



## Drive Smart Program Teaches Students That Impaired Driving is No Accident

Emma Dixon  
Staff Writer

Students that drove to school on Oct. 27th and 28th noticed the main parking lot was more crowded than usual, while the teacher lot was completely empty. In the teacher parking lot, instructors from Drive Smart Virginia and Ashland Police Department were informing students about driving intoxicated and texting while driving.

Two officers from the Ashland Police Department helped operate the SIDNE vehicle. SIDNE stands for Simulated Impaired Driving Experience. This vehicle showed what it would be like to drive under the influence.

"By actually getting into and driving 'SIDNE', the 'intoxicated go-cart', students could actually feel how slow their reaction time and decision-making abilities would be if they had a BAC greater than 0.08," said Cheryl Pacious, member of the PTSA.

Before getting into the vehicle, one of the police officers, Sargent Scott Menzies, shared with the students about how his family's life was affected by someone who was allegedly driving under the influence.

On the morning of Jan. 13, 2014, Sargent Menzies and his wife Meg went on a training run for the Boston Marathon. Meg was hit by a car. Sargent Menzies watched his wife die right in front of him that morning. Later that day he had to tell his children their mother was not coming



PHOTO: TEDDY SCHERER

Sargeant Scott Menzies of the Ashland Police Department and his partner, Officer Chip Watts, speak to an English 12 class about how the brain reacts under the influence of alcohol.

home. Now their oldest child, who is 9 years old, cries himself to sleep every night.

The students and teachers who heard this story were touched, and moved to be more aware of the dangers of drunk driving.

"When I heard about the police man whose wife died that was really scary. It showed me that driving under the influence is dangerous and has real world consequences," Junior Will Riggs said.

Every day, about 30 people die in car accidents that involve drunk driving. This comes to about one death every 51 minutes. Penalties for driving

under the influence are serious.

"If you are caught drinking and driving your license will be suspended, and you can be locked up and taken to jail," said Donald Proffitt, school resource officer.

Students then participated in a texting while driving simulation. The driver would put on a head set and start driving. Then, the Drive Smart instructor handed the driver a phone and asked students to text while driving. Almost every student crashed while texting and driving.

"The PTSA wanted to help students understand through the simulator how difficult it can be

to stay on the road while texting, and how important it is to realize how quickly something bad and irreversible can happen," said Mrs. Pacious.

"Driving the simulated car and having to text was upsetting. Kids would run out into the street and you would hit them or you would run into a house... this was really eye opening," said senior Yani Orpiano.

Each year, texting while driving causes over 330,000 injuries and 3,000 deaths. 360 of these deaths are of children from the ages of 15 to 19.

"Texting while driving is a criminal offense for anyone in

the state of Virginia. Most of the time you just have to pre-pay the ticket before your court date," Officer Proffitt said.

Students then rode bicycles while wearing goggles that simulated what it was like to ride a bike and walk in a straight line after having two beers.

"Driving the bikes were really hard because the goggles made you really dizzy," said junior Lizzie Cozens.

"With the goggles on everything seemed like it was moved to the side even though it really wasn't," said Yani.

Drive Smart also provided short videos telling the story of those who were affected by either drunk driving or texting while driving.

"The videos they showed us of the people who had real-life experiences with texting and driving and drunk driving was really sad. It made me realize how dangerous texting while driving is," said Lizzie.

Drive Smart provided a safe environment for students to learn about the effects of driving under the influence and texting while driving.

"We try and make sure to drive the point home with experiencing what it is like and not just talking about drunk driving and texting while driving," said Drive Smart instructor Kristin Smolensk.

"This taught me that I am not the only person on the road, and I plan to be more cautious," said Lizzie.

### In this Issue:

Page 3  
Opinion: Dress Code Controversy

Pages 6-7  
Special Features:  
Hobbies of Faculty and Students

Page 9  
Sports: Winter Athlete Spotlights

Page 12  
Movie Review --  
*Interstellar*

### Freeman Cross-Country Team Wins the State Championship

On November 15, The XC team won First Place at the VHSL 5A State Championship Meet in Warrenton, VA.

Coverage Page 8

## 2014 Can Food Drive in Full Swing

Sam Anderson  
Staff Writer

Every year, Freeman supports the Henrico Christmas Mother by donating cans to help local families around the Richmond area.

This year the can food drive is taking place from Nov. 6 through Dec. 3. Students have been advised to bring cans to their first period teacher.

"The Christmas Mother needs nonperishable food, but more specifically they need: canned soup, canned meat, stew, cookies, crackers, cereal, and peanut butter," said Carter Smiley, SCA Sponsor.

Freeman has been known to donate a significant amount of cans to the Christmas mother, donating 15,590 cans last year, and about 39,000 cans two years ago, which was a record setting year.

"Our goal is to beat last year's total of 15,590 cans," said SCA president, Jordi Lee.

Unlike past years, extra credit is not part of the can food drive, but teachers may offer it if they wish to motivate their students. Robert Peck, director of the leadership center, has never used extra credit to make students bring in cans, but he always seems to be able to motivate his students to bring in the most cans.

"That's the key, I make them want to win, I use a little bit of

guilt, fear, extraordinarily high expectations, and I assume that the students will rise to them," Mr. Peck said.

Rachel Keller, science teacher, uses a different strategy to get students to bring in cans.

"We set a class goal and by figuring out an average number of cans each person should bring in. If the class goal is met the entire class earns extra credit." Mrs. Keller said

The main goal of the can food drive, is not about winning but helping the community.

"I think it is important for people that are able to help, should help, not everyone is able to help, and so those that can should." Mrs. Keller said. Last year her class donated about 800 cans and they reached their class goal.

Ms. Smiley said that "just knowing that the donations make a difference for [people's] holidays and make a difference in their lives," is what the can food drive is about.

This year the SCA is going to the Christmas Mother warehouse to help organize the food.

"When we go to the warehouse, we are going to pack boxes of food to send to the families," Jordi said.

The school tries to bring in cans to help the community, but there is always an underlying competition. "We try to beat Godwin every year to be the top school in the county, but the main goal is doing it for charity out of the goodness of your heart," Ms. Smiley said.

## Over 200 Books Missing from Library



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

Carolyn Schmid, librarian, stands near any empty bookshelf that was previously filled with some of Freeman's library books.

Maddy Waldron  
Staff Writer

Imagine your friend borrowing your clothes every week and never returning them. That's how the library feels about their 200 overdue books.

Whether students forget to turn them in or lose them is not determined, but it is guaranteed that turning in an overdue is not as scary as it seems. The only step is to place it on the shelf by the doors in the library.

"Our goal is to get books in

students' hands; we want them to read," library assistant Kathy Lawrence said.

In order to obtain that goal, the library has recently changed a few policies. The check-out term used to be 2 weeks but is now extended to a month. Books still remain renewable after that month.

"If a student wishes to renew a book they have to bring it to the counter in order to renew it or else we are renewing a lost book," Mrs. Lawrence said about the new policies.

For those students who have lost their overdue books there

is a fine to pay. The student is not obligated to pay upfront, but the fine follows a student to graduation. Lost hard back books are \$16 and lost soft cover books are \$5. Fines must be paid before graduation.

"We use this money to purchase requests made by students and faculty so all the money that is taken in goes right back into purchasing materials for the library," librarian Rosemary Wheeler said.

"There are two parts of keeping a book: it denies access to that book for the rest of the student body, and there is a logistical side to overdues and county policy requires us to send out regular notices," Miss Wheeler explained.

For other students who are frequent library visitors, the library is proud to welcome you to their new Library Club. Senior Caroline Forrest, who is a participant in the library club, said, "We volunteer at the book fairs and we sit around and have a nice conversation about books we've read and their accompanying movies."

Returning a book to the library late is better than not turning it in at all because the most important part of returning the books is granting other students access to the books they want. Also, it will prevent the library from having to send out so many notices.

# Snow Patrol: How Many Days Can We Miss?

Teddy Scherer  
Photographer Editor

Ever wonder how it was decided that school would be cancelled for snow, or how many snow days are built into a school year? These questions were the hot topic last year when snow struck for exam week. Now the question being asked is, "Could it happen again?"

Mr. Andy Jenks, director of communications and public relations for Henrico County Public Schools, calls such questions "wishful thinking." "We'll wait and see what the actual forecasts bring," he said.

When school is cancelled, it's cancelled with no explanation other than inclement weather. This has led to the many unknowns surrounding snow days.

How many days of school can be missed before days are added to the year and what factors are looked at when considering cancelling are questions constantly asked as

winter approaches. Mr. Jenks has been making "the calls" for almost three years and has plenty of experience with assessing the conditions.

According to Mr. Jenks, Henrico does not have a predetermined number of snow days. Instead it's measured in terms of extra hours. "Our instructional day is longer than what's required by the state...Over the course of the year, that extra time every day accumulates and adds up to several days' worth of hours."

"If we have doubts about the safety of our students and staff, then we start to consider our options, which could include a closing or a delay," said Mr. Jenks.

As the days piled up last year, Presidents' Day was added as a normal school day. Misinformation and rumors led to concerns that Henrico would add school days to the year or extend the school day itself. Those concerns turned out to be unsubstantiated.

Despite missing 11 days and having another four delayed, Henrico was never in danger of

going under the required amount of hours; however, that does not mean there was no effect.

"Think of it as a reserve of sorts. When we then lose days because of snow, it depletes that reserve. Keep in mind, it's a very large reserve. Even though we lost several days last year, we still did not deplete our entire reserve," said Mr. Jenks.

Extended periods of missed school also have severe effects on the educational schedule. It forces teachers with testing deadlines, such as AP testing, to speed up their curriculum and only cover the essentials.

"It forces teachers to rethink their lesson plans and how to fit everything into a compressed time frame," said Ms. Poates.

Regardless of the effects it has on curriculum and scheduling, if it is not safe for students to attend school, the decision will always be to err on the side of caution and cancel.

"We look at several things, but the overarching question is this: Will it be safe for nearly 50,000 students to get to and from school?" said Mr. Jenks.



PHOTO: SEBASTIAN HUGHES  
Junior Allie Wainright (left), and sophomore Patty Richnafsky bundle up for the cold weather ahead.



PHOTO: ALECSYS BROWN

The graffiti tag, splattered on the wall of the math department hall, on November 13.

## Vandals Deface East Wall of Freeman

Eric Asplund  
Editor-in-Chief

Students arrived at school Thursday, Nov. 13 to a surprise: the east side of the main building had been splattered with a white paint in an act of vandalism. County maintenance staff have since removed the vandals' work.

"The night crew leaves at 11:30 and we get here at 5:30, so it must have happened between then" said Johnny Loving, school maintenance supervisor, who mobilized staff to clean up.

Video was captured which showed the incident taking place, but it is unclear as to whether or not students were involved.

"It's unsure at this time. We have subjects here; we don't know if they're students," said Resource Officer Don Proffitt, who filed the police report with the county and is investigating the incident.

"Two individuals were noted in the video, but they had hoods on, so we couldn't see their faces," said Laura Hollowell, one of the investigating administrators.

The vandals did not appear to fling or spray paint, but rather took a unique approach in their defacement. They tried to reach as much of the wall as possible.

"[The painting mechanism] appeared at first to be a fire extinguisher, but it turned out to be some sort of paint sprayer," said Ms. Hollowell.

The vandalism has been tied to a similar crime near an Ollie's Bargain Market in the Short Pump area – both sites were tagged with "MRBR." The meaning remains unknown.

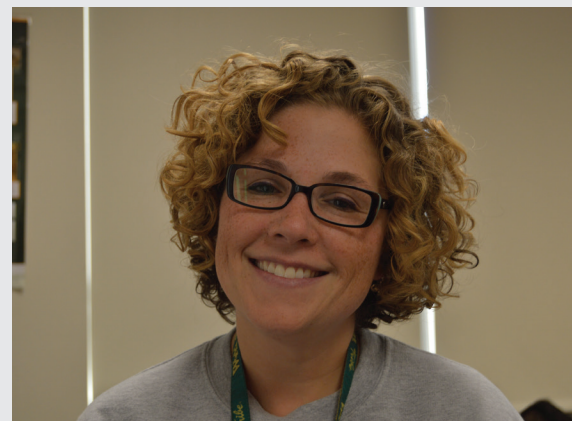
"The other one – near Gayton – had 'MRBR' and two question marks...it's no gang affiliation that we are aware of," said Ms. Hollowell.

There are no definite suspects in the crime, but if an arrest is made, a suspect would likely be facing fines and jail time. The cleanup cost the county around \$1000 for just the labor alone.

"It's a felony offense," said Officer Proffitt.

Sentencing could involve community service, probation, restitution, fines, or jail time.

## REB Award for Teacher Excellence



Art teacher, Rebecca Field was nominated by two of her students for a R.E.B. Award for Teaching Excellence, which recognizes public school teachers with grants to "support professional development and enrichment activities". Mrs. Field was awarded \$10,000 to spend on a trip to Spain and France to study sacred spaces: cathedrals, mosques, and synagogues.

*Q: How did you receive the award?*

A: "After I became a finalist, I had to write a proposal for how much money I wanted and what I would use it for... any sort of experience that would add to myself as a teacher."

*Q: What was your proposal?*

A: "I had to plan the whole trip... I had to have a budget, an itinerary, and a theme to pull it all together. My proposal is centered around the ideas of sacred spaces."

*Q: What kinds of sacred places will you visit?*

A: "That term represents my wish to go see cathedrals and mosques in Europe... And to explore and recognize the places where artists found their sacred spaces. For example, the French Riviera, where Post-impressionists found their sacred space."

*Q: What was it like receiving the award?*

A: "What they did was they read about the person who won the award before announcing their name... and the first thing they said was this teacher thinks of herself as awkward, and then I knew it was me."

*Q: Have you ever been traveling before?*

A: "I've been to Scotland and England, but I've never been on the continent... and I get to see, finally, the places where my students get to go, and I never get to."

## Highlights of the 2014-2015 Homecoming Weekend



PHOTO: TOM VEAZEY

The Varsity Football team kicks off with an exciting entrance.



PHOTO: TOM VEAZEY

Homecoming King and Queen:  
Jack McCall and Elizabeth Pollard.



PHOTO: TOM VEAZEY

Students enjoy the homecoming dance in the small gym.



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

The sophomore float won second place in the HC parade.



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

2013 HC Queen, Janie West, and  
2014 HC Queen, Elizabeth Pollard



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

The senior float won first place in the homecoming parade.

## Life isn't a Party, so Dress Like It



**Carissa Campbell**  
Opinions Editor

Recently, much controversy has risen in school and out of school about the purpose and effectiveness of our dress code. I am going to tell you right now that the current policies we have are only helping (not hurting us). A local rival, Maggie Walker, held a protest because the girls were no longer allowed to wear a certain length of shorts if one more girl was to violate the rule. In return, the next day, the boys dressed in their cutest short-shorts as an attempt to show their administrators that their rules were, well, stupid. However, this protest was more of a comedy act than a success in proving their argument. To many of us it seems that administrators have given up (as you have seen in the halls) on enforcing dress code violations. I still see some boys' pants hanging too low; I can say I am tired of seeing Vineyard Vines boxers. However, girls, too, are having many problems following

this so-called dress code. If you claim the dress code is violating your rights, then you are very wrong. You are in a school. In this school, you do not have the same rights that you do out of school, which is why we have the Code of Conduct. Many of you are aware of, or should be aware of, the Code of Conduct. In this novel that has been provided to us every single year of our school lives, there are many rules to ensure school safety and positivity. Well, in this novel, which we have annotated and written essays on for years, there is something called a Dress Code! I hope a majority of you reading know the basics of it through our twice-a-year Code of Conduct assemblies with Mr. Ahrens. Now here is where the problem is really getting out of hand: students, especially girls, are claiming that the dress code is harming them and favors male students. What? Never has that EVER been what it is about. It is in favor of everyone's education. The dress code applies to every student in the county, meaning that if a student, boy or girl, is wearing something that isn't appropriate, then that person will most likely be caught by Ms. Hollowell or will avoid walking by her office. The idea that the dress code favors males and is another example of male supremacy is well, dumb. The boys have a

dress code too, but they don't seem to have as much trouble following it. I do not care if you are a boy or girl, if I see something that should not be seen according to our dress code, I will be distracted by it. Why? Because if you know you're not supposed to be wearing it, then I know you're not supposed to be wearing it. I am tired of seeing hot pink bras and excessive holes in shirts. I know you look in the mirror, so you are telling me you didn't notice it before you left for school? Whether the clothing that is revealing you is attractive or not, it distracts everyone. If a boy wants to wear a short dress to school, he better make sure it's fingertip. And if a girl wants to wear saggy pants to school, she better wear a belt to hold them up. Everyone is susceptible to the dress code, students and staff, so please just try to follow it. Since I am very tall, I have had a hard time finding clothes to suit our Code of Conduct, but I have never wanted to dress in something sexy or revealing to SCHOOL. First off, it makes me uncomfortable and others around me uncomfortable. Second, if something is short on me, everyone notices. Not just boys or not just girls, but also everyone in the whole school notices the sight of skin. It does not matter what clothes you have in your closet, what you can afford or not afford, no

one should be coming to school wearing something revealing that will distract others. I decided follow to school rules, and started wearing things more suitable for school, which is...well... what we are supposed to do. My parents do not buy my clothes; I do. This gives me freedom to buy whatever I want, but I also pay a price for it. Therefore, next time you are shopping on your parents' tab or your tab, think: "Could I even wear this to school?" and "Oh, I'd probably wear this like once to a party." I, and the rest of the school, will thank you for it. You are at school for the majority of the year, so why not plan for it? No matter what your size or frame, I do not want to see your midriff or butt or any other unmentionables. No matter what gender I am attracted to, revealing clothing will distract me. So if you think your clothes are only distracting stereotypical hormonal boys, you are wrong. They are distracting your friends, your teachers, and your peers--and not in a good way. You are affecting not only your education, but also the education of others around you. What you wear is a way of expressing yourself. I wear what I want, you wear what you want, but with regard to the dress code. If you have trouble with that, then I recommend saving those sexy party clothes for the party,

my friend. What you wear, or choose not to wear, affects every single person you walk by in school that day, producing questions like "Why are they wearing that?" or "I can't believe they spent money on a piece of fabric." We are all receiving an equal education here; it's your job to actually be proactive about it. The Dress Code encourages us to dress like the young women and men we are. You need to learn how to dress for a job, so why not learn how to in school? It is in your power to take advantage of your education. Instead of thinking that only one gender is being favored, you should realize that we both have to follow the dress code in order to help our education and the others around us. What I want you to take from this article is better understanding of why we have a dress code. It is to help us, not hurt us. I want you to understand that everyone has a dress code and, yes, sometimes it can be hard to follow, but while you're out shopping, remember to buy clothes for school first. Our dress code is equal and everyone has to follow it to an extent to save our educations. So, girls and boys, remember to wear tops that cover your midriff, pants, skirts, and dresses that are fingertip length, and that we're all here to learn. Buy more fabric and save our educations.



**Connor Glowacki & Mary Rockwell**  
Opinions Editors

Dear DSF Students,

Are you familiar with how it feels to pretend to like a gift? Right after the excitement of ripping apart gift-wrap, you are stunned—surprised by how underwhelming your new argyle holiday sweater is. The holiday season is here! With winter break quickly approaching, many struggle with one of the most important aspects of the holidays: buying presents. The challenge to find the perfect present for your loved ones always presents itself as a looming stress above your head. We, the Opinion Editors of your Commentator newspaper, want to help alleviate the stress of gift shopping with our mental checklist, and make sure this season is filled with genuine smiles and holiday cheer.

*--Mary & Connor*

## Holiday Season Surprises

### A GOOD MENTAL CHECKLIST

- Do they already have something similar?
- Is it something they'll use more than twice a year?
- Are you unconsciously buying something for yourself?
- Did you remember to check clothing or shoe sizes (if applicable) with a friend?
- Are you over-spending? (You don't have to be a show-off)
- Will the gift have a special meaning to whoever you are giving it to?

### A BAD MENTAL CHECKLIST

- How can I use this present to put this person in my debt?
- What is the least amount of money I can spend while still looking nice?
- Hmm...maybe they would like my old running socks?
- Forget them, man, I am buying this for myself
- Wait, why can't I just receive presents? Won't my happiness make them smile?
- How long before this person talks to me again after receiving this?

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

## No-Shave November: A Definite Yes



**Connor Glowacki**  
Opinions Editor

It is November 30, 2014; I sit outside on my front steps contemplating the deeper mysteries of life, which slide in and out of reach as I stroke my chin—a bearded chin. The previous month yielded joy, sorrow, and most importantly, facial hair. In stroking the sparse scruff, I realize that No-Shave November is more than a way to raise awareness for men's health. It is a traditional display of manliness; any man worth his whiskers has the patience to wait out the month, the resolve stay his bearded path against the norms of facial baldness. The beard is a symbol of patience, commitment, and willpower. If I was given the choice between trusting my life to a bearded man and non-bearded man, the bearded hero wins my trust everytime. Many individuals do not see No-Shave November as anything especially profound or life-changing; however, despite what they think, it is a popular cancer awareness campaign and

### Teenage Boys During No-Shave-November

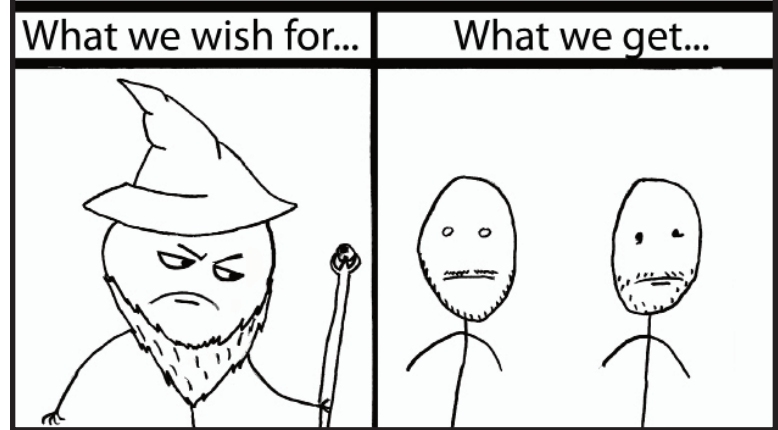


PHOTO: CONNOR GLOWACKI

,now, a tradition. Why do people do it? I say: Why not? When a boy reaches high school, it is only a matter of time before he has to shave. Albeit, there are those who might go without shaving until college (they still technically are part of "No-Shave November"). For many boys, "No-Shave November" is the first time we even have the choice not to shave. I do not think "No-Shave November" is strange or annoying. Honestly, even if I was not participating I would humor those who are, especially because I think it is funny to see my friends with the incomplete beards typically worn by young men. The reason for participating in the tradition may even be simple curiosity. What do I look like unshaven? There is one way to find out.

On a more serious note, No-Shave-November originally started in 2009, when Rebecca Hill and Bret Ringdahl came upon a brilliant idea. They figured, since many individuals spend some amount of money on grooming, these individuals might betray those costs and instead donate them to fight cancer. Whether from saving money on razors or expensive salon visits, any donation would help their cause. Since its founding, the No-Shave movement has partnered with the American Cancer Society, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in the name of cancer research, treatment, and prevention. Find out more about No-Shave November and help raise cancer awareness by visiting the official website: <http://www.no-shave.org/>

# Man on the Street

What clubs do YOU want to see at Freeman?



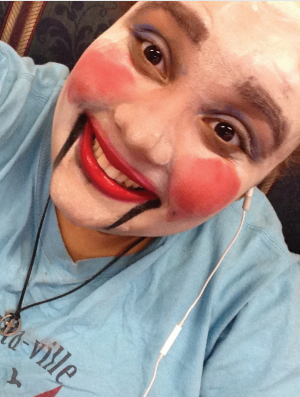
**Ashlee Owens, junior**  
 "I would like to start a Pinterest club!"

**Zach Schwert, freshman**  
 "I think a tree climbing club would be of substantial value to the student body."



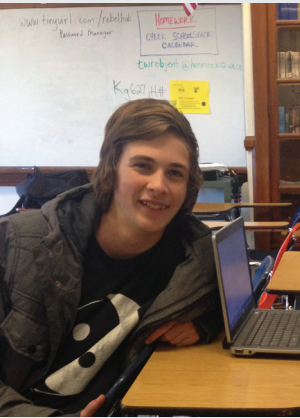
**Jack Miller, freshman**  
 "It would be cool if we had a baking club!"

**Caroline Gravely, junior**  
 "I would like to have an animated movie club!"



**Taylor Petrosky, sophomore**  
 "I would like a cosmetology club."

**Martin Chege, senior**  
 "I want a barbecue club! We would eat barbecue every day!"



**John Chadwick, senior**  
 "Pep band! For basketball games...like a drum set and a guitar player."

**Christian Wilber, senior**  
 "I think a free style wrestling club, if you could implement that."

# Teachers Toast the Rebel Roast

Mary Rockwell  
Opinions Editor

Everyone knows that coffee is a key part of many of our teachers' mornings. Without caffeine, we would not have the same enthusiasm from some of our teachers to teach all of our bright and shining faces every day. The introduction of the new coffee delivery service, Rebel Roast, is about to take Freeman by storm.

Lauren Lightfoot-Clare, Exceptional Education teacher and Co-Department Chair, teaches Life Skills and Reading.

"The class gives students the opportunities to try anything and everything, and the classroom environment gives the opportunity to learn. They learn to cook and clean and interact with people as well as social and basic life skills," she said.

The students in Ms. Lightfoot-Clare's class are in charge of the Rebel Roast as a way to directly incorporate various life skills that they have been learning this year; some of the skills include social skills, practical math, and language arts. The students will deliver coffee mugs to teachers every Friday starting Dec. 5 for 50 cents per mug. They will also be assembling packages of coffee fixings such as creamer and sugar

in assembly lines dependent on the teacher's request in the organized Rebel Roast Google Doc.

"Teachers will provide their own mug with a detailed description of its appearance so that the students can identify the mug and match it to the teacher and his or her specific order," Ms. Lightfoot-Clare said.

The Life Skills and Reading students will collect money and make change ahead of time in order to make deliveries on each Friday. In November, the class made 80 pies to sell and jumpstart the Rebel Roast program with the funds they collected.

The first week of the Rebel Roast will be free to all teachers so the students can grow familiar with the process. Currently the delivery service only makes and serves coffee with the donated three coffee makers, but in the future, they may expand choices to hot chocolate and tea.

"This will be a great opportunity for the students [because] it's an opportunity for them to interact with those who they do not always...interact with," Ms. Lightfoot-Clare said.

With slots filling up fast, Rebel Roast will deserve a toast in the near future.

# Senior Trains to be a Fireman



PHOTO: LANTE TUCKER

Lante Tucker wears his fireman's uniform with pride in the Explorer Program.

Trey Holsten  
Staff Writer

Firefighters are true heroes. They risk their lives to help save the lives of others stuck in bad situations. They show true bravery every day. Senior Lante Tucker is studying to one day be one of these heroes.

This is Lante's first year at Freeman and living in Richmond. Before moving to Richmond, he lived in Virginia Beach. He knew that this year he wanted to start training for the life ahead of him.

Lante has always had an interest in firefighting. Kevin Steele, his school counselor, introduced Lante to the Explorer Program while discussing his interest in firefighting. Mr. Steele said that Lante told him right away that he wanted to become a firefighter.

The Explorer Program is a way for people aged 14 to 25 to discover their interests going forward in life. The program offers many different fields such as EMT, healthcare, and police. Mr. Steele said Lante was currently the only student from Freeman in the program, but he has seen many other students join the program and eventually go into their field of work.

"The Explorer Program is for focused, driven, goal-oriented students who know what they want to do in the future," said Mr. Steele. The students have to

have been pondering joining the program for a period of time, Mr. Steele said.

"It is a very hands-on program," said Lante. Lante said students in the program are very involved in actual career activities. It helps students figure out whether or not they want to do a certain job after they are done with school.

For the firefighting field, Lante is required to go to training classes twice a month. He usually goes on Saturdays and must stay for at least 6 hours.

Lante has done many different types of training. His main training exercise is called "Mayday Training."

"The firefighter gets put in a building and then gets disoriented so that he doesn't know exactly what is going on," said Lante. He then explained that they must recount where they are and describe to another person how to get there. This is done so that if a firefighter gets stuck or needs help, he could easily get help from another firefighter.

They also have drills with full fire protection gear on. They conduct most of these training sessions in the Henrico County Fire Training Centers. The sessions all center mainly on how to get out and how to communicate with one another.

Lante has not been able to go on any real calls yet. He must take tests before going on calls. The tests consist of knowing the functions of every tool they use and knowing the names,

positions, and roles of everyone in their fire squad.

Lante said that he plans to become a real firefighter once he is done with high school. He also added that he will likely have another job besides being a firefighter.

He also must complete EMT training. The EMT training will teach him how to apply First Aid to people who have been hurt by the fires or whatever injury they had.

Before he can become a certified firefighter he must complete a variety of tests. He must complete the personnel and tool tests but there are also written and fitness tests. These are the most important and determine whether he is able to become a full time firefighter.

"I think it is possible that I am done with all my training by graduation. If I'm not it will be in the months soon after," Lante said.

If Lante is able to stay on his time table, he will already have a job he can start right out of high school.

"I'm currently taking fire science, but I am open to taking any classes I find that will help me learn about anything fire related," Lante said. By taking classes like fire science he will know how to put out fires more efficiently.

If you are ever in the horrible situation of having to call 9-1-1 for a fire, Lante Tucker could be on his way to help you.

# Freshman Writes 2<sup>nd</sup> Novel

Alex Gilliam  
Design Editor

"Alright, let's get down to the facts."

That is the first line Zack Samuels' book entitled "My Life as a Young Wizard." The book, written during his sixth grade year at Byrd Middle School, catalogs Zack's experiences in fictional form.

"It was a documentary of my sixth grade year, except more wizardly, and more fun," said Zack, who is now a freshman at Freeman.

He said that sixth grade was "such a different year for me" that he wanted to have a record of it.

"My embodiment was a young character that lives in a country near Honduras that doesn't actually exist," said Zack. It was important that the book talked about his life in a way different "than normal, American, non-wizard life."

Zack began writing the book near the beginning of his sixth grade year.

"I would usually write for a few minutes every day, or maybe an hour if I had a really good idea about the story."

About a year later Zack finished the story. In March of 2013 at the end of seventh grade, Zack received a gift from his parents.

"They handed me this small bag, and I began to open it up," he said. "I saw this small book with my pen name and title... I was running around screaming!"

The publishing process does remain a mystery to Zack because he was surprised by his parents with the finished book.

The book is set up in the format of a diary, or "journal" as the main character would prefer it to be called. There is

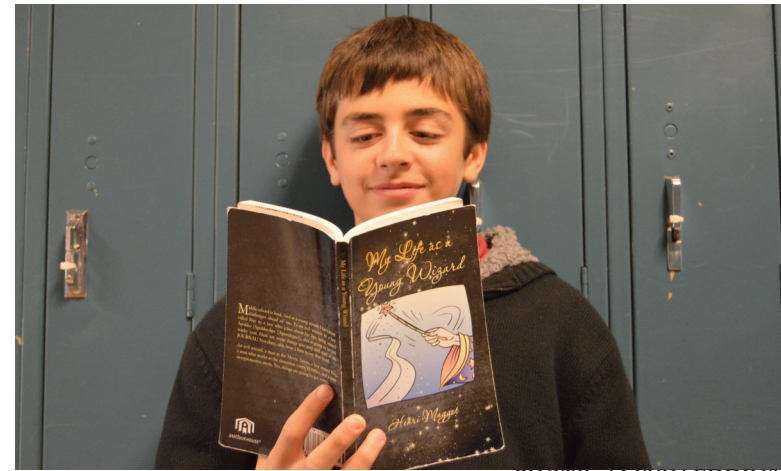


PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

Freshman Zack Samuels enjoys a quality book.

an entry for every couple days from the beginning of September to the beginning of January; presumably Zack's days in sixth-grade.

"That's why I loved writing the book so much," said Zack. "Because every day I would just sit in school all day and listen to what people said and to what happened."

Then he would go home and write about it, but with a "wizardly" spin. The main character shares names with the book's author, Henri Maggot, which is Zack's pen name. It is also a hint at his distant French heritage.

These days, in the halls of DSF instead of Byrd, Zack has a new book in the works.

"This is like a much better story line; it's called 'My Parents' Friends,'" said Zack. This new story involves a boy who was put up for adoption at a young age after his parents make a bad investment. The boy is adopted by his parents' best friends who live nearby.

"He gets to see his parents [often] but never live with them. I think he compares it to always running a race but never being able to finish," said Zack.

Right now the story is about

half the length of "My Life as a Young Wizard," which came in at 175 pages.

"I'm to trying work some more magic into it and make it longer. I like my books to be nice and thick, at least a couple ounces," said Zack.

At school, Zack says that he does enjoy English class – but for grammar, not for writing. His English 9 teacher, Mrs. Megan Ariail, says that he sets himself apart in this capacity.

"Zack's grammar is phenomenal," she said. "He is able to pick up on mistakes and errors that most freshmen miss." As for the first book, Zack does not keep track of how many have been sold but estimates that it's probably less than 50. His family bought many of them to give to other family and friends when it was first published.

"My Life as a Young Wizard" is available for purchase on amazon.com and the Barnes and Noble online store.

Be careful not to do anything too interesting in front of Zack, or you might just find yourself embodied – in wizard form – in Zack's next book.

# Mr. Callan's Snakes Surprise Students



PHOTO: CONNOR LOUGHRAN

Students pet Mr. Callan's snake as he sits outside the cafeteria during the wildlife spirit day.

Connor Loughran  
Staff Writer

Have you ever seen a snake calmly wrapped around a teacher's neck? This brave spectacle was Todd Callan, a biology teacher at Freeman. Mr. Callan holds the record for the most animals in a classroom at DSF, with a whopping total of five fish and five snakes.

His implementation of natural life in the classroom came from a love of animals before he even started teaching. "I used to breed snakes to help pay for college," he said. But his staggering collection of animals increased over time from a variety of sources. "Other teachers donated some, and I bought the fish," he said.

Despite the obvious attraction to using animals in a lesson for entertainment, Mr. Callan is a firm believer in the educational benefits from such hands-on experiences.

"Adding animals into the curriculum is a great way to get

students' attention and helps to teach difficult topics," he said. "It gets kids interested and engaged, which can be hard to attain."

Mr. Callan said that his students usually respond well to the supplementation of animals into the classroom, especially the snakes.

"The snakes are awesome," sophomore James Neary said. "It's a unique thing to have because not many teachers just have snakes in the classroom."

However, just recently there was one problem that changed his policy on handling the snakes.

He said, "This year someone complained, so now the students aren't allowed to hold the snakes anymore."

The change in policy hasn't deterred his outlook on the classroom pets. His personal favorite is a ball python, but he also has one albino, one King, and two other pythons. Luckily, there is no substantial burden from the many animals for which he is responsible.

"They are actually all pretty easy to take care of," he said. He feeds each snake one rat

about twice a month. During the summer, he comes in once a week to feed the fish and snakes.

Although the addition of animals might seem like more fun than merely educational, Mr. Callan is a strong believer in the benefits from his teaching methods.

"I gave a presentation on this topic to the National Science Teachers Association in New Orleans," he said. Not only are his methods recognized at the national level, but they are appreciated by some of his colleagues.

Gregory Townsend, an earth science teacher, said, "A living animal does have a bigger response from students than say a box of rocks or minerals for Earth Science. The animal and the student can have an interaction on a higher level than simply holding or manipulating a hands-on lesson."

From all of the interactive advantages of implementing animals into the curriculum, Mr. Callan is able to actively engage his students while providing a memorable learning experience.

## Junior Starts Red Cross Club

Grace Gemmell  
Staff Writer

Have you ever made a friend switching machines at the gym? Junior Jordan Bourgeois has! Over the summer, Jordan went to the gym to prepare herself for winter and spring track in the upcoming school year. While she was there, she met a woman who informed her about the Red Cross Organization. Jordan had never met this woman before, but after repeatedly seeing each other at the gym, they became friends.

"My friend at the gym works for the Red Cross and inspired me to participate and take part in the organization," she said. Jordan's friend, Carter Childress, is currently the business development manager at the Red Cross.

Jordan has been an active participant giving back to the Richmond community. She volunteers at marathons, the Ronald McDonald House, Precision Body Works, Veterans of Home with a Heart, and occasionally tutors kids.

In order to become a Red Cross member there is a long process you have to undergo. This training enabled her to start the club. "You have to complete the online registration process and attend an orientation," she said.

At the orientation, the Red Cross educates new members about the purpose of the organization and what do to as a volunteer.

The newly created Red Cross club focuses on the blood drive and natural disasters. Jordan and the other members of the club organize fundraiser events at Freeman and help host sponsored events for the Red Cross Organization. "The club will travel to Elementary schools around Henrico County and informs them about the dangers of natural disasters and what to do in hazardous situations," Jordan said.

"The Red Cross club meets once a month and discusses future fundraisers and activities," Jordan said. Jordan and the club will be organizing events at Freeman for various occasions.

"We are currently going to host a blood drive in December, visit the veterans at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, and possibly host a Christmas fundraiser," Jordan said. Jennifer Crowder, counselor at Freeman and sponsor of the Red Cross club, said the club will be participating in Red Cross sponsored events.

Junior Laura Adamson is a friend of Jordan and a member of the Red Cross club. "I love being a part of this club because it helps out with disasters all around America," Laura said. Laura is looking forward to

hosting canned food drives and sending the food to places where tornados or hurricanes have hit.

"It is always important to give back to your community and at the same time be prepared in case of a crisis," Mrs. Crowder said.

The Red Cross club brings awareness to the organization and assists the Red Cross's contribution to countries all around the world.

"One of the reasons why I started the club was to make a difference within the Richmond community," Jordan said. Many of Jordan's best friends joined the Red Cross club this year. "I love hanging out with my friends and influencing our community at the same time," she said.

The Red Cross club has contributed to Jordan's goals for her career in the future.

"It has always been a dream of mine to become a doctor when I am older," she said. The Red Cross will help Jordan become more educated on the field of medicine.

"Jordan is someone who is driven! She is organized and when she says that she will do something- she does it," Mrs. Crowder said. Jordan's bright attitude and faithful determination might one day lead her to change the world and become the person she strives to become.

## Literary Magazine Recieves High Praise

Trent McCaffrey  
Sport Editor

Freeman's literary magazine, *The Educator*, received recognition from the Virginia High School League this October. The staff was awarded for "outstanding achievement in quality publications service to its school and community."

"We received the highest honor for the magazine which is known as Trophy Class," said Wiley Hunnicutt, creative writing teacher. Mrs. Hunnicutt has been the sponsor for the literary magazine of two years.

"We were judged on attributes of style, visual impact, graphic elements, and the balance of art and literature," Mrs. Hunnicutt said.

"The book was very sleek; it had good content and art. The format was very good because the pictures and the writing went side by side with the theme of perspective" said senior Tiya Booker.

In order for *The Educator* to be created, the staff had to go through a certain process.

"First we collected works of all kinds from Freeman students by either submission from email or we hunted works down from the art department. After that we finalized a theme. Finally we designed it with InDesign and Photoshop to make sure the style and layout compliment the work

and theme so that it all works as a unified piece of art," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

The magazine was evaluated by the Publication Evaluation Services of the Virginia High School League and was awarded at the fall VHSL conference.

"We submitted the magazine at the end of the school year. We had to state the process to make the magazine and the theme," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

"The big difference in this year and last years class is that this year's class has a lot more people. Last year we only had six members but this year we have around 15," said Tiya.

The leaders of last year's submission were former seniors Peter Barkey-Bircann and Mac Wood. This year's group leaders are yet to be decided.

"I think there will be a lot of good stories and poetry because the class is much bigger and plentiful," said Tiya.

Mrs. Hunnicutt's creative writing class is made up of sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

"This class is a group of students with varied interests, some prefer writing, while others prefer design and layout," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

Students interested in submitting works to *The Educator* can submit them by emailing dsfeducator@gmail.com. The work must have a title and it cannot be anonymous.

## A Day in the Life of:



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

7: 00 a.m.: Wakes up, already dreaming about her cup of coffee.

7:05 a.m.: Best moment of the day—time for that first cup of Kroger half and half brew.

7: 20 a.m.: Eats a half a bagel and a banana, drinks more coffee, and watches the news.

8:15 a.m.: Drives to school, cranks heat and sips on coffee. Listens to French music.

8:30 a.m.: Arrives at school, brews another cup of coffee in the resource room.

9:00 a.m.: First period planning- grades papers, goes to check box, calls Jerry (husband).

9:55 a.m.: Teaches French III, the wonderful and perfect class, sips on second cup of coffee of the day.

10:47 a.m.: Time for French IV, another great class.

11:34 a.m.: Lunch time! Eats leftovers—mean salad or stuffed cabbage.

1:24 p.m.: Things get hairy in fifth period with both French IV and V in one class.

2:10 p.m.: Time for sixth period, French I is a real handful.

3:03 p.m.: Makes another cup of coffee to handle departmental duties.

4:30 p.m.: Time to head home. Finishes coffee in the way to the parking lot.

5: 00 p.m. : Time to boogie in Zumba dance class...or go shopping at Marshall's.

6:00 p.m.: Dinner time, cooks up something with meat—usually coq au vin, sometimes vegetables but only because I know they are good for me.

6:30 p.m: Enjoys the gourmet meal with Jerry.

7:30 p.m. Cooking channel time! Watches chef Jacques Pépin.

9:00 p.m. Gets on the Facebook to check out what old students are up to and tries to think of a clever post.

10:15: p.m. Lights out.

12:00 p.m. Dreams about 5th period being bad...and coffee.

## DSF Club Briefs

### Educator:

Submit works to the Literary Magazine at dsfeducator@gmail.com. Submissions must include name and a title.

### Forestry Club:

Applications can be seen throughout the halls. If interested, contact member head: Jackson Johnson.

### Rebelettes 2017:

A jean drive is being conducted by the sophomore Rebelettes club. Bring your used jeans to Mrs. Campfield's room to donate them to homeless shelters around Richmond.

### Hawaii Trip 2015

Stop by Mr. Callan's room (148) or email him at wtcallan@henrico.k12.va.us for more information. Trip will be held on July 14-18 of this year.



# Cross Country Wins State Champs

Livi Justis  
Staff Writer

Near freezing, blustery conditions failed to blow a consistent Rebels team off course from capturing a state championship.

On Nov. 15, the varsity boys' team, composed of Waleed Suliman (10th grade), Peyton Artz (12), Alex Gilliam (12), Matthew Heinicke-Pearl (12), Reese Pounders (11), Campbell Baskin (12) and Daniel Gilman (12), and coached by Mark Harvey and Brian Reutinger, won Freeman its first state title since 1969.

"Freeman's had a great tradition of cross country leading up to '69 and after '69, but very few on the state championship side," said Reutinger in an interview with the Richmond Times-Dispatch. "So to be able to come and get one feels good. It feels well deserved."

The Rebels won the 5A Boys race with a total of 104 points, beating 2nd place Thomas Jefferson S&T (Alexandria) by 22 points and last year's state champion Deep Run Wildcats by 59.

The team's consistency



PHOTO: CRAIG HEINICKE

Coach Reutinger (far left) and his team have worked for this moment for years.

was arguably the senior-heavy squad's strongest asset; the team lost to just two of 92 schools it faced all season, and placed first, first and second at its three invitational regular season meets.

The Rebels rolled through the postseason in similar fashion, winning their conference, regional and state meets by comfortable margins of 36, 31 and 22 points.

Another key to their dominance was depth. What Freeman lacked in superstar power (its highest finisher at the state meet, Waleed, finished 15th) it made up for in being tightly packed, as Lake Braddock (6A) was the only other team in the state with seven of its varsity runners under 17 minutes at some point in the season.

The team's senior class

can point much of its collective success to a program that has produced high quality athletes in the past several years, including Foot Locker Nationals finalist/state champion 3200m runner Silas Frantz and five time all-state runner Ronnie Calkins.

With strong depth for next season, the Rebels will have another chance to wreak postseason havoc, but it will be tough for

them to match the success of this season's group, who managed to set the bar as high as it can go. For now though, the 2014 team members will enjoy the success of their historic season.

## Girls:

The Freeman varsity girls' team finished off its most successful season in recent years, advancing to the state meet for the first time since 2007.

This advance came thanks to a strong 6th place finish at regionals in which the Rebels secured their spot by more than 40 points, and were less than 20 off the 4th place team of Menchville.

The team rallied around its young talent, as three of the team's top seven runners (Anna Gilliam, Brenna Gilman, Mia Girardi) were underclassmen, and just three were seniors. Mia Girardi posted the best individual time at regionals, placing 19th in 19:58.

The girls have been in a rebuilding phase for quite a number of years, but with this season's improvement and the promise of four returning varsity runners next season, Freeman has a chance of becoming a very solid team.

## Senior Athletes Commit to College

**Logan Harvey**  
Wake Forest University  
Baseball

**Mackenzie Kerr**  
Duke University  
Track

**Jamie Lockwood**  
Duke University  
Lacrosse

**Daniel Lynch**  
University of Virginia  
Baseball

**Travis Stockow**  
Hampden-Sydney College  
Baseball

**Evan Tyler**  
Jacksonville University  
Lacrosse

**John Woolley**  
Washington and Lee University  
Lacrosse

# Boys, Girls Volleyball Teams Turn in Solid Seasons

## Tough Loss to Deep Run Ends 13-2 Year

Jamie Bacon  
Staff Writer

Boys' Varsity Volleyball overcame obstacles to achieve a successful season. They ended up with a record of 13-2, losing only to Deep Run and Atlee, and their best performance also being against Deep Run.

In the post-season the team lost to Deep Run in the conference semi-finals.

Senior Nate Mazzini, a captain of the team, was more than satisfied with the season.

"In the beginning we really worked hard to mesh as a family and function as a unit. We got really close to each other. We didn't get as quite as far as we wanted to, but it was well worth the experience," Nate said.

The team had to face some hurdles, including junior Reagen Fakhoury's father passing away suddenly and unexpectedly on September 28th. That night the team had a road game at Patrick Henry.

"Reagen wasn't with us, but the team really stepped



PHOTO: MARGARET DE WITT

Seniors Eric O'Brien (left) and Duncan Thurston (right) display their athleticism.

up in his absence, winning convincingly and dedicating the victory to him and his family. That really solidified us all as a family," Coach David Calvert said.

Even ending as well as they did, Coach Calvert admits they will face some challenges next year.

"As I look to next season,

we'll have a bigger fight ahead of us as we graduate seven seniors," Coach Calvert said.

Although a challenge, Coach Calvert thinks that finding new players will be what he looks forward to most next year.

## Strong Team Chemistry Negates Early Injuries



PHOTO: MARGARET DE WITT

Teamwork propelled the Rebels to a winning season.

Clayton Leep  
Staff Writer

Freeman girls' volleyball has a history of success in the West End, but in 2014 the team was forced to fight through adversity to

maintain this.

The team took a turn for the worse with injuries striking the season early. Junior Ellie Bisese, the starting libero (also known as the player wearing the different colored jersey than the rest of the team) for the Rebels, was deemed

out for the season with a stress fracture in her back.

Injuries affected numerous other players on the team; junior Ellie Cox and senior Leah Dillard suffered from sprained ankles, senior Renzie Smith was out with a concussion, and sophomore Molly Bruce sustained a stress fracture in her back causing her to miss two games.

Despite the injuries, the team managed to flourish, finishing with a record of 16-11.

"We were injury stricken, and we had to overcome a lot of that which made us stronger," Assistant Coach Laura Moore said.

The collective highlight of the season was beating Godwin by a score of 15-11 in the final set.

"Everyone was communicating and stepped up to the plate and held each other accountable," senior McKenna Epperson said about the victory.

Despite three seniors Renzie Smith, McKenna Epperson and Leah Dillard, the team will look to continue success next year.

## Tough Playoff Loss Ends Third Straight Winning Season



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

The Rebels' signature defense kept games close all year.

Matthew H.P.  
Sports Editor

A 39-21 loss to the Manchester Lancers in the first round of the playoffs ended the 2014 football season for the Freeman

Rebels. This season saw yet another successful team coached by Mike Henderson that went 7-4 (7-3 regular season), with losses all being to playoff-caliber opponents.

Freeman will graduate much of its receiving

core (Ford Hendrix, Andrew Oodstyk and James Blevins), its two main running backs (Evan Tyler and Nathan Moody), its quarterback (Tanner Toy) and its strongest linemen (Wyatt Priddy and Jake Hendricks).

## Rebels End With Another Stellar Finish in Conference Tournament

Matthew H.P.  
Sports Editor

The Freeman field hockey team wrapped up its third straight season in which it went second or higher in the district tournament.

A 0-7 loss to Mountain View in the first round of the regional tournament ended the Rebels' season.

The Rebels faced a tough conference schedule, having to play Godwin three times and playing Deep Run and Maggie Walker twice.

The team had nine underclassmen on their varsity team, which suggests the Rebels will maintain their success, and perhaps even recapture a conference title.

Junior Varsity Goalkeeper Emma Buckley, said, "There is a great future ahead of us because of all of our youth. Even though we didn't get [a conference title] this year, we will for sure get it in the future because of our great



PHOTO: SUE ROCKWELL

The Rebels celebrate after a big win.

underclassmen."

"Everyone on the team gets along well," said Lindamood. This is one of the reasons why she is confident that they can and will be successful again next year.

As a part of the team, Lindamood loves being on the field with her team-

mates, but also loves being a part of the team off the field and in the classroom.

Next year, the Rebels will aim for another strong season and try to regain their status as top dogs in the conference.





# Winter Athlete Spotlights

## Versatile Senior Runner Hopes to Win States This Season

Leah Dillard  
Sports Editor

A new sports season provides athletes with a fresh slate to accomplish their goals. Senior Tarell Cisneros-Harrison, an accomplished member of the Freeman track team, is excited for the chance to beat numerous records.

"This year, I'm hoping to break the record for the 55 meter hurdles, which is 7.45 seconds; the long jump record, which is 22 feet and ten inches; the 300 meter dash record which is 35.21 seconds; and the high jump record, which is six feet, eight inches," he said.

Tarell, also a defensive back on Freeman's varsity football team, worked throughout the fall season to improve his track performance. "Recently, I have been doing exercises for football which are helping to build up my strength for the coming season," he said.

Tarell hopes that this training, coupled with future track workouts, will help him close the margin between his current times and school records.

He said, "For each of the running events, I'm less than a second away from achieving those times. What I need to work on



PHOTO: MILESTAT  
Tarell doing a run-up for the triple jump during indoor track.

most this season is my acceleration out of the blocks and holding my top speed for longer extensions of time."

Although he has concrete goals in mind for the coming weeks, Tarell does not lose sight of his preferred events. "My favorite winter event is the 55 meter hurdles but the one I'm best at is the high jump currently," he said.

Tarell said that he is looking forward to the state meet the most of all, because it provides the greatest chance to produce personal results and awards for his team.

"This season, I am looking forward to winning many championships and medals and bringing a trophy back to Freeman for the first time in a few years."

## Gymnastics Looking Strong This Year With Help of Freshman Star



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS  
Kameryn practicing in the small gym.

Sydney Catlett  
Staff Writer

Freshman Kameryn Shears was a nationally ranked gymnast that is on the Freeman gymnastics team this year. During her career as a competitive gymnast she was ranked 18th in the nation, third in the state, and third in the region.

"I trained at Richmond Olympiad for 11 years," Kameryn said.

She learned the true definition of dedication during her time as a competitive gymnast by making sacrifices to focus more on gymnastics.

"I was homeschooled for part of my seventh grade year," Kameryn said.

"As one of people at the

highest level I was expected to win, and it put a lot of stress on me and there was a lot of pressure to be the best," Kameryn said.

All gymnasts have their strengths and weaknesses and Kameryn is no exception.

"Mental battles were my biggest weakness," she said. Although she had to fight her mental battles she thrived on the floor event.

Floor is her favorite and best event, "I was ranked sixth in the nation on floor," she said.

Sophomore Shakia Plasket is a teammate and friend of Kameryn on both the cheerleading and gymnastics teams.

"I was on the gymnastics team last year and I think Kameryn will be a great asset to our team," Shakia said.

The gymnastics coach Sharon Kelly has heard many great things about Kamryn from other gymnasts and has never had a girl on the team that was nationally ranked.

"Her gymnastics talent will help but also her knowledge of the sport will help," Sharon Kelly said.

Coach Kelly looks forward to being able to "pick her brain when it comes to choreography," and seeing how she can help the other teammates with questions and routines.

Always having to focus on gymnastics took a toll on her social life, "when I broke my foot I was able to hang out with my friends a lot more and I really enjoyed that, so that's when I realized I was done with gymnastics," Kameryn said.

Kameryn enjoys competing here because "it is not as much work, and on a national level there are better gymnasts and harder competition." Kameryn said.

Although she quit competing nationally and does not plan on returning, she is looking forward to doing gymnastics again with her friends on the Freeman team.

"If you cannot have fun, what is the point of participating in a sport in the first place," Coach Kelly said.

## Junior Preps for Wrestling Season



Brett wins his match.

PHOTO: BRETT REID

Rachel Varon  
Staff Writer

It's been said countless times that hard work leads to success, but sophomore Brett Reid is living proof. His hard work during wrestling season and the off season is evident in his tremendous improvement from the beginning of his wrestling career to now.

"In seventh grade I lost every single one of my matches, and in eighth grade I only lost one match. Then freshmen year I was a varsity wrestler," Brett said.

His first season on varsity he broke his own record.

His teammate, junior George Holm commented on Brett's attitude during practice.

"He puts in work. He's strong for his weight class and very technically sound."

As well as his experience and strength, Brett's wrestling style contributes to his success, "I'm very physical. I have a pretty good headlock," said Brett.

Brett is confident about the season to come and is hoping to win some conferences, but it will be different with the former coach, Coach Preston Ailor, gone.

"Our old coach was awesome, he was very motivating, very cool guy, easy to talk to and easy to understand," Brett said.

The new wrestling coach will be Coach Jim Butcher. "He knows what he's talking about," Brett said.

Coach Butcher complimented Brett's past season, saying he worked hard and

did very well.

"He seems to be very dedicated and serious about the sport; wrestling takes passion, it's not always fun," said Coach Butler.

However, all that hard work has its rewards:

"There is no feeling that compares to how you feel when you win a wrestling match. In wrestling you win because of yourself; it's all you."

Brett's transformation from winless 7th grader to a varsity wrestler is an inspirational story of the success won through commitment, perseverance and sweat. With the season having started Nov. 10, his hopes are to continue his varsity career in the 113 weight class, but to do so he'll have to lose 7 pounds. He looks forward to wrestling against Tucker, who did very well last year, and Deep Run. But mostly he looks forward to their match against Freeman's big rival: Godwin.

"Godwin is going to be a big one because they're usually really good" said Brett.

Brett Reid's story of success is an inspiration as well as a lesson to students from all walks of life: with hard work and dedication, come results.

## Senior Runner Sprints to Duke



PHOTO: MILESTAT.COM  
Mackenzie running a relay last winter.

Yashia Burrell  
Staff Writer

It's no secret that senior Mackenzie Kerr is a talented runner. Mackenzie committed to Duke on Nov. 17 with an official signing.

Since freshman year, Mackenzie has participated in track and field, and she has gone on to win multiple large competitions and high rankings.

"I was ranked number 1 in the nation for a while, and I've won three individual state championships and

two relay state championships," she said.

Due to her success in running short and middle distances, she usually runs almost seven different events, the: 200, 300, 400, 500, 800, 4x4 relay and the 4x800 relay.

"I like the 4x4 relay the best, just because I like the team, and it's areally fast-paced event. The people on your relay team are the people you're closest with," she said.

A short to mid-distance runner, Mackenzie tries to stay away from miles and short dashes. "I don't run them, but I would hate

being put into a distance event. I also don't really like the 55-meter dash that much," Mackenzie said.

Mackenzie's parents are very supportive of her decision to run for Duke, though making the decision wasn't the easy. She was also recruited by UVA.

"It was really hard, I had to make a lot of pro and con lists but visits helped me make the decision," Mackenzie said.

While the college application process is creating stress for most seniors, Mackenzie said her commitment has given her a sigh of relief. "To know that you're going somewhere for the next four years, it's less stressful," Mackenzie said.

With college decision made, Mackenzie is free to put all her focus on dominating in the winter indoor season which started Nov. 17, states at the end of February, and the spring track season.

She has already made personal goals for her last time running as a high school student. "Hopefully for winter, I will win all three events at states for relays and individuals and do the same thing during the spring," she said.

## Junior Looks To Rebuild Varsity Basketball This Upcoming Season

Matthew H.P.  
Sports Editor

Reflecting on the 2013-14 basketball season is something Clayton Leep probably doesn't enjoy much. The Rebels won just three games and failed to defeat any significant conference opponents.

"Last year's season was rough for everyone," Clayton said.

"We felt we couldn't really settle down and just play," said Clayton.

"Just playing" has been the main focus for Clayton and the team during the offseason. While playing

varsity football has limited the 6'4 small forward's basketball-specific preparation for the upcoming season, he is confident that he and his team will be ready.

"This fall the team has been doing a lot of conditioning as always, but once a week they have a workout at Tuckahoe Middle to just play some basketball," Clayton said.

Assistant Coach Doug Clements said that he expects the team to "outwork other teams and play hard from start to finish" this season.

Individually, Clayton has a goal to be First Team All-Conference (he was Sec-



PHOTO: JAMIE LOCKWOOD  
Clayton shoots a free throw against Godwin.

ond Team last year). However, becoming a leader on the court for the Rebels will be Clayton's main fo-

cus. According to Clayton, leadership is what the team needs the most this season.

Coach Clements said that Clayton "leads by example."

"He makes good grades, is respectful to teachers and his peers, and he does things 'the Rebel Way'" Coach Clements said.

Coach Clements also said that Clayton plays aggressively.

"He is strong and has the ability to get to the rim off the dribble."

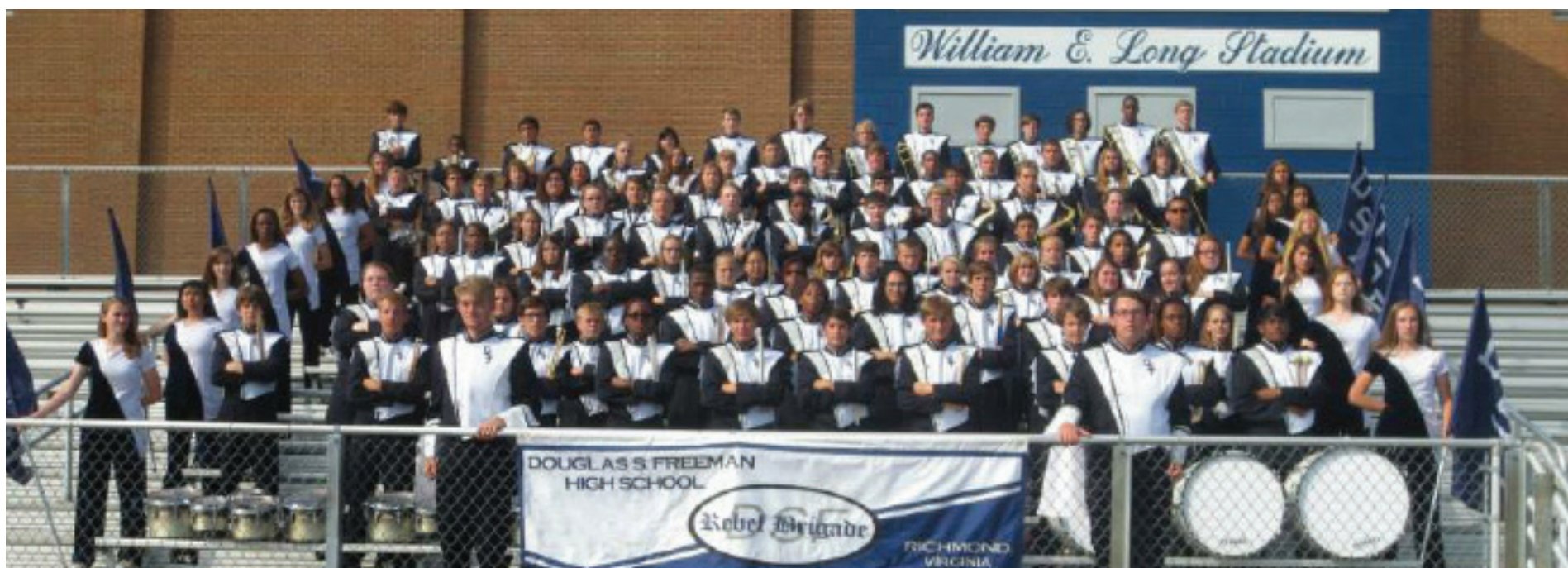
His already solid chemistry with junior point guard Gabe Fountain will make his transition into a leadership role all the easier.

"[Gabe] always knows where to get me the ball to score, and can shoot lights out as well," said Clayton.

Off the court, Clayton enjoys watching Kevin Garnett: "He has always been my favorite player and I love his attitude going into every game he plays...no matter the advantages, the other player or team has," said Clayton. Perhaps this is what inspires Clayton to play so competitively.

"This year we know what it takes to win, after seeing ourselves drop so many games last year. We need to play to win, not to just see how we do," Clayton said.

"Everyone on our team has a role to play, and if that happens then we will be successful" Coach Clements said.



The Douglas Freeman Band poses during Band Camp after practicing their field show, "The Divine Comedy."

PHOTO: ROB BLANKENSHIP

# Freeman Band Marches To Victory

Jack West  
Staff Writer

The Freeman Band stays under the radar. There is not a spirit week leading up to when they compete and there is not a student section at their events. However, band has quietly been one of the most successful activities of Freeman.

The marching band plays a "Divine Comedy" themed performance during half time of all of the home football games. The synchronized band members and the flag twirling color guard try to not only provide the crowd with good music and entertainment, but also get them excited for the game.

"The marching band is a great attribute for the half time show because they hype the crowd up and get everyone excited for the game by playing some radical tunes," said senior student section member Tyler Hutchinson.

This year, the marching band

won Grand Champion at their competition at Bluestone. Band director Robert Blankenship described the Bluestone competition as "in the middle of nowhere; surrounded by trees and cow pastures." Despite its remote location near the Virginia and North Carolina border, the competition draws a large number of bands from both states.

The Rebel Brigade, led by drum major Connor Glowaki, swept its division and won the entire competition. "I was so happy to win [the Bluestone competition] in my final year at Freeman," said Connor.

One very important part of the marching bands performances is the color guard. "Color guard is the visual part of the show. They add color and dance and are a huge part of our general effects score during competitions," said Mr. Blankenship.

Connor said that color guard was important because of the way "big impact moments in the music coincide with dramatic flag movement."

"I really like [color guard]

because... it's a great way to be part of the marching band, even though I can't play an instrument," said junior color guard captain Laura Beamer.

The biggest honor the Freeman Band recently won was Virginia Honor Band last year. Winning Honor Band is dependent upon all of the ensembles in band getting a superior rating. This includes the marching band, woodwind, brass, and strings sections.

Last year was the first time Freeman has won Honor Band in 34 years. Mr. Blankenship credits the band's success to a "strong commitment from his students."

The time commitment for marching band is similar to that of a sport. Members of the marching band are expected to be at two weeks of band camp over the summer, seven a.m. practices Tuesday through Thursday during the school year, and competitions over the weekends.

The hours of practice go into creating a very detailed and fluid performance. Mr.

Blankenship described the process of marching band as "marching around, being in step with 100 other people, having to memorize the music, and having to be in the right spot so someone else doesn't plow into you."

Connor believes that the band has "grown in ability, passion, and number" over the last four years. Mr. Blankenship thought it reflected well on the band that so many middle schoolers are interested in joining the band and stick with it all the way through high school.

The Freeman Band will not be in the running for Virginia Honor Band this year because they received an excellent rating, rather than superior, at their Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association assessment.

Mr. Blankenship was disappointed, but has chosen not to dwell on this and is excited for the rest of the year. Because Freeman will not be able to win Honor Band this year, the band has elected to play more challenging pieces and worry less about the ratings.

Connor is ready to "take it and run with it and have fun with the rest of the season."

The Rebel Brigade completed its last competition of the year at Godwin on November 1. Mr. Blankenship said, "We did very well, winning a superior rating and second place overall, second place drum major, and second place music."

The next big task on the marching band's schedule is the upcoming Christmas Parade on December 6. Freeman will march in the parade for the second year in a row, this time alongside the Glen Allen band.

"It's a unique opportunity to see how the Richmond community come together to celebrate the holidays. [From last year], I remember how people from all over Virginia came to watch the Christmas Parade," said senior clarinet player Campbell Baskin.

Mr. Blankenship is "very proud of the band," is excited for the rest of the year, and is hopeful for the continued success of the Freeman Band.

## Dance: Freshman Cultivates Life-Long Passion

Yashia Burrell  
Staff Writer

From the classroom to the stage, freshman Natalie St. John has always had a drive for dance. Natalie started training at the Richmond Ballet when she was in fifth grade. She even participates in the Richmond Ballet's annual performance of the Nutcracker, along with the productions of "Swan Lake," "Cinderella," and "Mozartiana."

"Each level has a I, II, and III, and I'm in the middle division now, in the highest section of that division, and next year I'll be in the lowest section of the upper division," Natalie said.

Dancing became an important part of her daily life.

Ellie St. John, Natalie's mother, has been a supporter of Natalie and her dancing since she was a little girl.

Mrs. St. John hesitated to take the then-toddler to the Nutcracker performance at the Richmond Ballet because she was feared it would bore her.

"I had no idea at the time that it would develop into such a passion for her," Mrs. St. John said.

However, when she noticed Natalie glued to the television watching the entire performance, she knew dance was an excellent choice for her daughter. "I figured any toddler that interested in ballet would enjoy some dance lessons, so I signed her up right before she turned 3," Mrs. St. John said.

With dance classes Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, plus the additional Nutcracker rehearsals on Sundays, her dancing is a significant time commitment.

"I have only really gotten out of school once, they try to keep

us in school as much as possible," Natalie said.

She willingly accepts the pressure of dancing with a professional company, enjoying every minute of her experience dancing with the Richmond Ballet. "I love how we can look up to the professionals in the company and see the progression and really work hard at it," Natalie said.

Natalie takes jazz and character dance classes, along with the many different styles of ballet that makes up the Richmond Ballet.

"The Richmond Ballet is a mix of all ballet styles. I don't have a favorite but there is Vaganova and Italian...they're all different in their own ways," Natalie said.

Natalie has been lucky and has never suffered an injury past a jammed toe, and her pointe shoes seem to hold on better than most. "The average pointe shoes only last 10-12 hours because they are only made of satin and glue, but I'm only on my third pair and that's crazy because most people go through a lot more than that," Natalie said.

"The Richmond Ballet has been a fantastic place for her over the years. It is a supportive environment where she has made many wonderful friends," Mrs. St. John said.

Although she hasn't looked that far into the future regarding school, she knows she wants to be involved in dance for a long



PHOTO: SARAH FERGUSON

Freshman Natalie St. John practices pointe ballet.

time.

"I see myself studying dance in college. I hope to continue with the Richmond Ballet, and hopefully moving on to bigger and better companies," Natalie said.

Her dreams are big, but Natalie also has some serious short-term goals before her time at Freeman is over. "Natalie has dreams of becoming a trainee with the Richmond Ballet, like DSF senior Haley Fogelman," Mrs. St. John said.

Along with support from her parents, Natalie has many opportunities ahead of her and goals of becoming a professional dancer to keep her grounded.

"Her dad and I encourage her to set high goals for herself and then work as hard as possible to make them happen," Mrs. St. John said.

## Violin Tugs on the Heart Strings

Caroline Cook plays with Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Annie Spivey  
Features Editor

There are those who can play music, and then there are musicians. Senior Caroline Cook, a violinist in the prestigious Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra (RSYO), is definitely the latter. RSYO is the highest of four orchestras in the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Program, above the Youth Concert Orchestra (YCO), the Camerata Strings, and the String Sinfonietta.

Caroline has been in three of the four orchestras over the course of her involvement, excluding only the String Sinfonietta.

"I started freshman year in Camerata, sophomore year I was in YCO, and I have been in RSYO since junior year," said Caroline.

Caroline played the violin for many years before she joined the program.

"I have been playing since I was in the first grade. I got started because I was interested in piano and had taught myself some piano and my mom asked me if I wanted to take up violin too," she said.

Every Tuesday Caroline attends practice from 4:45 to 7:00 pm in preparation for three annual concerts.

In addition to the official rehearsals, she practices her violin after school in her living room.

"I try to practice every day but that rarely happens," she said.

Musicians earn a spot in RSYO through auditioning.

"I get extremely nervous for auditions, so I prepared for weeks (okay, months) before this one," said Caroline.

"[To practice] I would run up and down the stairs until I was out of breath and then go

try to play the music, [which] supposedly simulates the shakiness in your hands and breathlessness that happens when you audition," said Caroline.

"Maybe my teacher just thought it was funny that I would actually run up and down the stairs," she said.

Though RSYO is affiliated with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, they perform independently from the Richmond Symphony and the other three youth ensembles, with the exception of an event called the Side-by-Side.

"Side-by-Side is great because you are seated next to a Richmond Symphony musician, which presents a unique opportunity to play with a professional and learn from them," said Caroline.

The Side-by-Side this year will include Stravinsky's "Firebird," a piece even some professional orchestras have difficulty playing.

"This music is really challenging, but it has also been my favorite because it is a really beautiful piece and I enjoy the challenge of working with the group on this music," said Caroline.

Caroline acknowledged the role RSYO has played in her development as a musician.

"I get a little competitive with the other students for seating auditions; being surrounded by so many other good musicians has made me want to be better and to improve."

"I would love to be able to play in college in some form or another. I don't want to be a music major, but music will always be a part of my life," said Caroline who plans to continue improving her skill in the future.

As Caroline said, "Once you start playing, it is hard to stop!"

# How Stellar is Interstellar?

## REVIEW

Movie: Interstellar



Shannon McCarthy  
A&E Editor

After I walked out of Christopher Nolan's "Interstellar," I felt a mixture of awe and utter confusion. I was in awe of the spectacle of the film—the effects, the acting, the sophistication—but I also felt like I needed a tutor in quantum physics.

"Interstellar" explores a futuristic society in which there is a limited supply of food, and NASA decides to look towards interstellar travel—I see what you did there Christopher and Johnathan Nolan!—in hopes of survival. NASA sends a team of astronauts to explore potential planets where humanity can survive. The theme of the movie is that love is an unstoppable

force in the galaxy.

The Nolan brothers obviously know how to craft a great film (movies like "The Dark Knight" and "Inception" are the two biggest examples I can recall). What I like about their movies is that they do not treat their audiences like idiots. They expect the audience to understand what is going on, but in this subject matter I felt that the movie lost some of its magic.

I enjoyed the beginning of the movie because of the human relationships it explored. The main focus was on Cooper and his family and how they adapted to living without food. I really enjoyed the thought of how the world would react to dwindling food supplies and where our priorities would lie as a species.

The performances, although, made the movie connect with audiences on a human level. Seeing Matthew McConaughey's character, Cooper, watch his children age 23 years before his eyes was heartbreaking.

I also was utterly fascinated with the effects in the movie. They are the true star of the film. I honestly felt like I was watching

astronauts traveling through wormholes and exploring new planets. The second planet the crew visits was so utterly beautiful I almost considered buying a ticket to visit it. Traveling alongside a black hole, the sheer brilliance of the shot left me speechless—to think computers are able to convincingly portray interstellar travel is beyond my comprehension.

In the theatre I saw plenty of people start to check the time on their phones to see how long they had been in the theatre. I was guilty of this as well, because by hour two, I was ready for the story to wrap up. Don't get me wrong, the story itself was engaging and had me on the edge of my seat for the majority of the run, but I also was getting somewhat antsy by the end.

However, the movie lost my attention when Cooper entered into a black hole. Somehow the beings that created the black hole decided to spare Cooper and allowed him to communicate with his daughter by manipulating time. Confusing, I know I could not understand what was happening for about



PHOTO: IMDB.COM

five minutes, but by the time I caught up so much action had passed that I was even more lost. Maybe I should have studied quantum physics before I saw the movie.

Don't get me wrong, I really enjoyed this movie (it's in my top ten for the year), but it has some flaws.

Overall, "Interstellar" is a tale

about how love conquers all—even black holes that will most likely rip you to shreds. The themes presented throughout the movie were interesting, and high-brow, but also somewhat elementary. I would recommend seeing this movie in theatres, though. I felt that the \$17.50 I spent on my ticket was well worth the cinematic experience.

## Album Reviews: Swift and Harris

Album: 1989

Artist: Taylor Swift

Genre: Pop

Release Date: Oct. 27 2014



T.S. 1989

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

4.1

I know its Taylor Swift. I know that every song she puts out is called "uncreative" and "stupid," but as hard as I try, I can't give this album a bad review.

Before I go too far into my review, I want to give some context. Until Swift released her fifth album, not a single 2014 album had gone Platinum, which is when an album's sales reach 1 million units. In the first week of sales, Swift sold 1.3 million copies. Whatever you think of Taylor Swift and her music, to have that sort of power over the industry is a feat that cannot be denied.

Swift has completed her transition from country to pop, though I think she was considered pop long before this album came out. I actually find it refreshing that she is not pretending to fall under the same category as Blake Shelton and Carrie Underwood. Her previous album *Red* did not sound country in the slightest and I constantly heard "I Knew You Were Trouble" and "22" on pop radio stations. With this album officially labeled pop, it can be compared against all other pop singers in the world.

Maybe 1989's songs are not brilliant, but almost all of the songs are incredibly catchy and relatable. I will admit that the vocabulary is simple, but she does not have to conjure

too much thought to relate to her music. Even if the songs do not make you think she has mastered what I call the Sing-Along Factor, every song has words and phrases that are easy to understand, say, and relate to. If you have heard the lead single "Shake It Off," you know what I am talking about. Some people may be stubborn enough to shun the song, but when it comes on in the car it is hard to not be compelled to sing. The best songs on the album incorporate this perfectly. "Bad Blood", "Out of the Woods", and "How You Get the Girl" are all songs that get you hooked from the first listen. She also has some beautiful songs, like "Clean". The bottom line is that I can see almost all of the songs being successful hits for this generation.

Swift does, in my opinion, take a step back from her previous album. Like I said before, I'm fine with her songs being catchy and simple, but 1989 comes a little too close to being generic. This is true in songs like "All You Had To Do Was Stay" and "Welcome To New York." Since Swift has finally transferred to full-blown pop, I would have liked to be completely blown away. Still, it's an album I recommend buying if you can get past the judgments of your friends.

Sebastian Hughes  
A&E Editor

Album: Motion

Artist: Calvin Harris

Genre: Pop/Electronic

Release Date: Nov. 4 2014

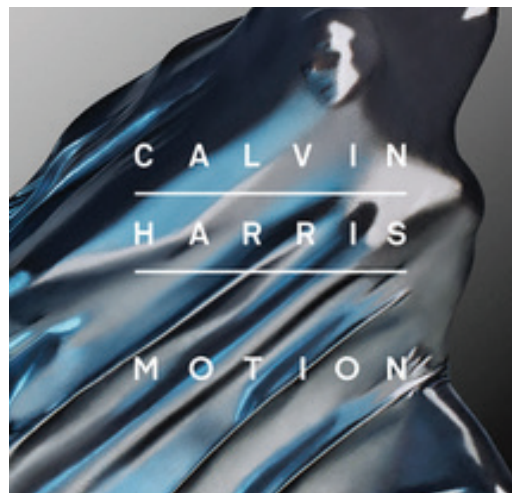


PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

3.9

Occasionally disc jockies will make an album with other artists singing to their music. Calvin Harris is one of the more known DJs to do this, along side those of David Guetta and Avicii. In his new album, Motion, Harris recruits the likes of Hurts, Jon Newman, All About She, Ellie Goulding (a previous collaborator), HAIM, Big Sean, Gwen Stefani, and Tinashe. What I love about DJs making albums is that there are so many different voices and styles to listen to, and it is always interesting to see what music a DJ will make with each artist.

Calvin Harris succeeds when he takes stylistic risks, instead of creating generic, computerized music. This can be shown in the songs "Pray to God," which features rock-pop band HAIM, and "Blame", which features jazz-pop artist John Newman. Both have intriguing lyrics and incorporate alternative styles into the electronic genre. Other great songs include "Under Control", which features Hurts, and "Together", which features Gwen Stefani.

Harris himself sings on certain songs: "Faith" and "Summer". He incorporates his own voice well, and I would not mind listening to more of his own singing if he developed his own artistic style more, instead of

using lyrics and sounds that are lackluster and standard.

There are also songs with little to no singing at all. These were difficult to label good or bad, as I personally do not listen to non-lyrical music like "Slow Acid," "It Was You," "Overdrive," and "Burnin". Though not traditional to listen to, they have great beats and are terrific for those that love club music.

There are some pretty generic songs, like "Love Now", which features All About She. It travels down the same streets that previous DJ's have gone down; the notes chosen do not make the listener hooked, and I think I would grow tired of the song quite quickly. Another song that could use work is "Outside," which features Ellie Goulding. The song is catchy enough, but it is too similar to Goulding's earlier music and earlier Harris collaboration "I Need Your Love." There is also the awful, vulgar song "Open Wide," which has neither good lyrics nor catchy music.

In general, most of the songs are little above average with a few that are exceptional and a couple that weigh down the album. The good greatly outweighs the bad and, though it needs more originality, give a great electronic dance option for listeners tired with straight-up pop.

## HOLIDAY EVENTS AROUND TOWN

**Blessings of the Animals**  
Morgan Fountain – 13th St.  
Dec. 12 (12 p.m.)  
Free

Honor Richmond's K9s, working horses and dogs and pets. Pet donations collected.

**Carytown Christmas**  
3400 W. Cary St.  
Dec. 13 and Dec. 20  
Live music, free horse-drawn carriage rides, Santa visits and photo opportunities, and gift certificate giveaways  
Free

**Capital City Kwanzaa Festival**  
The Hippodrome Theater – 528 N. 2nd Street, Richmond, VA  
Dec. 27 (1 p.m.-9 p.m.)  
Gen Adm: Advance \$6, Door \$7  
Children under 12 enter free.

**2014 Dominion GardenFest of Lights**  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
Nov. 28-Jan. 12 (5-10 p.m. daily except Dec. 24 and 25)  
This tradition features more than a half million lights, botanical decorations, trains, holiday dinners, family activities and more.

**Hanukkah Family Extravaganza**  
Lubavitch Center  
Dec. 21 (5:30pm)  
\$8 adults, \$4 children

**Improv Festus**  
ComedySportz  
Dec. 12-14 (8pm and/or 10pm each day)  
\$10-\$30

National improvisational comedy festival featuring 23 performers and troupes from all over the country, comedy workshops and a class taught by Tara DeFrancisco

**James River Parade of Lights**  
Osborne Park  
Dec. 13 (3pm-8:30pm)  
Holiday boat parade sponsored by the James River Advisory Council

**39th Christmas Collection of the Bizarre Bazaar**  
Richmond Raceway Complex  
Dec. 4-7 at various times  
The Bizarre Bazaar's Christmas Collection features more than 500 exhibitors selling holiday decorations and gifts, gourmet foods, jewelry, clothing and accessories, toys, quality crafts and fine arts, hand-painted furniture, and decorative items for the house and garden and so much more!

## Douglas Freeman Players Present 'You Can't Take It With You'



PHOTO: SEBASTIAN HUGHES

The Douglas Southall Freeman Players presented George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's comedy "You Can't Take it With You" on Nov. 20 through 22. The story focuses on the New York City family of the Vanderhofs. When Alice Vanderhof's boyfriend, Tony Kirby, attends a dinner, the zany begins to ensue.