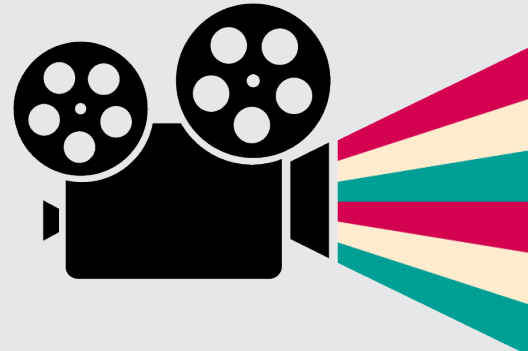


PHOTO: IOM

More Renovations to Reinvent Regency



PHOTO: REGENCY MALL

An artist's rendering of the future of Regency Mall.

Alexa Mosley
Online Editor-in-Chief

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 in 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 Steven Bonnaville, 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 Regency's makeover will bring better shopping closer to the Freeman community.

"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*, locals 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 overcrowd-

ing in nearby schools. However, Bonnaville 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, adding sidewalks [that] will make our site and others around more walkable and inviting to the neighbors and students in the area," said Bonnaville.

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,

"I'm really excited to see all the new stores and businesses open around the mall."

- Mrs. Trexler

new business will continue to stream in. According to Bonnaville, students can look forward to Regency bringing "entertainment and excitement for everyone."



(Left to right) Tik Tok stars Max Gregory, Olivia Moun, Graham Boyle, and Sophia Goldin

Rebels Tout TikTok Clout

Mary Cooper Frank
A&E Editor

Every once in a while you may recognize a fellow Freeman student while scrolling through your TikTok feed. These familiar faces include seniors Olivia Moun, Sophia Goldin, Max Gregory, and Graham Boyle.

TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing, and discovering short music videos. The app grew in popularity when people started looking for a replacement of a similar - but now dead - app called "Vine."

Olivia Moun became interested in TikTok when several of her friends downloaded the app and she "thought it would be fun to learn dances." She became famous when she posted a video from her job at South Moon Under that got 1.2 million views. In the video, Olivia is comically showing someone to a dressing room.

"I had no idea it would get so many views, because I thought it was stupid and just something I tend to do when I am at work," Olivia said. She came up with the video idea after seeing a similar video on her "For You" page.

"It was hard at first... but you start to get the hang of it."

- Sophia Goldin

Although not all of Olivia's videos are famous, she hopes to continue "making videos that people enjoy" and "learning new trends." One

famous TikToker that she would like to collaborate with is Max Dressler, who currently has 3.9 million followers.

Sophia Goldin makes her famous TikToks in our very own school. Her most famous video includes

"All my friends had been doing it, and I thought it would be fun."

- Max Gregory

Freeman's own physics teacher, Mr. Booher. Sophia never thought that her videos would go viral. She became involved in TikTok when she saw one of her friends scrolling through their "For You" page. "I thought the videos were really funny and wanted to start making them myself." Sophia said, "It was hard at first to come up with original ideas, but you start to get the hang of it." One of her goals for her TikTok account this year is "to possibly collaborate with Max Gregory." Max is currently a senior, and is also a TikTok star.

Max said that he "got interested in TikTok mainly because all of [his] friends had been doing it, and [he] thought it would be fun."

When Max first started making videos, he "hoped that his videos would get famous, but didn't think that it would really happen."

"I get my inspiration from my shower thoughts or just random ideas that come to my head," Max said. He likes to keep his videos as original as possible and "produce quality content." His most famous video currently has 6.7 million views and will continue to make

videos in the future. He also hopes to collaborate with the famous rapper, Bhad Bhabie, in the future.

Senior Graham Boyle became interested in TikTok when several of his friends decided to download the app. Graham likes to make his videos about pretty much anything. Graham said, "I use it as a way to express myself and make unique videos."

Graham's most famous TikTok currently has 60.3K views and shows him and senior Kenzie Myers acting like siblings. Graham said, "I don't really care about views and consider them more of an added benefit to the app."

"I normally get my inspiration from other TikTokers and my life in general," Graham said. Graham

"I use it as a way to express myself and make unique videos."

- Graham Boyle

believes that his videos "are different from others," and although he gets his inspiration from other videos, he can still come up with his "own ideas." "I will definitely continue TikTok in the future and hope to collaborate with Aidan Duffy," Graham said.

Overall, TikTok has gained great popularity over the past several years. If you are a student who likes to watch TikToks, make sure you look out for these TikTok stars in our very own school.

Rebels Review: Never Fear, Takeout is Here!

Although social distancing has eliminated the possibility of going out to eat with family and friends, don't worry: takeout is here to save the day! Take a look at the eateries that are still open for business around town:



And, last but not least, the one and only...

