



Booster Club Hosts 5th Rebel Run



PHOTO: SARAH LINDAMOOD

Sarah Lindamood
Photography Editor

On Saturday, March 19, 550 runners lined up to race in the Rebel Run 5k. This year, over \$11,000 was raised for the Douglas Freeman Athletic Booster Club.

Junior Waleed Suliman and sophomore Ryan McCracken placed first and second in the overall race. The first two finishers in the female race were not Freeman students.

The race continued to unite the Freeman community and uphold its place in the top 5 percent of 5k's in the nation.

Girls varsity soccer had the highest percentage of team members registered for the race.

"We are most appreciative of all the participants, volunteers, sponsors, the school groups that shared the day with us, the bands and the brave dunk tank participants" said Shawna Shade, 2016 Rebel Run 5k coordinator.

Junior Waleed Suliman crosses the finish line first at the 5th annual Rebel Run on Saturday, March 19.

Schoology: Revamped Technology or More of the Same?

Thomas Best
Staff Writer

Say goodbye to SchoolSpace and say hello to Schoology (pronounced skoo-luh-gee), Henrico County. Beginning in the fall of 2016, all teachers in secondary schools will begin using the new learning platform to share documents and connect with students. With this new change fast approaching, a lot of students are wondering: What exactly is Schoology?

"Schoology is an integrated platform that will connect our entire learning community in a safe, secure, collaborative environment," said Kourtney Bostain, instructional technology specialist. "It lets teachers connect a variety of digital resources into a single location, which gives students easy access."

Some of Schoology's features include an integrated calendar, mobile access and a modern interface.

Although this change may come as a surprise for some students, this is a project that has been in the making for years.

"There were quite a few planning sessions with Instructional Technology, Operational Technology and Schoology's Project Management team," said Brian Maddox, director of technology.

"The planning effort really started back in the fall of 2014 where the need to change from SchoolSpace became evident," he said.

Mr. Maddox said one of the county's highest priorities was getting student and teacher feedback. About 75 percent of the participants that evaluated Schoology were either students or instructional staff.

"Part of our approach included planning for teacher training. To date, we have a variety of training materials designed for teachers and have started training at our pilot schools," said Mr. Maddox.

One of the pilot schools, Hermitage High School, has been using Schoology since students came back from winter break.

"Overall, I think the platform is better than anything we have right now," said Trey Kawugule, a junior at Hermitage.

"It can be used for grades, calendars and document retrieval, so it's nice to have something that encompasses all of that," he said.

In addition to the pilot schools,

all secondary schools have groups of three teachers doing a mini-pilot with students. Science teacher Greg Townsend is one of the teachers participating in this pilot program at Freeman.

"I like it a lot. The process of setting it up is easier than it was in SchoolSpace and, for students, the flow of material is better," said Mr. Townsend.

Townsend said one of the biggest perks of Schoology is that grades sync to PowerSchool.

"As teachers, we don't have to write a bunch of grades down and then transfer them. They will automatically sync up," he said.

"Not everything that students do is digital, so those assignments will be entered directly into PowerSchool," said Mrs. Bostain. "The assignments completed in Schoology can be automatically pushed out to PowerSchool."

Schoology's updated interface was one of the biggest reasons for the county's choice. Although the learning platform has been around since 2009, Mrs. Bostain says Schoology has "better communication tools that are easier to use and more integrated."

The first thing Schoology users normally notice is how alike the



The Schoology's new interface promises a more accessibility.

layout is to social media websites like Facebook and Twitter. Similarly to Facebook, students can comment and "like" a teacher's post to their board.

"Users not only have access to all of their academic courses, but they also have access to academic groups," said Mrs. Bostain.

"So if I'm a member of say, band or an honor society, those groups will have their own space," she said.

Many students who use Schoology share Mrs. Bostain's enthusiasm. Collegiate began using Schoology earlier this year and many students enjoy the new learning platform.

"My favorite aspect of Schoology is the calendar feature. It shows all upcoming assignments so I can remember the work I have coming up. It's also helpful when you miss class because it lets you check your homework

on the website," said Collegiate sophomore Carter Norfleet.

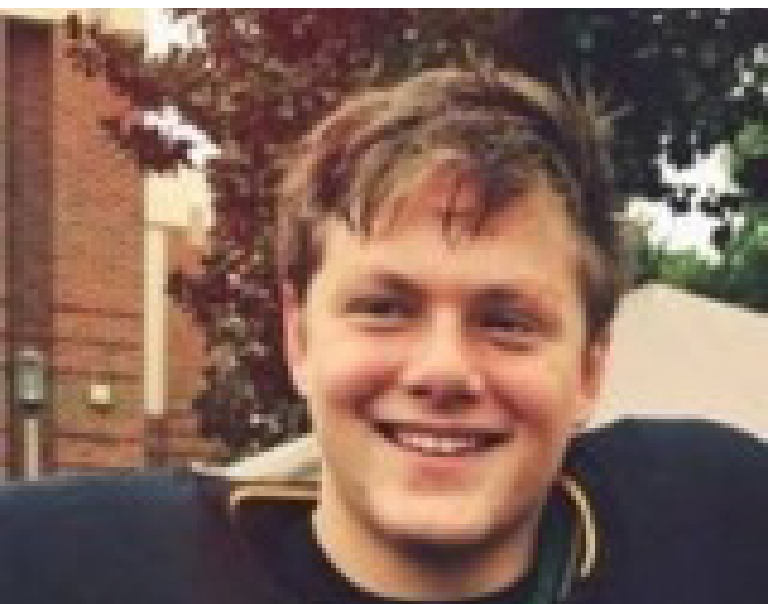
However, many Freeman students who are already using the new learning platform feel differently. Sophomores Josh Taylor and Marin Shade use Schoology in their English class with Mr. Inman. Josh described it as "basically like SchoolSpace, but better looking and more confusing."

Marin compared the change to "switching from Chipotle to Moe's." However, both agreed that Schoology has more features to help you stay on top of your work than SchoolSpace.

Although it may be hard to pronounce, students and teachers are sure to become more familiar with Schoology soon.

The HCPS Finance Department did not respond when asked about the cost of the implementation.

Freeman Family Mourns Loss of Alumnus



Christian smiles after a Randolph-Macon football game.

Connor Loughran
News Editor

Freeman graduate Christian Cozens passed away on April 1, 2016 after a year-long battle with chondroblast osteosarcoma, which is a form of bone cancer.

He is survived by his two parents, Karen and Lloyd Cozens, and his three siblings, Paul, Lizzie, and Patrick Cozens.

At Freeman, Christian was a three-sport athlete, competing in football, lacrosse, and track events. His successful Freeman

football career as a fullback led to a position on the Randolph-Macon team.

"He was one of the most dependable guys out there," said football coach Mike Henderson.

"If you needed a yard, he could run someone over for you. To see such a hard-working attitude everyday was amazing."

His physical strength, however, stretched far beyond the lines of a field.

"He loved mountain biking, kicking, and camping; he was never interested in television or videogames, and this became a

real struggle when he became bedridden" said Mrs. Cozens.

Christian was first diagnosed last April when he experienced pain similar to that of a football injury. As the pain persisted, the doctor ordered an MRI that showed he had a large mass on a bone in his hip.

"We believe the tumor started growing his senior year of high school, but we can't really know" said Mrs. Cozens.

He was diagnosed with osteosarcoma 12 days later, yet his mother said, "he never lost his faith that he would beat this horrible cancer."

His mother recalled his boundless courage during his journey.

"He was paralyzed in January, and even then he knew he would get better. We loved his spirit, and it was Christian who gave us hope when we thought we had lost it all," said Mrs. Cozens.

The Freeman lacrosse team hosted a benefit game in Christian's honor for SARC (Sarcoma Alliance for Research through Collaboration) which he was able to attend on March 18, and raised about \$4,000.

"We were overwhelmed by the show of support for our boy," said Mrs. Cozens.

"He had no idea how many people cared about him," she said.

"I believe being a part of the

RMC and DSF families was a very important part of Christian's life. The support he got from these teams was invaluable this year," said Mrs. Cozens.

Many Freeman students are mourning Christian. The baseball outfield has once again been painted in memory of a lost Rebel, with Christian's initials "CBC" displayed in blue and grey. The boys lacrosse teams are also showing their support and respect for Christian by wearing "CC" stickers on their helmets.

On May 7 at 1 p.m., the baseball team will host an additional benefit game for the same organization, SARC, in memory of Christian.

While his sheer athleticism was apparent, as Coach Henderson recalled his "two touchdowns against Manchester in the triple overtime playoff victory," he was also dependable off the field. Christian was an active member of St. Bridget Catholic Church, where he participated in countless mission trips and a youth group.

"The most important parts of a person's faith journey is who accompanies you on the journey; Christian accompanied many on their faith journeys...and for that we are all grateful," said Dan Harms, youth group leader at St. Bridget.

"It was hard for him to go to

church during this year, but he insisted on receiving communion at home and always welcomed visits from priests," said Mrs. Cozens.

Christian continued to touch lives in other aspects of his life, as close family friend Clayton Ashby remembers their friendship.

"He is the strongest person I've ever met, and it has resonated through those he left behind," said Clayton.

"Christian loved deeply, cared strongly, and his desire for the happiness of others will never be forgotten," he said.

Social Studies teacher Ben Fabian also attested to Christian's dependability in the classroom, describing him as "the anchor of every group in which he was a part."

"He was a very constant and reliable person. I always appreciated his positivity, day in and day out," said Mr. Fabian.

Christian's positivity outlasted the trials of cancer, even after it stole so many aspects of his freedom.

Mrs. Cozens encourages others to adopt the attitude Christian maintained during his battle with cancer.

"When life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, show life that you have a thousand reasons to smile," said Mrs. Cozens.

Students Start Courageous Conversations

Maddy Waldron
Editor-in-Chief

“What is a moment that you have felt conscious of your race?” Rebecca Field, art and art history teacher, posed this question to students in order to start the inaugural meeting of Freeman’s newest club, DSF Discussions.

The club was originally suggested by Mrs. Field. With the help of seniors Yashia Burrell, Ferran Evans, and Joseph Mitchell, it was put into action in efforts to openly address and discuss issues regarding the student body’s social dynamics.

“I suggested it as a way for the school to address issues that came up surrounding the Glen Allen video. It was also a way to address student and teacher concerns about the environment at Freeman,” Mrs. Field said.

DSF Discussions was not only created for students to voice their opinions, but also for the teachers, who feel the same way or want to understand how their students are feeling. This is why Mrs. Field, among other teachers and students, saw this club as a necessity at Freeman.

“I think teachers want to make Freeman the most equitable place that we can, and we need students to tell us what the issues are... I also think that teachers were doing things separately but [for teachers] to come together with a likeminded goal was important for Freeman,” Mrs. Field said.

Once DSF Discussions was created, the most important factor in the club running smoothly was establishing rules.

The discourse of the club is what Mrs. Field calls a “courageous conversation.” This means every student and teacher present must follow the rules which are written in bold, red ink on the board: use statements of purpose, listen and talk with respect, criticize ideas not people, and to learn and to be open to doing so, avoid blaming individuals, and give everyone has a chance to speak.

“One thing I found productive was that Mrs. Field keeps [the club] moving and on task but also everyone listened and commented on someone else’s opinion and respected each other and that was something I was nervous about but people were polite and open-minded,” Joseph said.

The club wasn’t only an open

conversation, but also had interactive activities. Students were split into groups nearby, given a large piece of paper, and prompted to list parts of the school that could be altered in a way that is more inclusive or creates equality among others.

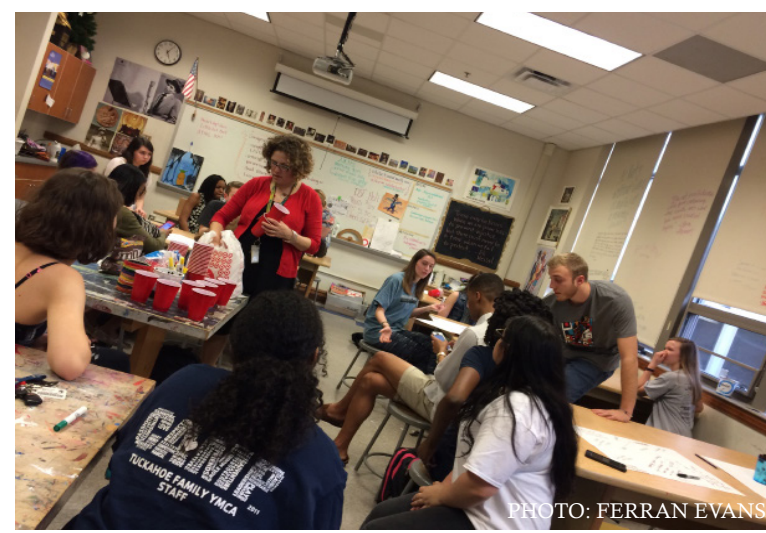
“I liked how we went around the room and shared our ideas [that were on our papers] and how it was not only us students, but the teachers had their own sections with papers to do so as well,” Ferran said.

Topics of discussion included the student section at sports games, the divide between AP classes and college prep classes, prom court decision making, and feelings about race.

These topics were addressed in efforts to facilitate positive changes that can be made regarding these issues at Freeman.

Though many people enjoyed the successes of the first meeting, they agreed there could be improvements.

“I would love for people from the entire Freeman community to feel like they can be a part of the conversation... We had lots of people who were interested, including lots of the minority, but it didn’t feel like we were reaching every part of the community in the school,” Mrs. Field



Students meet in Mrs. Field’s room to voice their opinions.

said.

Creators and members of the club agree that diversity of opinion is just as important as other diversities.

“I would love to see more diversity in that I mean that different mindsets from the first meetings. Everyone was agreeing with each other and having an open discussion, but I want people who feel differently rather than everyone just agreeing,” Joseph said.

As the club moves forward in the future, members of the club involved hope to make it an outlet for a lasting discussion

amongst Freeman family members.

“We are trying our best as far as social media goes and as well as trying to get it on the announcements as well as the posters and flyers around the school in attempt to reach more of the school,” Ferran said.

For future meeting, DSF Discussions meets every other Thursday in either Mrs. Field or Mr. Larkin’s room. The next meeting will be held on April 28 after school and everyone is welcome.

ECPI Offers Henrico Students Three Dual-Enrollment Courses



Students watch video in morning ECPI dual-enrollment course.

Sarah Lim
Staff Writer

Since beginning the dual enrollment partnership between Henrico County Public Schools

and ECPI more than five years ago, more than 750 students have taken advantage of the advanced dual-enrollment program.

The East Coast Polytechnic Institute’s free dual-enrollment program allows students to complete an online course for no charge in order to earn an Ad-

vanced Placement credit and a professional certification in only five months.

ECPI is currently offering three dual-enrollment courses: Logic and Design, Criminal Justice, and Business. All assignments and quizzes for each course are completed and turned in online. Every Friday at 7:30 a.m., the dual enrollment students file into Mrs. Trexler’s room, Mr. Zanetti’s room, or the library in order to listen to their virtual, weekly lecture from their professor.

Many students, such as junior Brenna Gilman, saw this opportunity as a chance to explore the topic she hopes to major in in college.

“I think I want to go into business so this was a good chance to test the waters and also get ahead before I get into college,” said Brenna.

Brenna, along with about 20 other students from across the county, are enrolled in the business class within the ECPI program where they learn about marketing strategy, personal fi-

nance, and business administration.

Junior Austin Evans already knew he would like to concentrate on studying business marketing in college and said the class has been helpful in confirming his decision.

“My teacher, Mr. Fowlkes, is pretty cool and knows what he’s talking about. He makes the class really interactive and asks a lot of questions that have to do with real life business situations,” said Austin.

Though these classes may seem like excellent opportunities, how exactly do these students manage the work load of a college course on top of their high school assignments?

As a general consensus, many students believe that the work load of the dual enrollment class is very manageable.

Sophomore Rachel Alexander, enrolled in the logic and design class, explained that she and her peers are given about an hour of homework per week and about every other week there is a quiz.

Sophomore Kirthi Logachandar, a criminal justices student, said that many of her assignments are guided readings of state laws and legislature.

Other than the worksheets and reading, students also participate in two mandatory field trips. In February, the ECPI University’s Richmond-Innsbrook Campus hosted the students for a four hour long session. The business students designed and marketed their own, unique companies. The criminal justice students shot fake hand guns in a simulation that demonstrated the purpose of state gun control laws. Finally, the logic and design students built NXD robots and programmed them through an app on their phones.

Many students agreed that the program’s free tuition, accelerated teaching techniques, and focus on independent learning has helped them prepare for college and career life. These students are able to take a glance into what the professional world will be like in the future.

GPA Changes to be Implemented for 2016-17

Sarah Farney
Staff Writer

Like many students at Freeman, junior Keely Wood has taken Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses to help her grade point average (GPA). Keely found that the rigor of her AP classes was much higher than her college prep or honors classes, however the GPA scale gave the same weight to honors and AP.

This year Henrico County decided to change the cumulative GPA calculations starting with the class of 2017 and beyond. Students will get an additional .5 for any honors class and 1.0 for any AP classes as opposed to the old system where GPA was calculated unweighted and an additional .17 was added to the raw GPA for any honors or AP class.

According to Shannon Edwards, director of school counseling, the change will be made “retroactively and systematically.” Things are already in place for the change to occur over the summer and by next fall, the class of 2017 will have a new calculated GPA to send to colleges.

The motivation behind the GPA change was to get Henrico County on par with the national standard. The GPA change was the next step after switching to a 10 point grading scale.

“I think that the decision was made county-wide and part of that decision was to distinguish the different levels of rigor and



Sample Report Card

	Old system	New system
1 English 12 A (Honors)	B+ 3.3	3.8
2 Intro to Calculus (College prep)	B 3.0	3.0
3 Latin II (College Prep)	A+ 4.0	4.0
4 AP Physics	A- 3.7	4.7
5 AP VA and US Government	A+ 4.0	5.0
6 AP Human Geography	A- 3.7	4.7
7 Art II	A 4.0	4.0
	4.35	4.17

work that went with each class,” said Mike Massa, associate principal.

To calculate GPA on the old scale, a student would first find their unweighted GPA by averaging the point total associated with the letter grade they received in each class. A student in two AP classes, three honors classes, and two college prep classes who was a straight “A” student would have a 4.0 unweighted GPA then add .17 to that for every honors and AP class. Their weighted GPA would end up as a 4.85.

That same student’s GPA on the new scale is slightly different. Now the student adds a point to their AP classes, .5 to their honors classes, and leaves their college prep classes as a 4.0. After all seven classes have been averaged together, the student’s GPA comes out slightly lower at a 4.5.

Students with very high GPAs will likely see a drop from the new scale, but it will provide a boost for a majority of students.

“I like the new GPA change because I think it gives the students that take AP courses an edge against the students that take college prep courses. It gives students taking AP courses a greater distinction than students taking honors courses,” said Keely Wood. Mrs. Edwards agreed with Keely that the change will have a positive impact on the school and college acceptance.

The GPA change has a lot of support because AP students feel the amount of time and independent study they put into class merits a distinction from their classmates in slightly less rigorous honors classes. However, rewarding students for taking AP classes with an entire point in

their GPA puts pressure on students to take the harder classes.

“I’m neutral on [the GPA policy], I think that I don’t want kids stressing and stretching themselves thin taking AP and honors. I continuously hope students don’t choose these classes to get every weight possible, but to get deeper into the curriculum they care about,” said Mr. Massa.

With the added distinction between honors and AP, students may feel additional pressure to improve their strength of schedule to look competitive to colleges.

“I want to take AP classes for the GPA boost,” said freshman Nicholas Viers.

Mrs. Hunnicutt teaches an honors English 10 class as well as AP English literature. Her AP students are expected to read and write at a higher level, ap-

ply subtle style in their writing, have deeper understanding of text, and use more sophisticated support along with completing more essays. Despite this, Mrs. Hunnicutt thinks weighted GPA is a bad idea because having AP classes on your transcript should speak for itself.

“I whole heartedly think [the GPA change] is a mistake. I think the higher bump promotes taking AP for a GPA boost and not for the learning, which for a teacher is counter to everything I believe,” she said.

“With guidance and direction from their school counselors, parent and teacher they will make the right choice for them based on their strengths. Students are always encouraged to use the resources available to alleviate the stress,” said Mrs. Edwards.

Guidance has compiled an AP course expectations document (on Freeman school counseling website) with offered courses and expectations. This way students can make a more informed decisions about the courses they’re choosing to take in order to prepare for college.

“GPA is absolutely a factor, but every college is different with the weighting they put on it. It’s a process that takes multiple factors into consideration- they look at extracurricular, strength of schedule, it’s really the overall picture. We all need to be mindful of that,” said Mrs. Edwards. While touring colleges with her brother, Keely noticed schools put more emphasis on course rigor than GPA.

“It will be interesting to see the long term affects as the change roles out,” said Mrs. Edwards.

The Nightmare that is Main Hall



Rachel Varon
Opinions Editor

scription that matches your behavior, I urge you to stop being a turd and amend your ways.

1) The Left-Way-Walkers: There is an ingenious little system used everywhere except England in which everyone is asked to walk to the right. This way, no matter which direction you are going, everyone else walking in that direction is on the same side as you. This way we avoid collisions. However, every once in a while, these rebels decide to fight the system and walk on the left side of the hallway, creating a rather unwelcome obstacle for LITERALLY EVERYONE they come across.

2) The Screen Zombies: These are the people who choose to spend their time between classes catching up on the latest via their cell phones. With their heads turned down to their phones and feet dragging as they pay less attention to where they are going than who tweeted what, these people resemble scuffling zombies lost in the hall. They bump into anyone and walk at a snail's pace, consequentially slowing down everyone behind them.

3) The Long Lost Lovers: Oh dear how hard it must be to be separated for 45 minutes! Quickly, to

make up for lost time, these star-crossed lovers hold to each other for dear life as they display their affection for one another in the middle of our crowded halls! Oh bless those few who think they are being thoughtful by moving their love-fest to a corner or by a wall! Wrong! It doesn't matter where you go in hallways as crowded as these, you will always be in someone's way unless you move with the flow of traffic and get to class!

4) The Main Hallway Hooligans: These are the people who you undoubtedly see every day because they choose the absolute WORST place to assemble: the main hall. They choose the comfortable intersection of the main hallway, a stairwell and the gym to gather and socialize. They form a large collective in the middle of the hall wreaking havoc for all in their wake, who must meander between this horde avoiding getting shoved whilst plugging their ears to protect themselves from the loud laughter and banter. I know the quality of these social interactions cannot be that great considering the 5 minute limit of these exchanges, so I implore that these people postpone their great fun for another time, an-



PHOTO: SARAH LINDAMOOD

Students attempt to traverse the more crowded halls.

other location, and spare the rest of us the selfish stress you cause by taking over the halls and impeding our movements.

Imagine, if you please, a world in which everyone watched where they were going, was considerate of the people walking around them and kept a healthy pace until reaching their destination. What a world this would be! The halls would become manageable, and dare I say it, even pleasant! One could say hello to their friends and be heard because their voice would not be drowned out by kissing couples and shrieking posse!

All jokes aside, our hallways are actually horrible and it is almost entirely the fault of a few individuals who just haven't stopped to consider how the world around them is affected by their actions. The main hall especially is the worst problem. Please stop congregating there. If you want to talk with your friends, just walk and talk. Don't just stand there in the middle of the hall jamming up traffic for everyone else. It is aggravating, irritating, inconvenient and, at times, dangerous.

What's Hot This Spring?



Jack West and Rachel Varon
Opinions Editors

puppy. If conversation gets boring, spark up a nice philosophical debate about whether or not hot dogs are sandwiches!

3) The outdoor movie theatre – nothing will impress your partner like going to a movie, only being stuck in a car, surrounded by other cars and also mosquitoes. If you are a fan of good cinema, this is not the place for you. This is the place to smuggle in snacks under the seats and canoodle in your Ferrari... or Honda Civic.

4) Science after Dark – nothing will impress your date like your knowledge of random scientific tid-bits. If you are hoping to get intimate, this is the place for you! With children running around, telescopes everywhere, and the occasional cow eye dissection, your date will be guaranteed to remember this night forever. On the third Friday of every month, the Science Museum of Virginia has a themed event in which they perform experiments and show a movie in the dome. It's loads of fun!

5) Dinner at Costco - nothing will impress you partner like starting the evening off right with some free samples and then moving towards the cafe for a \$1.99 hotdog and soda. Everything at Costco is supersized, just like your love for one another.

As many of you already know, Spring *c'est la saison de l'amour* – Spring is the season of love. In order to attain a Second Half, or keep your current one content, you are going to have to be prepared to take advantage of all the love in the air and make this season special. Luckily for you, we have composed a list of HOT activities for you and your partner to embark on this Spring:

1) Hit up Belle Isle – nothing will impress your partner like you basking like a wet seal on the hot rocks of the James River. Observe the nice families, questionable strangers and other lovers like yourselves as you enjoy a nice Popsicle. If the date isn't going well, you can always jump in the water and float down a few miles before calling your parents to pick you up. That's what we here at the Commentator call a smooth get away.

2) Grill Down with your date – nothing will impress your partner like you flipping a burger with some aviators on while smiling at some adorable child running around with a

He Said

Jack West
Opinions Editor



She Said

Rachel Varon
Opinions Editor

Destroying friendships one shot at a time.

Senior Assassin

Too soon :(

I would never!

Gaming in Class

Those towers aren't gonna defend themselves. #BTD5

Expensive and overrated.

High School Relationships

Probably the most valuable relationship you will ever have!

Expensive and overrated.

Prom

Good luck seeing anything else on Instagram.

Worked for me!

Online Dating

Worked for Jack!

A Public Letter of Apology to Charlie Bonner



Thomas Best
Staff Writer

When I was a freshman, a senior named Charlie Bonner published an article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch criticizing the school's mascot and encouraging the administration to change it to something more inclusive. I vocally opposed any such change both in and outside of school. Today, I'm writing to atone for the years I've spent silently regretting the stance I took against Charlie's article.

Charlie, you were right.

Freeman's mascot is outdated and has no place in 2016. It was my belief up until recently that Freeman High School gave students an inclusive environment for learning and socializing. However, after the recent negative backlash I saw to Yashia

Burrell's article about cultural appropriation in the Commentator, I now realize that we must take every step necessary to make our school the most inclusive place possible. As a community, we must now send a clear message that racism and bigotry have no place at Freeman. As president of the junior class, it is my job to represent and defend the students whose voices may be drowned out by those who say, "racism doesn't exist." Today, those students told me about the types of racism they have personally encountered at Freeman High School. It ranged from things as simple as getting a dirty look when they tried to sit in the "white cafeteria" to being called the "n-word" by a classmate. Another student had been told to, "go back to the plantation."

Do I think the way we depict the mascot on spirit wear today is offensive? No. But I do believe the "Rebel Man" we see every day has a very offensive past? Yes.

This past can contribute to the exclusive atmosphere that many Freeman students are trying to abolish. If you look at yearbooks from the 70s, you will see students waving Confederate flags at football games to show support for their school. Today, you won't see such overt displays of

racism. You will, however, hear phrases like, "The South will rise again." I understand the Rebel Man has played a huge role in Freeman's past. However, today I am not worried about the past. I accept and understand the fact that there is nothing we can do to change history. Nor should we. There is, however, something we can do about our future. We can be a school that promotes diversity and leads the way in creating the most inclusive school environment possible. Or, we can hold on to the past simply because it's tradition.

Two years ago in my opposition to Charlie's article, I went so far as to email our current principal, Anne Poates. In my email I argued, "with almost sixty years of history, the Rebel mascot has left an indelible mark on the students and alumni of Freeman." This still holds true today. But respecting tradition cannot stand in the way of progress. And progress must not be confused with political correctness. This change is not about being politically correct. Rather, it is about creating an environment where every Freeman student can take pride in his or her school. I hope that Freeman can stand on the right side of history – just like Charlie Bonner did two years ago.

GSA Makes Loud Statement with Silence



PHOTO: YASHIA BURRELL

Senior Joseph Mitchell participates in GSA's Day of Silence on April 15.

Keanna Anglin
Staff Writer

Each year, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) sponsors the Day of Silence, a student-led national event to call attention to offensive anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) behavior in schools. This year, on April 15, the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) held the Day of Silence at Freeman.

The Day of Silence is an event intended to raise awareness for the LGBT bullying in US schools.

"It is one day out of the year where allies and other gay people are encouraged not to speak in order to symbolize everyone who cannot speak out in their own defense," said Riley Ford, senior and GSA president.

The GSA, sponsored by physics teacher Jeremy Booher, is a club that aims to promote acceptance and community through providing a safe,

supportive environment for the student body.

"The students approached me at the beginning of the year because they needed someone to sponsor the club this year, and I just said yes. All I do is talk to the officers about possible events and projects the club can do, but mainly it is just the students who lead the club," Mr. Booher said.

The Day of Silence is an important event to the club, but also for the community as a whole because it allows people to come together and support

acceptance and tolerance.

"In general, I don't think people always realize how difficult it is to identify your sexuality as a teenager," said Riley, "I have always considered this day to be really important because it is us remembering who came before us and the people now who cannot speak out because of their parents, peers, or society."

While the Day of Silence is one of the ways GSA helps the community, the club also sponsors and participates in other events such as: Ally Week and the Governor School Gay-Straight Alliance Conference (GSAGC) to promote inclusion and educate people about the LGBT community at large.

"GSA is not only a club in which the members create a safe space for LGBT and straight people, but also an organization to bring together a community of acceptance," said junior Caroline Azdell. "The goal of the club is to go into the greater community of Freeman and even broader into the world to spread acceptance, understanding, and education."

In addition, the club aims to break down the barriers and stigmas within schools.

"I joined GSA because my friend at Godwin was bullied for being gay and he committed suicide, and I decided that I didn't want that to happen at Freeman," said junior Parker

Lazar, "To me, being a part of GSA means that I don't care who you like, I care who you are."

This club has not only created a supportive, safe environment for students, but also inspired a greater message in its members.

"I just want to get people to understand that all this change is good," said junior Hayden Smith. "It is not going to change the school in any radical way, but rather create more connectivity within the school. The main thing I want to accomplish is that I want everyone to stop being so afraid of what we want to do. We are not trying to work against them, but work with them."

GSA is important to the school in that it has an impact on all students regardless of whether they are members of the club or not.

"This club is important because it means that Freeman is making strides to bridge the gap between the straight student body and the LGBT community," said junior Myles Casey.

From meetings to events and even relaxed discussions, the Gay-Straight Alliance is a club that fosters support and acceptance while still being "relaxed and fun." Furthermore, it reminds us that it is not who we are as individuals, but what we can do and stand for as a united community.

Student from Uganda Makes Freeman Her Home

Deija Bowden
Staff Writer

Sophomore Jamie (Jamilea) Nanteza was born in the U.S and had spent three years in Boston, Massachusetts with her mother and brother. She then moved to Uganda, Africa at age three with her younger brother for 12 years because her mother, Annmarie Norton wanted her to visit other family members.

Her grandmother suggested that Jamie and her brother stayed for a few years to gain education in Uganda.

After, spending 12 years in Uganda, Jamie says that she considers Uganda her home country.

"I miss my friends and my family and it was always warm and sunny," said Jamie.

She still keeps an open mind to Richmond schools and its fluctuating weather.

On the first day of school Jamie said, "It was nice, though kind of hard getting used to the students, classes, and teachers."

Jamie said, "It was easy," when it came to making friends at Freeman.

Jamie also shared that in Uganda, schools are divided differently. She attended one school for kindergarten through third grade, another one fourth through seventh grade, and she started high school in eighth grade before moving here this winter.

Jamie explains schools in Uganda by saying, "kindergarten to third grade and fourth grade

to seventh grade we learned four subjects, eighth to tenth grade we learn 17 subjects, and then tenth to eleventh we take eight subjects, then for eleventh and twelfth grade we acquire four subjects because it's senior year. Also, instead of two semesters we have three terms before starting a new class," Jamie said. "From eighth to twelfth I took chemistry," said Jamie. The school system in Uganda is similar to the school system in the UK.

Since kindergarten, she and the students were to speak English instead of Luganda, which is the major language spoken in Uganda. She also speaks English in her home to better her fluency. All three schools had to follow a specific uniform morning until 4 p.m. which was a long green skirt, a yellow colored collared short-sleeve shirt Monday through Wednesday then a white collared short-sleeve shirt Thursday and Friday, long white socks, black shoes, and a badge.

Jamie had lunch from one to two and shares that they eat rice, posho (A porridge-like side in Uganda), greens, bananas, pork, and beans.

She says, "The food here are like snacks."

There are other differences in their eating customs and events. They choose to eat with their hands rather than using silverware and the students celebrate on March 20 of every year to celebrate St. Joseph's day, October 9 they celebrate their independence from Great Britain, senior day, the welcoming of eighth graders,

and at the end of each month they host a talent show.

Every day they have prayers before classes and begin with the St. Joseph's anthem.

"Once we finish classes at 4 p.m., we take a shower, and at 5 p.m. until 6 p.m. we have dinner. Then from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. we have prep classes," said Jamie.

Unlike classes in the U.S, certain grades were to master several a subjects in specific years.

Students here are suggested to take their core curricular classes which would be four subjects for four years (English, Math, Science, and History) to graduate and then given the choice to take on extracurricular subjects.

This year at Freeman, Jamie only has to take two curricular classes then four ESL (English Secondary Language) classes to continue her wide variety of vocabulary.

Irene Roberts, one of the many ESL teachers explains the placement and starting point for when new students arrive to ESL.

"When they first come to any Henrico School they have to register at the welcome center that gives a test that determines their level. Which Freeman does not administer. So they just start wherever we are when entering," Mrs. Roberts said.

Mrs. Roberts also states that when a student enters ESL in the middle of the school year it is, "typically hard."

Although, she believes that Jamie is already well prepared with her ease in English.

Jamie questions why she's in so



PHOTO: DEIJA BOWDEN

Sophomore Jamie Nanteza poses for a picture.

many ESL classes but, she says, "I think that because I'm from a different country they expect my English to be bad."

"Levels 1 and 2 they take ESL English and composition and they have a separate reading class and then they take a language and culture class. For level 3 and 4 most of the students are in a regular English class so they don't take three anymore," said Mrs. Roberts.

ESL started a new math class last year because of how different countries teach math and by having this class it helps the students get used to the teaching here.

Jamie thinks the classes are boring because she has already learned the topics in Uganda.

She's not upset by taking all the ESL classes.

Her goal for next year is to get out of ESL.

"They have to take the access test to be released. Sort of like a post test. Even after they are finished with the classes they are monitored for two years. Their progress is looked at closely to make sure they're doing okay in their regular classes," said Mrs. Roberts.

"In the future I want to be an accountant," said Jamie.

"I am very thankful for the opportunity given to me by coming to Freeman, I look forward to the following school years with fun here," Jamie concludes.

Putting Art to Work: Senior Artist Sells Stickers



PHOTO: SARAH LINDAMOOD

Senior Amanda Sasina shows off her stickers for sale.

Elena Rogers
Staff Writer

Instead of going bonkers inside a cramped car as she rode through Yonkers, NY listening to "Yonkers" by Tyler the Creator, senior Amanda Sasina put her emotions onto paper.

"I drew what I was feeling," Amanda said. The shapes, the colors, the patterns- all her emotions captured on a piece of paper.

"When I listen to music, I close my eyes and can think and feel in colors. For rap songs, I usually feel in purples, greens, and oranges," she said.

As she closed her eyes and

listened to "Yonkers," she said she "felt the colors and patterns flood" into her mind.

Instead of keeping these expressions to her sketchbook, she decided to share them.

"There are three abstract faces that are kind of twisted and connected in the primary colors," Amanda said. Though at first her drawing contained several different colors in many different shades, she simplified it to make it more appealing to others and for easier production.

That's right, production. Amanda has turned her design into a sticker and is selling them to help pay for college expenses.

"I know I won't make but so much money, but I might be able to buy a textbook with it," Amanda said.

Though undecided on where she will go for college, Amanda plans to sell her stickers at local shops on and around campus.

"I am selling them because it's always been a dream of mine to be an artist. I don't know what an artist really is or how I'll get there, but selling things that I

make makes me feel like I'm getting closer to whatever an artist might be," she said.

"She really wants to have her art strike an emotion in you. To have her art put a smile on your face or make you think or make you laugh or even make you recoil. Just react to it and appreciate it," said Dianna Sasina, Amanda's mother.

"As she has grown, the mediums she's used have changed; tempera paints and colored markers gave way to acrylic paints, water colors, and colored pencils," Mrs. Sasina said.

Mrs. Sasina recalled when she would put arts and crafts materials out every morning for Amanda to sit and play with every day. Amanda created "mountains of art each day," Mrs. Sasina said.

"I've loved art since I was little. I would finger paint all the time," Amanda said.

Reflecting on her artistic career, Amanda recalled a previous business affair when she made pendants, though that did not last long.

"I wanted to keep my rocks," Amanda said. At the time, younger Amanda couldn't bear to part with her art. Now, she is ready to share her art with her community, proven in her sticker selling endeavor.

"My mother is and has always been a big supporter in my art," Amanda said. She said her mother was the one who encouraged Amanda the most to sell her stickers.

"I feel weird self-promoting, so my mom is the one who pushed me past that fear of putting myself out there," Amanda said.

Amanda's neighbor who quickly became her role model refers to her as the "Oh so amazing Amanda," applauds her fantastic artistic ability, and looks forward to the day Amanda makes it big as an artist.

Amanda is selling her stickers for \$4 each. You can buy them personally from her by finding her in the halls or direct messaging her on Instagram (@amsasina). She will also be selling them at Plan 9 in Carytown, where there will be a small extra fee charged.

Letters to the Editor

Someone Finally Speaks Up: Senior Agrees Race is Relevant

Finally someone said it. I, as a black male at Freeman, have been waiting for this. Thank you Yashia Burrell for your article. I cannot speak for anyone but myself, but I feel frustrated and exhausted by years of feeling like my voice isn't heard. For the first time in a very long time, I felt like the school cared about me as a student and was willing to listen to what I had to say.

I love your metaphor of white students who listen to rap music. However, I also I understand that is far from the central point of the article. The metaphor provides common ground; a situation that many students can relate to coming from a generation that loves rap music which is most often recorded by black artists. This common ground illustrates a more complex issue that many may not easily understand. The issue is not white students listening to music by black artists but white students who enjoy certain aspects of minority

cultures but still take part in the prejudice and racism members of these cultures are often forced to endure. I honestly am so pleased that many of my classmates believe they live in a world, or at least a school, where racism does not exist. It shows me they have never experienced the pain and humiliation of what I and many other students have. Of course it is not by every white student or every individual of European heritage but it is enough for it to be harmful.

I understand that many of my classmates "do not see race" and have never experienced racism but just because certain students have never experienced it does not mean it does not exist. I also understand that there are many students who cannot help but see race. I have heard countless students use the "N" word while passing through the hallways, and I have even been called the same term by more of them than I can count. I have heard white

students ask the question "why does he have to act so black" in regards to a student who cared little about his classes and rarely attended. I have heard my friends be told that they "should use the colored fountain." School is an environment where we should feel safe and empowered, not unwelcome, harassed and even terrified.

To return to the metaphor of white students who listen to music by black artists, I must also address the students who consider themselves allies yet fail to speak up when racism arises. Often, I have mutual friends with the students who are blatantly racist.

These individuals, and I believe Martin Luther King Jr. said he best when he addressed the "white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice" in Letter From a Birmingham Jail, consider themselves progressive and allies yet never say anything when their friends

scream racial slurs at football games. By failing to speak against these disgusting acts of racism because, these "allies" are allowing it to continue. They may not approve, but they still deem it socially acceptable because it does not directly affect them. You cannot be an ally only when it is convenient for you.

We are all American. However, not all of us are treated as such. Due to a political system built on years of oppression, some individuals enjoy certain privileges that others do not. Some are too blinded by this privilege to recognize the inequality and others are too afraid of the negative repercussions that may ensue if they do speak out. Of course, white individuals are not the only ones who are capable of being racist. Yet, I must also acknowledge this article is an opinion article and was written with the opinions and experiences of the writer. I would like to commend her for being so honest and brave

to share her opinion on what she has experienced in such a professional and eloquent manner. I, who feel there is a lack of equality and respect for all, needed that.

I would also like to apologize on behalf of the students who made her feel so frustrated and hurt that she felt compelled to write an article addressing their problematic behavior. These issues are not often addressed out of either ignorance or fear. Yet, not addressing these issues does not solve them. I believe, just like the writer did with this article, we need to address these issues and work to change the way we think, act and behave. Thank you to Yashia Burrell and the entire journalism team for running such a fantastic and influential article. Thank you for doing this for students like me.

- Joseph Mitchell

If We Ignore Skin Color, The Race Issue Goes Away

First, I'd like to say you're very bold for writing this article, you make some good points, and I fully respect and recognize your opinion.

However, I would like to say I respectfully disagree. Second, white people may use "black" music as inspiration, but this does not mean black people are being used as pawns. Personally, I would consider it a compliment that other artists, regardless of color, appreciate and are inspired by "black music."

I view that as a sign of respect and appreciation. However, I think that "ignoring racism and continuing to allow it to breed more racism" is inaccurate. By talking about race, color, etc., you are making race the issue. By saying "black people..." race then becomes the issue. A

large majority of people don't look at someone's skin color and automatically judge them based on that. Just as it is unfair to say "all black people..." it is equally unfair to say "all white people..." Now, that's not to say there aren't a few bad apples in every bunch, because there are. However, no race wants to be categorized as a whole based on the actions of a few members of said race.

Next, there are no rules regarding where people can or cannot sit in the cafeteria. It is purely personal preference. Each day, the individual arrives in the cafeteria and decides where they would like to sit. No one would ask them to move if they decided to sit somewhere different than where they usually do. I wholeheartedly believe (and wish to be-

lieve) that most people, including those at our school, are courteous enough beings to look past difference in skin color. I would like to think that students of Freeman form opinions based on people's actual character. To me, race is not really the issue as much as thinking race is the issue, and using race as a social scapegoat. Again, bad apples are always going to be present, however just as black people don't want to be viewed as "pawns" to a "white industry," white people don't want to be called racists who use people solely for specific cultural aspects that seem appealing.

On the issue of "your people" being "gunned down" by police, let's make something clear. There is no "your people," you are an American, just as all other citizens. So stop isolating your-

self from the rest of America. Although my roots are Scottish, I don't call myself a "Scottish American," I am an American. Also, black lives do matter, as do all lives. When was the last time a community became outraged by black on black crime, or even black on white crime? Nothing comes to mind. However, the instant there is white on black violence, there is uproar and outrage, and even praise to those who take "vigilante" action by gunning down innocent officers simply for wearing a uniform. These people are in fact dedicating their lives to protect and serve the very people who gun them down. Where is the outrage over the white officer who was gunned down this past week while responding to a domestic violence call? She was a

young, innocent woman merely trying to protect the people of America. Or what about the two officers murdered while sitting in their NYPD patrol car? There is none. And that is the problem. It doesn't just go one way.

That being said, culture is important, as is knowing where you come from. Yet talking about race, and saying one race "uses" the other, is in fact just creating racism. If we just stopped talking about it, and acknowledged that race (in and of itself) isn't really important, then the individual's personality, opinions, actions, and attitudes would carry more influence. If we ignore the color of people's skin, the "race issue" would cease to exist altogether.

- Dana Gillespie

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No More Excuses From America

With the current Black Lives Matter movement, the traditional modes of peaceful protest have been abandoned for a more violent, intrusive mode of protest which many feel could be more successful, yet accomplish- es nothing.

Recently, modern and, more importantly, popular black music has transitioned away from the struggles of black culture during the 80s and 90s to a genre of hate, drugs, sex, and crime. Scenes from the recent riots in Ferguson and Baltimore of burnt convenience stores, destroyed cop cars, damaged public buildings and ruined communities do nothing but tarnish the merit behind an attempt for positive change in society.

The combination of a new style of "culturally black" music along with the violent riots showing scenes of attacks on innocent civilians and public property should not and will not draw any sympathy to the movement, regardless of the good intent behind it.

Yashia mentioned in her article artists like N.W.A, Tupac, Wu Tang Clan and others who truly did sing and rap to protest the wrongdoings of the police and our nation upon blacks during their time of popularity. That is a fair statement, but it is 2016 now, not 1992.

The ignorance expressed by whites and blacks by not properly fixing the problems at hand are glaringly evident. Rapper J. Cole, in his recent song "January 28th" writes "I turn the TV on, not one hero in sight, unless he dribble or he fiddle with mics" which yet again brings out the

injustices felt by the black community in our nation.

It's disheartening to see that he alone represents such a large portion of the modern rap artists who express the problems at hand in a rational and truthful way. Furthermore, this arouses questions regarding the true intentions behind rappers such as "Migos" who rap about killing police officers and evading in a high speed chase in their song "Highway 85".

The sense that ALL whites who seek to take after black culture then try to adopt it as their own is simply untrue, as the generalization of a whole race as the representation of a specific belief is narrow minded and false. Not all whites who listen to rap music proceed to devalue the merit in the black progressive movement.

America has become a "progressive" nation that pins race as the cause of many of its social issues instead of looking past the blacks and whites of a situation.

One statement made in the opinion article dictates that blacks wearing cornrows, dreadlocks, or Afros were automatically more prejudiced against than whites. In a recent case that does an adequate job of representing the majority of related cases, Ashley Davis, a black female, was ordered by her company to cut her dreadlocks because it was against a new company policy. The defendant and her supporters immediately turned this into a race oriented dispute, which, in my opinion, eradicates any validity to the argument. The company created a new policy that did not allow for dreadlocks,

braids, cornrows mohawks or mullets. There was no mention of race, gender, or sexual orientation included in any of the new regulations, and no specific racial group was targeted by the new rules, since many races wear the mentioned hair styles somewhat frequently.

To sum this up, I would encourage all those who are offended by the under appreciation for "black" music or those using race as the excuse for social issues to transition away from using skin color as the reason for our nation's issues.

Similar to how Yashia used the word "we" to only group herself in with those of her same skin color, we, as Americans, should work together to solve social problems. Her claims are in many cases valid, but the important and underlying fact is that the only reason any of this is about race is because no one stops to look at any other factors.

Embracing black lives the same as whites embrace black culture happens inherently when the latter occurs. The fact that Miss Burrell implies in her argument that whites completely ignore and reject black lives but openly enjoy their culture is no different than implying a stereotype upon the black race and something that I feel makes no progress in actually attempting to save and change black lives.

-Clayton Ashy

Letters to the editor should be emailed to: ldombard@henrico.k12.va.us

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

FASCINATING PETS COMPLETE THE FREEMAN FAMILY

Freeman students share their unique stories about their even more unique pets.

Junior Gets Two Pet Goats



Sam poses for a picture while feeding one of his goats.

Mrs. Stevens said that goats cost around \$75. But like any other pets, the goats require medical treatment: rabies and tetanus shots. Pet goats also have to be spayed or neutered. Sam's family takes their goats to a vet in Louisiana.

"We have had the goats since this past Thanksgiving," Sam said. "They are very social animals," Sam said. "They love being around other animals or people," Sam said.

"Both the dogs and the goats get along quite well," Sam said. "It is impossible to train goats. They do what they want unless you have food in your hand and then they follow you around," Sam said.

"As much as our goats think they are dogs... Goats do not care at all where they use the bathroom and cannot be trained. "They are acrobatic dogs," Mrs. Stevens said.

"They love to jump on top of things; the top of our grill, all the patio furniture, the riding lawn mower. Baxter and DJ are either chasing each other around the yard or studiously ignoring each other," Mrs. Stevens said.

The goats live in the backyard in a little hut. "They are about two feet tall from head to toe," Sam said.

"They are used as pets but, they also keep the back yard trimmed year round," Sam said.

They eat a wide variety of food. Basically anything they can eat is found in the backyard.

"They even eat the bark off our trees. We also feed them hay and grain pallets form Southern States," Mrs. Stevens said.

"DJ even tried to eat my leg hair. Sometimes I spoil DJ with Wheat Thins, he goes crazy for those," Sam said.

"Pearl still has to be bottle fed because she is too young for solid food," Sam said.

We got her when she was six weeks old as her mother had rejected her and would not feed her, so she has been bottle fed since birth," Mrs. Stevens said.

"Raising a baby goat is much more of a challenge than an adult because all you have to do for an adult goat is make sure that they have plenty of food, water, and a shelter," Sam said.

"Everyday, I have to refill the water bucket and give some feed to DJ. We also have to give Pearl three bottles of milk a day," Sam said.

If gardening is your thing then goats are definitely not the pet of choice for you!

Reptiles in the House



Tim hold his pet gecko on his hand.

Trey Holsten
Sports Editor

Many people only see reptiles on their TV, many people like to only see reptiles on their TV. They sit comfortably on their couch while watching the amazing interactions of the animals that are far away from their home. Junior Tim McGinley and his family prefer to watch and care for reptiles at their house.

Tim McGinley has a Giant Madagascar Day Gecko, African Forest

Tim has to feed the reptiles live food. This food includes crickets, wax worms, and beetles. He said feeding the chameleons is the coolest because of how they get their food.

"First they eyeball their prey, then they shoot their tongues across the cage to get the cricket. Their tongue can extend three times their body length to get their prey quick," said Tim. Tim has to throw the crickets into the cage alive. The tortoises have a different item on the menu some days.

"We feed the turtles mice. We have to knock them out before we give it to them because they can't eat it live," said Tim. Tim said that part can get kind of gross.

Tim has Panther and Jackson chameleons. Tim is able to take the chameleons out of their cages also to let them crawl around. His family also breeds them.

"It's tough to breed them because you have to keep them healthy and make sure the female doesn't kill the male when they mate," said Tim. Tim also must keep the eggs healthy.

"The eggs are super fragile and have to stay in the incubator for warmth," said Tim.

These reptiles are from all over the world. Many people will never see even one of them in person. Tim is able to interact with all of them in his house.

Hinge Back Tortoises, Alligator Snapping Turtles, and chameleons. They live in cages that Tim's family have set up to look like their real environments in nature. They have had reptiles for about ten years.

"We just got tortoises last week," said Tim. He is learning how to take care of the tortoises now.

The upkeep of the reptiles' cage is very tough. Every day they must spray down the cage and water the plants. The family has to clean the whole cage every month and replace the soil.

Siblings Bond Over Snakes



Baby the python is curled up in his cage.

William Omberg
Staff Writer

While most students enjoy walking their dogs or freeing their cats, two Freeman siblings, freshman Shy-Anne Jacque and junior Noah Jacque, bond with their pets in a different fashion. To care for their two pythons, the Jacque siblings enjoy letting them out of their cages to slither in the bathtub.

"My favorite way to spend time with my snakes is when they wrap

themselves around the shower," said Shy-Anne.

The siblings have one Albino Burmese python, a 16 year-old male named Baby. Baby is 12 feet long and weighs over 50 pounds. Baby has been a part of the Jacque family since before Shy-Anne was born.

"We have always had Baby because my dad loves snakes. I became fascinated with snakes and begged to get another one," said Shy-Anne.

Her wishes came true when five months ago she added a new python, a five month-old baby

brother to "Baby," named Killian. Killian is two feet long and weighs roughly ten pounds. The brothers reside in side-by-side cages, 55 and 32 gallons, respectively.

Inside Baby's cage is a log to wrap around, similar to a scratching post for a cat, and a large bowl of water. Killian's cage has a heater instead of a log to keep the young, cold blooded python comfortable and healthy. The all-glass cages "are really just huge fish tanks," said Noah.

"Most people think they are slimy, but they really aren't. It's just the way their skin is...They are lazy, unless you let them out of the cage and roam around," said Noah.

Feeding day is always an event for the Jacques. The pythons eat live, jumbo rats. Killian gets fed once every two weeks. To feed him, one of the Jacques holds a rat by its tail and waits for Killian to strike it.

Baby can go months without eating, but normally gets fed once a month. Since he is bigger, Noah or Shy-Anne puts a rat in the corner of his cage, letting him corner his prey before devouring it.

"Don't feed them too often or they will get really, really big really fast. When he [Baby] was a baby, he got overfed, which is why he's so huge," said Shy-Anne.

"Every time a python eats, it sheds its skin. Once a snake is fully finished

shedding, you know it is time to feed him again. He can't eat when he is shedding because the skin fogs his eyes and prevents him from seeing," said Noah.

Baby and Killian not only share their home with the Jacque family but also with Shy-Anne's two black cats. Surprisingly, the pythons get along well with the cats.

"Baby has escaped a few times, but it wasn't a big deal because he's huge. It's pretty hard to miss a 12 foot long python slithering through your house. Sometimes, we even let him outside because he loves to roam in the backyard. Killian is a little easier to miss, but he is easier to pick up," said Shy-Anne.

"One time, we let Baby out in the front yard and our neighbor came outside to see what was going on. He asked about him and after we talked for a while, he laid next to him. They kind of cuddled-Baby wrapped himself around him and our neighbor laughed," said Noah.

To get them inside, Noah takes matters into his own hands.

"Just pick them up. Be careful of their mouth because they might try to bite. If they do, wiggle their heads around; don't pull them straight off. This will rip their teeth out. Even if they bite, you still have to protect them," said a smiling Noah.

C.R. Nease
Staff Writer

Although not your average pet, goats can still be considered pets. Junior Sam Pooley and his family have pet goats. "It all started with my mom watching goat videos on Facebook," Sam said.

Sam's family has an Australian shepherd named Baxter and a Shih

Tzu named Rosie. Sam's mom, Karen Stevens thought a goat would be a good "job" for Baxter while the family was at school and work during the day.

Mrs. Stevens took her interest in goats to Craislist where she found a seller.

The goats are Nigerian Dwarf goats. DJ is an older goat with a black and white coat and Pearl is baby goat with a white coat.

Senior Searches for a Hedgehog



Olive the hedgehog sits quietly in her cage.

Mackenzie King
Staff Writer

"Hedgehog?" Outside of room 139 after C lunch, students passing by gather to hear about Olive the hedgehog,

who can attract such a crowd without even being present.

Olive belongs to senior Annie Mumford, who bought her two summers ago in August from a woman in Newport News who bred hedgehogs.

The idea of owning

a hedgehog wasn't one Annie was always sure about, though. She said she first got the idea of owning a hedgehog while stalking someone on Instagram who had one.

Annie's mind was made up when she saved the \$200 to buy one and saw the hedgehogs in person. Annie said she knew Olive was the one because she was the most social hedgehog in the bucket.

Friends and parents have come to love Olive, too. Senior Laura Adamson is one of those friends. She occasionally pet sits for Annie and remembers the day Annie went to pick up her hedgehog.

"She seemed very excited. She had been planning it for like a month and I was excited that I could play with it because it was so cute," said Laura.

Laura also helped Annie name her hedgehog. "She liked the name and it was cute," said Laura.

Both Laura and Annie agree that the best thing about Olive is her "cute little nose," and Annie's least favorite things are her quills which "will

make me bleed because she gets a little moody sometimes," said Annie.

Olive stays in a clear space in Annie's room where she is fed Pro Plan kitten food and water every day, and though she stays up all night, it doesn't usually cause Annie to lose sleep.

Olive is now two and a half years old (the average life span of a hedgehog is five to 10 years) and likes to play.

Annie compared Olive to a dog and said she loves to explore. "She likes to sniff everything. She loves to go under blankets, inside pillow cases, or up someone's shirt sleeve," said Annie.

According to Annie, Olive has always been well trained.

"I used to just fall asleep with her cuddled next to me and I would wake up an hour later with her still there," said Annie.

Annie plans on giving Olive to another family who has two hedgehogs of their own before leaving for college.

Wherever Olive goes, or doesn't go, she will be sure to gain attention.

WHOSE PET IS WHOSE?

Match the person with their pet.



1. Elise Bowers (9)



2. Olivia Yang (12)



3. Julia Meyer (9)



4. Makayla Keller (10)



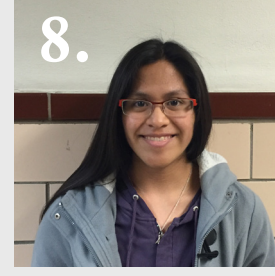
5. Sean Everett (11)



6. Catherine Trevey (12)



7. Anna Gilliam (12)



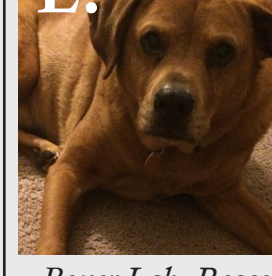
8. Tirzah Hawkins (11)



A. Shih Zhu - Sadie Mae



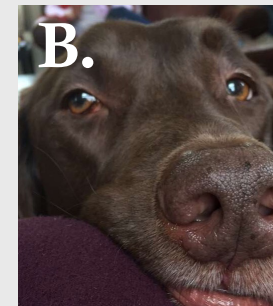
C. Tortoise - Voldetort



E. Boxer Lab - Roscoe



G. White Cat - Ellie



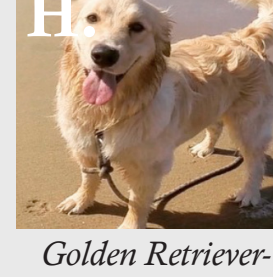
B. Lab - Teddy



D. Cat - Spot



F. Mixed Breed - Vivi



H. Golden Retriever - Cricket

ANSWERS: 1. B, 2. D, 3. C, 4. E, 5. A, 6. G, 7. H, 8. F

Grady the Gentle Giant



Caroline poses with Grady for a picture

Emma Dixon
Centerspread Editor

Caroline Fortune's Great Dane, Grady, is truly a gentle giant despite

with black spots all over. Despite his many spots, they are not the only thing that add to his big size and big personality.

Don't be fooled by his scary size, because Grady is goofy, funny, and hungry.

"Grady runs into walls a lot and is so big he eats 12 cups of food a day," said Caroline.

To work off his 12 cups of dog food, Grady spends a lot of his time outside doing all different activities and living life as a giant dog.

"My favorite things to with him is to take him on walks around my neighborhood and around the University of Richmond lake," said Caroline.

Grady is so big that he does not have a normal dog bed.

"He has his own human chair and foot rest he lays on during the day," said Caroline.

As well as running into walls, eating lots of food, and going on long walks, Grady is the Fortune family's greatest supporter and number one fan.

"We take him to all of our sporting events and he goes to watch my sister's lacrosse games at Lynchburg with us," said Caroline.

This allows for Grady to stretch his long legs and explore new places outside of Richmond. As well as exploring, he gets to show off his huge size to all those he meets.

Since Grady is the Fortune family's number one fan, it is only expected that he has a loud bark to cheer on all of the family members.

"His bark is so loud it shakes the house. Everyone can hear it from outside and it is so loud that sales people don't even come to our house anymore," said Caroline.

Don't let his huge size or loud bark scare you, because Grady is a friendly Great Dane. From going on walks, to running into walls, Grady is a Great Dane you can count on.

"Everyone really likes him after they meet him, he is really friendly and funny," said Caroline.

From the Sidelines to the Stage

Freeman Trainers Show Off their Talents in Williamsburg

Jack Bernhardt
Staff Writer

During a usual sporting event you would find junior Bella Dorington and senior Grace Barker assisting athletes on the sidelines, but now you can find them in the heart of the competition.

Bella and Grace both competed and placed highly in Virginia's Health Occupation Students of America Competition (HOSA) in Williamsburg from March 11-13. Bella placed in first in the state for sports medicine and Grace placed second for physical therapy.

They heard of the opportunity to compete through their Tech Center teacher, Bobbi Southard.

"Every year Mrs. Bobbi brings certain people from my sports medicine class to HOSA, you have to have 90 or above in the class. She asks which category you want to participate in and then you start studying and training," said Bella.

"Choosing Grace and Bella was easy, they are very committed, hard-working, and are very focused on their careers in medicine, applying themselves to be top in the class," said Mrs. Bobbi on her decision to choose both Bella and Grace.

Grace chose to compete by looking at last year's competition.

"My motivation was the student last year representing Hermitage getting first in the nation and I just wanted to follow in his footsteps and prove to myself I could do it," said Grace.

Both Grace and Bella were two of the three Hermitage representatives and of 900 students participating in the statewide competition.

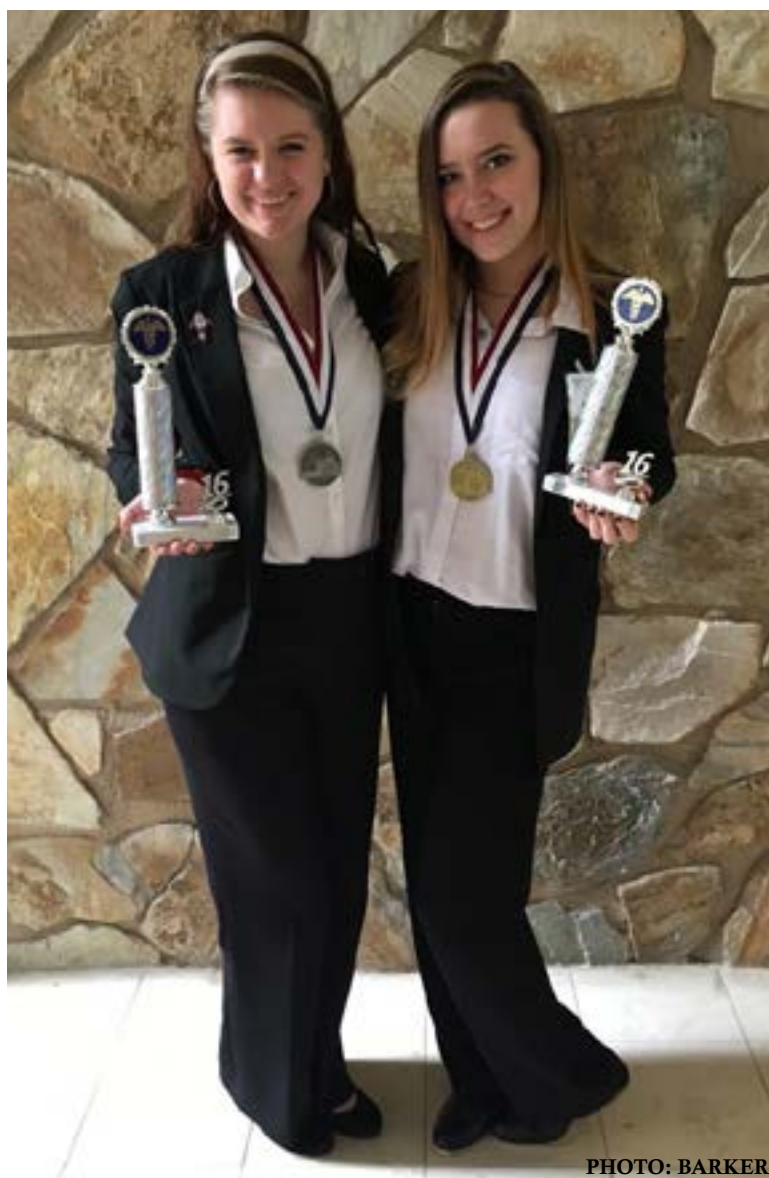


PHOTO: BARKER

Junior Bella Dorington and senior Grace Barker pose with their awards in Williamsburg following HOSA Competition.

"To start the competition for states we take a 50 question multiple choice test in an hour with questions from our huge textbook we had to study. The top ten scorers would then qualify for the second part of the competition which is skills," said Bella.

Bella and Grace both qualified for the second round of the event by passing their respective categories of the competition. They would next have to perform in

the skills section of the competition to show off their knowledge of their particular categories.

"It was harder for Grace adjusting to the HOSA skills competition because her category was completely different from what we learned in our Tech class. For me it was a little easier, because we already learned some of the content for sports medicine, my category," Bella said.

In the skills competition each

participant is given six skills rubrics prior to the competition. "For physical therapy I had to ambulate with crutches, with a walker, gate belt, use an ice bag, and use range of motion on the whole side of a body," Grace said.

Bella also was given six rubrics for showing her skills in sports medicine. "I had to evaluate and tape an ankle and go exactly from the rubric," said Bella.

Bella and Grace both performed with excellent scores on their tests and skills portions of the competitions.

"Placing first was really nice. It felt good to see my hard work pay off. It was satisfying to see how far I could actually go and how much I could accomplish," said Bella.

Bella and Grace both placed in the top three of their respective categories, moving them up to the international competition in Nashville, Tennessee from June 20-23. Students from all over Northern America, this year including Canada, will compete for a chance to get first place.

Bella, hoping to pursue a career in sports medicine, is using the opportunity of the competition to get a step ahead on her future.

"This competition helps get you ready for pressure in the future, when you are actually doing it for your job it could be life or death, the burden of competition gets me ready for the pressure of real life scenarios," said Bella.

Grace is also using the competition to fully prepare herself.

"HOSA will prove to others and myself that I've been interested in this since high school and show I'm definitely dedicated and that I want to help others because in the end that is what I want to do, help others," said Grace.

Sports Briefs

Softball

Coach: Bill Butler
Quote from Coach: "We have nicknamed this year's team the DSF Fun Bunch. They have played very well as a team."
Captains: Virginia Irby and Kristen Disbrow
Key Moment: They had a big extra inning win vs Tucker. It was their first win vs. Tucker in a few years.

Baseball

Coach: Ray Moore
Quote from Coach: "To a person, I believe that everyone on our team feels that we have shown growth and improvement as the season has progressed to this point. The objective is to be playing our best baseball at the end of the season when it matters the most. We are getting better and want to continue the upward trajectory."
Captains: Coby Sale, Jake Gerkin, and Coleman Greene
Key Moment: The Rebels have posted decisive wins against strong Maggie Walker and William Monroe squads.

Girls Soccer

Coach: Bill Bartoszek
Quote from Coach: "This will be a good year to watch this team play. We have a good balance of skill sets from freshman through seniors, we have speed at every position, and the girls are not afraid to be physical. I think we will surprise some teams and people this year."
Captains: Caroline Turner and Caroline Kasprzak
Key Moments: The Rebs have a 3-0-1 record, 17 goals for and 1 against, and have had great team play thus far.

Boys Soccer

Coach: David Inman
Quote from Coach: "Our team foundation is 'Work Hard, Win Games.'"
Captain: Riley Buckenmaier
Key Moment: They were tied with Tucker and a player down but they were able to come back.

Girls Tennis

Coach: Larry Parpart
Quote from Coach: "Our team chemistry and spirit has been great. At this point in the season we are ranked third in the Richmond Area."
Captain: Mina Leino
Key Moment: They won a key match vs Maggie Walker 5-4 and suffered our only loss so far to Godwin in a hard fought, 7-2 defeat. They also won tough matches vs Glen Allen and Cosby.

Boys Tennis

Coach: Jeff Given
Quote from Coach: "The team is doing very well, we're 8-2. We've beaten the teams we should have. We lost a close match to Cosby and a tough loss to Deep Run. We have good senior leadership, and if we win a few more matchups we should be in the playoffs. I expect we will be 11-2 when this paper goes out."
Captain: Joe Brown, Bradley Knaysi, and Michael Wagner
Key Moment: The team posted an impressive win over rival Godwin in early April.

Girls Lacrosse

Coach: Samantha McLean
Quote from Coach: "The team is off to a very strong start. We are currently 6-1, with our only loss coming in overtime early in the season. Every girl on the roster is a solid lacrosse player and everyone contributes to the success of the team through their hard work in practice and games."
Captains: Caroline Plashal, Sarah Lindamood, and Carley Craddock
Key Moments: Gracie Douglas had 4 goals and 3 assists against Glen Allen; Ellie Cox had 5 draw controls, 4 ground balls, and a caused turnover in the win over James River.

Boys Lacrosse

Coach: John Neal
Quote from Jack West: "Ted Palmer has really stepped up and combines natural athleticism and a drive to win."
Captain: Oak Mize, Evan Wells, and Jack West
Key Moment: They had a hard fought 7-5 win over Atlee.

Two Sports With One Spring

Freeman Athletes Stretch their Talents this Season



PHOTO: HOLSTEN

Sophomore Janie Holston runs during a meet at St. Christophers.

Ross Metcalf
Staff Writer

Classes, practice, homework, bed, and repeat – this is the typical schedule of Freeman's student athletes, and for most one sport is enough. At Freeman, there are a few student athletes that are able to balance this daily schedule and add on top one more sport, typically track.

Running track allows athletes to increase stamina, to train, and to develop into a more dynamic

player in other sports. Many other athletes run winter/indoor track as a strength training process to get in shape for a spring sport.

Senior Bodhie Long, sophomore Janie Holston, and senior Jinks Jervey are among these students who practice with two spring sports. Jinks practices with soccer and runs during his study hall during the day. Bodhie works with the sprinting team after school and then practices with the baseball team. Janie Holston runs sprints during her study hall and plays JV lacrosse

after school.

"If you are really stuck between which sport to do and you can't decide, then I would tell you to do both [sports]. If you are really up for a challenge then I would recommend it, if not I would run in the off season to get in shape. It helped me a lot," said Janie.

When it comes to doing two sports the decision of doing the primary sports and track is in part the choice of the athlete and the primary sport coach.

"A lot of time if the runners are good enough and have a positive influence on the team both coaches will be ok with it and will work with you to get it done," said Jinks. Many track runners who play another sport compete in both because of their ability to positively affect both teams.

"I started running my sophomore year. I ran winter track to prepare for soccer. I did well and I liked it. I started to play soccer and run track in the spring of my sophomore year," said Jinks.

As Jinks continued to run track and play soccer in the spring of his sophomore his speed and stamina increased dramatically. Jinks started track as part of the sprinting team and would practice in the mornings before school, shower, go to class, and then complete his soccer workout after school.

"It definitely helps in soccer. Soccer running is a little different but it helps my speed and endurance on the field. It's definitely a win-win for both," said Jinks.

Many spring sport coaches prefer that athletes come to try-outs in shape and ready to play, for often in the preseason coaches will hold preseason workouts.

"Jinks is definitely the fittest on the field from running all year as

far as lungs and legs. Track running is different from soccer running and fitness, and mentally it requires him to switch mentally for soccer," said Dave Inman, head varsity soccer coach.

Coach Inman stated that he is fine with soccer players competing in track, but would rather have his players come to soccer in shape. He would recommend that his players run in the winter as preparation.

"At Freeman we have a good culture concerning allowing athletes to play other sports," said Coach Ray Moore, varsity baseball coach.

The atmosphere of athletic and academic betterment is one that the factuality and coaches has worked to create

"Running spring track and playing baseball is a lot of time juggling. It's a lot of work, but I really like it, it keeps me out of trouble," said Bodhie

Scheduling of meets and games is an aspect that this athletes need to pay even more attention to in order to be able to compete well for both teams

"[Jinks] likes competing. He likes track, and soccer is his first love, but ended up doing both. Athletically, he is pretty mature and committed to making it work," said Brian Reutinger, track coach.

If players are capable of doing other things, there is no substitution for the cross training and competition that takes place on other sports teams. Doing two spring sports it a complex time honored commitment, and finding practice times and resolving time conflicts are the responsibility of the student athlete to fix.

The Next Apollo Creed? Meet 'Swish'

Jack Neary
Staff Writer

Junior Ishmael Bennett said he used to fight behind the gym at Tuckahoe Middle School. Now he fights in the ring for state titles.

Ishmael, or "Swish," started boxing when he was 14. His father asked him to box because he was getting in fights and needed some place to expend his energy. "Back in the day I used to fight a lot, but now, after boxing, it would keep me from actually fighting," said Swish.

Swish won the USA Amateur Boxing Virginia state title in the 120 pound weight class this December, earning the coveted silver gloves.

"I won the silver gloves, which are like gold gloves but for juniors," said Swish.

In a bracket style tournament, Swish went 9-2 and had three TKO's.

A TKO, or technical knockout, is where a referee has to stop the fight because a fighter is unable to continue.

"I had this one fight where I knocked this kid's mouthpiece out and the ref had to shut the fight down," said Swish.



Swish poses for a photo before stepping into the ring for a fight.

Swish said he owes his powerful punches to his weightlifting class with Blake Derby, the Freeman weightlifting instructor.

"That stuff works on my power.

I max out benching at 160 and I squat 200 even though I only weigh 120," said Swish.

Swish's commitment to training has also made him a strong

overall fighter.

Swish trains at the Richmond Police Athletic League (PAL) boxing gym.

"I train every day, Monday to Friday, from 6-8 p.m.," he said.

"I start off with three rounds of shadow boxing to get me loose. Then I hit the speed bag for three to five rounds. After I'm done with the speed bag, I go to the heavy bag and work on my combinations," said Swish.

Swish also spars with other boxers. After all this training, Swish jumps rope for 20-30 minutes to work on his stamina.

Keith Hunter, Swish's coach, had high praise for Swish.

Swish is an "outstanding junior boxer," Keith said.

Swish also runs every morning at 6 a.m. with his neighbor, freshman Ethan Thomas.

"That's what keeps me going in the ring," said Swish.

"We usually run up and down Patterson. We've also run from my house on Patterson to Boyer's over on Grove," said Ethan.

Endurance is a large part of Swish's training because it is so important in the ring.

"When you're boxing you get tired easily. But as soon as you get tired and you drop your hands, it's a knockout. You have to keep your hands up at all times," said Swish.

His hard work and preparation paid off when he won the Virginia state title on Dec. 19, 2015.

"I'm the Virginia state champ, you already know. I'm the top dog," said Swish.

Swish had to defeat fighters from Richmond as well as Norfolk and Northern Virginia to earn his title. He also had to face one opponent twice: a tall kid with long reach who was one of the better fighters in the tournament. But by getting in close and dodging punches, Swish was able to negate his opponent's reach advantage and win the match.

"All I had to do to win was stay on the inside. I couldn't fight on the outside. I had to get in and slip every punch," said Swish.

Swish crowded his opponent and punched his torso to tire him out, then aimed for the face and head until his opponent could take no more.

"As soon as I got inside, I had to work the body, then work up to the head, and it was over," he said.

Although Swish has taken a brief break from boxing to take a job at Martin's, he says his love for boxing will keep him fighting.

"You might get tired of getting hit every day, getting punched in the face every day, but that stuff... it's life," said Swish.

Nationally Ranked Athletes Headline Tennis Teams

Nick Newton
Staff Writer

The number one spots on the Freeman tennis teams include two nationally ranked players: senior Joe Brown and freshman Emme Levenson.

United States Tennis Association (USTA) rankings are subject to change due to the number of tournaments played each week.

Joe Brown is currently ranked 307th in the country, and ninth in Virginia. Through his career he is 39-21, with most of the losses occurring only against four or five star recruits.

Joe said the rankings give him a general idea of "what everyone's level is...but there are some who are really good who aren't ranked as high."

Joe has committed to University of Mary Washington to play tennis for next year.

Coach Jeff Given said Joe has "stepped his game up a notch every year." His consistent practice culminated last year in a state championship in doubles with his partner, former senior Greg Ackerman.

"He loves the game of tennis and plays seven days a week," said Coach Given.

It all started about seven years ago at the Southampton Recreation Club. At the time he had been trying out many different sports "but I just liked tennis,"



Senior Joe Brown warms up against Godwin.

said Joe.

Joe has also trained with a coach Julian Lousao at Bon Air.

Though Joe's parents never pushed him towards any sport, his dad was an important influence.

"When I was probably around 12-13 I was right around his level, and then I started to beat him, and then I started to beat him lefty. I made a bet with him that if I beat him, I got to play as many video games as I wanted, and if I lost I didn't get to play any video games for the rest of the year. I beat him 6-4 left handed," Joe said.

Five years later Joe is first seed on the tennis team, and he is try-

ing to teach the younger players the some of the skills he has learned.

Joe said his strength is his speed. "I can run a lot of shots down," he said.

Coach Given said, "At the Hermitage matches he wasn't playing doubles, and he took some of the freshmen over to help them with their serves."

Joe said his toughest competition this year will be Paul Mendoza from Cosby High School.

Freshman Emme Levenson is another talented player. She is ranked 590th in the country, and 16th in Virginia. She is 16-13 in private matches.

The national ranking doesn't

stress Emme.

"It just makes me want to win more--to get my ranking up," she said.

"It's her determination that really sets her apart on the court," Coach Larry Parpart said.

Emme agrees. She credits her consistency and "strong mental game" for her success.

Emme has been working with Romain Anbert at Westwood Club since the fourth grade. She practices at Westwood twice a week at 6 a.m.

"He tells me never to give up," Emme said.

Emme's parents, Jeff and Debby Levenson, encouraged Emme to learn to play tennis because it

is a "lifelong sport."

"She caught on rather quickly and had a strong desire to take clinics throughout the year," Mrs. Levenson said.

Emme's dad also plays tennis.

"Emme enjoys hitting with him because he hits a very hard ball. She has also sought out adult players at our club which gives her extra practice," Mrs. Levenson said.

Emme said the best moment of the season so far was when she beat Godwin's number one seed, Anna Brodzik, in three sets.

She also defeated the 2A state champion Anna Soffin from Maggie Walker on April 28.

Emme said that her biggest challenge this year will be competing against Deep Run's two-time 5A state champion, Nina Sorkin.

Emme also competes with sophomore Lucy Collins in doubles which she also describes as an opportunity for growth.

"I never grew up playing doubles," she said.

She has always seen Rafael Nadal as a role model for tennis.

"I have always looked up to his style," she said.

Coach Parpart, prefers a comparison to Chris Evert, a star tennis player in the 1970s because "she would always do on the court what was necessary to win, but she was a great lady off the court."

"I'm really competitive but I also just like tennis," said Emme.

Freshman Girl Swings For the Fences on JV Baseball

Meredith Given
Staff Writer

Dakota Hansen makes throwing like a girl look good. Freshman Dakota Hansen has defied gender roles by becoming the first girl to play on the Freeman baseball team.

Dakota started out playing softball, but after 6 years she switched to baseball. Dakota's father, Guy Hansen, has been involved in professional baseball as a coach, scout, and player from 1969-2010. This includes time serving as pitching coach for the Kansas City Royals in 2005. Mr. Hansen is also a part of UCLA Baseball Hall of Fame.

"I started getting into baseball because my dad was the pitching coach for the Richmond Braves," said Dakota. Mr. Hansen was the pitching coach for the Richmond Braves from 2001-2004.

Dakota doesn't just play baseball; she competes in several sports. She was a member of the JV volleyball team this past fall.

She made the team, even though she had very little experience playing volleyball. According to her dad, when Dakota was six years old she competed in ice



Freshman Dakota Hansen practices bunting at baseball practice.

skating competitions with girls who were much taller and twice her age.

Dakota started playing for a U12 baseball team that her dad coached. Her dad believed she was good enough player to try out for Freeman's baseball team.

"Dakota has something within her that loves the challenge of trying sports that are difficult," said Guy Hansen.

"Coaches Kenny Moore and Jay Barnes had seen her in infield drills and felt she had the ability to try out for the JV baseball team. I also had some baseball

professionals watch her and each confirmed she had the talent and instincts to move forward," said Mr. Hansen.

"When I found out that Dakota was trying out, I was not surprised," said JV coach Jay Barnes.

"Dakota won the Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit and Run competition at the Washington Nationals Park in 2013, 2014, and in 2015. She was the only competitor to throw 6 out of 6 strikes, although by missing third base in the running competition from second base to home,

costing her a spot at the 2015 MLB All Star game," said Mr. Hansen.

Dakota began training for the season this winter in the weight room with the rest of the players.

"First when I started weight lifting it was awkward because I didn't know the guys. But since then I've gotten really close with the team and they are really nice and include me in everything," said Dakota.

In order for Dakota to be able to try out for the baseball team, the coaches had to confirm it with Suzanne Criswell, Director of Student Activities. If it had not been for the 1979 Title IX law that states "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance," Dakota may have never gotten the chance to play baseball.

"Since we have a comparable sport with softball, we had to clear her trying out for baseball with Mrs. Criswell. I applaud Mrs. Criswell as well as Coach Moore for giving Dakota the chance to try out for baseball," said Coach Barnes.

The team has been very accepting of Dakota so far.

"She's a good teammate and she interacts with everyone and is like one of the guys. Some of the other teams bother her and are rude to her, but it doesn't seem to bother her," said JV captain Drew Parkhurst.

"Most people in the school thought I was just trying out for attention, but I really wanted to expand my ability, and most of the guys thought I wouldn't make it," said Dakota.

Dakota has proven them wrong with her skill and ability to play on a highly competitive team.

Dakota is a very strong player and has started at second base in several games.

"She has a couple hits, scored a few runs, and even has a stolen base," Mr. Hansen said.

"She is a good player. We hold very high standards for the student-athletes who try out for baseball. This is why we have been very successful and competitive every single year. With this being said, she was good enough to make the team, so she is a good player. Dakota, just like every other teammate, still has a lot to learn as well as the ability to get much better," said Coach Barnes.

New Counselor Brings Experience



PHOTO: SARAH LINDAMOOD

Mrs. Brown settles in to her new office as she joins the DSF staff.

Kyle Adams
Staff Writer

With a bubbly persona and an open door, students will now see

Libby Brown's face in the Counseling Department for students with last names falling between Gi-L.

The Hermitage High graduate joins the Freeman staff after working for seven and a half

years at Tucker High School as a counselor and dabbling in private practice. In addition, Shannon Edwards will now be the counselor for students with last names between A-B as well as take over the duty as Director of Counseling.

Mrs. Brown is a familiar face to many around Freeman. In fact, her relationship with longtime counselor Kevin Steele goes back a long way.

Mr. Steele said he has known Mrs. Brown since she was in high school. She grew up in the same neighborhood he raised his children and was a member of his wife's drama program at Hermitage for four years.

"She was a babysitter to my children for many years and with us on vacations. I know Libby as a person just as much as I do a professional. I am gracious that she calls me a mentor in that regard," said Mr. Steele.

This familiarity, as well as Free-

man's reputation as an enthusiastic school, lured Mrs. Brown into applying to be a school counselor. She noted that her adjustment at Freeman has been seamless thus far.

"Everybody is just very kind, and the students have been very polite. They want to meet me and get to know me... and at the same time parents are calling wanting to do the same thing," Mrs. Brown said.

Mr. Steele described Mrs. Brown as someone who loves to smile and laugh. "She is someone who enjoys the interaction with people, whether it's adults or kids," Mr. Steele said.

In fact, Mrs. Brown and her husband have a four year old son, and a baby girl due in May. However, she strives to treat her students as if they are her own children.

"My goal is to form relationships and connections with the students and parents and have

them trust me and work with me to get to the next step, whether that be the future or helping them apply to college," said Mrs. Brown.

"She's been very helpful to me. Not only with my schedule in school, but also generous with her time to hear my schedule outside of school and figure out how to manage junior year," said junior Molly Jenks.

Mrs. Brown is excited to join the Freeman Family and partake in the renowned traditions, especially Freeman-Godwin rivalry. With her vibrant attitude and familiarity with the staff, Mrs. Brown has hit the ground running.

"Libby is a valuable resource for us; we are very fortunate to have her. She puts others in front of herself. She cares about people, she genuine, she's real. She is going to give the students of Douglas Southall Freema everything she can," said Mr. Steele.

Holocaust Survivors Teach Students Tolerance

Anna Lyle Collett
Staff Writer

Holocaust survivors Alan and Helina Zimm came to Freeman to share their experiences in Poland to the sophomore class.

Most sophomores spend part of the year studying firsthand accounts of World War II such as the novel "Night" by Elie Wiesel in their English class. Librarian Laurie Kaplan asked the Zimms to speak at Freeman, eager for students to better understand the atrocities that occurred, and that acceptance is the answer.

"A lot of time students have a superficial understanding of what happened, but when you actually get into the details, many students are surprised. They did not realize things were as awful as they really were," said Kyle Schuster, tenth grade English teacher.

Reading "Night" has helped the students grow in their understanding of the lives of people during that time, and how bad life truly was.

"It was upsetting to see how those people were treated so badly. It makes you thankful for what you have," sophomore Mitchell Berrios said.

The octogenarians live in Richmond and own Alan Zimm's Custom Tailoring on Grove Avenue. The Zimms said that even before the breakout of

World War II, they experienced anti-Semitism living in Poland as young teenagers. The two faced unthinkable circumstances, being forced to leave their families for years.

From his small village of Kolo, Mr. Zimm was taken from his home, and put on a train for three days and three nights with no food or water. He was then sent to four different concentration camps.

While at Dora-Mittelbau, a concentration camp hidden by a mountain and trees, a German engineer monitoring the job he was working on noticed the extra work he was doing. When the Germans were about to put everyone back on a train, he gave Mr. Zimm a loaf of bread for the journey. Mr. Zimm put the bread under his shirt, and rode the three day, three night train ride.

As a result of the German engineer's kindness, Mr. Zimm was able to survive the train ride, and ultimately the Holocaust. Two weeks later, he was liberated by the British armed forces.

Unlike from her husband, Mrs. Zimm had a different experience during the war. She grew up in Poland's second largest city, Łódź where she and her family left for a small village to escape the Nazis.

When rumors around the village began to stir up fear, her father sent her and her sister, with fake identifications, away for their safety. That was the last



PHOTO: CAROLINE DANIEL

Freshman Max Nardi talks with Holocaust survivor Mrs. Zimm.

time Mrs. Zimm saw her Mother and Father.

For the rest of the war, Mrs. Zimm had to fend for herself as a young teenager, facing several moments of fear. At one point, a Polish officer began to question her, almost revealing her identity. However, Mrs. Zimm made it through the war by working for a Polish family, who she adored for their kindness towards her.

"The woman was very good to me...she always said that when the war was over, she was going to send me to school," Mrs. Zimm said.

The Zimms encouraged Free-

man students not to hate, but to love everyone no matter what.

"Be good to other people. When you smile at other people, they will smile back. Nobody is born to hate. It comes from somewhere," Mrs. Zimm said.

They opened for questions at the end of the event, when sophomore Max Nardi spoke with Mrs. Zimm about hatred.

"People are not comparable, and they need to be treated so," Max said.

Mr. and Mrs. Zimm's hope in speaking to the students was to make everyone aware of the Holocaust, and teach of the tragedy

of the event.

Through tears, Mrs. Zimm said, "Talk about it. My father said, God gave you a tongue, use it. Talk. When you see something wrong, speak up. I wanted to live because I wanted to tell the story. It is a burden. It is a responsibility. Don't hate, accept people for what they are, do not have a head without a heart. Be kind."

The Zimms touched the hearts of the Freeman students through their words, tears, humor, and kindness.

"I was surprised honestly because of how hard it is for them to talk about that kind of stuff, but I was also amazed about how open they are about telling their stories. Their stories were very touching to the heart. It really moved you to be nicer to everyone because everyone is the same. It doesn't matter what race you are or anything like that," Michell said.

Mrs. Kaplan agrees.

"The message is to teach tolerance. The main thing is to not judge people because of their different religious beliefs or race or sexuality because things like this can happen if you don't stand up for your neighbors. We ended it because people finally stood up for their neighbors. That is the main message of anyone who has been through a genocide," Mrs. Kaplan said.

French Students Convened at Congrès

Sara Hamilton
Staff Writer

A lively French immersion experience, French Congrès is an opportunity for sixth through twelfth grade students to participate in various French competitions and engage in the French language, culture, and food.

On March 19 at James River High School, about 500 students from Chesterfield County schools and some schools from Henrico County, including Freeman, spent their day immersed in an environment with fellow Francophiles.

Through her ties with the creator of French Congrès in Chesterfield, French teacher Shannon Bailey was able to present the opportunity to Freeman students to attend for the first time this year. All French students were given the opportunity to go, and 22 Freeman students from various French classes signed up.

Senior Caroline Gravely was chosen to be on the French Congrès Executive Council.

"Every two weeks I had to leave school early to meet with the representatives from the Chesterfield schools, and we voted on everything from the t-shirt design to the theme of the event. We were the visionaries," said Caroline.

After looking forward to Congrès Day for a few months, Freeman students said they were excited for its arrival.

After the opening ceremony, each student participated in a morning competition of their choice, and three Freeman students won awards in their contests.

Freshman Gillian Saunders received third place in French



PHOTO: SARA HAMILTON

The French Conres took place on March 19 at James River HS.

Idol, sophomore Sam Ashkani received third place in Art Reproduction, and senior Abigail Cawley received third place in Recitation.

Later, students enjoyed a French lunch and afternoon activities that dealt with the French language and culture. These activities ranged from (noodle) fencing to watching French movies to making French desserts to purchasing goods at the French market.

"I liked the cultural immersion experience," said Abigail.

"The market was very cool because you could buy so many different things. People were selling really good food, drums, 'Frenchship' bracelets, and much more," said Caroline.

Freeman students also said they enjoyed the energy brought by students from different counties.

"Everyone seemed really enthusiastic to be there," said junior

Kylie Lynch.

"I really enjoyed having the culture around me. A lot of people were fluent speakers," said Gillian.

The day ended with a closing ceremony, and everyone said their goodbyes.

As there are less opportunities for French students to use the language outside of class, Ms. Bailey believes French Congrès was a very important experience.

"It is important to come together and celebrate French in a different way," said Ms. Bailey.

Freeman students who participated also saw firsthand the benefit of French Congrès.

"I think it's beneficial to experience different cultures. It gives you a new perspective that we as Americans don't often get: to take ourselves out of our small lives and realize that there is a whole big world that we can be a part of," said Caroline.

A Day in the Life of



Junior Ryan Fad

7:40 a.m.- Finally realize I've hit snooze 5 times and get out of bed.

8:45 a.m.- Do my morning walk to school contemplating last night's decision to not do my homework.

9:50 a.m.- Walk to second period and dap up all my boys on the way.

10:30 a.m.- Talk to Mr. Booher about moving the next quiz because I don't want to take it.

10:47 a.m.- Arrive late to Mrs. Smith's English class because people walk too slowly in the halls, but I beat Ted Palmer, so it's fine.

12:53 p.m.- Get in a quick round of SportsHead Soccer during study hall.

2:30 p.m.- Walk in Striker's room and dap up my boys again.

3:08 p.m.- Walk into study hall and dap up my boys for the third time.

4:30 p.m.- Either hit the gym or take a nap depending on the day.

7:30 p.m.- Catch up on the 'Gram.

10:00 p.m.- Finally start homework.

11:00 p.m.- Give up on homework.

11:01 p.m.- Pass out.

Students Participate in Youth Art Month

Page Ryland
Staff Writer

Wouldn't it be nice to have a month dedicated to team building, positivity, creative thinking, and student art? Introduced by Logan Miller, senior and co-president of National Art Honor Society, as "Hey fam, it's YAM," Youth Art Month gives schools all around the county the opportunity to make that happen.

While art students spend their class time discussing and planning for Youth Art Month, non-art students may be wondering, "What exactly is YAM?"

According to the Art Educators: National Youth Art Month website, Youth Art Month is an on-going event of small festivities and showcases, every March, to help celebrate the visual arts for grades K-12.

According to the YAM official website, "Youth Art Month also provides a forum for recognizing skills developed through visual arts experiences that are not possible in other curriculum subjects."

Freeman art students said they were thrilled to get the word out about the month.

"It is all about drawing attention to the creativity and talent that we have here at our school," said Logan.

"It is a collaboration of everyone coming together with their art, especially with the art classes and National Art Honor Society," said Macon Thompson, senior and fellow co-president of National Art Honor Society.

Throughout March, Logan, Macon, and fellow members of the art community have been working on YAM projects. Students may have noticed the many colorful magnets displayed throughout the hallways. These little magnets are decorated with positive quotes by artists to spread some positivity throughout the school.

There were also signs of Youth Art Month present at the annual Rebel Run on March 19, 2016. There was a face-painting section for the kids and a photo op where you could pose as Freeman runners behind a cardboard cut-out.

"At one point we were taking this little girl's picture for the photo booth, but then she saw we had chalk, she ran straight to that," said Logan.

The art students presented a variety of fun, art-related Rebel Run crafts and activities.

In spirit of Youth Art Month, the art team has also been planning an art show scheduled for April 12 after school until 7p.m. in the library. The show will exhibit art student's work as well as a section designated for senior artwork. The senior's art will showcase all four years of their artwork, revealing the progression from freshman to senior year.

"We hope we get a lot of people out to see it," said Logan.

The art teachers said they are also overjoyed with Youth Art Month's appearance at Freeman.

"Youth Art Month is an advocacy tool for us to keep our program healthy. The more people that know about the art department, the more people are going to take the classes," said Rebecca



Senior Logan Miller paints a Rebel Run participant's face at the Art Honor Society's stand.

Field, art and art history teacher.

This movement has inspired creativity both inside and outside the classroom. Students, teachers, families, and community members have had the opportunity to participate in Youth Art Month related events.

"The winter kind of gets you down and we need a little rise! And what better way to do that than to be surrounded by color and activities," said art teacher Mary Baker Neal.

One motto of Youth Art Month is to "recognize art is a necessity for the full development of better quality of life for all." The art department here at Freeman seems to agree.

"As a school and as a community, I think our art is one of the most uniting things at our

school," said Logan.

"I also think that sometimes not everyone can excel in things like math or English, and it isn't fair that society doesn't accept art at the same level of success in life," said Macon.

Youth Art Month's purpose is to reflect positively on the students here at Freeman. It is giving out the message that art can be a life tool and help in daily tasks.

The art teachers agree that it allows for creative problem solving and team building that can be used in other classes as well. Mrs. Field mentioned it shows how creative thinking can be part of every subject, not just art.

"We promote things like failure because we learn from that," said Mrs. Baker Neal.

But what about the students that don't take an art class? Logan Miller feels strongly that every student should try out an art class at some point in their high school career.

"I feel like for a well-rounded education it would be nice if everybody had a class within the art department," said Logan.

From a teacher's standpoint, Mrs. Field and Mrs. Baker Neal have realized that unlike academic subjects where everyone is supposed to get the same answer, in art, students are encouraged to get different answers.

Art can be used as a universal tool in education, and with the help of Youth Art Month, more and more students are able to realize that.

Jazz Band Students Perform at the Tin Pan



PHOTO: TINPANVA.COM

Emily Finto
Staff Writer

Freeman's Jazz Band takes the stage this school year, meshing swing and pop to develop a unique performance for their audiences. With a non-stop rehearsal and performance schedule, the band program continues to grow, earning superior state rankings such as the Blue Ribbon Award, the Virginia Honor

Band award, and an opportunity to perform at the Tin Pan, a local restaurant and music venue.

The music students traveled to New York for a spring trip April 21-24. "We always seem to have something coming up... We have our spring concert, then the Tin Pan, and right after that we have to start working on the marching band's show for next year," said Robert Blankenship, band and strings teacher.

Ms. Corbett, band mother and the Band Booster President, organized the Tin Pan event as a

fundraiser for band programs.

"The Band Boosters were looking for a way to raise money that did not involve the students selling stuff and concentrated more on music. The Tin Pan is a great venue that supports local musical talent," said Ms. Corbett.

The change in venue only motivates the band to work harder. They've added an extra day of in-class practices, now practicing on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays instead of Tuesdays and Thursdays. They also anticipate having rehearsals before or after school when the Tin Pan performance draws nearer.

"This is not just a competition at another school or a concert here at Freeman. This is out at a public restaurant," said Mr. Blankenship.

"It's going to take a lot of preparations, that's for sure," said senior Chris Walters.

Despite the pressure, the band is taking the performance as an opportunity to try out new pieces, adding more popular culture pieces to their typical "swing stuff." Some examples of the songs to be played are "I Wanna Be Like You" (from the "Jungle

Book") and "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy."

"I always try to pick music that's going to challenge them. The more the challenge, the better they're going to get," said Mr. Blankenship.

Many students thrive off of each rehearsal and the relationships with their fellow musicians. "Playing with jazz band has always fun because it's a smaller group and we play more popular music," said senior Spencer Cook.

Students in the jazz band come from different musical backgrounds. Whether they were inspired to play by friends, family, or middle school teachers, they've come together to work as a band.

Chris began by playing the clarinet in sixth grade, later learning how to play the alto saxophone in order to join the jazz band. Now he's the lead alto saxophone player in the jazz band and plans to continue playing music next year in college.

Sophomore Gabby Corbett was encouraged by her musical mother, Mrs. Corbett, to join the jazz band in middle school

and the marching band in eighth grade. Now she performs in the concert band where she plays the French horn and in the jazz band where she plays the trumpet.

"I love jazz band a lot. It is so fun and more laid back than playing in wind ensemble or concert band," said Gabby.

Through the leadership of Mr. Blankenship and the work of each student, the Jazz Band works through many rehearsals and performances in preparation for their upcoming performances.

"This band has improved since I've been here. I don't take credit for that, it's just that I've found a groove with the students and we've been able to make it work," said Mr. Blankenship.

The jazz band will be performing on Monday May 16, at 7 p.m. at The Tin Pan located at 8982 Quiocassin Road in the Quiocassin Station Shopping Center. Tickets are \$10 and do not include dinner. All proceeds will support the DSF band and strings programs.

To purchase tickets, go to The Tin Pan's website at www.tinpanva.com/calendar.

Students Celebrate Hindu Festival at Freeman

Max Slone
Staff Writer

The Holi Fest has been going on around the world for over thousand years, and it has made its way to Freeman.

Senior Cat Spencer, co-president of the Human Rights Club is heavily involved with the Holi Fest at Freeman.

"As part of Human Rights Club, I have been involved in getting the word out for Holi. For the actual event, I stay after school the day of the festival with some other members of the Human Rights Club to put the colored powder into bags and get everything set up in the Driver's Ed lot," said Cat.

Prior to the Holi Fest, Cat with help from others worked to set up the festival.

"Mrs. Field and Mrs. Pasyavala purchased the powder about a month ago from us. For the past couple weeks, we have been focused on our advertising for the event, spreading the word to the Freeman community. As far as actual setting up for the festival, today we will be dividing the colors into smaller bags so that it is easier for people to run around and throw it and we will also be setting up our table to collect donations for Flint,

Michigan," said Cat.

Cat credits Freeman's diversity as a reason for celebrating the Holi Fest.

"Freeman has such a diverse population, that an event like Holi allows us to come together and celebrate that diversity," said Cat.

Freshman Pari Kapila attended the Holi Fest at Freeman, but also celebrates it with her family as well.

"The last few years, my family and I have gone to the Hindu Center of Virginia to celebrate," said Pari.

Pari likes the idea of celebrating Holi at Freeman.

"It's just a great way to spread diversity and it's just a really fun holiday. It's not that common here and it's a way to bring something new to the table," said Pari.

Pari credits advertising the event around the school as a way to spread the word about the festival.

"I am part of the History and Human Rights Club and we all together and put up a ton of posters around the school," said Pari.

Pari likes the environment that the Holi Fest brings to Freeman.

"I like being around with everyone and its cheerful environment," said Pari.

Despite the festival being held

on a school day, Pari thinks that it shouldn't stop people from coming next year.

"Though it is on a school day, it's something you definitely wouldn't want to miss. It is the highlight of the week in the midst of all the schoolwork and it gives you a chance to let loose, have fun, and learn more about Holi," said Pari.

Math teacher Anu Pasyavala, not only is involved with the Holi Fest at Freeman, but celebrates outside of school as well.

"My family celebrates Holi at home and at Hindu Center of Virginia. In India, we celebrate Holi with family and friends. We would walk up to each friend's house in the neighborhood and play with Holi colors at every friend's house. The celebration starts around 8 am and continues until about 2 pm. We would have so much color on our faces and arms that people couldn't recognize us. It would take days of scrubbing to get the color off our body," said Mrs. Pasyavala.

Mrs. Pasyavala is also involved with the Holi Fest at Freeman.

"I help with the Holi fest by purchasing the pigment colors used to play Holi. I buy them from local Indian grocery store," said Mrs. Pasyavala.

This is the third year that Freeman has celebrated the Holi Fest put on by the Human Rights



PHOTO: MAX SLONE

Students throw powdered paint at each other during the festival.

Club.

Mrs. Pasyavala has a fun time celebrating the festival at Freeman and at the Hindu Center.

"Celebrating Holi with the Freeman family is a unique experience. When we play Holi at the Hindu Center we have Bollywood music and dancing. We

normally play with water guns filled with water mixed with color pigment. Playing with wet colors is more fun (less allergies and eye irritation)," said Mrs. Pasyavala.

Junior Takes Home Show Choir Award

Livi Justis
News Editor

For most show choir members, winning the Showmanship Award one time would be a serious accomplishment, but junior Libby Browder has won this prestigious award twice. The Showmanship Award is reserved for a show choir member who demonstrates enthusiasm and excitement in her performance.

After two years in show choir, Libby has been awarded the Showmanship Award at both the Manchester and Hanover Show Choir Competitions.

"Libby approaches everything with fun... she is always smiling!" said Amy Hruska, chorus and show choir teacher.

Freeman's show choir con-

sists of 33 girls who compete throughout the school year.

Fellow show choir member and longtime friend, junior Molly Jenks and Mrs. Hruska admire the hard work that Libby puts into her show choir efforts.

"Libby is a very hard worker and she's very focused during our choreography," said Molly.

"She worked really hard to achieve these accomplishments," said Mrs. Hruska.

"There is a lot of rehearsing and a lot of dancing and I am not the best dancer," said Libby.

Aside from her hard work, Libby's personality and permanent smile are part of what set her apart from other performers.

"During practices, I work on my smile, my facials, and my energy," said Libby.

"Out of all the performers, you can see her personality most



PHOTO: LIBBY BROWDER

Junior Libby Browder poses for a picture after winning her award.

and it entices people to watch her," said senior Natalia Araujo.

Her bubbly personality also inspired her closest friends to call her by a special nickname.

"We call her squeak because

she's squeaky and adorable," said Molly.

According to her friends and fellow show choir members, there is something special about Libby when she takes the stage.

"Instead of just dancing, she performs," said Molly.

Libby's outstanding performance is a result of her dedication during practices and her kind personality but there might be a third factor that helps her stand out.

"I have been a vegan for a little over a year," said Libby, who has her own vegan food account on Instagram where she showcases her culinary creations.

Libby has "a creative spirit," said Molly. Her creativity is evident in her song, dance, performance, and experiments with vegan fare.

With such creativity and one more year remaining in show choir, Libby will have many more opportunities to leave an impact on the stage and an impression on her peers.

Anokha: Restaurant for Indian Connoisseurs and Novices

Kyle Adams
Staff Writer

As William and I walked in to Anokha, we were greeted by an aroma of curry spices paired with the welcoming glow of candlelit tables.

It was a familiar ambiance that immediately resulted in a pang of hunger for me.

Although I often have to explain to people that I am Mauritian rather than Indian, I still know my way around an Indian menu and have cravings for authentic samosas just like I do for a Cookout tray.

Immediately, we noticed the mixed demographic of the customers that differentiated from the homogeneous restaurant staff. Anokha prides itself on being an authentic Indian cuisine, including its staff—many of whom still have rich Indian accents.

In the West End, some of my favorite places such as India K'Raja cannot maintain this authenticity.

I ordered my usual: vegetable samosas, garlic naan, and chicken tikka masala.

When I saw that William was going to choose a dish that specifically was noted as "spicy," I could feel my eyes subconsciously enlarge.

Indians rarely acknowledge that something is spicy, so this was bound to end with a red face and runny nose from the fledgling curry-eater, a sight I am acquainted to from eating Indian with my white father.

William was adamant on making a bold selection in order to attain a true taste of India, but thankfully the waiter must have tipped off the chef to lower



PHOTO: ANOKHA.US

Anokha restaurant lies at the intersection of Three Chopt and Lauderdale.

the spice level (edible suicide avoided).

The vegetable samosas were quite large, and they had an interesting combination of a pastry-like shell with the typical potato-pea mash inside.

The chicken tikka masala was delectable with basmati rice; the masala sauce was creamy and flavorful while the chicken itself was juicy and evidently fresh by its visible skewer holes.

It was the best I have had besides the tikka masala at Himalayan Fusion, a pricey restaurant in Charlottesville.

The garlic naan had the right texture (similar to a thin cookie), and it was excellent when dipped in the masala sauce. The portion size was enough to fill me up and well worth the \$20.

Overall, Anokha quickly ascended the ranks of my Indian restaurant default list in Richmond.

The warm atmosphere, attentive staff, and exquisite food makes Anokha a truly unique and authentic Indian experience—whether you're new or experienced on the Indian food scene.

William Omberg
Staff Writer

In the heart of American Suburbia, at the intersection of Three Chopt and Lauderdale, lies Anokha Unique Cuisine of India. Anokha serves as a microcosm of authentic Indian food in one of the least expected places. When Kyle and I ate there on Sunday evening, the restaurant was split nearly evenly between white customers, the demographic of the nearby Gelati Celesti's customers, and Indian customers, paralleling Anokha's all-Indian waitstaff.

Our table was also split just as such: Kyle, the Indian food connoisseur, and myself, the Indian food novice. I was slightly intimidated by the bowl of Mukhwas, a mouth-freshening Indian spice blend, that took the place of mints as we entered the restaurant.

Upon receiving our menus, I heartily agreed to let Kyle start us off with an order of vegetable samosas and garlic naan.

D.C.'s Batman v. Superman

Or, the ways in which D.C. did not deliver on its promises of a blockbuster movie

Jamie Bacon
A&E Editor



"Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" disappointed me, but not in the ways I expected.

I saw the movie a little less than a week after it came out, and was surprised to find for a 2:50 showing on a Friday the theatre was full enough to force me to sit directly next to a stranger.

Seeing the movie much later than most, I was subject to the barrage of criticism for the first few days, including the fact that reviews vary from as low as 29% on Rotten Tomatoes, to as (relatively) high as 6.8/10 on IGN. I admit that I went in with multiple prejudices about the movie.

Ben Affleck as Batman? I was essentially dumbfounded after seeing the lead from the superhero movie Daredevil would be



PHOTO: IGN.COM

Ben Affleck and Henry Cavill stand opposing each other.

playing arguably one of two of the most iconic super heroes of all time.

When I first heard that Jesse Eisenberg, who played Mark Zuckerberg in The Social Network, is playing the antagonistic role of Superman's arch nemesis: Lex Luthor, I knew there was an issue with the casting decision.

One part that bothered me was part of the title itself: v. What

possible motive could there be for two superheroes, whose sole motivation is to protect the innocent, to have to fight to the death?

Though as expected, most prejudices were justified and came to fruition, but some did not.

Ben Affleck did The Dark Knight justice. In my opinion, he was just as good, if not better, than Christian Bale. Affleck

played the dark vigilante in an interesting fashion, as the typical strong and silent, yet charming billionaire... but aged, and perhaps, a bid ornery, providing a nice change to the regular Batman.

An aged, almost grouchy Batman juxtaposed with a young, rookie Superman created an interesting dynamic between the two heroes.

Henry Cavill as Superman has received a large amount of flak from fans and critics alike, many calling his acting "wooden" and most of this criticism is justified. Of course, Superman is an alien, but this is not an excuse for poor and rather emotionless character.

Another problem I found that recurred throughout the entire movie was the set up for the next movies. At one point in the movie, a computer file is opened with videos of other superheroes yet to be seen, such as Aquaman, The Flash, and Cyborg. Throughout the movie I could not help but feel a solid portion was just one large trailer for the

sequels to follow.

Many critics have had a fair share to say about the opening, but a lot of these critics are not fans of Batman nor Superman movies, and are not familiar with the background necessary to understand the recap that takes up the first ten minutes or so of the movie.

Visually, the movie was appealing, assuming you do not mind lots of CGI heavy battle scenes. Although likely comprising less than half of the movie, the action-shots were done well. I found that no two fights were the same, and was genuinely unaware of the direction each fight was going.

It is fairly obvious to most fans that D.C. is trying to compete with Marvel's blockbuster series, *The Avengers*, but it simply was not good enough.

All in all, Batman v. Superman felt like it was poor plan that was well executed, worthy of all fans of DC movies' two and a half hours, as well as 2.5/5 stars from me.

The Douglas Freeman Players

Presented

Something's Afoot

From April 14-16, the Douglas Freeman Players performed "Something's Afoot." The production was a musical spoof of the murder mystery genre.

In "Something's Afoot," six guests arrive for a weekend of leisure but each believes he alone has been invited.

A thunderstorm makes the bridge impassible, beginning the mayhem.

"The play really left you on the edge of your seat. I couldn't take my eyes off the stage," said junior Rebecca Houck.

Director: Mary Spears
Scenic Designer: Ryan Imirie
Orchestral Director: Rob Blankenship

Cast:

Lettie: Gillian Saunders
Flint: Zach Fox
Clive: Angus Dawson
Hope Langdon: Ariela Press
Dr. Grayburn: Conor Battle
Nigel Rancour: Franklin Pugh
Lady Grace: Ellie Priday
Col. Gillweather: Owen Payne
Ms. Tweed: Claire Gardner
Geoffrey: Jamie Bacon



PHOTO: YASHIA BURRELL

The cast performs the opening number, "A Marvelous Weekend."