

THE COMMENTATOR

Vol. LXX, No. II Douglas Southall Freeman High School November 2020

Freeman Parts with “Rebels” Nickname

Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

This year has been a time of seismic change in social justice and race relations both on a national scale and within the Freeman community. Over the summer, Freeman began a community-wide discussion regarding the school’s controversial nickname: the “Rebels.” After numerous polls, surveys, focus groups, and personal conversations, the school elected to part ways with the “Rebels” nickname.

“I’m glad we’re doing it now, sooner rather than later.”
- Ola Akinsanya

An integral part of the discussion process was a poll that drew responses from students, community members, and faculty. Principal John Marshall said that there were “sixteen hundred responses to the “Rebel” survey [and] another thousand on a [second survey].” According to Mr. Marshall, “We had to distill all the opinions and attitudes into a single consensus.” Using results from the surveys, the school decided to remove the “Rebel” moniker.



PHOTO: PICASSA

The new mascot options are the Mavericks, Pioneers, Trailblazers, and United.

Students such as senior Ola Akinsanya were pleased to hear the news of the nickname change. Ola said, “I feel like it’s been long-awaited; I’m glad we’re doing it now, sooner rather than later.”

Ola was an organizer and speaker at a demonstration for the national Black Lives Matter movement that occurred on campus on June 12. The demonstration protested not only police brutality but also the “Rebel” nickname.

Mr. Marshall hopes that the name change “is a step... to making sure we are as inclusive and culturally-responsive as we can be.”

Within the rebranding process, there have been obstacles in transitioning to the new name. For example, the school must alter any visuals or signage that includes the name “Rebels.” Additionally, after existing for over 60 years, the former nickname is a part of many aspects of the school, especially

the athletic culture.

When asked how the changing of the “Rebels” name af-

“This process can be difficult at times ... but a real positive change comes out of this moment.”
- Ashley Sommardahl

ected athletics, sophomore baseball player Grayson Archibeque said, “I don’t think it’s going to affect [sports] at all. I feel like we won’t let [the name change] stand in the way of a good performance on the field, the courts, or the track.”

To accomplish the large task of rebranding the school, and minimize setbacks, Freeman has enlisted the VCU Brandcenter. Ashley Sommardahl, Director of the Brandcenter at VCU, explained, “this process can be difficult at times ... but a real positive change comes out of this moment. We [at the VCU Brandcenter] want to create something that is forward thinking and evokes a sense of unity.”

As the school selects a new nickname, students have the opportunity to make their voices heard. Mr. Marshall said, “In this new nickname we can demonstrate our traditional values of excellence, intensity, and pride, as well as new values such as diversity,

inclusivity, and challenging the status quo.”

Students detailed what their core values of Freeman are. Grayson described “strength, grit, determination,” and Ola listed “inclusivity and moving forward.”

“I want students to be involved in any ways that are possible,” said Mr. Marshall. “We really mean it. So, be involved, make your mark, we want to hear from you.”

On Oct. 14, Mr. Marshall announced the final four nickname options: Mavericks, Pioneers, Trailblazers, and United. Students and community members can currently express their favorite options through ranked-choice voting. The official nickname will be announced the week of Nov. 9.

“We can demonstrate our traditional values of excellence, intensity, and pride.”
- John Marshall

According to Mr. Marshall, students have the ultimate say in the effect of the name change. Mr. Marshall said that if students “want to rally around [the new nickname], it’s going to go great. If they want to rally against it, that’s how its going to go.” Ultimately, however, “now is a time to come together and rally around our core values.”

Who’s Got Freeman’s Votes? The Commentator Polled Instagram to Find Out!



Republican
Trump: 13
Freitas: 13
Gade: 13



Democrat
Biden: 22
Spanberger: 22
Warner: 20

Remembering Campbell Doty

Anastasia Branch
Editor-in-Chief

The Freeman community mourns the loss of rising sophomore Campbell Doty, who passed away on Friday, July 17.

Campbell’s “presence as a guiding, positive force amongst his peers will be greatly missed,” said English teacher Meredith Swain.

“Campbell had an infectious smile and a profound ability to make people smile and laugh,” said Mrs. Swain. “He was the kind of person who could turn around your day with a simple smile or a ‘hello.’”

According to Mrs. Swain, “he was a hard worker and an incredibly talented public speaker” who “blew everyone away” when he gave a persuasive speech on an ancient god last year. “I imagine I would have eventually convinced him to join the Forensics team or Drama to use his speaking talents,” said Mrs. Swain.

In August, Mrs. Swain hosted a memorial Zoom meeting for students who wanted a space to remember Campbell. She said, “it was wonderful hearing their

memories of him from before I knew him... and how he changed their lives in so many small ways.”

Sophomore Sophie Armstrong, Campbell’s neighbor, remembered how the two used to trick-or-treat together on Halloween and sled at Dogwood Park in the winter. According to Sophie, “Campbell loved to play soccer, play video games, and read.”

Campbell’s teammate and friend, sophomore Kieran Berry has memories of them together last year in gym class. He said, “Almost every day, Campbell and I would walk around and talk about

“Freeman will miss Campbell immensely.”
- Kieran Berry

pro soccer and our soccer teams.” As a defender on the soccer field, Campbell “was getting better and better and kept on moving up levels on his club team,” said Kieran. After playing soccer together from as early as Tuckahoe Elementary School, Kieran said that “Campbell was [a] hard working kid who

put in everything he had.”

Tuckahoe Middle history teacher and soccer coach Thomas Gregory attested to this when he said that Campbell’s “work ethic made him special as he always wanted to be at the top. He constantly strived to be the best that he could be.”

Campbell “was very intelligent and enjoyed having fun on the soccer field as well as in class,” said Coach Gregory. Throughout Campbell’s years in soccer, Coach Gregory said that “his teammates were always supportive of him [because of] his personality, smile and the joy he brought to the game.”

“Freeman will miss Campbell immensely,” said Kieran. “We’ll miss his skill on the field and the great teammate he was, we’ll miss his smile and the conversations we had, and most of all we’ll miss the great friend that we grew up with.”

With this in mind, “we also know how Campbell would want us to keep our heads up and keep smiling,” said Mrs. Swain.

On Sunday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m., there will be a celebration of Campbell’s life at Striker Park for family and friends to attend.



PHOTO: STRAWBRIDGE STUDIOS

A celebration of Campbell’s life will take place on Sunday, Nov. 8.

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HCPS Expands In-School Learning

New Teachers at Freeman



PHOTO: HCPS FACEBOOK

New HCPS Logo encourages COVID-19 safety.

“huge impact on what choices [came] to the table on Oct. 22.”

Students returning to in-person class will be entering a different education experience than they left in March. Nurse Estrada said that “It is vital that everyone remembers his or her mask every single day!” Healthcare providers like Nurse Estrada have been working to prepare Freeman for students in the second marking period.

The clinic will not only serve its usual purpose as a place for students to receive medical treatment and take medications, but will also contain a “health isolation room.” This is where any students showing symptoms of COVID-19 will quarantine until their parents arrive to pick them up. Any student or faculty member will have to quarantine for 14 days if exposed. If the outbreak is more severe, individual classrooms or schools could return to virtual learning for a 14-day quarantine period.

To avoid such situations when students return, Nurse Estrada emphasized the importance of mask-wearing, social distancing, and frequent hand washing, which she said is “the easiest thing we can all do to keep us safe from viruses and germs.”

If there are no significant scheduling changes to the phased reopening, most Freeman students will remain virtual until early February. Mr. Marshall believes that the predominantly-virtual first quarter has thus far been “better than expected,” noting that “we have the best teachers in the world, and we also serve some of the best students in the world,” a factor he considers key to the success of online learning. Freeman principal John Marshall said that DSF teachers and staff “believe strongly in the power of education,” and thanked students “for engaging in learning despite all the challenges.”



PHOTO: GEORGE BLAND
George Bland

Where did you go to college?
“Randolph Macon”

Do you have any pets?
“I have two dogs”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Cake Batter from Gelati Celesti”



PHOTO: CARA FERRAS
Cara Ferras

Where did you go to college?
“James Madison University”

Do you have any pets?
“I am hoping to get a dog soon”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Chocolate”



PHOTO: KARA BLEECHER
Kara Bleecher

Where did you go to college?
“Tulane University”

Do you have any pets?
“I have one cat”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“I love all types of gelato”



PHOTO: DAVID MORALES
David Morales

Where did you go to college?
“Old Dominion University”

Do you have any pets?
“I have a dog and a cat”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Mint Chocolate Chip”



PHOTO: TIMOTHY FINOTTI
Timothy Finotti

Where did you go to college?
“William and Mary”

Do you have any pets?
“I do not have any pets”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Mint Chocolate Chip”



PHOTO: EMILY WALTHALL
Emily Walthall

Where did you go to college?
“Virginia Tech”

Do you have any pets?
“I have three pets”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Phish Food from Ben & Jerry’s”



PHOTO: KYLE MCCOLLUM
Kyle McCollum

Where did you go to college?
“Indiana University of Pennsylvania”

Do you have any pets?
“I do not have any pets”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Mint Chocolate Chip”



PHOTO: PHYLLIS CLAYTOR
Phyllis Claytor

Where did you go to college?
“Elon University”

Do you have any pets?
“I have 6 chickens”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Just Ask from Gelati Celesti”



PHOTO: KATHRYN WILLIAMS
Kathryn Williams

Where did you go to college?
“University of Richmond”

Do you have any pets?
“I have a dog named Lucy”

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
“Chocolate, all the way”

Kieran Wall
Staff Writer

On Oct. 22, Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) announced its decision to pursue so-called “expanded” in-person learning.

The plan, approved by the Henrico County School Board in a 4-1 decision, outlines a phased approach for returning to school. The plan allows for ninth graders to return to in-person instruction on Feb. 1-2, and tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders to return on Feb. 4. The approved plan also provides a virtual option for students who wish to remain at home. The Oct. 22 decision was the culmination of a process involving not only the school board, but school faculty and the Henrico community.

“There’s a lot of pieces that go into getting our students back in the building,” said Marcie Shea, school board representative for the Tuckahoe district.

The school board did not put together those pieces on its own. “We have a lot of different staff working on a lot of different arms of [the matter],” Ms. Shea said. The county’s decision on Oct. 22 was in response to the recommendations made by Henrico County’s health committee. This committee is composed of HCPS staff, state and local health officials, school health providers, and community representatives.

“The idea is to bring a variety of perspectives, so that the school

board can hear more than just a one-size-fits-all report of health data,” said Andy Jenks, Henrico County’s Chief of Communications and Community Engagement.

Though the health committee provided the final input in the decision to pursue phased reopening, a number of other teams supplied feedback along the way. Instructional, transportation, and facility committees advised the school board on how to maintain the “high caliber of instruction in Henrico,” said Ms. Shea. Leading up to Oct. 22, these teams visited other districts that are practicing in-person learning to see what is working and what is not.

Another group that influenced the committee’s decision was the Henrico community. According to Ms. Shea, community input was “certainly being weighed,” and “health and safety are the priority.”

Mr. Jenks said of differing community opinions, “School divisions everywhere find themselves in the unenviable position to make a decision knowing that probably not everyone is going to be pleased.” However, Mr. Jenks said, “We will remain hopeful that our community will respect the decisions that are made.”

Both Ms. Shea and Mr. Jenks discussed the importance of the surveys sent to families the week of Oct. 5. From providing the county with information on what options were most popular to giving estimates of how many students would be open to in-person learning, Ms. Shea said the questionnaires had a

Possible FreeMUN Conference

Russell Nystrom
Staff Writer

The Freeman Model United Nations club is hoping to host its own Model U.N. conference for the first time in club history. For years, hosting a conference has been the club’s goal, and it finally appears to be coming to fruition.

Model U.N. conferences provide member students the opportunity to learn more about the functions of the United Nations through role play and competition. In years past, the club traveled all over the state to attend various competitions at locations like the University of Virginia and Old Dominion University. This year, the club hopes to add a new conference to the schedule: one taking place right here at DSF.

In hosting their own conference, Model U.N. students will have a far greater amount of responsibility than they do as attendees. As hosts, Freeman students will have the opportunity to chair the various committees that make up Model U.N. As committee chairs, students’ responsibilities will include not just designating the topics to be covered, but also running the meet-

ings as they take place.

The upcoming event—referred to as “FreeMUN,” has big plans. “The club hopes to expose Model U.N. to students who might not normally be interested in it, or even know what it is, or had been too busy in the past,” said club sponsor Jason Abril. Club Vice President and junior Sagar Murthy said, “We want to create a place where we can discuss issues like international relations, climate change, history and human rights, and all the issues we care about.”

The opportunity to host the conference is creating a buzz within the club. “We’ve been looking forward to this for a long time and I hope for a successful first FreeMUN this year,” said sophomore Catriona Flynn, Model U.N.’s social media manager.

Due to the pandemic, there is uncertainty over FreeMUN. At this time, the conference has yet to formally become virtual, and leadership is still creating plans for a format that can be either in-person or online. “I’m pretty sure it’s going to end up being virtual,” said senior Co-President Andre Tran. “If we are fortunate enough, we are planning on one track that is



PHOTO: SAGAR MURTHY

The potential FreeMUN logo

virtual and one that is in person.” While this may be the case, sophomore Ishita Bakshi said, “I think everyone is looking forward to it, whether it is virtual or in person.”

There is some concern about what will be lost if the event does move online. Andre said he thinks that “there’s definitely something in being with other people and being able to do things like real body language, because you want to know what people are thinking, even if they’re not saying something.”

On Tuesday Nov. 3, the club officially received approval from Principal John Marshall to host FreeMUN. At this time, official confirmation from the county has not been received, and the club has yet to pick a potential date for the conference. In the meantime, Andre said, “we are pretty optimistic about our prospects, and we are looking forward to the opportunity to host a conference of our own.”

Stadium Entrance Gets a New Look

April Miller
Staff Writer

Over the summer, Freeman underwent multiple renovations to the football stadium, including a new entrance and a ramp for handicap accessibility. However, with virtual learning taking place, a lot of students have yet to see the renovations and feel the impact.

Suzanne Criswell, Director of Student Activities at Freeman, calls the renovations “a positive change for Freeman.” Funded by a bond referendum from Henrico County Recreation and Parks, the renovations include a HVAC system, internet access, and a new entrance and exit, as well as a ramp for wheelchair accessibility. The pandemic has “really changed the [renovation] schedule, from ending in August to ending in July,” Ms. Criswell said. “We were really lucky.”

Many students feel the same way. Isabella Fowler, a junior on the girl’s soccer team, is excited to see the transformations, especially the ramp. “I think the renovations will be good because they will allow students or families of students to get easier access to the stadium. It’ll make the school better,” she said, adding that ramps will “also make it easier for injured or sore

athletes to enter or exit the stadium.”

Freeman’s athletic facilities have received other renovations in the past few years. From 2018-2019, Freeman installed a new turf field as well as a new track. Not only are there comprehensive changes to the entrance as listed earlier, but there is also a new ticket booth, three entrance gates, and two additional exit gates.

These renovations also do away with the grassy section behind Freeman’s bleachers, known for concealing prohibited behavior. “These renovations will eliminate the ‘play area’ where people always congregated,” said Ms. Criswell. “It will be a positive change to eliminate a place where bad things happened.”

Varsity swimmer and junior Caroline Zorn said she wants the school to look “more put-together.” Her sentiments are shared by junior Morgan Louria, a member of the girl’s basketball team. Overall, Louria said that, “it’ll make our school look better.”

Ms. Criswell is ready for the student body to see the completed changes to the football stadium. “Not only will it create an easier way to buy tickets at the football games, [but] the Wifi will create a better community at Freeman.” These renovations will give the football stadium improved accessibility and increased inclusivity.



PHOTO: APRIL MILLER

A new ramp leads to the remodeled stadium entrance.

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POV: Virtual Senior Year



Keya Pokhriyal
Opinions Editor

have to reimagine what it means to be senior in 2020, just as we all have had to completely reimagine life in 2020.

Easier said than done, I know. Virtual learning has not been the easy ride I was anticipating. Admittedly, it has been considerably harder to stay motivated and engaged with the content in class when there is an unmonitored laptop in front of me and a phone to my right. It is safe to say that for teachers and students alike, there has been a steep learning curve.

That being said, virtual learning has its advantages. As much as I miss in-person school, there are things that I do not—and will not—miss. I do not miss the panic with which I am overcome as I speed down the freeway in a desperate (and surprisingly successful) attempt to make it to class on time. I do not miss the unusually short lunches. Online school offers a flexible schedule and, with dismissal at 2:55 p.m., it is hard to argue that online school is all that bad.

Most importantly, I would much rather lose one semester of in-person school than lose a Freeman community member to this pandemic. The greatest advantage of online school is, of course, that we are minimizing the risk of contracting COVID-19. Teachers, staff, and students should not have to put their lives at risk to go to school.

Yes, I miss in-person school and I want to go back. Online school, though, has been an adventure of its own, and we are all trying our best to navigate these uncertain times. We will return to Freeman one day, but until that day comes, just remember to do your daily check-in.

There I am, outfitted in a gray sweatshirt, black leggings, and incredibly worn-out tennis shoes. In case you could not tell by the outfit, I am running off of four hours of sleep. However, that does not stop me from preparing for the most strenuous task of the day—getting out of the school parking lot on time. I hear the glorious sound of the 3:55 p.m. bell, catapult out of my seat, and begin my daily aggressive speed walk to the parking lot. Although it may seem like an ordinary school day, the date is March 13, 2020.

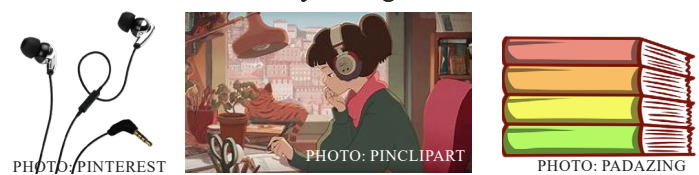
Little did we know, that day would be the last day of in-person school for at least eight unthinkable months.

Now, the mere sound of the bell and the adrenaline rush that ensues is an all too distant, blurry memory. Strangely enough, I miss it. I often reminisce on all of the bizarre, trivial things that made school so memorable and remind myself how much I took it for granted.

As a senior, online school is not desirable, to say the least. The last first day of school was online. Senior convocation was online. Senior Halloween was cancelled. Senior year does not really feel the way it should. Quite frankly, though, I have adopted the belief that the experiences that make senior year so special have not been stolen from us. Instead, we

Best Study Beats

“The Commentator” polled Instagram to find Freeman’s favorite study beats genre.



Ambient: Whether you want to feel like you’re in the middle of the woods or in a sad movie, 44% its a go-to.

LoFi HipHop: It has the perfect level of energy: enough to bob your head, but not enough to start dancing. 22%

Indie: There’s no need to get distracted by the lyrics - they probably won’t make much sense anyway. 22%

Jazz: You’re bound to get creative while listening to this. Let’s just hope there’s no rough jazz in the playlist for now. 11%

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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

A wonderful twist of two amazing things.

Very ok.

2nd best holiday.

Should be moved up to October.

She Said



Keya Pokhriyal
Opinions Editor

Solid 6 out of 10, maybe 7.

Good only in moderation.

Make Halloween a federal holiday.

Couldn’t come sooner.

This is the End.



Ashton Doll
Opinions Editor

Since the beginning of 2020, I have felt uneasy towards this year. For a good while, it was a joke that 2020 would be the end of the world. But with this year’s events in mind, it is totally possible. Are you ready for the end?

First of all, we have to talk about 2020’s beautiful track record. It has been an absolute roller coaster. This year has constantly one-upped itself, surprising everyone by increasingly getting worse. So many people consider winter break or Christmas to be the end of 2020, but how can someone be so sure? I will finally be at peace once that big ball falls in Times Square, unless 2020 has one last hit in its final moments, breaking in the news just seconds

after the year ends.

Instead of thinking of these potentially harsh New Year’s scenarios, let’s think about the more positive ones. I am going to rank the greatest forms of apocalypse on a rating scale of chaos, quality, and environmental effects.

1) Total nuclear annihilation. It is a chaotic yet quick end, but destroying the planet even more is not ideal. Humans need a more environmentally-friendly option for the end of the world, so it receives an 8/10.

2) An environmental disaster could be cool, but only if it was a huge tsunami. No potential apocalypse scenario can beat saying “no” to a massive wave as it crashes over you. It scores an easy 10/10.

3) Another contender is the introduction of aliens. Not much can top the chaos of aliens appearing on the planet. With widespread fear, immensely unpredictable futures, and the collapse of all of our systems, aliens easily beat the tsunami with a 11/10 on my scale.

On New Year’s Eve of last year, people made jokes about 20/20 vision. The crazy thing is that no

one could predict the state of the world today. Potential wars, massive protests, climate crises, and a worldwide pandemic have struck the year by surprise, but 2020 is still not done with its shenanigans.

If 2020 ends with an apocalypse, I will enjoy my time at a nice restaurant while the world collapses. I might have to be the one making food for myself, but at least I will not be one of the people who freak out and scramble to save themselves from the unforeseen disaster.

Accepting the end and denying its power over oneself is something I admire. It takes a lot of power to recognize the littleness of events in our lives and how limited our impact is in the grand scheme of things. Why waste time worrying about the future when you can have a front row seat to watch the world collapse in all its beauty?

Unfortunately, humans have a tendency to bounce back from their problems, so our terrible impact on our planet just might move to another planet. As always, we will manage to find some way out of our disasters, I hope.

Seeing the World Through



Do your eyes hurt after a long day of online school? No need to worry; blue light glasses can help! Take a look at various blue light glasses that you can buy today!

Coollest:



CREDIT: BLUBLOX.COM

Clarke Sleep+ Blue Light Glasses
\$169.95
Blublox.com

Trendiest:



CREDIT: AMAZON.COM

Firmoo Blue Light Blocking Glasses
\$18.19
Amazon.com

Best Value:



CREDIT: AMAZON.COM

Maxjuli Blue Light Blocking Glasses
\$6.99
Amazon.com

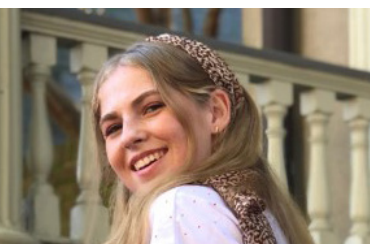
Priciest:



CREDIT: BLUBLOX.COM

Clarke Sleep+ Blue Light Glasses
\$169.95
Blublox.com

Roll Roaches!



Holly Doustout
Features Editor

Whether it be the Deep Run Wildcats, the Varina Blue Devils, or the Glen Allen Jaguars, just about every school in Henrico County is able to flaunt its mascot without issue. However, as many Freeman students know, the "Rebels" mascot has sparked much controversy in recent years.

The cost, effort and pushback associated with rebranding the school will require innovation and creativity. Yet, through my modest proposal, our problem could be easily solved through a tiny resource with which Freeman is all too familiar, but has neglected to consider: the roaches.

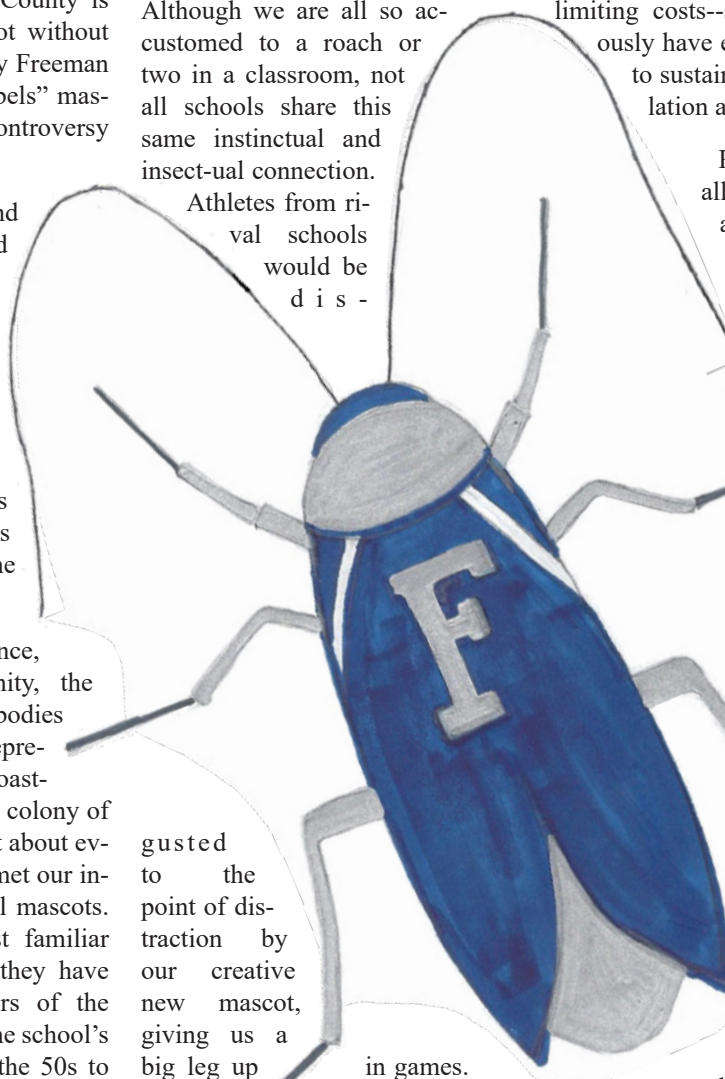
A sign of resilience, strength, and community, the Roach perfectly embodies what Freeman truly represents. With our school boasting a robust and healthy colony of the little arthropods, just about everyone at Freeman has met our insect peers and unofficial mascots. We are more than just familiar with the little critters--they have been honorary members of the Freeman Family since the school's opening. Classes from the 50s to today should be proud to dub the roaches as the new Freeman mascot.

Not only would utilizing the Roach for our mascot resolve the controversial background of the "Rebels", but it would also enable

the mascot to spread school spirit in ways that only roaches could. No school in Henrico would be able to have a live tiger, panther, or other cliché big cat mascot roaming their halls. But our mascot would be the real deal! Everywhere we look, we would be invigorated with school spirit as our friendly little mascots crawled around at our feet and wished us a good day as they gobbled up Pop-Tart crumbs.

We can even use the Roach to our advantage against other schools. Although we are all so accustomed to a roach or two in a classroom, not all schools share this same instinctual and insect-ual connection.

Athletes from rival schools would be dis-



gusted to the point of distraction by our creative new mascot, giving us a big leg up in games. It may even be possible for us to train some of our mascots to invade Freeman's fields and courts during sporting events to trip up the other teams. We would quickly jump up to the number one rank in all sports due to our creepy-crawly

pals' commitment to our school.

Freeman would easily save on the costs associated with creating a new mascot by using the Roach, as well. There would be no need to rebrand the school and buy expensive mascot costumes when we have the real thing right here at Freeman. All we need to do is collect a few of the roaches and use them at pep rallies and sports games for a cheap, effective, and school-spirit-filled solution. We would not even have to feed our little insect cheerleaders--further limiting costs--since they obviously have enough food here to sustain a healthy population as is.

Plus, think about all the cool cheers and chants that we could create with the new mascot in place! We can reinvent our new fight songs by playing "La Cucaracha" at sporting events and shouting "You Don't Want to Go to

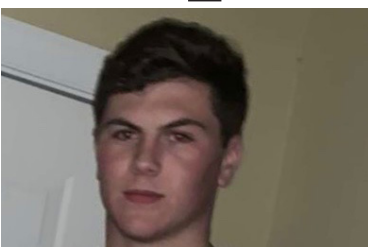
War with the Roaches." We could even rebrand the Freeman classic that is the CW as the Roach Rumble.

It is time for a change, my fellow Freeman students, and with your support, we can make 2020 the year of the Roach.

Roll Roaches!

ILLUSTRATION: TIMMY DILLARD

Sports Sans Fans



Leo Lombardi
Sports Editor

For months, there was absolutely nothing to watch on TV with the exception of "Tiger King"--if you're into that sort of thing. In the middle of March, the world of sports came to a screeching halt.

It was Thursday, March 12, when everything shut down abruptly. This was all back in the short-lived era of "14 days to slow the spread." In a span of 48 hours, the NBA had suspended their season, NCAA March Madness had been

canceled, NCAA spring sports had been canceled, and the 2020 Summer Olympics were tossed out the

“Not having fans in attendance, put simply, sucks.”

window. That nearly five-month hiatus from sports was brutal for a multitude of reasons.

When leagues like the MLB, NHL and NBA started to return in the late summer, games looked vastly different for one glaringly obvious reason: the absence of fans. Not only did ad revenue from broadcasting and the ticket revenue from games take a massive hit, but so did the industries that compliment professional sports. Because there were no fans to attend games, there were also no fans to

book hotel rooms, spend money at bars and restaurants, book cross-country airline tickets, purchase team merchandise, etc. The list goes on and on. The disappearance of fans created a huge drop in income for every single one of the workers in the aforementioned fields. That is a big deal.

Additionally, the absence of fans hurts stadiums big time. The Las Vegas Raiders of the NFL are playing their inaugural season in their brand new \$2 billion stadium. That is billion with a B. According to a 2018 report from the Green Bay Packers, a NFL team averages \$255 million in seasonal revenue. For teams like the Raiders who have newly built stadiums, a year without that \$255 million from fans lengthens the time it takes to pay off their \$2 billion stadium.

It also hurts the newly-hired

Worst Celebrity Products

“The Charli”



PHOTO: MASHED

How is a 16-year-old dancer exploiting you? When Dunkin' collaborated with Charli D'Amelio and created "The Charli," they saw a 57 percent increase in their app downloads. What Dunkin' is not telling you is that "The Charli" is no different than a cold brew with caramel, long story short: save your money, kids.

Kylie Cosmetics Lip Kits



PHOTO: KYLIECOSMETICS

Do you want to look like a pufferfish? If so, make sure you buy all of Kylie Jenner's lip kits. Kylie is known for her big lips, and if you are not a millionaire living in Los Angeles you may have trouble finding yourself in a similar situation. Ever since she has released her products there has been a long line of teenage girls waiting to overspend on a product that makes their lips look fake. Once again kids, don't believe it when these influencers tell you their brands will make you look like them. Save your money.

“The Travis Scott Meal”

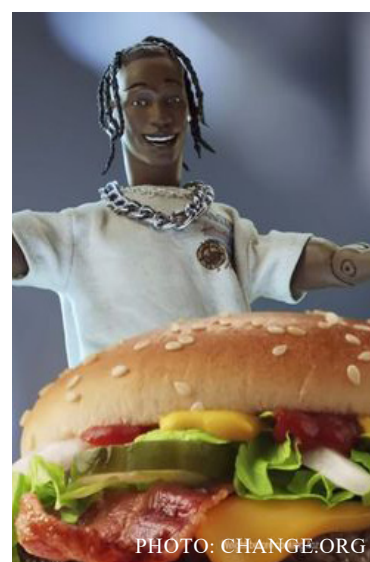


PHOTO: CHANGE.ORG

"You know what I want," cue Travis Scott's "SICKO MODE" in the McDonald's parking lot. This TikTok trend has emerged from the release of the "Travie Paddy". This "special" burger comes with the standard lettuce, cheese, and bacon. AKA, you can find this burger for a whole lot cheaper on the dollar menu. The "Travie Paddy" is a waste of your time and not worth the 500 likes.

stadium employees. The average NFL team hires over 3,700 employees. Only a small percentage of those employees are players, coaches, and front office personnel. The majority is comprised of stadium employees. Not having fans at games hurts those who work in security, will call, concessions, and custodial services.

Sports without fans, put simply, sucks. Not only does it financially burden professional sports and the supporting industries, it also just makes games way less exciting. The cheers, the chants, the boos, the outfits, the traditions, are all

gone for the moment. Most networks broadcasting NFL games are even pumping artificial fan noise into the game to boost ratings. This goes to show how important fans are to the quality of TV viewing.

“Sports on a diet is better than no sports at all.”

That being said, we will take what we can get for now. Sports on a diet is better than no sports at all.

‘Nectar’ Album Review

"Nectar" is Joji's first full-length album. Coming out with a whopping 18 songs, Joji branches out to find his true place as a musician. Although Joji was a successful YouTuber, he quit his job to pursue a career in music. Does he break away from his past life or remain a comedian in the minds of his fans?

Song Rankings:

- 1: "Mr. Hollywood"- 11/10 with a strong message
- 2: "Like You Do"- One of Joji's best
- 3: "Upgrade"- Very quick masterpiece
- 4: "Ew"- A total experience
- 5: "Afterthought"- Strong message and narrative
- 6: "Normal People"- Personal and impactful
- 7: "MODUS"- Vocal versatility!
- 8: "Pretty Boy"- Loving the California lifestyle
- 9: "Daylight"- The peak of pop music
- 10: "Gimme Love"- Simple but catchy
- 11: "NITROUS"- Solid pop song
- 12: "Run"- Great vocals, great guitar
- 13: "Sanctuary"- Fine song
- 14: "777"- Surprisingly good
- 15: "Tick Tock"- Way too ambitious
- 16: "High Hopes"- Disappointed
- 17: "Reanimator"- Too chaotic
- 18: "Your Man"- Not a fan whatsoever



PHOTO: WALLPAPERCAVE

Freeman's Favorite Foreign Foods

Freeman High School is home to one of the most diverse student bodies in the county. Along with our diversity of heritage is a rich diversity in palate. Here are just a few Freeman students' favorite foods from foreign countries.

Senior Jianna Young devours churros.
Churros got their modern recipe in the 1500s when Spanish settlers used sugar from Latin America.

Senior Andre Tran loves pizza.
Pizza originated in Naples, Italy in the 18th Century.

Junior Sagar Murthy takes pride in his grandma's signature rotli and coconut chutney with eggplant curry.

Senior Gavin Jones savors Chicken Lo Mein.
Chicken Lo Mein was first created in China during the Han Dynasty.

Sophomore Catriona Flynn enjoys Pad Thai.
Pad Thai was made in the 1930s by Thailand's prime minister to inspire national pride.

Social Studies and Smoked Meats

Brooke Ward
Staff Writer

When not teaching social studies at Freeman, Benjamin Fabian occupies himself in his kitchen. Bussing himself with meats, seasonings, recipes, and social media accounts, Mr. Fabian simply can't get enough of the culinary arts. Mr. Fabian's kitchen contains colorful vegetables, glazed meats, fried scallops, smoked beef, and a love for cooking!

Mr. Fabian hasn't always been a cook. "Honestly, I barely cooked at all as a kid," he said. "I wish I could go back and teach myself now!" He began cooking after he got married and decided that it was time to try something

new. "On a whim, I bought a vertical water smoker at Lowe's and started trying to learn how to use it," Mr. Fabian said.

His adoration for cooking took off from there. "I love to cook meats, mostly because I started off grilling and smoking food," he said. Mr. Fabian prefers to use his smoker for large cuts of meat because he "really love[s] the flavor that woodsmoke gives."

Mr. Fabian draws inspiration for his dishes in several ways, one of which being recipes. "A lot of times I will follow a recipe from a book or video the first time I make it, then start thinking about what I would do to improve the taste or make it mine," he said.

This process of personalization played out the first time that Mr. Fabian made bruschetta. He said that he "made it exactly the way the recipe said to," but "thought it would benefit from adding a fig glaze." He set out this dish for dinner and said "it was a big hit."

Mr. Fabian claims that salt and pepper are the base of all his seasonings because one "can't go wrong there." According to Mr. Fabian, "the goal in finding a good seasoning mix is to hit the different taste sensors in the mouth just right." He said that "the best foods have a solid balance of flavor that creates a memorable eating experience."

He believes his best dish to be another meat dish, Mediterranean-style herb-

crusted prime rib. Mr. Fabian uses a homemade rub, cuts slits in the fat on the back, and inserts slivers of garlic into the ribs. "Then, I smoke it with hickory wood for a few hours," said Mr. Fabian. "I make a horseradish dipping sauce with fresh herbs to go with it."

This specific dish is special to Mr. Fabian and his family because he cooks it for Christmas Eve dinner every year. His cooking is an entertaining hobby, but it also brings Mr. Fabian and his family together. "My family loves to cook, so when I got started I had a lot of people to help me learn," said Mr. Fabian.

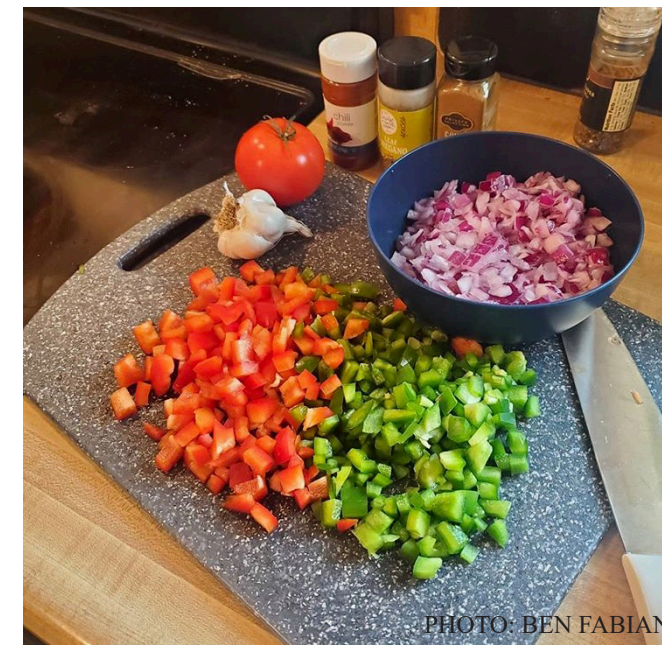
After learning his way around the kitchen, Mr. Fabian needed a way to document his progress. He decided to make an Instagram account to post pictures of his dishes and have a timeline of everything he'd been making. He created the Instagram account @ben_likes_to_cook. "Over the quarantine, I did a lot of cooking ... especially of dishes that I had never tried before, and I thought the account would be a good way to keep track of it all," he said.

At school, Mr. Fabian finds ways to incorporate cooking into his classroom.

While teaching his AP Government class, he uses cakes to represent each type of federalism. His hope is that the cakes will make a simple symbolism of an advanced concept. "I am interested to see ... if it makes it easier to remember and study the different types of federalism," said Maggie Linthicum, a senior in Mr. Fabian's government class.

Mr. Fabian's dedication to the culinary arts shines through on Mondays in his classes. "The best part of having a cook as a teacher is hearing all of his recipes and things that he's cooked over the weekend," said Maggie. With these engaging conversations, Mr. Fabian draws interest from his students. "We all love to ask him questions about his techniques and what he likes to cook in class," said Maggie.

From starting with a water smoker to working with bruschetta, Mr. Fabian has made himself into a serious chef. Maggie said that she "love[s] to hear about all the food Mr. Fabian has cooked," and said "his Instagram is really entertaining."



Mr. Fabian posts pictures of meals that he cooks to his Instagram account, @ben_likes_to_cook.

Freeman Family Recipes from Around the World

Riley Speidell
Staff Writer

At Freeman, one way that students and teachers represent their cultural identities is through food. A defining characteristic of culture is cuisine, this is shown by the variety of foods prepared by Freeman's diverse members.

Spanish teacher Erica Beard has a blended family heritage. As a teenager, Mrs. Beard spent her summers living with her extended family in Paraguay and experiencing the country's cuisine. Mrs. Beard said some of her favorite dishes are gnocchi and quinoa with vegan sausage. She said that "if you mixed Spain and Italy with South American indigenous people, you would have this cuisine."

In addition to eating family foods, the Beard household also eats all vegan foods, and most of their vegetables are grown in their garden. Her extended family in South America is vegan as well, so incorporating veganism in Latin food is something which Mrs. Beard is familiar with. That being said, Italian and Spanish cultures focus on meat in their diets. As substitutes, Mrs. Beard uses vegan sausage to keep with the traditional side of the meal while simultaneously morphing it to fit her family's individual desires.

Gnocchi is a go-to in the Beard family for birthdays, Thanksgiving, and other family gatherings. Mrs. Beard said, "we actually made this for my son's birthday." Mrs. Beard likes to make a vodka sauce to



Mrs. Beard and her younger son at work in their garden.

go over the gnocchi, but vegan versions of vodka sauce are hard to find because milk is such a key ingredient. As a solution, Mrs. Beard makes her own using cashew milk and home-grown vegetables. Mrs. Beard said that she incorporates her cultural foods into her children's meals to "give them a taste of their heritage."

Just north of Paraguay is Brazil, where senior Victor Moura's family originates. One Brazilian dish that can be found on the Mouras' table is escondido, made with potato, beef, and cheese.

"My family has been making this for a while now and it tastes really good," said Victor. Victor's father and uncles were the first in their family to try out the recipe. "I think they were looking for something new," said Victor. Although he does not know how to make escondido by himself, Victor said that he would like to learn. He said, "when they are making it, I never pay attention to learn it, but yeah, I want to."

Escondido is mostly served at birthdays, Christmas, and some Brazilian holidays. The dish has led to some memorable moments for Victor. One Christmas, Victor's cousin was carrying the dish of escondido into the room and spilled it all over the dinner table. "Yeah man, it was funny," said Victor.

Another member of the Freeman Family with recipes to share is junior Lucy Strauchler. Lucy and her family are Jewish. In her culture, "kugel is served at almost every Jewish holiday except Passover, because we're



Ranked: First Date Restaurants

The beginning of school provides many new opportunities, new friendships, and most importantly, new romantic relationships. As so-called "cuffing season" goes into full effect, "The Commentator" has you covered with the best restaurants to go on a first date.

3: Can Can Brasserie

You've finally secured a date with the partner of your dreams. In the time it took you to woo him/her, you've been able to save up enough money for the perfect romantic meal: the Can Can Brasserie. It's hard to go wrong with this option's gourmet cooking and its prime location in the heart of Carytown. Also, you'll be able to lose some excess weight by eating here, as your wallet will become much lighter.



2: Chick-fil-A



Maybe you're not ready to spend your life savings on a dinner with someone you'll probably date for less than a month; that's understandable. In that case, try dinner at Chick-Fil-A in Short Pump Town Center. Nothing says love like greasy fingers and Chick-Fil-A sauce. After your dining experience you can stroll through the mall and spend some of that money you saved on a T-shirt you think is cool, but are guaranteed to only wear once.

1: Chaperoned Home Meal

There's one last option that is both original and intimate. Why not have a chaperoned dinner date at your house? A table, some candles, the person you love, and your mom standing in the corner pretending to be doing something else as she secretly eavesdrops on everything you say ... can it get any more romantic? After all, eating at your house seriously reduces the chance of catching COVID-19, and nothing ruins a date faster than a deadly pandemic.



Mrs. Beard's older son squats next to a tomato plant in the garden.

Fingers, Fritters, or Fries: Which Fast Food Chain Are You?

- You just got out of school on a Friday afternoon - what is the first food you want to eat?
 - A) Chicken nuggets
 - B) Super salty fries
 - C) Biscuits
- You are getting dressed for school - which colors are you going to wear?
 - A) Red and white
 - B) Red and gold
 - C) Red and orange
- What is your spirit animal/item?
 - A) An overly-friendly cow
 - B) A scary clown
 - C) A simple star
- What's your go-to soft drink?
 - A) Frosted lemonade
 - B) McFlurry
 - C) Sweet tea
- What time is it?
 - A) Time to eat mor chikin!
 - B) Time to follow the yellow arches!
 - C) It's Bo Time!



Hard Work on the Horse Farm

Taylor Widdifield
Staff Writer

Summer jobs at the local pool, movie theater, or shopping center are common for teenagers who are looking to make some extra cash during their break from school. For junior Aidan Baird, his summer job was much different.

Aidan spent his summer working as a farmhand on the Hanover Horse Farm, owned by his grandmother's next door neighbors and family friends. Aidan and his cousin, New Community School senior Patrick Cozens, started doing small tasks for them, which eventually led to a job opportunity for the two.

"We started doing little jobs for them, at first ... and it kind of spiraled into a full-time job," Aidan said. The pair started working around June and continued the work up until the start of school. Throughout their summer, they devoted five or six days a week to their job, working eight hours a day in intense heat.

Aidan expressed that working as a farmhand during summer in Virginia is not an easy task. "Sometimes we would be out there in 115 degree heat in the middle of the field," Aidan said. Despite the heat, Aidan and his cousin continued to look after the farm.

To take care of the horses, the two would "muck their stalls, groom them, feed them, wash them, saddle them, and even walk them," Patrick said. "We also did a lot of hard tasks, like moving hundreds of fence boards from one barn to another," Patrick said. Additionally, Patrick and Aidan were responsible for main-

taining the 26 acres of fields where the horses roam.

Aidan's mother, Melissa Baird, thought that working on the farm was beneficial for her son. "I was very excited that he was going to have this opportunity," she said.

"Aidan just had this gift, like this intuition, working with this horse."

- Melissa Baird

Ms. Baird said, "I feel like we live in such a high-tech society and young people are always tuned into their phones," but she "knew out there on the farm, [Aidan] would not be able to do that."

His mother described a close bond that Aidan formed with a temperamental horse on the farm. "Aidan just had this gift, like this intuition, working with this horse," his mother said. By the end of the summer, the horse had gone from skittish and untrusting to social with Aidan. The bond they formed was so close that at times Aidan was the only one who could go and get the horse from the field. His mother said, "it was just an amazing thing to watch and to witness, and I just had no idea that he had this connection with horses."

"He is a very hard worker," said Patrick, and "would not back down no matter how hard of a task laid before him." Patrick said, "I am very thankful I had him as a work partner."



PHOTO: PATRICK COZENS

Aidan stands with one of the horses on the farm.

Senior Marches in National Protest

Sydney Tyler
Staff Writer

On Aug. 28, 2020, over 50,000 people marched on the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington--among that crowd was Freeman's own Camden Thomason. The senior jumped on the opportunity to show her support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement when her cousin invited her this summer.

Marya Thomason, Camden's

mother, said that Camden "cares about the world and wants to support positive change." Mrs. Thomason said, "Camden is fun, thoughtful, bright, low-drama, and very quick-witted ... it was not out of character for Camden to participate in the march."

In June, Camden attended the BLM demonstration held at Freeman by the Black Student Union in collaboration with the History and Human Rights Club. This was her first protest, and it made her want to participate in more. Camden said, "I felt like I

hadn't been to as many protests as I wanted," so she took advantage of the opportunity to make change on a national level. "I really wanted to attend the march because I felt

"The main focus was unity, and that made it very powerful."

- Camden Thomason

like I hadn't done enough," said Camden.

"Going to the capital and seeing the national impact from people from all over the country was eye-opening," Camden said. According to Camden, it was inspirational to see "people coming from everywhere, even Idaho" and having "people of all ages and races, all minority groups were represented."

The march started with what Camden described as "an insane number of people gathering all around" the reflection pool in front of the Lincoln Memorial. About an hour later, speakers shared their powerful messages with the crowd. "Bringing out George Floyd's family to speak was one of the stand-out moments from the day," said Camden. At the end of the day, the crowd broke in two, with one group marching toward the White House and the other--Camden's group--marching to the Capitol building.

Even though they marched through a global pandemic and the August heat, Camden described the event as being "really powerful." According to Camden, COVID-19 "propelled [the march] because people didn't have much else to do, so they advocated." To ensure the safety of the marchers,

Freeman's Got Talent: Nour Ahmad

"Freeman's Got Talent" is a new column featuring a DSF student who displays a particular talent. This issue's column focuses on senior Nour Ahmad, who designs her own clothes.

Out of all the clothes you've made, which is your favorite piece?

"I had these black jeans and they didn't really fit me well ... so I fixed the waist and cut off about 5-6 inches. I also had an old scarf, so I sewed the scarf around the bottom of them and it turned out really cool."

Is there any designer or style that inspires you?

"I like the avant-garde style of clothing where it's not like anything that you'd see in a department store, but at the same time you could wear it out ... I like things that stick out, things that are bold."

How often do you design your own clothes?

"As often as I can find fabric, or every time someone asks me if I want to do something with an old article of their clothing."

What inspired you to design your own clothes?

"About two or three years ago, I learned about unethical consumption ... and I was like, 'I want to be conscious about how I'm wasting my money and what I'm doing to help the environment.'"

What is your process for making clothes?

"Before I make anything, I have to know exactly what it is that I am making. I have to find designs online or sketch something out to start, and then I'll use cutout fabric from something else as a trial to make sure it will actually fit and work. Sometimes it will take longer because I don't use my sewing machine for everything, and I'll sew by hand."

What types of clothes do you design?

"I'll usually take shirts and I'll make them into something, but my favorite thing is old pants. I'll fix the waist and the hemlines and I'll do something kind of quirky with them. I'll put new fabric on the sides or I'll cut them out in different ways. I'll even bleach them and have a bunch of creative ideas on the sides which before had nothing on them."



PHOTO: NOUR AHMAD

Nour's most recent project, a T-shirt

Camden said that "most everyone wore masks." Though the weather was "sweaty and uncomfortable," Camden said that the thousands of marchers were "determined to power through."

"The main focus was unity, and that made it very powerful," said Camden.

"I hope that the march will be able to make a real impact."

- Camden Thomason

Smaller moments were also impactful to Camden, who said

that "waiting in line for the porta potty and talking to people from all over the country" was one of her favorite moments of the march. She said, "it was great to see the diversity of people from all walks of life and people representing every minority group." Camden said that the main focus was "on unity and honoring those who had lost their lives at the hands of police. At the end of the day, it was about personal connections."

Camden said the march placed "an emphasis on encouraging people to vote ... to create change." Camden said, "I hope that the march will be able to make a real impact in the country."



PHOTO: CAMDEN THOMASON

Marchers at the rally stand around the reflection pool.

Diamonds Aren't Forever

OPINION



Alexa Mosley
Online Editor-in-Chief

In mid-March, the rise of COVID-19 marked the end of professional sports for what would be many months. After a miserable period of time with no live sports, the MLB, NFL, NHL, and NBA have all returned to playing. Yet, no matter how action-packed these leagues may be, there is still a Nutzy-sized hole in the heart of Richmonders. Minor League Baseball was tragically canceled when incompetent MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred decided not to provide teams with any players. For the past seven months, the city has mourned the loss of the Flying Squirrels' 2020 season.

What hurts the most is knowing that this season undoubtedly would have been the Squirrels' worst yet, and we didn't get to watch their historic crash and burn. Last year, they finished the season dead last in their division with an impressive grand total of 55 wins and 84 losses. That means the team won almost a whole 40 percent of their games.

One would think that after that dumpster fire of a season there's nowhere to go but up, but that's wildly underesti-

imating the Flying Squirrels' first-class losing capabilities. In 2014, the team won their division. In subsequent seasons, they placed third, then fourth, then fifth, and then sixth (last place) for the past two seasons. The team is continually progressing to new depths of losing, and one would be sadly

mistaken to assume that their magnificent skid is over.

Yes, the San Francisco Giants, the organization to which the Flying Squirrels belong, have made remarkable draft picks and have done incredibly well in the trade market. Yes, the Giants' farm system is ranked 13th out of 30th and is expected to continue to rise given the state of

where the Flying Squirrels play. The Diamond is 35 years old, absolutely disgusting, and needs to be put out of use immediately. In fact, it should have been retired years ago.

Richmond used to be home to the Atlanta Braves Triple-A team, the Richmond Braves, but that team left because the city refused to give the players a decent ballpark in which to play. The Diamond is devoid of locker rooms that aren't dingy and smaller than a living

room. Modern amenities present in most ballpark are lacking. Not to mention, the concession stands take at least three innings to get to the front. A team was forced to relocate solely because the Diamond was so unbearable, yet the city still has the Squirrels playing in that concrete box.

It's quite a tragedy that Richmonders didn't get to pack the Diamond and cheer on the Flying Squirrels to what most likely would have been another depressing season. The combination of "2020: the year of utter disaster," and "Richmond: the city where sports go to die," would have made for an exceptionally entertaining train wreck.

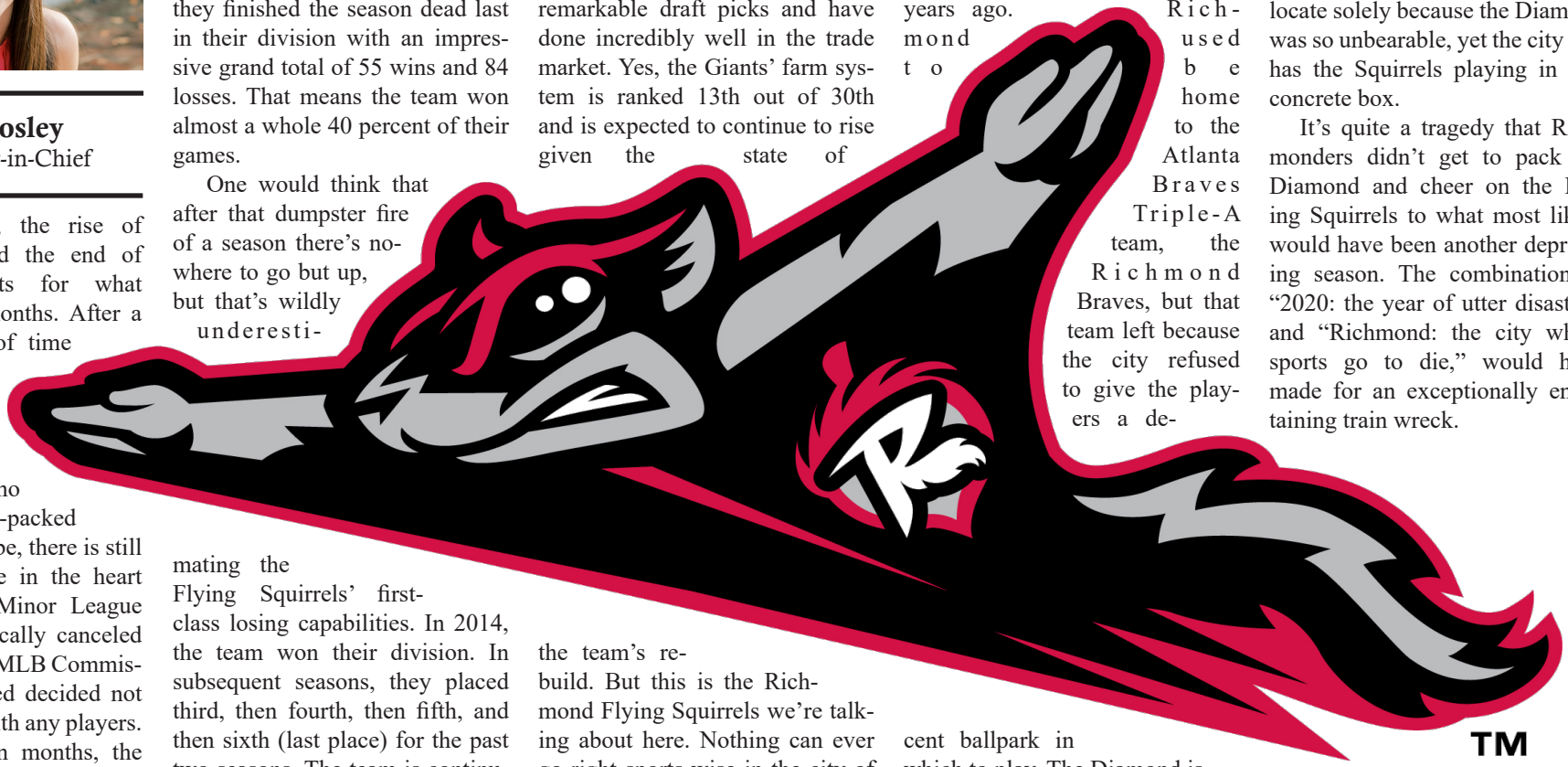


PHOTO: WORKINSPORTS

Top Super Bowl Contenders

OPINION



#1: Baltimore Ravens

With new additions like Patrick Queen, Devin Duvernay, and J.K. Dobbins, the already incredibly talented Ravens cement themselves at the top.

#2: Green Bay Packers

While the Packers' defense has struggled, they have an electric edge rushing duo in the Smith brothers, plus Aaron Rodgers is playing at his highest level in years.

#3: Seattle Seahawks

Russell Wilson has yet to produce a losing season for the Hawks, the Seahawks are #3 because of their heavy reliance on their quarterback.

Freeman's Busiest Twins

Grayson Horner
Staff Writer

Twin juniors Brett and Blair Bishop manage a full courseload of AP classes while simultaneously competing in track and cross country.

Both twins have run track competitively for five years. In their two seasons at Freeman, they have run times that consistently put

them at the top of the track team, with Brett running close to a four-minute mile. Even with their previous successes, their "times and running skills are still continuing to improve," according to Brett.

Running track isn't the only way they spend their time. This year, Brett is taking seven AP courses, while Blair is enrolled in six, and both currently have an A in every class. Brett said that he and Blair "are both doing quite well in

school this year." That being said, their dedication has led them to some complications. In sophomore year, Brett missed an entire unit of math because he said, "I had to leave early for track meets and practice." By the end of the quarter, however, Brett said that he had "worked hard and met with [his] teacher and eventually made up the unit and [his] missing work."

Another challenge they've faced is overscheduling. The twins' mother, Jodi Bishop, said that if there is a conflict in events, "they either have to make it work ... or make a decision as to which sport or activity will be missed."

In the classroom and on the track, Brett and Blair practice time management in order to overcome challenges. To complete both his schoolwork and extracurriculars, Blair said, "I set out a



PHOTO: JODI BISHOP

Brett and Blair pose together after a race.

Happy Trails

With strict social distancing guidelines in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, hiking across Virginia is an amazing way to get exercise, spend time in nature, and get out of the house, all while practicing social distancing. Visit these hikes throughout Richmond to experience the natural beauty of the great outdoors!

The Wetlands

PHOTO: ELLA MORTINIS

Scenery & Wildlife:
★★★★★

Terrain & Intensity:
Easy

Location:
North end of Landria Drive

Distance from DSF:
16 minutes / 8 miles

This is the perfect hike to appreciate the beauty of the James River ecosystem and wildlife. This hike is very dog-friendly and even has openings to the James River where hikers and their furry companions can enjoy the views of the James River. The Wetlands Park hike eventually connects to Pony Pasture.

Lewis G. Larus Park

PHOTO: ELLA MORTINIS

Scenery & Wildlife:
★★★★★

Terrain & Intensity:
Medium

Location:
8800 West Huguenot Road

Distance from DSF:
11 minutes / 6 miles

Lewis G. Larus Park is a hidden haven for hikers who enjoy a peaceful walk through streams and forests. The entrance to this hike is very easy to miss, but this hidden gem of a hike is perfect for maintaining social distancing as the trails were never crowded.

Garland Dodd Park

PHOTO: ELLA MORTINIS

Scenery & Wildlife:
★★★★★

Terrain & Intensity:
Easy-Medium

Location:
201 Enon Church Road

Distance from DSF:
32 minutes / 28 miles

Although Garland-Dodd Park is a little far from Freeman, the walk along a floating boardwalk through a freshwater tidal marsh is well worth the trek. This hike is filled with incredible scenery and diverse wildlife.

certain time during the day when I can get my homework done." During the school year, he said that this time "is directly after dinner; that way I make sure that I don't lose track of time doing other things."

Brett, on the other hand, completes his assignments by prioritizing. "I just focus on one topic at a time, and try to get it done, then move on," he said. "This makes it

so I don't get too stressed or distracted ... so I can just deal with what is at hand."

With a schedule full of academics and track, Brett and Blair are, "outstanding at getting their work done, and prioritizing their obligations," said Mrs. Bishop. "I am very proud of both of them for how hard they work, yet balance ... time for friends and family, and do so with such ease."

The Headless Saxmen Jam Through Pandemic

Jack Harenchar
Staff Writer

A group of Freeman Jazz Band students found a way to stay connected with each other and in-tune with their musical skills during the COVID-19 pandemic: they formed their own band.

The band calls itself The Headless Saxmen and consists of seniors Holden Seward (vocals), Andre Tran (piano and melodica), Andrew Russell (tenor saxophone), Matthew Moore (trumpet), Carter Barnes (bass guitar), Ryan Strohmman (alto saxophone), and Connor Wright (electric guitar), junior Luke Morton (drums), and Freeman graduate Cole Thomason (drums). Although the group had been friends for a while through Jazz Band, they hadn't had success forming a band of any sorts in the past. "We tried to do something similar in freshman year, but it was really bad," Andre said, "because neither I nor anybody else really knew anything about music like that."

After COVID-19 hit and live music disappeared, Andrew Russell said, "as band kids, we just kind of had this moment of 'you can only do so much playing alone in your room.'" With this in mind, they decided to find a way to get together. "We said... 'where are places we can play?'" explained Andrew, "that was really... all the thinking involved." With a venue set and a number of students looking to get back to playing live music, the group got together.

In the beginning, this would-be band was just a group of friends looking for something to do. "It kind of makes me laugh to call us like a band," said Andrew, "because in my mind we were just a bunch of guys in a parking lot, playing notes." Holden explained that "the day the band really formed was when I showed up with some actual sheet music I'd written."

Since the creation of The Head-



PHOTO: HOLDEN SEWARD

The Headless Saxmen practice their music while following social distance guidelines.

less Saxmen, Holden has become the main composer, writing three songs. Holden's personal favorite, "Reste," is a "French pop song [that] we got to record in a studio... I had a lot of fun writing [it]," he said. Most of what the band plays is classified under the genres of rock and funk. In addition to Holden's work, Andre has also composed a piece, and the band plays a number of covers. Andrew said that Holden and Andre "are definitely talented guys."

Beyond impressing each other, the band has impressed what little audience they have been able to have. Julia Wright, band member Connor Wright's mother, said, "Watching teenagers come together without any assistance from adults and create perfect pieces, from the composition to the final execution is amazing." She said that she "was so impressed with how everyone was provided an opportunity to have a solo and highlight [their] strengths." Besides parents and a few lucky passersby as the group practiced outside one day by the lake at the University

of Richmond, not many have been able to hear the band play. When asked if she had heard about other parents' feelings towards the band, Ms. Wright said, "At this point, I have not, but I can only imagine they are as impressed as me!"

Their band name, The Headless Saxmen, draws a chuckle from Andrew Russell. "We played in Connor Wright's garage, and we just propped a phone up on a step... and the framing just cut off my head," Andrew said. "You could see all of the parts of the saxophone... but couldn't see my head and I guess it just stuck."

Despite the limited time they have been together as a band, their previous friendships have helped them develop a sense of collaboration. "[There is] a lot of take and give so really anything anyone wants to do... it goes, and we're all pretty flexible, but also consistent. So, [there is] good chemistry," Andrew said. Ms. Wright said that she has seen a kind of bond develop between the members of The Headless Saxmen, especially in how collaborative they are.

"They seem to be engaged with finding ways to produce, store, and share their sessions," she said, "[it] seems to be one way they are all participating, even afterwards."

While the band has been active for the past few months, what comes next is still uncertain.

Andrew said the future of The Headless Saxmen is "definitely up in the air." "I think that's why we want to jump on it right now, as much as we can... because we know we have this group, and we

can make this music now. I think that's really why we're doing it," he said.

In the end, the group, described as "collaborative, organized, high-octane," by Ms. Wright, has made some memories these past few months. Andre concludes that, "I just hope everybody [is] able to have fun and... learn something from this experience because it really is just such a unique thing to have a bunch of friends who can just go to a parking lot and make music."

Junior Walks Museum Runway

Emily Waters
Staff Writer

For the past four years, junior Ann Douglas Rabon has participated in the TeenStylin' program at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA).

TeenStylin' is an intensive 12-week program offered to middle- and high-school students throughout Virginia. Accepted students are tasked with creating a wearable work of art that is inspired by a preselected piece from the VMFA's permanent collection. According to Fionnuala Bradley, the VMFA's Teen Programs Coordinator, students "really think about what they can pull from [the chosen piece]- whether it's color, or shape, or concept." The objects vary from year to year. "One year I got two champagne flutes, which was kind of interesting," said Ann Douglas.

In addition to the assigned work of art, an overarching theme guides the participants' designs. This past year, the theme was Metamorphosis, which Ms. Bradley said "actually became very well suited for the year that we had."

Ann Douglas began the program in seventh grade after hearing about it from her neighbor. "She showed my family pictures [from the program], and we were like, 'That's so cool!'" said Ann Douglas. Once notified of her acceptance, Ann Douglas said that "it was obviously very astonishing to me, especially as a middle schooler!"

TeenStylin' didn't let COVID-19 stop them from holding the program. The participants met over Zoom instead of in person. "Despite the virtual environment, this year's project was [my] favorite to work on," Ann Douglas said.

TeenStylin' students meet virtually each week to participate in

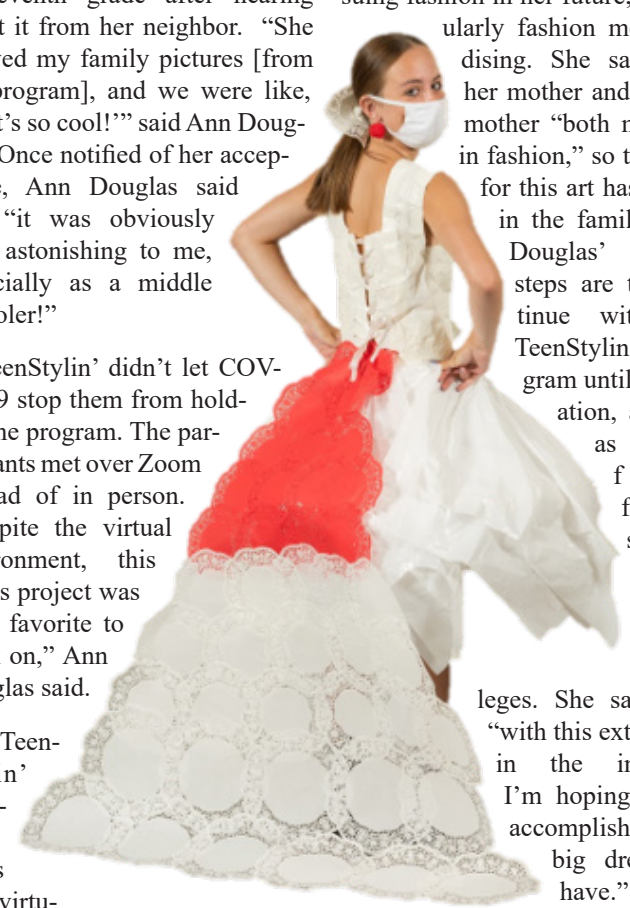
warm-up activities and lessons and work on their pieces. Each week, the VMFA would "bring in a special person who specializes in one thing," Ann Douglas said.

At the end of the 12 weeks, TeenStylin' held a runway show. All participants had the opportunity to display their wearable works of art, which they crafted over the course of three months. Artists have the choice to model their own work or recruit someone else for the job. "This year I just did it myself," said Ann Douglas. According to Ms. Bradley, "We take over the entire museum... to put on this very high quality runway show for every person that participates." She added that they "run it at the same quality that you would see a runway show at the collegiate level."

Through TeenStylin', "students really put together these wonderful works of art," said Ms. Bradley. "People are honestly stunned at times to realize how young the people behind them are." Ann Douglas recommended the program to other teens interested in the fashion industry because "it was a great learning experience," she said.

Ann Douglas is interested in pursuing fashion in her future, particularly fashion merchandising. She said that her mother and grandmother "both majored in fashion," so the love for this art has "been in the family." Ann Douglas' next steps are to continue with the TeenStylin' program until graduation, as well as search for a fashion-specific internship and a college. She said that "with this extra push in the industry, I'm hoping I will accomplish the big dreams I have."

Anne Douglas poses in her creation.



NO-SEW FACEMASK TUTORIAL

MATERIALS

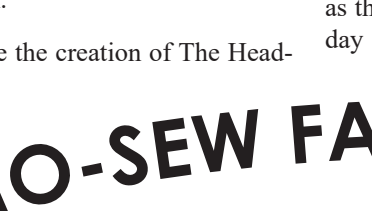
- 2 rubber bands or hair ties
- 20 in x 20 in square of washable, breathable cotton fabric (t-shirt, bandana)
- Scissors

CDC FACEMASK RECOMMENDATIONS

The CDC recommends that face masks:

- Have two layers of fabric in order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus
- Fit snugly to face with no gaps at sides
- Fully cover nose
- Allow for breathing without restriction

STEP 1



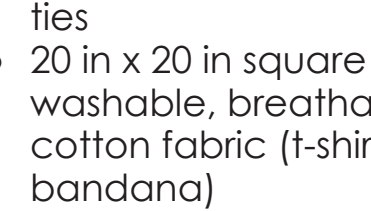
Fold the fabric square in half

STEP 2



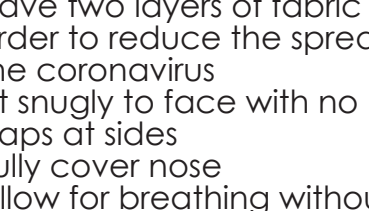
Fold the bottom and top edges of the fabric towards the center.

STEP 3



Place the rubber bands around the fabric spaced around 6 in. apart.

STEP 4



Fold the left and right edges of the fabric towards the center.

STEP 5



Use the rubber bands as earloops for the mask.

Your DIY mask is ready to help stop the spread of the coronavirus!

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Pumpkin Spice: Worth the Hype?

OPINION



Daisy Fuller
Staff Writer

Pumpkin spice - what is the hype all about?

Once late August hits, coffee chains throughout America release their seasonal drink lineup for the fall. These seasonal drinks offer many varieties of flavors that include caramel, apple, and chai. But, none come close in popularity to pumpkin spice.

Pumpkin spice has evolved beyond being a popular flavor for coffee drinks. When fall begins, you can find pumpkin spice candles, ice cream, air spray, and even dog treats. Junior James Wright said that the pumpkin spice hype is "like the iPhone- you just have to have it."

Why is this particular flavor blend such a phenomenon in America? I had never had a pumpkin spice drink and asked myself this very question. To find out if this flavor is really worthy of its praise, I decided to try the classic, infamous pumpkin spice latte. Opposed to the drink's popularity, sophomore Ginny Gerzack described the latte as "overrated" and "a drink that you either love or hate." For my debut pumpkin spice experience, I tested and reviewed two iconic coffee chains' approaches to the legendary drink.

My first "PSL" (Pumpkin Spice Latte) was from Dunkin'. I have been to Dunkin' several times, but I had never gotten one of their seasonal drinks. I ordered a small iced pumpkin spiced latte (I can't stand

hot drinks), which costs \$3.59.

As I was given the drink, I first noticed the size. It is a very big "small" drink considering the fairly cheap price. However, the appearance was fairly underwhelming. The latte lacked the advertised whipped cream and cinnamon and looked unappetizing and milky. When I first tasted the drink, I wasn't floored: it tasted like a sugary vanilla latte with just a splash of pumpkin flavoring. Although there was no strong spice flavor, it wasn't awful -- it was still a pleasant, light approach to the iconic fall beverage.

After my Dunkin' experience, I visited the chain's main competitor, Starbucks. According to junior Molly Fratkin, the Starbucks pumpkin spice latte is "really good and gets [her] in the mood for fall."

I ordered a tall iced pumpkin spice latte and was immediately shocked by the price. I know that Starbucks is generally more expensive than Dunkin', but their tall pumpkin spice latte is \$4.90, which is over a dollar more expensive than Dunkin'. Not only is the price staggeringly high, but Starbucks' smallest size is 12 fluid ounces while Dunkin's smallest size is 16 fluid ounces. That being said, when I tasted the Starbucks latte, I was generally impressed.

The drink had an excellent spice taste, a more powerful coffee base, and a notable pumpkin flavor overall. When I received the drink, it was topped with whipped cream and sprinkled with cinnamon. It was also a pumpkin-like bright orange color. Starbucks achieved my standards for how I believe a classic "PSL" should taste, but I was still thrown off by how expensive it was.

With price, taste, and appearance in mind, Starbucks has the best latte. Although it was pricey, Starbucks' drink has the better pumpkin spice flavor and overall taste experience. It has more depth to its flavor and more attention to detail in the appearance. However, I did enjoy Dunkin's pumpkin spice drink, especially for the cheap price. The Dunkin' latte could be perfect for someone who is unsure about the flavor combination and wants a milder take on the drink.

After this experience, I can confidently say that I don't think the "PSL" is overhyped. Some fanatics may take their pumpkin spice addiction to the extreme, but the drink genuinely deserves its popularity. I am no coffee connoisseur, but the pumpkin spice latte is pretty fantastic and definitely got me excited for fall.



A side-by-side comparison of the Dunkin' and Starbucks PSLs

Student Art in Quarantine



Junior Lily Bowman after a dance recital.



The band, The Headless Saxmen, practice playing a song.



Senior Jenna Matthews's artwork is made of alcohol ink markers, pen, and acrylic paint.



Sophomore Elizabeth Knerr creates elaborate makeup looks.



Junior Dani Henry's art piece that consists of colored pencil on grey-toned paper.

(New) Lights, Camera, Action!

Emma Ridolphi
Staff Writer

It's been over 60 years since the lights in Freeman's auditorium were installed. Now, they're finally getting an upgrade. The Henrico County School Board approved the installation of a new lighting system in the auditorium recently. Marcie Shea, Tuckahoe District School Board Representative, said that the "money was approved for the project," and that "they are working to get the purchase order paperwork completed so they can begin the project."

Ms. Shea also said that "the investment will allow Freeman students to continue the legacy of excellence [that] Ms. Spears, Mr. Blankenship, and Mr. Todd have built in art programs." Ms. Shea said that during the 2007-2009 renovation of Freeman, the auditorium was "the last piece of the school to be renovated," and that "many of the allocated funds had been used to fill gaps elsewhere in the school." The lighting system wasn't upgraded. "Our lighting system is so old that the board we have isn't made anymore," drama teacher Mary Spears said.

Sophomore drama student Avery Ingram said that "for the year and counting that I've been here,



Theater students perform onstage.

the lights were always on their last legs." She also said that "anytime we'd do any type of production or class project that involved the lights, we just crossed our fingers and hoped that it wasn't the day they died."

Senior Maggie Goodrich, another drama student, also expressed the instability of the lighting system, saying that "we used what we had, but there's so much more we can do with the new lights." She also said that "it affected our performance because Spears had to take into account where we did or didn't have lighting."

Ms. Spears explained why the lighting is crucial to the play, "It's a big role. Lighting sets the mood, creates time of day, and highlights the person's space." Maggie agreed with Ms. Spears, when she said that the new lighting system will "help us set the scene more,

which will help us get into character."

Maggie said that "while this was an expensive purchase, it's so appreciated." Avery added that "it's very exciting to get an entirely new system. It's been needed for a while, but it's finally happening now, which is great."

Ms. Spears mentioned other improvements that she would like to see in the auditorium. "I would like to have more fluorescent lights in the ceiling. There's also a box that houses our sound amplifier that needs to be moved. We need new curtains as well," she said. While there's still more work to be done, Ms. Spears has hope for the installation of the new lighting system, saying, "I'm thrilled that they're going to do it. I've been pushing for this for 10 years, and now it's happening."

Which TikTok Star Are You?

1. What side of TikTok are your friends on?

- Dance TikTok
- Halloween TikTok
- Cooking TikTok
- Makeup TikTok

3. What do you do during your free time?

- Learn TikTok dances, especially the renegade
- Prepare for spooky season by dressing up like ghosts
- Cook yummy meals or attempt whipped coffee
- Follow the latest makeup trends

2. How much time do you spend on your phone daily?

- 2 hours
- 4 hours
- 3 hours
- 5 hours

4. Do you know all the latest celebrity drama?

- I like to stay updated, especially with the Hype House
- Sorta, but I mostly focus on trends
- Not really, I'm more interested in food
- Totally! Did you see what makeup look James Charles did last week?

Answers:



If you chose mostly As, you are like

Charlie D'Amelio!

You love to learn new dances, drink Dunkin', and hang-out with your friends!



If you chose mostly Bs, you are like

Jack Janson88!

You love to create trends, especially when they involve dressing up like ghosts for Halloween!



If you chose mostly Cs, you are like

lamTabithaBrown!

You normally find yourself cooking in the kitchen and always say "Like so like that."



If you chose mostly Ds, you are like

Abbyartisty!

You often find yourself spending hours on your phone while creating makeup looks.

Navigating the Virtual Arts

Claire Morris
Staff Writer

The transition to virtual school has caused Freeman's Art and Music Departments to reimagine their class structures, while also trying to move forward with the curriculum.

So, what does a virtual art class look like at Freeman? There is no singular answer, because the class structure varies depending on the day. Most of the classes are a mix of synchronous and asynchronous work. They begin with a lesson or discussion with the teacher, and then the students break off to work on their projects and assignments individually or in small groups. "The hardest part is trying to keep it simple and finding out what is the most important thing to get across to the students," said art teacher Shari Beazley.

While this concern is also applicable in a normal routine, art students and teachers now lack face-to-face communication. The art classes at Freeman are centered around student-teacher interactions, so junior art student Danielle Henry said that she missed "having the teacher sit down with [her] in person." Since the switch to virtual, "it feels like we are being robbed of that experience," said Danielle. One of the main problems that arose for virtual art classes was the distribution of materials and supplies. Students at home do not necessarily have access to the closets of paper, pencils, and paints that they would have if they were at school. In order to make sure that each and every student had the materials they needed, the county put together material sets that were mailed directly to students' homes.

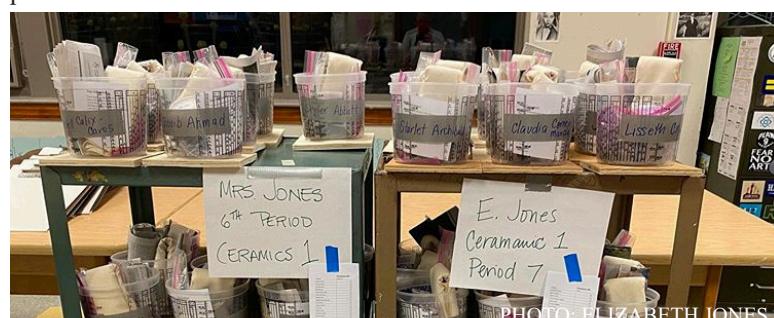
Theater students have been affected by online learning, as well. Drama teacher Mary Spears said that "as theater teachers, we pride ourselves on not using the computer." That being said, current circumstances have led to the opposite: drama classes that are en-

tirely online. In order to engage her class, Ms. Spears has been creative with Schoology. She posts how-to videos for each lesson and has synchronous meetings every class in order to keep the class focused.

Being online, Ms. Spears' lessons themselves differ from previous years. For example, one upcoming unit is on puppetry. Students will learn how to build their own puppets and theaters at home. Then, they will learn how to create and perform a play with the puppets. Another unit that will need adjusting is the makeup unit. Ms. Spears said that "it's going to be interesting, because doing a makeup unit is really hard." Much like the art classes, students at home likely do not have access to all of the stage makeup and tools that they would have used in school. In order to combat this problem, the Theater Guild is buying starter makeup kits that will be mailed to everyone's houses.

Freeman also has a variety of music programs that have had to adapt to virtual classes. For example, students in chorus can no longer sing together due to the amount of lag on Microsoft Teams meetings. Instead, the teacher gives a demonstration while each student sings warmups and practices with their camera on and microphone muted. According to junior chorus student Yasmin Lopez, the new class format is "doable, but can be complicated and a little time consuming." On the topic of social interaction, she said that "it's harder to build that connection with your classmates that you need to make music together."

Each teacher has embraced the creativity that embodies the arts and has transformed their hands-on-centered classes onto a virtual platform. Classes have adapted differently, but they all focus on one central theme: the students. "I miss them, it makes me tear up just thinking about them," said Ms. Beazley, "but I've got some really talented kids and I'm really proud of them."



Bins of arts supplies sit ready for students to pick up.