

the Commentator

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Douglas Southall Freeman High School

February 2019



Rivals Come Together For Change

PHOTO: GRETCHEN NEARY

Principal Andrew Mey eats lunch with students at Godwin on the "Day in the Life Event."

Gretchen Neary
Staff Writer

1980: The year John Lennon was killed, Ronald Reagan was elected president, Pac-Man was released, and the Freeman-Godwin rivalry began. The clash between the Eagles and Rebels has grown more intense each year since Godwin first opened its doors.

Nicole Arnold, English teacher and administrative aide, meets with "Freeman X" a group of teachers and administrators, every Friday morning to "talk

about how to make Freeman a better place." Through these meetings, she dreamed up the idea of "Rivals for Change," a week of varied events in partnership with Godwin. Mrs. Arnold's goal was to "offer students opportunities to be catalysts of change."

There were six main events in the week leading up to the home varsity boys basketball game. Although there was no school on Monday, the week kicked off with a Chipotle fundraiser benefiting the Freeman Fund.

On Tuesday, there was an opioid awareness assembly, where students learned how quickly

people can become addicted to opioids, and the effects of these drugs on the brain.

Tuesday also featured the "Day in the Life Event," a faculty-student exchange. From Godwin, principal Leigh Dunavant, 19 students, and two teachers came to shadow Freeman faculty and students for the day. In exchange, Freeman SCA class officers, with a few additional students, two teachers, and principal Andrew Mey traveled to Godwin to shadow students and faculty there.

Prior to switching schools, students went through "action research training" with Dr. Drew Baker, a Professional Learning

Specialist in Henrico County. Dr. Baker and the students discussed what they wanted to gain through the experience and what differences they wanted to look for at Godwin. After the switch, the students and Dr. Baker reconvened to review their days. "The Godwin cafeteria is really big and open while ours has wall that separates everyone," said senior Abok Kawaj.

Junior Sarah Kate Gentry noticed a difference in the communication between teachers and students at Godwin. "The way teachers and students interact is way more relaxed," she said. Godwin senior Patrick Lyons came to Freeman and said, "the atmosphere of the class seemed to be more student-led than teacher."

"We are still rivals on the basketball court and football field, but at the same time we can be cooperative and friendly with each other and promote change," concluded senior Tripp Hickman after the switch.

On Wednesday, 21 Freeman students and John Larkins, social studies teacher, traveled to Godwin High School for a session with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. With their newfound information about how to improve inclusion efforts, "We are going to teach freshman history classes about diversity and leadership," said freshman Elisa Begic.

Thursday's Supersized Basketball game showcased Freeman

and Godwin's All-Star basketball teams competing against each other. The energy in the gymnasium was positive, and the game ended in a tie.

In addition, on Thursday night those who participated in any "Rivals Unite for Change" activity met at Glory Days to eat dinner and discuss their experiences.

Friday, students received Sportable training through their PE classes, which offered insight into how students with disabilities play sports. Freshman Riley Campbell said, "We learned how to play basketball in wheelchairs, how it would feel to be blind and play a game, and how to play volleyball without using your legs."

In the basketball game, which capped a week of fun activities, Freeman students dressed in the traditional camouflage attire while energetic Godwin students dressed as "golf bros." According to the Richmond Times-Dispatch, seniors Muktar Abdulkadir and Christian Smith led Freeman with 14 points each which led Freeman to a 56-42 victory over Godwin.

Throughout the week, Freeman students were given the opportunity to learn about those different than them and how to include all types of people in their day to day lives and activities. It was an impactful and exciting week of new experiences. "I had a lot of fun at Freeman, and it was really interesting to see the differences and similarities between our two schools," said Patrick.

Virginians March For Education

Lowell Smith
Staff Writer

In the midst of the Los Angeles strike, awareness for public school funding has never been higher.

Teachers in great numbers marched from VCU's Monroe Park to the Virginia State Capitol for a rally organized by Virginia Educators United on Monday, Jan. 28. Speeches were delivered by Mayor Levar Stoney, Governor Ralph Northam and teachers from union groups.

The purpose of the march was to bring the issue of public school funding to the General Assembly and the state government.

Multiple Freeman teachers participated in the march. Superintendent Amy Cashwell and Chief Spokesperson for HCPS, Andy Jenks also came out to support the cause. Jan. 28 was a teacher-work day, but Henrico superintendent Amy Cashwell designated it an e-commute day so that teachers could participate in the march. In addition, Henrico County provided bus transportation from four high school locations.

The demands of Virginia educators include restoring funding for public education, an increase in teacher pay to the national average, to recruit and train high-quality diverse teachers, and more.

One teacher who only wished to be identified as a Henrico County teacher was holding a sign stating, "Ask me about my ESL class size," which she reported had 34 students.

Freeman English teacher Meredith Swain also participated in the march. She carried a sign that read, "I'm here because I loved my teachers and now I love my students."

"Not only do I feel strongly



PHOTO: SARAH SNELLINGS

(From left to right) Sarah Snellings, Andy Harris, Jenna Szot, Ryan Burgess, John Marshall, Laura Jones, Greg Townsend, Stephanie Baber, Paverick Nicholas

that teachers are underpaid, but I also feel like my students are under-served by large class sizes and lack of access to the best materials," she said.

Senior Andy Harris, who as-

"I'm here because I loved my teachers and now I love my students,"
-Meredith Swain

pires to become an educator, participated in the march. He explained, "The mayor was talking about how Virginia recently fell behind Mississippi in teacher pay, and how that was just embarrassing...where Virginia is the twelfth wealthiest state in the country."

Participants commented on the welcoming and supportive response from the neighbors along the march.

"It was really powerful to see everybody kind of supporting each other and fighting for fund-

ing increases," Andy said.

Mrs. Swain also added that "The most moving part of the march was the people." She got to march with a teacher she worked with in the past and a current co-worker who once was her teacher.

"I got to walk with elementary school students who were cheering louder than the adults. There were parents, principals, superintendents, community members, and spouses of teachers there. It was great to be all together for a good cause," she continued.

Awareness for an increase in teacher salary has never been higher, and with the sheer amount of teachers speaking out, everyone can't help but listen.

After the success of the rally, the Virginia house republicans announced a new proposed budget that implements a 5 percent raise without increasing taxes. The streets of downtown Richmond bled red, "red for ed" to be exact.

Prom Planning Committee in Full Swing this Winter

Piper Finkelson
Staff Writer

Forty years before Freeman was founded, the Hippodrome Theater opened its doors. It was the center of entertainment in the historical Jackson Ward district of Richmond. Many have graced the stage with their presence, including Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, and Ray Charles. Over 100 years after the founding of the Hippodrome, the juniors and seniors are celebrating prom at the theater.

Prom planning committee is in full swing. The committee is made up of over 20 juniors, whose work is overseen by the Class of 2020 sponsors, Jason Abril and Sarah Snellings. To complement the historic venue, the committee has selected the theme "Old Hollywood" for this year's dance.

Katie Wilson, a member of the committee, said, "The group of

junior students is very interactive and collaborative." She loves the dedication of her peers, and said, "All of the members are working hard to ensure that prom is a night to remember."

Class officer Nicholas Cavallo is also excited to be on the committee. He hopes to create a fun experience not only for him, but for his friends at Freeman. "Planning has gone very well so far," he said.

Mr. Abril is proud to sponsor both Katie and Nicholas and enjoys working alongside them. "They're a very proactive, self-motivated group," he said. "Planning prom is no easy gig."

While the Class of 2020 is busy sorting out the remaining details, including a prom playlist and decorations, the seniors are anxiously awaiting their final high school dance. "I'm looking forward to one last night together," Senior Ford Burke said. "Prom will be a little bittersweet."



PHOTO: HIPPODROMERICHMOND.COM

The Hippodrome is located in historic district Jackson Ward

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AP Exam Exemption

Sabereh Saleh
Staff Writer

The chatter in the hallways of Freeman have recently been filled with worried whispers of concern regarding exam exemption policies. "I've heard about changes, but I'm still really confused about the exam exemption policy," said junior Adam DeGuzman.

The confusion and rumors going around the school have been nerve wracking for students. "I've been nervous because I've heard from people that AP exam exemption policies are changing," said junior Keyana Henley. "I've heard from my AP teacher that you have to take both the AP and final exam, which I don't think is a good policy," said sophomore Ella Creason.

During school leadership meetings, administrators have discussed exam exemption policy, according to teacher John Larkins. "Right now all I know is that policy hasn't changed in regards to exam exemption, but it might still change. The big change is going to be, I think, this year with freshmen. It probably won't affect other grade levels."

Thomas Ferrell, director of high school confirms: "We are looking at the possibility of making a few minor adjustments, however, we are not prepared to share anything at this point," he said.

"The senior exam policy has to do with the grade in the class and attendance. The AP exam exemption policy has been that when you take the AP exam, you don't have to take the final exam. Right now most of that hasn't changed," according to Mr. Larkins.

But what is sure is that no one

"We are looking at the possibility of making a few minor adjustments, however, we are not prepared to share anything at this point"
-Thomas Ferrell

is unsure. "As of right now, what we're being told by central office is that nothing has changed with the senior or AP exam exemption policy," said administrator Tim Sanders.

Testing coordinator Kelly Day has also been asking the same questions students have. "The testing coordinators have asked and the answer that we have been given is that there will be no change. At this point all we know is what it's always been," she said.

"There may be speculation, but that's all unofficial. Nobody from central office has said 'this is changing,'" said Principal Andrew Mey.

AP Exam Schedule:

Week 1:

Monday, May 6:
8am: AP Government
12pm: AP Environmental Science

Tuesday, May 7:
8am: AP Spanish
12pm: AP Physics

Wednesday, May 8:
8am: AP English Literature
12am: AP European History
AP French

Thursday, May 9:
8am: AP Chemistry
12am: AP Psychology

Friday, May 10:
8am: AP US History

Week 2:

Monday, May 13:
8am: AP Biology
12am: AP Physics C

Tuesday, May 14:
8am: AP Calc AB and BC
12pm: AP Art History
AP Human Geography

Wednesday, May 15:
8am: AP English Language

Thursday, May 16:
12pm: AP Statistics

Friday, May 17:
8am: AP Microeconomics

Freeman Students Involved in Local Political Outreach Through HCDC

Ashwin Suresh
Staff Writer

Lobbying, representing, and supporting candidates is typically the job of those in society well over thirty-years-old. The Young Democrats of Freeman High School are doing this at the ripe age of fifteen and sixteen years old.

With a "start from scratch" attitude, the new officers and leaders of the Young Democrats Club at Freeman High School have had large success in promoting themselves, not only within the school, but throughout the community. For example, Vice President, junior David Lim, has helped ensure that there are volunteering opportunities for the club's members. These range from tasks like directing voters on Election Day to working on Democratic campaigns all over the country.

"I think what has really propelled our success this year is the initiative the leaders are taking in order to make the Young Democrats impactful" said David.

Among the other new leaders of the club are president, junior Salaar Khan; secretary, junior Elizabeth Sjovold; social media director, junior Sadie Rogerson; and outreach manager, junior Russell Swartz.

The officers said that one of their main goals for the club this year was to reach new members and help get Freeman students civically engaged. For exam-



PHOTO: WHITNEY HOLT

David Lim and Elizabeth Sjovold meet with Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger.

How to Get Involved:

- Get to know your local legislators
- Attend town hall meetings
- Volunteer at campaign headquarters
- Attend rallies for issues you care about
- Volunteer at polling places
- Vote, if you can

ple, the Young Democrats have spread their wings through social media outreach and laid groundwork in multiple Democratic organizations across Richmond.

This Freeman group is the only high school Young Democrats organization in the Henrico County public school system. They have made a name for themselves by directly working with the Henrico County Democratic Committee (HCDC) and Metro Richmond Area Young Democrats (MRAYD), providing them with some representation within the Democratic Party.

But to David and some of the

other officers, this is not the main purpose of aligning themselves with the HCDC or MRAYD. As a high-school club, they do not have the assets or funding to support national campaigns. These organizations help them with opportunities, resources, and infrastructure on local, statewide and federal levels.

Lizzie Drucker Basch, the chairwoman of the HCDC, said that the Young Democrats at Freeman represent the upcoming generation of political activists, and that their initiative has truly helped the HCDC tremendously. Local politicians like State Senate candidate Marques Jones

have been able to connect with the Young Democrats directly, and through the HCDC, in search of volunteers at certain events. At a recent fundraiser, numerous club members were able to meet public servants including Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger, Congressman Donald McEachin, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, and Commonwealth's Attorney Shannon Taylor.

"One of our biggest goals as the leaders of the club was to make every single member more involved and aware of politics in Henrico County," said David.

With more than sixty student members involved with the Young Democrats, they are able to send multiple people to different places, as well as make each member more aware about local politics.

The new leadership of the club has inspired Freshman like Joseph Chambers to begin thinking of initiatives for the Young Democrats, and the direction they want the club to take.

"I do hope that Young Democrats continues to reach out to the Henrico Democrats in the future, and that we can perhaps organize a lecture series with local politicians...it would also be nice if we could reach out to other schools and encourage them to start their own" said Joseph.

As the Young Democrats at Freeman continue to thrive, they will receive more opportunities, and a chance to make a lasting impact for local politics.

VA SOL Requirements Change

Joshua DuPuis
Staff Writer

Unlike some current sophomores, juniors, and seniors who need to pass almost ten SOL tests to graduate, this year's freshmen will need only half of that to walk across the stage four years from now.

The Virginia Department of Education is making changes to graduation requirements, the Standards of Learning, and the profile of a graduate in hopes of positively evaluating the methods used to create an ideal high school graduate.

According to Mr. Mey, the state is decreasing the number of SOL tests with hopes that instruction will increase in quality. The thought process behind this change stems back to teaching students knowledge in addition to life skills in an attempt to prepare students for adulthood.

"[The state is] trying to revamp education in its entirety" said Mr. Mey.

Furthermore, the state has made several changes in the "Profile of a Virginia Graduate," modifying what they expect a student to look like as they graduate high school.

In 2015, the SOL Innovation Committee suggested that the Board of Education create an ideal stereotypical picture of what a graduate should look like and change diploma requirements to match their creation.

One year later, the Virginia General Assembly approved House Bill 895 and Senate Bill 336 allowing the Board of Education to "Develop and implement . . . a Profile of a Virginia Graduate that identifies the knowledge and skills that students should attain during high school in order to be successful contributors to the . . . Commonwealth."

The bill also stated that the developers are to "give due consideration to critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship."

In addition, the bill instructed the Board of Education to "emphasize the development of core skill sets in the early years of high school" and "establish multiple paths toward college and career readiness for students to follow in the later years of high school, which could include opportunities for internships, externships, and credentialing."

Profile of a Virginia Graduate

In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual Will During His or Her K-12 Experience:

Achieve and apply appropriate academic and technical knowledge

Attain and demonstrate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors

Align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career opportunities

Build connections and value for interactions with diverse communities



With a reduced requirement of SOL tests, teachers gain more freedom because they won't be prepping students to pass a standardized test at the end of their curriculum. This will give them a platform to incorporate the life skills outlined in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, increasing the quality of education in Virginia, and further preparing students for their life ahead.

"Ultimately what we are trying to do is make sure that all the things we teach to a graduate from high school will prepare them for life, college, or their careers," said Dr. James Lane, superintendent of public instruction for Virginia.

In terms of specific changes to tests, instead of taking the tenth grade English SOL, students will analyze different sets of texts and respond in essays. Those assessments will be administered several times throughout students' freshman and sophomore years. The county will then assess each student's portfolio.

There are several reasons for this change. "A portfolio assessment of a student is going to be a more authentic assessment of a student's ability rather than a one-day test," said Brian Durrett, English department chair. Furthermore, it can be expensive to score several thousand writing tests as capital resources are needed to transport the tests to places around the country where graders will carefully read and

calculate each individual's score.

The state has also changed math SOL tests to fit the revised Standards of Learning for mathematics that were approved by the Board of Education in 2016. These tests will also feature a new online calculator in order "to improve the testing experience of students."

To go along with these changes, the state has introduced new graduation requirements for the classes of 2022 and beyond.

"Current tenth through twelfth graders have different requirements depending on whether they are working towards a standard diploma or advanced," said Kelly Day, coordinator of assessments and remediation at Freeman.

This year's sophomores, juniors, and seniors that are working towards a standard diploma are required to earn 22 standard credits, meaning they successfully complete at least 22 high school courses throughout their middle and high school. This includes at least four English classes, three math, three science, three history/social studies, two health/PE, two world language/fine arts/career and technical education, one economics and personal finance, and four electives.

According to the Virginia Department of Education's website, students must also earn six verified credits, which means they must take and pass six "end-of-course SOL tests or other as-

essments approved by the state Board of Education." Each student must receive no less than two credits from English, one from math, one from science, one from social studies, and one student-selected test. This credit can come from any class that doesn't amount to their other verified credits requirements.

For an advanced diploma, current sophomores, juniors, and seniors must take and pass at least 26 classes in order to graduate. This includes four English courses, four math, four science, four social studies, three world language, two health and physical education, one fine arts or career and technical education, one economics and personal finance, and three electives.

An advanced diploma requires nine verified credits: two must come from English, two from math, two from science, two from social studies, and one student selected test.

The Class of 2022 and all future classes, while still required to achieve the same number of standard credits as before, will only be required to earn five verified credits no matter what diploma they are working towards. They must earn two in English, one in math, one in science, and one in social studies.

In addition to this, several big changes are being made to the English end-of-course Standards of Learning tests.

Freeman's Two Cafeterias



Kate Yarbrough
Opinions Editor

"We are..." the columns in the second lunchroom boast, "Proud. Creative. Productive. Honest. Strong. Dynamic. Respectful. Empowered. Unique. Diverse. Inclusive. Family."

But every day when I go to lunch, walking through the first cafeteria and into the other, it feels uncomfortably significant. It's as if the newer, whiter walls and floor tiles and individual chairs lining the tables are telling me something about who I am.

But they're just cafeterias. The fact that the table I sit at doesn't have attached stools while others do isn't the crux of the issue—it's the fact that there is so obviously a divide between us, the Freeman student body. And that divide is encouraged by our two cafeterias.

We advertise our diversity—in fact, the makeup of the Freeman population is very similar to that of the United States—but this diversity cannot teach us anything if we are unable to see it. Like the wall separating the two lunchrooms, we are divided. We keep to whom and what we know during the majority of our school day, only seeing each other for the five minutes in between each class.

Some of this is undeniably a part of our biology. As humans, we naturally keep to where we feel secure—whether that be a physical shelter or a social one. We feel safe behind a wall, sheltered among who we consider our people.

"Friends tend to sit with friends. I think, to a large degree, most of the students who sit in the different locations are people who are in classes together...so I think when you look at the divide, it's going to be along those lines," said Andrew Mey, principal. "It's in the social groups that people are in, relative to classes they take, sports they're engaged in, those types of things."

Further, most see high school cafeterias as almost synonymous with cliquishness. With cartoonish conceptions of high schoolers perpetuated in the media, a certain amount of self isolation

is expected, excused.

But to excuse Freeman's issue as solely cliquishness would be horribly understated. It's more that within our school, we have two bodies of people. These people never are given the chance to see each other, blocked by a wall impossibly thicker and taller than it seems.

Our population is around 2,000 students, but for as long as many of us can remember, we've been in classes with the same 50-100 kids. The wall between the two cafeterias didn't manifest this problem—it merely presents it.

In order to fix this disconnection at our school, we need to be given an environment where we aren't seeing the same group of students for our entire school day. The absence of this environment is why our sponsored "Mix it Up" days have historically failed—you can't force teenagers to walk to the other side of the lunchroom when they don't feel socially comfortable there.

There are several ways our school could encourage interaction between people that otherwise wouldn't occur. But, most basically, we need to be given a space where every student can meet with each other—maybe a class, a discussion group, or a study hall of sorts. With a program like this in place, students can be given the tools to break down the wall. Further, students can be brave enough to go to the other side of the cafeteria.

"I have issues with the way our cafeteria is built, because it does [divide us]. There is a wall in between the two, a physical wall, and it does—it separates students," said Mr. Mey. "I think [if we had one lunchroom], it certainly would take down the physical barriers that are making the separation of students more pronounced."

I, too, believe that if we had one lunchroom, it would be much easier to solve this issue. But I also posit that making a problem less pronounced is not fixing the problem, and a major renovation is not the only way to minimize self separation.

As students, the best thing we can do to start to bridge this gap is to recognize that it is there, and, consequently, try and reframe our conception of each other and disregard the wall that separates the two rooms.

Ultimately, however, I call on our administration to continue to ponder how we can encourage interaction between all students within the school day. In order to become the "Freeman Family" that we boast so often, we need to better understand and appreciate each other for how we are different.



PHOTOS: KATE YARBROUGH

Freeman's two cafeterias.

INSIDE OUT

An Introvert and Extrovert Weigh in on the Issues of the Day

Kate Yarbrough
Opinions Editor

Braxton Berry
Opinions Editor

Not sure why we ever stopped. I always want Fun Dip!

Exchanging Valentines

One thing I miss about elementary school is that I technically had a class full of Valentines.

Never been on one. It's fine! I'm fine. Ha ha. Help.

Dates

Yes! Buy me dinner!

Most recently, Cody Fern, but I have a *long* list.

Celebrity Crush

Dylan Minnette will be the father of my children.

Heart-shaped pancakes that my mom makes me—love you Mom.

Favorite Valentine's Day Gift

Money, dinero, mula, coins

The collective obsession over whether or not you have a date.

Least Favorite Part about Valentine's Day

That the only person that gives me a gift is my mom.

Definitely *Mamma Mia!*

Favorite Rom-Com

Obviously *Clueless*.

What Black History Month Means to Me



Braxton Berry
Opinions Editor

Remembering our past and taking responsibility for our future is the unequivocal importance of Black History Month.

You can tell a great deal about a country's character and its people by what they consider to be important to remember. This is shown in what they put in their museums, what they expressly celebrate in mainstream culture, and even what is mentioned and taught in school.

However, I would suggest that we learn even more about a country by what it chooses to forget—its mistakes, its disappointments, and its embarrassments. In many ways, Black History month is important to remember. Yet it is a holiday that is often disregarded in many places, sites, television programs, schools or any public sphere that is not heavily populated with African American people.

Why is that? Our public education system and overall society puts an enumerated interest in European history and western culture as a whole; often leaving the people who have majorly contributed to the society that we live in today without mention. We learn about kings and queens, forms of government, enlightenment movements, artists, poets, philosophers, lawyers, leaders, and many more subjects that show

the multiplicity of white Americans. Which I argue shows how multifaceted they can be.

However, when it comes to black history, not only is it rarely focused on, it is only mentioned enough for students and adults to know that we were slaves, who MLK is, that Rosa Park wouldn't give up her seat, and that Barack Obama was the first black president. This is not the end all, be all of what Black people have done for this country.

Without African American people everyone's culture would be different. There would be no jazz music, no rock, no pop, no blue grass, no rap, and many more genres that rely on percussions. There would be no blood banks, plasma transplants, Gas heating furnaces, ice cream, lawn mowers, sprinklers, mail boxes, modern lock, modern toilet, pacemakers, traffic lights, or even the first clock; the 'trendy' and 'urban' styles of hair and clothes and even something as simple as the way in which we casually converse with one another; and that is only to name a fraction of what my people have contributed

African American history is American history and needs to be treated as such. As a black student at a school and classes where I do not see many people like me or subjects or books that reflect me and my distinct culture—I find it disheartening; however, I believe someone like me has something interesting to offer to conversations and to basic information that could change world-views in the classroom.

As a student who has personally

witnessed the effects of years of segregation, disenfranchisement, and disproportional imprisonment. I have overcome a lot to be a student here. I had to beat the status quo of having a single mother, a deceased father, and being one of four kids in the eastern-side of Henrico, where opportunity is few and far between; and the focus on education is simply not there (in my opinion).

I came to Freeman in pursuit to not only better myself, but better those around me. For many people in the classes I take or this school in general. I am the first black kid that was not raised in west-end culture and I have dissimilar experiences to my other black counterparts.

I told myself that I would show those around me how I see the world; and in doing so I would learn from them, and they would learn from me.

This is why I believe that discussing and incorporating contributions of black Americans should not be a task; however, something we look forward to doing and find it easy to incorporate.

It is through black history and Black History Month, that we can learn from our past, so that we can garner our future. Black History is American History, and it should be mentioned, taught, and respected as such.

Because when we strive for inclusivity and awareness, we are avidly dismantling a system meant to glorify and represented and already benefitting group of people.

Correction:

In the past issue, it was stated that Matthew Moore is the "only student at Freeman to be both a member of the wrestling team and to play for the Freeman marching band." This is incorrect; there are multiple students that participate in both activities.

The Commentator Staff apologizes for this error.

Commentator Staff

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

Tuba Player Hits High Note

Balazs Kaszala
Staff Writer

When it comes to playing the tuba, senior Kieran Casey has perfect pitch. The six-year veteran, playing in both the band and marching band, won first chair in the All-District band.

In order to be placed into the All-District band, a musician must first perform in an audition. This year, 543 students competed for only 200 spots. The first chair in the band is awarded to the musician with the best performance, which this year was Kieran. Because of his placing, Kieran will also be eligible to audition for the All-State band in February.

Kieran comes from a musical family, finding inspiration in both his brother and uncle. "My older brother played guitar, which inspired me to learn an instrument," he said.

According to Kieran, the key to success is hard work and dedication. He said that "long hours for doing fundamentals" is the best way to succeed with an instrument. More specifically, "stuff like long tones [and] just sitting down and mastering fundamentals before playing harder



PHOTO: MARCUS RAND

Senior Kieran Casey practices during 4th period band.

pieces," seem to be Kieran's approach.

According to Robert Blankenship, band and orchestra director, Kieran has worked hard to improve.

"He's always been a good tuba player, but since he's gotten older and gained more confidence it's skyrocketed him," he said. "He's

the first All-State eligible tuba player I've ever had."

There have been many moments to remember for Freeman's band this year, but Kieran's fondest memory, was placing first in the marching band competition at Hermitage High School. Alongside the win at Hermitage, Kieran and the Freeman band

took home a third place award at Powhatan High School, after not placing at all last year.

In the future, Kieran plans to incorporate music into his life. "I want to be a music director...I'm going to bring my knowledge of tuba and some trombone to help my students improve," he said. He would also be open to directing a college marching band at some point.

According to senior Amari Lewis, Kieran's close friend, Kieran is a "good tuba player and a good friend. He's gotten so much better at tuba over high school and now he's first chair in the district." The two play the same instrument and have similar ambitions after school in becoming music directors.

This season of success has not had a shortage of difficulties. Kieran recalled pressure of low expectations from previous band members, however it seems that the band has used this as motivation to succeed. "We had the best season since freshman year," he said.

Kieran will continue working on his musical talents, eventually hoping to make it even further than the All-District Band. "I'll be auditioning for the All-State band in February," he said.

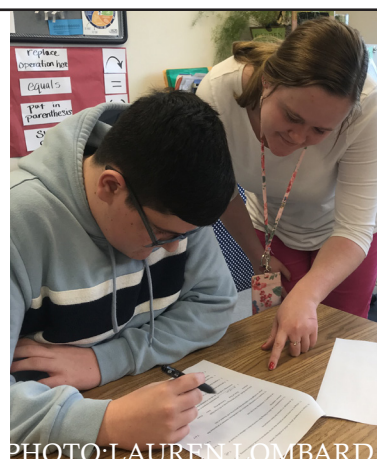


PHOTO: LAUREN LOMBARD

Miss Radday helps students

Student Becomes Teacher

Sadie Rogerson
Staff Writer

A guaranteed job after college and a \$5,000 grant aren't typical high school graduation gifts. However, exceptional education teacher Missi Radday, the first Teacher Scholars' program participant to begin her job in Henrico County, received both of these things upon graduating in 2015.

During her senior year at J. R. Tucker High School, Miss Radday learned of a new opportunity offered by Henrico County Public Schools to seniors: students who had an interest in education could apply to receive a guaranteed job teaching in a department with limited employees in Henrico Schools, as well as a \$5,000 bonus, following their graduation from college.

The Teacher Scholars' program appealed greatly to Miss Radday, as it would put her one step closer to becoming a teacher, a dream that began in elementary school. "My kindergarten teacher made me want to teach" she said. "I always knew I wanted to help others."

Later, her experience volunteering with special needs children at the YMCA as a teenager influenced her. "I wanted to be their voice for them, in case they couldn't be their own voice," she said.

After winning the scholarship in 2015, Miss Radday attended the University of Lynchburg. There, she majored in elementary education, minored in special education, and graduated a year early, becoming the very first recipient to get a job teaching in Henrico. "She was impressive in her interview and beat out a number of candidates," said Andrew Mey, principal.

Miss Radday's typical day at Freeman begins with teaching English and life skills, then three collaborative classes with Nicole Arnold, English teacher, and ends with a self-contained English class. Such a busy schedule demonstrates the drive and desire to learn that Ms. Arnold said she possesses.

Before finishing her first year at DSF, Miss Radday has already begun to impact her students in the way she has always wanted. Jose Phillips, a freshman in her English class, said, "She's always hands on, and helped me a lot with my grammar and reading." Although she's no longer a student herself, Miss Radday believes there is still so much to learn in the job both as a teacher and about her students. "Every student's story impacts me in a different way," she said.

Henrico Schools Teacher Scholars

What? Opportunity for guaranteed teaching position in HCPS upon college graduation

Who? Seniors interested in becoming teachers

When? Applications due March 11, 2019

Where? Information online at henricoschools.us/teacher-scholars/

How? Application includes resume, contact information for references, and an essay

Senior Model Strutting to Success

Sarah Echols
Staff Writer

Caroline Michie has to pick the perfect outfit, accessories, and shoes not only for herself anymore, but also for her customers and models now that she is jumpstarting her career in fashion while she is still a senior.

Caroline works at Fab'rik, a boutique in Carytown, where she started this September. "I didn't have any retail experience before this, but I've always loved fashion, so I decided to pursue my interest in it and I ended up getting the job" Caroline said.

She recently partnered with the boutique to create an unofficial look book for her college portfolio. "I had to create a business proposal highlighting how a look book would benefit the boutique" said Caroline. After Fab'rik approved her proposal, she got to pick out ten outfits along with accessories to use in her photo shoot.

Caroline then got to style, direct, and even model some in the photo shoot for the look book. She hired Isabella Thiele, a junior at Deep Run, to photograph her and the other models in five different locations. "I based the



PHOTO: CAROLINE MICHIE

Senior Caroline Michie poses in an outfit she styled.

look book around Richmond locations so I could highlight the lifestyle and scene of Richmond" Caroline said. They went to Belle Isle, Shockoe Bottom, the Quirk Hotel, the Virginia Capital, and Carytown.

One of the models at the shoot was Freeman senior Tory Weav-

er who models with the company Modelogic. "The shoot was a lot of fun and the girls were so amazing, boosting each other's confidence the whole time" Tori said. Tory doesn't know if she wants to pursue modeling professionally, but she hopes to make a profession out of some art form

and be famous one day.

On the other hand, Caroline already knows she wants to pursue fashion in college. She hopes to go to the school of fashion marketing and management at Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia or LIM college in Manhattan, New York. She is not sure which college yet because she is still deciding whether she wants to market or sell clothes.

Caroline hopes including the look book in her college portfolio will help her get in to one of these colleges, but she also believes the look book will help Fab'rik. "We use the photos now for their social media, and it makes the target demographic of Fab'rik younger," said Caroline.

After working at Fab'rik for several months now Caroline is able to style clients based on the psychology of fashion and how clothes can make one feel. Robin Michie, Caroline's mom, believes the fashion industry is a great fit for Caroline. "Helping women feel confident through styling outfits, creating a look book, collaboration with business professionals, and managing social media are all in her wheelhouse of talents, and I can't wait to see where it all takes her," Mrs. Michie said.

Exchange Student Dives into DSF

Megan McDonald
Staff Writer

Junior foreign exchange student, Vey Sætra has travelled 4,000 miles to be a rebel. After seeking a change in pace, Vey found herself asking her parents if she could leave her home in Norway to spend a year in the US. "I wanted to try something new, like a new culture, and improve my English," Vey said.

Vey's parents were nervous at first, but after Vey did some persuading they agreed. "She loves adventures and challenges," said Inger-Lene Sætra, Vey's mother.

For perhaps Vey's biggest adventure yet, the exchange agency paired her with a Richmond host family in the Freeman district. To make friends, Vey naturally turned to something that has always been a big part of her life... sports.

Vey's mother explained that since she was a little girl Vey has tried many different sports. "She has been playing football, doing gymnastics, figure skating, cross country skiing, running, but most of all she has been swimming," Ms. Sætra said.



PHOTO: CAITLIN MCSORLEY

Vey had an excellent cross country season in the fall, becoming close friends with her teammates. For the winter season Vey decided to run track because of this bond with her teammates, but she also wanted to participate in her favorite sport: swimming.

Not only is Vey training with NOVA, competing with the Freeman swim team, and running winter track, but she is also taking Freeman's weight lifting class. "I don't like sitting still and doing all the boring stuff, so that's my favorite class," Vey said.

The Freeman track coach, Bri-Ann Reutinger, spoke very highly of Vey and her contribution to the team. "She brings some talent to the team, and she's also a great girl," said Coach Reutinger.

Freeman assistant swim coach, Chris Tiller, has also really enjoyed having Vey on his team. "She always displays a positive attitude, and that is a great contribution to the overall energy of the team," Coach Tiller said.

Vey wakes up early for swim practice before school, weightlifts during the school day, and stays after school for track. "It's a long day," she said.

Vey's mother explained why Vey participates in so many sports. "Being a part of a team, getting new friends, competitions, traveling—she experiences a lot and has a great time," Ms. Sætra said.

Her many different forms of training also help her performance. "Vey's versatility with everything she is a part of, in and out of the pool, is a very beneficial contribution to a team of very talented student-athletes, including herself," said Coach Tiller.

Vey is more than just an athlete though, she has quickly gained a reputation as a friendly face. "She is super funny, and probably the sweetest person you'll ever meet," said Vey's friend, junior Emmarie Armstrong.

Vey has met many of her friends through sports. The team aspect is not as big in Norway because people only compete with clubs and not schools. This difference has been one of Vey's favorite things about the US.

"People support each other, and I like that," Vey said.

As an athlete, friend, and teammate, Vey has already left her mark on Freeman in less than a year.



PHOTO: JAIME CHINCHILLA

Jaime wrestling during a Junior Varsity wrestling competition.

Spanish Student Experiences DSF

Salaar Khan
Staff Writer

This school year, Freeman added a student to its community who lives outside Henrico County... about 3,800 miles outside.

Sophomore Jaime Chinchilla is a 15-year-old student from Madrid, Spain. He came to Freeman High School on an exchange program this September with an organization called Critical Language Scholarship (CLS). He is staying with the Willis family who live in the school district and have helped Jaime achieve his goal of acquiring new experiences since moving to the United States. For example, they took him on vacation to Florida over winter break and are planning a trip to New York City in the spring.

Jaime is not the first one in his family to try an exchange program like this as his brothers both came to study in America.

One of Jaime's favorite ways to spend his free time has always been to play sports. He started playing rugby three years ago and has now joined a local team in Virginia. In addition, Jaime has recently taken up wrestling. "My brother wrestled when he was here and told me it was really fun. I definitely like it so far," said Jaime.

Although he likes wrestling, Jaime says he still has a slight

preference towards rugby because it is more of a team sport. Even when he wrestles, his favorite thing to do is spend time with his teammates.

"Jaime is a really fun and caring guy," said Jaime's wrestling teammate, sophomore Semen Atsanyuk. "He loves spending time with his friends and we all love hanging out with him."

But Jaime isn't just focused on his athletics. In fact, he was surprised by how much American schools seem to emphasize sports. Jaime has also been learning English since he was five years old and therefore, does not have much of a problem communicating in class. He expressed how valuable he finds academics and is enjoying the classes at his new school.

"Jaime has been excelling in my class. He is a passionate student and I often call on him to help out any of his peers who seem to be struggling. If there is any language or cultural barrier, it certainly doesn't show," said technical drawing teacher Aaron Stapel.

Jaime will be staying in the country until his exchange program end in June. Despite sometimes feeling homesick for Spain, Jaime said he will miss his friends and teachers from Freeman and he is glad to have joined the Freeman family.

"The worst part of the experience is that I only get to be here for one year," said Jaime "but the best part is that I get to be a part of Freeman."

Baby Bots Teach Life Skills

Abby Zorn
Staff Writer

Ever seen kids walking around with halls with personalized "egg babies" in tupperware containers? Carrie Yeatts, Child Development and Parenting teacher, has a semester class that takes this "parenting" project to a whole new level. Her class participated in a project called the "RealCare Baby Project." This project allows for students to take care of realistic baby dolls that cry, cough, and whine during class and outside of school.

According to Ms. Yeatts, this project is not designed to prevent teen pregnancy, despite popular belief. It is rather to make students and teens aware of the realities of parenthood. This project allows students to experience the troubles and joys parenthood provides—which few teens get to do.

"I've never been so sleep-deprived in my life. It was so exhausting,"
- Ronnie

Students identify their baby with a bracelet in order to "check in" with their baby via an internal drive. It lets the student parent know whether the baby needs to be rocked, fed, changed, or burped.

"The baby coos when the need is met," said Ms. Yeatts.

Students are given birth certificates for their baby (they choose the name), and parents of the students send in real schedules that will be randomly distributed to the "new student parents."

There are three difficulty levels that one can program into the babies: easy, medium, or hard.

"I always program them with the hard setting for my students," Ms. Yeatts said. She wants to ensure the most realistic circumstances—for example, the babies waking up in the middle of the night crying.

"I was so sleepy, I've never been so sleep-deprived in my life. It was so exhausting," said freshman Ronnie Dantzler.

Another challenging aspect of this project is maintaining the correct body temperature for the baby. If the baby is not wearing clothes or is kept too close to the parent, the body temperature can fluctuate to potentially unhealthy levels, and the baby will cry.

When students arrive and leave school, they must put their baby in a car seat to keep it safe. The baby must also have a completely supported head and neck.

"If the head is not supported the baby makes this awful noise," said Sophomore T'era Hunter-Shelton.

At the end of the project, Ms. Yeatts receives a simulation report digitally of each student's baby and is able to grade based

on their progress and success relative to an actual parent. "Not every parent is perfect, so I don't grade based completely on their report," said Ms. Yeatts.

There were many mixed reviews from the student participants surrounding this project—both good and bad.

"I would probably do this again. This was pretty fun. It definitely woke me up at 5:40 a.m., but it was pretty convenient since I hadn't finished my math homework. Everyone was saying this project was pretty difficult, but I really enjoyed it," said sophomore Joseph Delahanty who received a perfect score on the project.



PHOTO: ABBY ZORN

Sophomore T'era Hunter-Shelton practice holding the babies.



PHOTO: ABBY ZORN

Sophomore Jodh Delahanty learn useful skills including how to change a diaper.

DSF We the People Teams Take on States Competition



PHOTO: VA CIVICS

DSF Team Morris places 2nd at the states competition at UVA.

Julia Hall
Staff Writer

From the Constitutional Convention to future challenges the Constitution will face, 30 million students for 32 years have argued these issues at We the People competitions across the nation.

We the People is a competition for high school students to see who knows the most about the Constitution, and American history and government. The teams are split up into class periods and then students are sectioned into units, or topics of discussion.

On Dec. 18, 2018 two teams from Freeman went to the We the People Regional Competition. Spoiler alert: the Freeman teams placed first and second, beating Maggie Walker Governor's School for the first time ever.

For the past 9 years, every regional competition win has been taken by Maggie Walker. But this year, Freeman fought back. Robert Peck, the Director of the Center for Leadership, Government, and Global Eco-

nomics said that the win against Maggie Walker "felt good."

Maggie Walker went on to win first place at states on Feb. 1., while Freeman's Team Morris placed second, and Team Paine placed third. Team Morris and Maggie Walker will both go on to nationals.

Students say that there is a great deal of preparation involved. "You have to write a paper for each question, [each paper] has to be about three pages long," said senior Will Chambers.

To prepare, groups collaborate in class, as well as also outside of school. Students meet at each other's houses, the library,

or even Panera to discuss the questions, write their opening statements, and prepare for any other questions the judges will ask them.

The competition consists of an opening statement, answers to the three questions, and then judges can ask students questions about their answers or questions on their unit. Students have to be prepared with an opening statement, Supreme Court cases as evidence for their answers to the questions, and be prepared for unexpected questions the judges might ask them in the question and answer portion of the competition.



PHOTO: CATHERINE MCSORLEY

DSF Team Paine wins Regional Competition at Randolph-Macon College.

Mr. Scott Brings Innovation to Class

Addison Gorenflo
Staff Writer

The closest thing to magic on the Freeman campus may just be in the library storage room. There lies the Augmented Reality sandbox, a hands-on exhibit that doubles as an interactive teaching tool and a fascinating toy. When a user molds the sand, the sandbox uses a Microsoft Kinect 3D camera to interpret the shifts in elevation and feed this information to a computer every few seconds. The computer translates the information into a color-coded design which is then displayed by a projector that hangs above the sandbox. The astonishing result is that as a student builds in the sandbox, it simultaneously projects the corresponding elevation color map, contour lines, and simulated water on top of the sand.

The 3D sandbox was the brainchild of Matthew Scott, an Earth Science and Oceanography teacher here at Freeman. Mr. Scott first saw this type of model at a convention for the Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST), for whom he has served as treasurer since 2015. Inspired to make his own version of the sandbox, he used a \$1,000 grant from VAST to acquire the materials and then spent about nine months "getting the money, planning, and resources together" for the device. After he successfully constructed the sandbox's base at his father-in-law's workshop in Charlottesville, VA, Mr. Scott collaborated with Freeman's IT department over the past summer to calibrate the computer software.

Before retiring to the library, the sandbox spent a few weeks in Mr. Scott's classes during his lessons on topography, which

concerns the representation of natural features such as mountains or valleys on maps. For freshman Kahmari Green, using the sandbox was an interesting opportunity to see how science plays out in the real world without having to step out of the classroom. "It was a great hands-on learning experience," Kahmari said, "and it was really fun to maneuver the sand and see how the display changed."

In addition to exposing him to the methods of other science teachers, VAST has benefited Mr. Scott by giving him experience with the financial aspects of jobs that he doesn't get from teaching. As VAST's treasurer, Mr. Scott handles funds and allocates grants on a scale similar to a small-business owner, which has been a challenge to balance with his teaching schedule. Though it requires a high level of commitment and all of his participation is volunteerwork, Mr. Scott asserts that he works for VAST "for the love of science, not for any monetary gain."

The success of his sandbox project has encouraged Mr. Scott to continue using his connections with VAST to seek innovative learning opportunities for his students. Next year, he plans on taking a panoramic camera to a solar eclipse and then using this footage to "develop an immersive eclipse video for 3D viewers". This will give students the experience of viewing a solar eclipse up close, which will not be possible in Richmond until the next eclipse occurs in 2099. With such compelling lessons on the horizon, there is no doubt that Mr. Scott's devotion to innovative teaching will continue to transform the science classroom into an exciting portal to the outside world.

Feeling the Love at Freeman

♥ - VALENTINE'S DAY 2019 - ♥



A Valentine You Can Forever Count On

Braxton Berry
Opinions Editor

For most us single Pringles out here, February is not a month we look forward to; the prospect of Valentine's Day is as tacky as the gifts your imaginary significant other did not get you.

As this day of commercialized love, cheap chocolates, and expedient relationships approaches, many of us are faced with the hard truth that we simply cannot find a significant other that will buy us teddy bears, roses, and those cheap chocolates we all know we secretly want.

Well, who needs a boy to buy me a gift that is meant to make me feel special when I

have an amazing mom, that unlike a guy, will never break my heart?

For as long as I can remember, my mom has always given me gifts for Valentine's Day. So much so, that it has become a topic that many of my friends joke about and admire.

Waking up every Valentine's day to a bouquet of roses, a teddy bear, and chocolates became so normal to me that I took it for granted. Instead of it bringing me joy and excitement, like it had when I was younger, it became something I expected.

I guess that is one of the pains of growing up. That undying eagerness that we have, that makes us say and do things that break your parents heart;

and minimize the impact of what they do for us.

However, last year I realized how much of an impact those small acts of kindness and acknowledgment over the course of life mean to me when my now ex-boyfriend broke up with me. I remember waking up that morning with a heavy heart and an indifference to the holiday, until I walked into my kitchen and saw the gifts and letter left for me.

It was in that moment that I learned the lesson I believe my mom set out to teach. That no matter how old I get, where I go in life, and what I do—she will always love me and I will always be her baby. It was a notion that made me realize how much it means

to show those that you care about and love just how much they mean to you.

I guess it goes into my mom's saying that you should give flowers (and gifts) to the people you love while they are alive to smell and admire them; and some of the smallest acts of kindness can change someone's life forever.

As I grow up and pay more into this holiday of commercialized love, cheap chocolates at high prices, and stuffed animals, I will always look back at the lengths to which my mom went to show me love, forever cherishing the fact that my mom is my Valentine forever and always; and I should always stop to smell and admire the roses.



Braxton & His Mom, sketched by Cole Ryland

Remembering Beginnings

Abby Taylor
Staff Writer

Valentine's day is a time for new romances to flower, but for many teachers at Freeman, it is also a time to remember the moments that led to their relationships today. The faculty is filled with teachers and workers that range from being married for over 30 years to becoming engaged in just the last month. A number of teachers also have interesting stories about their relationships.

"We had two weddings— one was a secret wedding and one was traditional," said Thomas Robjent, English teacher. Mr. and Mrs. Robjent have been married for eight years, and officially tied the knot on April 23, 2010, "which is Shakespeare's birthday

and death day" noted Mr. Robjent. As he is more of an introvert, Mr. Robjent enjoyed the small size of the secret wedding immensely, but said that he liked "both weddings in different ways." As of right now, the couple has no Valentine's day plans, "but we will figure something out!" Mr. Robjent said.

Principal Andrew Mey met his wife, Sylvia Mey, out of the country. "We met in Mombasa, Kenya almost 33 years ago," He recalled. "I was very happy to get to know her." Two years later, Mr. Mey proposed to Mrs. Mey at the beach, and the two have been happily together ever since. In regards to Valentine's Day, Mr. Mey explained that he and Mrs. Mey see "every day as Valentine's Day." Therefore, the holiday "will be some-

what like any other day," he said.

Closer to home, the smiley Reillys have been married for four years and met right here at Freeman. "We met on Fee Night in 2011 through a mutual friend," said Carter Reilly, SCA representative. She added, "My first impression of him was something like, 'Oh! He's cute!'" The couple both work at DSF, but Josh Reilly, Technology Support Technician, made the point that their relationship in comparison to couples with separate jobs is "not as different as you might think." The Reillys don't have any plans as of yet for Valentine's day, but "we will most likely cook dinner at home and hang out with our daughter," said Mrs. Reilly.

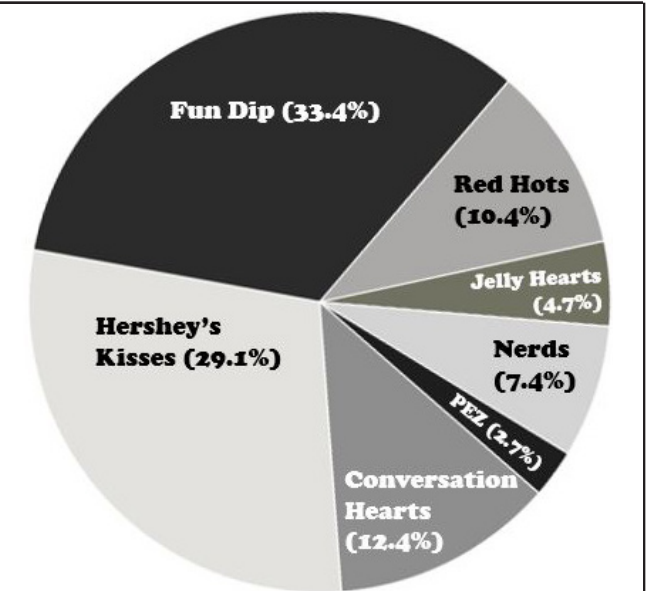
Just recently, another member of the

staff became engaged. Kyle Schuster, English teacher, and his fiance Graeme mutually agreed to get engaged on a trip to New York. "We don't have plans to get married anytime soon," said Mr. Schuster, but he affirms that he is "excited" for when the time arrives. As far as Valentine's day goes, Graeme currently lives in Dublin, Ireland, so "doing any celebration or dinner is going to be difficult," explained Mr. Schuster. However, the couple plans on meeting in Ireland over spring break, and will celebrate their engagement over "a nice dinner," said Mr. Schuster.

Whether the romance be old or brand new, it is certain that the Freeman community is blooming with love during the season of St. Valentine.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE VALENTINE'S DAY CANDY?

RESULTS BASED ON 300 VOLUNTARY RESPONSES TO SCHOLOGY POLL



Classmates Turned Couple

Cole Ryland
A&E Editor

The story of Kathryn and Andrew Pike began here, at Freeman, in an earth science class freshman year. They were desk mates for one quarter, and when the next quarter rolled around, Andrew said to Kathryn, "I hope I get someone smart..." without finishing his sentence with that crucial "...

like you." Andrew looks back on that first memory fondly, but admits it was "not [his] finest moment."

The love story of Kathryn and Andrew Pike began their junior year. They had Journalism and three other

classes together, both ran track, and their crushes developed in the midst of autumn.

"We were both shy personality-wise," Kathryn said, "so we were friends for a long time, until Andrew asked me to junior prom."

They went to see Shrek 2 for their first date, which was a week after prom. Andrew remembers it as being a great time, saying he "even held her hand."

Nowadays, the Pikes live an active life together with their daughter, Josie. Kathryn enjoys cooking, and Andrew is learning how to. Andrew is an early riser, and will often make breakfast before Kathryn wakes up. One of them will go on a run while the

other watches Josie, and sometimes they bring Josie with them to Mary Mumford park. In fact, last Valentine's Day was spent quite closely with Josie. "We held our sick eight-month-old in the bathroom while she vomited," Kathryn said.

Kathryn and Andrew keep their love alive with their cohesive personalities and mindsets, which is conveyed through a multitude of small things they do for each other. In their kitchen is a sign that says "I love you" in Italian, and they write kind messages to each other on it. They also call each other "baba." "Andrew misspelled 'babe' as 'baba' on AOL Chat," Kathryn said. Thus, the tradition was born. Communication

is a key factor in their connection as well, as they both check in with each other frequently. "At the start of each week we check in with each other and ask what we need," Kathryn said. "When you meet someone in high school they are one version of themselves, and over time they change, so it's important to be flexible."

Kathryn and Andrew are an example of a high school relationship being what it is due to the validity and truth of their bond. "We have a common language and a love for many things we loved then — running, cooking, getting outside, reading, and just plain old being together," Andrew said.

Kathryn said Mrs. Lombard is also to thank for this, as she positioned their seats close together in journalism class. If it can happen to them, Freeman may have a pair of "babas" waiting to come into fruition. Be wary of patterns in new seating charts.

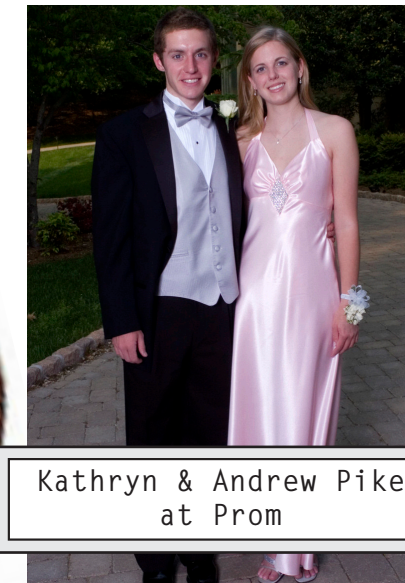
Who's Your Freeman Valentine?

Take this quiz to find out!

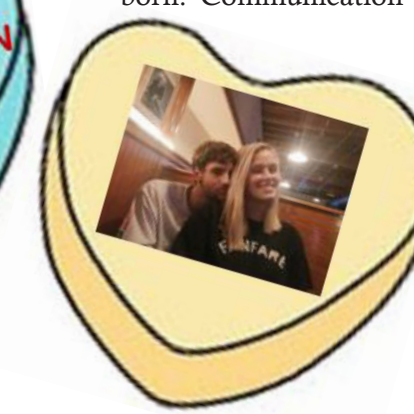
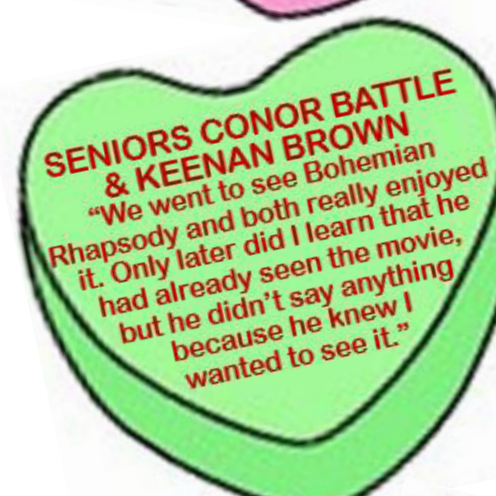
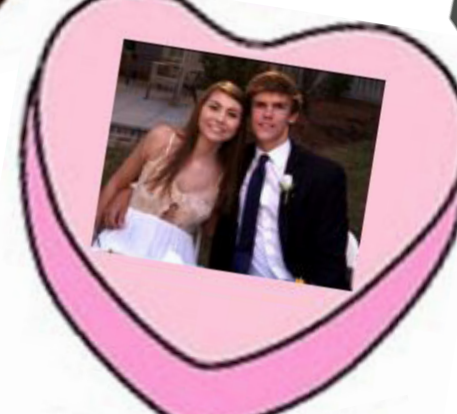
What's your perfect first date? a. Seeing a movie b. Dinner date c. Mall date d. Zoo date	What's your favorite color? a. Blue b. Purple c. Green d. Pink	Favorite restaurant? a. Cookout b. Chick-fil-A c. Hibachi Sushi d. Noodles & Co.	What do you look for in a partner? a. Nice smile b. Humor & kindness c. Loyalty d. Brains	Favorite artist? a. Weezer b. The 1975 c. JayDa Youngan d. Kanye West
Favorite Netflix show? a. Futurama b. The Office c. Lucifer d. Shameless	Favorite movie? a. Pulp Fiction b. Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows, Pt. 2 c. Bird Box d. Jurassic Park	Go-to pair of shoes? a. Adidas NMD b. Nike Air Max c. Jordans d. Converse	Describe your style. a. Sweatpants b. Casual c. Tough d. Fun	Favorite genre of music? a. Classic rock b. Pop c. R&B d. Alternative

SEE YOUR RESULT!

MOSTLY A'S	MOSTLY B'S	MOSTLY C'S	MOSTLY D'S
Aidan Sangiray (11)	Alyssa Gagen (9)	Jayveon McCloud (10)	Gracie Wallace (12)



Kathryn & Andrew Pike at Prom



Gymnastics and Wrestling Stars End the Season on Top

Wrestling: Andy Logan

Steve Ulrichs
Staff Writer



PHOTO CREDIT: ANDY LOGAN

Andy Logan wrestling in a tournament at Woodberry Forest.

mentors behavior that people look up to, conscious of his position as a role model. He is constantly impacting the Freeman community in a positive way and earning the trust of his peers.

“Andy Logan is an esteemed member of the Freeman community. I personally know him through wrestling. Andy is one of those guys I look up to, he’s always working hard. Andy is a very respectful person and often inspires me to want to work harder.” says teammate, junior Cole Holtz. “Andy is a role model; without Andy we wouldn’t be as driven to do well,” he continued.

He is not looking to wrestle after high school, and with this being his last year, Andy feels that he has to end his career on a positive note. He may seem cool and collected to his peers, but Andy knows the spotlight is on him

every time he steps out to wrestle.

“I put pressure on myself. I really want to go to states,” said Andy, acknowledging the fact that he is always trying to push himself.

Andy is known as a laid-back person amongst his peers, but when the bright lights come on he is all business.

“I make sure to get the team focused when we have matches. I try to support my teammates when it is their time to shine,” said Andy.

And said that he tries to lead by example

“I am a more passive leader” said Andy.

After his time at Freeman, Andy plans to go to college. He is looking at James Madison, Virginia Tech, and South Carolina. He wants to go somewhere where he can bring his leadership traits to thrive in a new environment.

Gymnastics: Lacy Fisher

McBride Rawson
Design Editor



PHOTO CREDIT: CAMERON MCCARTHY

Lacy Fisher competes on the balance beam.

Opening the meet with a strong first event brings confidence, relaxing the muscles and taking some pressure off the next three events. For sophomore gymnast Lacy Fisher, beginning the night with her consistently high-scoring vault is the perfect start. Solid performances next in floor exercise then uneven bars mean only one event is left. As she walks up to her fourth and final event, her opponent’s presence is unmistakable. Standing over four feet off the ground yet only four inches wide, her nemesis, the balance beam, awaits.

“The beam is a love-hate relationship,” said Lacy. Its height leaves plenty of space for bone-breaking falls but mere inches of width leave little room for error. For this reason, the “beam” requires courage, patience, skill, perfection, and (as the name suggests) balance. The beam is as much a test of character as it is a test of acrobatics.

“Trying new things on the beam is really tricky, so I like putting myself up to that and holding standards for myself,” said Lacy. Getting past the risk, reward, and hate of this event and down to its love, “It’s just fun when I can try new skills on it,” she said.

but when I came to Freeman I realized it’s all about team.”

This team mentality is echoed by senior captain Sallie Christopher: “She’s really positive. She cheers a lot for everyone.”

While Lacy knows how to sit back and cheer for her teammates, she can also get up and contribute to the team. “At meets she knows when she needs to turn it up and get the best score she can,” said Sallie.

Coach Sharon Kelly agrees about her attitude in the gym. “Lacy has a great gymnastics attitude, meaning she is a very confident gymnast,” said Coach Kelly, “She also has a very strong mental outlook.”

Her teammates, coach, and personal drive all increase the appeal of the sport for Lacy, but ultimately there is one thing that keeps her in the game. “It’s the love of the sport that keeps me doing it each year,” she said.

Indoor Track Athletes Shine

Boys Track: Sam Geissler

Taylor Pounders
Staff Writer



PHOTO: MC WOODRUM

Sam running at St. Christopher's for a track meet.

Senior distance runner Sam Geissler has made his mark on Freeman track.

Sam has been a member of the cross country and track teams for four years and is a captain for the indoor team this year.

He described being a captain as “a focus on more than just your improvement and making sure everyone else is doing what they should be doing.”

Off season training is a key part of being able to perform well during the cross country and track

“A focus on more than just your improvement and making sure everyone else is doing what they should be doing.”

-Sam Geissler

seasons. Sam will normally go on long runs, usually between 12 and 15 miles, during the summer.

“He is very dedicated to running and he trains and practices very hard,” says senior Jarrett Gouldin.

Many of Sam’s teammates know that he is a relatively quiet person.

However even with the role of team captain Sam’s quiet nature helps him to “lead by example and stay committed to his team,” says senior Cullen Munro.

When participating in such a large group sport, sometimes it can be harder for athletes to stand out

but Sam has made is mark throughout his career at Freeman.

He is “one of the only current runners on the team that has been able to qualify for the state meet before as an individual” according to Coach Rutinger.

Sam competed in the regional meet on Feb. 5. He ran a 4:35:02 for the 1600m. His 4 x

Having this experience at a championship level helps Sam to stand out from the rest of his team.

Being a captain can be a hard and stressful role on a team but Sam helps to “get things organized” and “even though he doesn’t

say a lot, when he does say something people tend to listen because they respect him just based off of his hard work ethic,” says Coach Rutinger.

When asked what made him want to pursue such a strenuous sport, he said that he likes to use running as a stress reliever from school and homework.

Looking forward to the rest of this season Coach Rutinger has seen Sam “get better with every race and he’s getting closer to state qualification.”

Girls Track: Kaitlyn Nguyen

Maggie Sheerin
Staff Writer



PHOTO: MC WOODRUM

Kaitlyn competes in the high jump at an indoor track meet.

Leaping into the air, arching her back, and bracing for impact on the fraying blue mat, junior Kaitlyn Nguyen strives to perfect her high jump.

While she first began competing in track and field as solely a sprinter during middle school, Kaitlyn quickly realized that she was passionate about something else: high jump. “I do high jump and a lot of sprinting events, but high jump is definitely my favorite,” Kaitlyn said.

One of only two female high jumpers on Freeman’s track team, Kaitlyn works hard to represent Freeman well at meets. “I always pressure myself to do better,” Kaitlyn said. Part of her routine in trying to get better at each meet is giving herself a pep talk before her events that consists of her “trying to think positively and then preparing for failure.”

With a personal record of 4-foot-10-inch jumped at both the St. Christopher’s meet and Atlantic Coast Invitational, as well as a goal height of 5-foot-2 inch by the end of the year, Kaitlyn stands out as a valuable asset to the team.

“Kaitlyn is very motivated and is a great leader. She often takes new sprinters under her wing during practices and at meets,” said junior Camila Perez, a teammate and close friend.

“Kaitlyn is really good at giving advice and telling you what you should fix in your technique. She has helped me a lot as both a high jumper and an athlete as a whole,” said sopho-

more Mari Seitz, the only other female high jumper at Freeman.

Kaitlyn believes that its important to help others who are just beginning in high jump, as for her “there was not really someone there to guide” her and she had to become primarily self-taught.

Despite this, Kaitlyn believes that track is primarily an independent sport and that it has taught her that “no one is going to help me but me so I must work hard.”

This hard work includes practices every Tuesday and Thursday, focusing mainly on the mechanics of high jump, personal technique, and muscle memory.

There also is a more laid-back, fun-loving side to Kaitlyn. Camila Perez describes her as “very goofy” and said that she “always takes the dread away from scary meets or hard practices.” When asked about what she believes has made her a successful high jumper, Kaitlyn joked, “It’s probably because I have scoliosis.”

Her teammates are not the only people that Kaitlyn has impressed. Avery

McGlvary, a coach for Freeman’s track team, has described Kaitlyn as “a very hardworking athlete that puts forth her best effort at all times.” She “has excelled this year in high jump and plans to improve even more by the spring season,” said Coach McGlvary.

Beyond Freeman, multiple colleges have expressed interest in Kaitlyn. “I just started my recruiting process, so currently the main schools interested are Division 3 schools like Christopher Newport University, Clarence University, Lynchburg College, and Bethany College.” Interested in competing at the collegiate level, Kaitlyn is keeping her options open at the moment as she continues her recruiting process to see what further opportunities she is given.

“I am already grateful for track as it has taught me how to be independent, as its mainly a sport where you have to help yourself improve,” Kaitlyn said. Yet, she hopes to learn much more from the sport in the years to come, wherever they may take her.

Star Swimmers Make a Splash this Season

Boys Swimming: Nick Viers

Marcus Rand
Staff Writer

While many uncommitted seniors may have a hard time finding motivation, senior Nick Viers is going stronger than ever.

His time on both Freeman's varsity swim team and NOVA has been distinguished. Nick placed fifth in the state competition and has qualified for the National Club Swimming Association Junior Nationals swim meet for the past three years. He's even been awarded the USA Swimming Scholastic All-America award, which is based on achievements in both swimming and academics and given to fewer than 2,000 students each year.

This year he attended "winter juniors" — one of the fastest meets in the country — with five other Freeman swimmers.

Chris Dingman, the coach for Freeman's varsity swim team, said "In the pool, he doesn't back down from a challenge and consistently performs in big moments like leading off the 200 Individual Medley and 400 Free relays and setting the tone for each."

At the state competition last February, Nick was awarded 5th place in the 400-yard freestyle relay, 7th place in the 200-yard medley relay, and 11th place in the 100-yard



Nick stands on the block for the 100 freestyle.

breaststroke.

"He lets his actions speak louder than his words and leads by example" Coach Dingman said.

Junior Dain Ripol, who has been swimming with Nick for nearly a decade, said "Many people are only good at a few of the four parts of the Individual Medley, but Nick is really

"In the pool, [Nick] doesn't back down from a challenge and consistently performs in big moments."

-Coach Dingman

good at all of them."

While the training for NOVA is demanding, Nick appreciates the community that the team provides. "No matter where you swim, you inevitably get a group of people you really like and enjoy and want

to hang out with outside of the pool. It's really the people there that keep you there," Nick said.

"It's one of those sports where if you drop that level of commitment even a little bit you start to fall behind," Nick said.

Nick recognizes the commitment it takes to achieve in this sport, especially in regards to earning college offers. He received offers to swim for both William & Mary and Brown, but for now he is keeping his options open in hopes of receiving a walk-on spot at Notre Dame.

His passion for swimming is overwhelming. "I'd say college is probably the most motivating thing but even when I didn't commit somewhere I still found myself not wanting to stay out of the water because, for me at least, it's hard to not want to improve yourself," he said.

Although it's now his senior year, Nick shows no signs of caving to senioritis.

Girls Swimming: Lizzie Danforth

Emma Johnson
Staff Writer

What does it take to be a top-class swimmer like Lizzie Danforth? Start with 4:30 a.m. practices. "Getting up in the morning is definitely hard, but the water wakes you up," she said.

Lizzie's swimming career picked up early on in her life. "Her dad taught her to swim when she was three..." said Leah Danforth, Lizzie's mother. At eight years old, Lizzie began to swim year-round and also competed with the Canterbury Crocodiles, her local summer league.

While Lizzie's knowledge is extensive in the pool, swimming has also taught her key skills that she has applied to her everyday life. "Swimming has taught me many things like time management, goal setting, and good sportsmanship." While it has instilled many personal skills, Lizzie says swimming has also helped her make "lifelong friendships." According to her fellow swimmers, Lizzie shows many leadership skills and proves that she can work hard inside and outside the pool. Senior captain Katie Cooper said, "Lizzie is outgoing and definitely has the potential to be a captain next year."

Lizzie has had many memorable accomplish-



Lizzie swims the 200 IM at the JR Tucker Invite.

ments throughout her swimming career such as junior Olympic training in Colorado and numerous titles, however, her most defining moment she says is when she received her first junior cut and got to go to Florida. She first qualified to go to the meet in Florida two years ago when she swam an astonishing 2:02 minutes in the 200 backstroke. This year will be her 3rd year qualifying for the meet.

Lizzie's coach, Chris Dingman, was first introduced to Lizzie in 2017, when he started as the head coach at Freeman. "When I first started coaching Lizzie, she was a versatile swimmer on a senior-heavy women's team. Last year, we swam her in events primarily where we needed her to fill in for senior swimmers. This year, she's one of our top swimmers and the go-to option in her primary events."

When it comes to goals, Lizzie has some specific, short-term achievements she hopes to accomplish

this year. "I would like to commit to college on a scholarship by the end of this school year."

Coach Dingman had some insight into what he hopes to see from Lizzie in her future. "I want her to perform her best at Regionals and States for Freeman.....Outside of the pool, I want her to continue to also perform academically to provide her the opportunity to swim at the next level at an institution that she's interested in and provides the appropriate resources for success after swimming is over." As for non-college related goals, Lizzie said she hopes the Freeman team wins' states, a title they've been hoping to attain as a team for multiple seasons.

Lizzie continues to make waves in the swimming world, aiming high with short and long term goals for her swimming career. Her passionate attitude helps feed her drive for success and leaves everyone to eat her bubbles.

Senior Basketball Stars Finish Season Strong

Boys Basketball: Michael Fortune

Davis Buckbee
Staff Writer

Step back three-pointers from the corner. Forceful drives weaving between defenders. Encouraging and uplifting teammates after they make a mistake. Varsity boys basketball senior captain Michael Fortune can do it all: shoot, assist, and lead; and he's a large reason the varsity team has had a successful season.

Michael has been playing basketball since he was "big enough to hold one," according to his mother Sarah Melvin.

He started playing basketball on recreation teams at the YMCA, then in the Upward basketball league. In middle school, Michael juggled playing for his school team, Steward School and later Tuckahoe Middle School, with his Bon Air recreational team. At Freeman, he is a four-year member of the basketball program, and a three-year member of the varsity team.

"He's probably the lead captain, I'd say," said senior co-captain Muktar Abdulkadir. "He's started on the varsity team for the past three years, so he has great experience being on the team."

Michael is one of the leading scorers on the team; in a win against George Wythe, he scored 30 points, grabbed 9 rebounds, and assisted his teammates 6 times through the course of the game.

"Michael has been a phe-



Michael goes for a lay-up against Collegiate.

nomenal offensive player for our basketball team this year," said first-year varsity head coach Chapin George. "He's in the top 10 in the region in scoring average and he's turned himself into a player who can go get a bucket when his team really needs one."

While Michael is a leading scorer on the court, he also offers other advantages to the team, both on and off the court.

"As [Michael's] gotten more experience, it's apparent he's become more comfortable in regards to talking to players and keeping their spirits high," said Coach George. "Michael never feels like he should be beaten; he never feels as if our team should lose."

The Freeman team needed that leadership as they faced a coaching change this year. Longtime varsity boys basketball coach Larry Parpart retired last year. However, Michael argues not much has changed.

"The program is still very similar to when Coach Parpart was the head coach, because [Coach George] was the assistant last year," said Michael.

Teammates and coaches are not the only ones who

have taken notice of Michael's success. On Jan. 16, 2019, he was featured in a "Prospect Spotlight" article on Prep Hoops Virginia, a Virginia high school boys basketball recruiting publication. Still, Michael's focus is to continue the team's success and win more games.

And win they have; following a 67-78 loss at Godwin High School earlier in the season, Freeman responded by beating their cross-town rival 56-42 at home on February 1, 2019. Michael scored 12 points as Freeman improved to a record of 15-6 on the season.

"I think we've been successful this season mostly because of our all-around unselfishness," Michael said.

Regarding his future playing basketball, Michael said he has many options available, including continuing to play basketball at the collegiate level.

"One thing is for certain," said Ms. Melvin, "whether or not he chooses to play on a college team, he will never stop playing basketball. He loves it. He can't not play!"

Girls Basketball: Abigail Wilson

Annie Stephens
Staff Writer

Growing up, Abigail was surrounded by basketball, "My cousin played at Roanoke and my sister played too," she said. This influenced Abigail to start playing basketball in the fifth grade.

Her favorite part about playing basketball is the social scene. "I like being able to hang out with my friends and play basketball at the same time," she said.

Regardless of the social aspect, she works very hard, "Abigail is constantly working on her individual game, which inevitably helps the success of the team," said Andrea Sisson, head coach of the girls varsity team.

After playing basketball for seven years, she has been able to pick up leader-

"I have been able to become a leader and learn to work with the team."

-Abigail Wilson

ship roles along the way. "I have been able to become a leader and learn to work with the team," she said.

Abigail uses her leadership position to encourage and push her teammates to do their best. "She's really willing to work with the team to make sure that we do what we need to do," said junior Eleanor Carey, a teammate.



Abigail passes the ball during a game.

"She is very vocal, which helps. Communication during the game is very important," Senior Captain Leanne Larkin said.

In one particular game against Henrico "our defense was breaking down and she boosted it back up," Leanne said.

"She is always on the floor diving for balls, and is always really aggressive to get open inside the paint," Leanne said.

Before games, Abigail must listen to music with her teammates to get her adrenaline pumping. Ranging from "Mo Bamba" to songs from the "High School Musical" soundtrack, Abigail always finds the perfect song. "I just listen to whatever I can sing to," she said.

During games, she always works her hardest to help the team. "She hustles and makes sure that she gets the rebound" said Eleanor.

Her leadership skills are not only prominent dur-

ing games, but also during practice. "She's a great motivator and she pushes her teammates to be the best they can be each and every practice and game," said Coach Sisson.

Despite this being her last year playing for the Rebels, she possibly will scout out intramural teams during college. "Depending on where I go, I might look at the club teams," she said.

In one of Abigail's best games, against John Marshall, she scored eight points and received nine rebounds.

Abigail's leadership and driven attitude have helped her succeed and become the great player that she is today.



PHOTO: CLIPART LIBRARY

Juggling Two Sports in One Season

Caroline Tyler
Staff Writer

Two student athletes are playing two varsity sports this winter season. In addition to their academics, senior Cameron McCarty and junior Meredith Hearn each balance competing in gymnastics and pole vaulting for Freeman.

Cameron McCarty is experienced with this because it is her third year balancing gymnastics and pole vaulting for indoor track. Since the two separate practices and meets do not overlap, she is able practice with the Freeman gymnastics team every weekday from 4-6 p.m. and attend pole vaulting practice Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 6-8:30 p.m. at Xtreme Heights Gymnastics.

"Tuesday and Thursday I'm a little late to [pole vaulting] practice but my coach doesn't mind." Her coaches' flexibility allows Cameron to cross train and become a better overall athlete. "Both sports help with each other because the conditioning and some of the motions are the same," she said.

Dual athletes with gymnastics and pole vaulting are not uncommon. Many pole vaulters have a background in gymnastics because pole vaulting is often practiced in indoor gymnastics training facilities and there is similarity of the required athletic abilities.

"It has been challenging at times but I like having a busy schedule and I am used to it from doing competitive gymnastics," said Cameron.

Participating in both sports at the same time doesn't spread Cameron too thin because she



Cameron and Meredith before a Freeman track meet.

has qualified for the state meets in both sports during the same year. Although she prefers the team aspect of gymnastics she says, "I'm probably better at pole vaulting."

Her pole vaulting personal record is 10-foot-6-inches and she has placed fifth and seventh in the state during recent indoor seasons. Mr. Reutinger, head coach of the track team, says, "Cameron's been our best female pole vaulter for four years now."

Meredith Hearn is also balancing gymnastics and pole vaulting for indoor track for her second year. Similar to her teammate, she is able to attend all Freeman gymnastics practices and meets because they do not directly overlap. Meredith spends two days a week driving straight to pole vaulting after gymnastics ends at 6 p.m.

Both of her coaches support training in the other sport. "My gymnastics coach is super happy to help," she says.

"I really enjoy pole vaulting but I've been doing gymnastics for about 13 years so it has always been a part of my life." Meredith began pole vaulting during spring track her freshman year. Despite a few injuries, her com-

mitment has allowed her to learn the complex field event in just a few seasons.

Her personal record is 9-foot-6-inches and she also qualified for the state meet last season.

In addition to the cross training benefit, Meredith said the experience has "helped me learn to balance my time, especially with schoolwork and prioritization."

Coach Reutinger is thankful for the additional work that Cameron and Meredith put in to compete for both teams.

"Gymnastics is their main sport during the winter and we don't interfere with that. They just need to tell me when they want to compete and I sign them up for meets."

Coach Reutinger adds that they're two of the strongest girls in the track program. He says, "I don't think we've ever had two two-sport athletes that have been as productive as they are. It's not that common because it is extremely difficult."



Cameron leaping in the air during her beam routine at a home Freeman gymnastics meet.

Three Freshman Stars Make Great Strides

Lauren Bruns
Sports Editor

The future of Freeman track is bright at the hands of three freshman stars.

Luke Neely, Nate Elkin, and Matt McCabe have taken their first year on the varsity team by storm. "These are probably some of the best freshman we've had in a long time. They are really fast and have a ton of natural talent," said senior Cullen Munro.

As first year members, all three boys had different motivations for joining the team.

Luke is following in the footsteps of his older sisters Liza and Hillary Neely. "It's fun to see him work hard and succeed even running with the seniors," Hillary said about Luke's experience this season.

First pushed to run by his parents, Luke has found his niche not only in cross country but also in the events of the mile and the 1000. "I want to run well and improve my times throughout high school. My goal mile time would be in the 14's, but I don't know if that's possible," he said when asked about his aspirations for



Luke, Nate, and Matt pose for a picture after their track meet.

the seasons to come.

Balancing practice, meets, and school has been a challenge for all three, but Nate has particular-

ly embraced it. "I decided to do track because it is a great way to stay busy after school and to stay in shape," he said.

Their inner-team competition has been a source of both great inspiration and camaraderie. Nate commented on the reason

behind their success saying, "I think the reason why we do so well is because we always want to beat each other and be the best we can be."

All three have a shared incentive to run to stay in shape for the spring lacrosse season. A competitive lacrosse player, Matt participates on a travel team and goes to many showcases to play in front of college coaches and recruiters.

Matt will likely be a member and starter on Freeman's varsity lacrosse team and has used track as a means to elevate his game. "I think track helps me because now I don't really get tired. I like to be on the field as much as possible and track has helped make it so that the only reason I come off is because of the coach's decision not because of my fitness."

Regardless of reason, all three hope to eventually qualify for states and plan to continue their track careers into the coming years.

"The future looks encouraging if they continue to work as hard as they already do," said senior Ryan Christman.

Times are exciting for Freeman's track program, especially with the presence of such young talent on an already strong team.

Signing Day: Football Edition



Danny and Liam at the National Signing Day ceremony getting ready to sign their letters of intent.

Remy Schimick
Online Editor-in-Chief

On National Signing Day, Feb. 6, two varsity football players signed their letters of intent to continue playing football at the collegiate level.

Senior Liam Simpson committed to the University of Richmond and senior Danny Bullock committed to Glenville State College.

Liam Simpson has been on the varsity team for two years, starting football when he was

a junior. Liam has been a strong presence on the baseball team since freshman year; however, after a little convincing from Coach Moore and Coach Henderson, made the jump to football his junior year.

Although he hadn't played football for several years, Liam was a quick learner and became a key player on the football team.

Coach Henderson praised Liam's hand-eye coordination and his leadership skills.

"You really were a leader off-season for us," he said to Liam.

"We're really glad you gave

football a shot."

Danny has been a member of the Freeman football team for four years.

"For as long as I've coached here, I've never seen a player improve so much in one year," said Coach Henderson.

Danny has been training with a speed coach and according to Coach Henderson, "gave us the physical element to our game."

"I'm looking forward to a new opportunity to play the sport I love at the next level," Danny said.

Football Team Wins Awards at Banquet

Emme Levenson
Sports Editor

At the All-Metro Football Banquet, the Freeman Football team was presented the Stretch Gardner Sportsmanship Award. The Central Virginia Football Officials Association gives this award to one school a year.

At the end of each football game, the officials rank the players, coaches, and fans on their sportsmanship.

Head Coach Mike Henderson and director of student activities, Suzanne Criswell, received the award at the All-Metro Football banquet on Jan. 23.

"[I felt] a tremendous amount of validation for the coaches, players, and the school," said Mrs. Criswell.

Coach Henderson strived for good sportsmanship each game. "Our players conduct themselves with great dignity and sportsmanship during the game... we do things the right way on the field," he said.

Credit is also due to the fans as they "cheer for our team supportively not against the other team," Coach Henderson said.

Coach Henderson gave the award to Mrs. Criswell after receiving it, and it is currently displayed in the main office.

Also, Coach Brice Fritts won the High School Assistant Coach of the Year which was presented to him by the Touchdown Club of Richmond.

"I am very honored and humbled to win this award," said Coach Fritts.

Coach Fritts has been working with Coach Henderson for 13 years.

"[Coach Fritts] sets up the end zone camera, uploads all our film to [website] Hudl, he trades film with other coaches, and he works with the offensive line throughout the year," said Coach Henderson. "He does a lot of things that maybe a lot of assistant coaches don't," added Mrs. Criswell.

Coach Henderson believes the award was well deserved. "He goes above and beyond and does so many different things in addition to being a terrific coach," he said.

Senior offensive lineman Chi Mills has seen great improvement in his game with the help of Coach Fritts.

"He helped me use my best assets to my advantage to dominate the field."

The football team was ranked first in the area and were 8-4 at the end of the season.

The football team has a bright future with great coaches and good sportsmanship.

Rockin' Rebels: Freeman's Fanfare

Abby Zorn
Lowell Smith
Staff Writers

In an ill-lit room brought to life with the breath of the city, walls are littered with grimy posters of old rock bands and spray paint splatters across the walls. Lights twinkle dimly while amps blast the songs of local band Fanfare. In the midst of a new extended play record (EP) release titled "I Could Live Here, I Could Die Here," and tour (Feb. 1—Feb. 3), junior bassist Miles Fagan and senior drummer Nathan Vranas have built a local fanbase for their alternative punk band.

The band launched at the end of this previous summer. After Nathan's experience as the drummer of the band Last Night's Ghost, he described Fanfare as being "a lot more driven on moving up and making it and working towards the next level."

Miles, on the other hand, had to learn an entirely new instrument.

"We already had two guitarists and a drummer, so I learned bass," Miles said. Since the band's songs were already written, the EP could begin recording as soon as Miles felt comfortable on the bass. It took some time, but he picked it up pretty quickly.

"We had a distribution service that put out the EP, since we aren't on a record label. It sends it to all music platforms at once," Nathan said.

Miles and Nathan have both had experience playing at house shows and shows at public venues.

"Sound-wise, a venue would almost always be better. House



The band members left to right: Josiah Wells, Collin Lassiter, Nathan Vranas, and Miles Fagan.

shows are more personal, and most of the people that come to the shows are friends. It's a lot more up close and personal and cost effective," Nathan said.

Band groupie and friend of

"We've never been on tour. We're excited to play some other cities and grow our fan base."
-Nathan Vranas

Miles, junior Lindsey Arnold goes to many of the band's shows—most recently one at Jungle House.

"I think that they have the ability to make it bigger than just

Richmond and I'm really proud of the work they've done and their EP," said Lindsey.

The band's music is very personal and unique to its genre.

"Our song 'Eight Grad Parties in Two Days' deals with mental health and depression," Miles said.

Fanfare's tour traveled around Richmond as well as places as far away as Philadelphia during the first weekend of February. The band took Nathan's car with a U-Haul trailer as they tour.

"We've never been on tour. We're excited to play some other cities and grow our fan base," Nathan said. It takes a lot of initiative to book their gigs. The band met Absinthe the Father, a band from Philly. "He helped us get the gig there [in Philadelphia]. He is actually coming along to play some shows with us," Miles said.



Miles Fagan playing the bass.

Fanfare has a lot of support from their families and friends.

Number one fan, junior, and girlfriend of Nathan, Caroline Ferguson said, "It is very exciting because I think it's super fun to see my boyfriend do something he loves, like playing drums. The only time it's difficult is when I can't make it to all the gigs. Nathan is really good at getting a crowd excited; it's not hard when you're so talented."

Miles's mom, Debbie Fagan, also supports his musical endeavors and is proud of his accomplishments. Music has always been a thing that Miles has had a connection with. "It was first the marching band, but later it has been the Richmond music scene. The people seem to all support and encourage each other in a way he has not always found in high school. As for us [his mom

and dad], we support him by going to many of his shows but try to help him balance music with his other pursuits," Mrs. Fagan said.

Both Miles and Nathan love the music scene and hope to never give it up.

"It's hard in our genre to get super big," Miles said.

Despite this, both guys would love for music to be a career path and think it would be awesome if they blew up because "we'd get nicer studios and maybe even a record deal," Nathan said.

Nathan has been accepted to the Berklee College of Music in Boston to pursue his passion.

The Fanfare EP is available on almost any music platform (Spotify, Apple Music, etc) to stream, or if you're interested in seeing these guys at their next gig, check out their Instagram @fanfareva.



Playful male cat "Ari."



5-year-old Stella, hanging out on the bar of the Cafe.

The Clash of Fans

Will Dornik
Staff Writer

For some, the "Clash of Clans" era was short-lived after its release in 2012, while for others, Clash has never lost its glamor. There has been a resurgence at Freeman amongst the students with clash of clans.

Clash of Clans is an online mobile app where people can build and upgrade their kingdoms while attacking their friends' bases or team up to attack other bases. The goal of the app is to continue upgrading bases and win battles. The mobile app seems to have almost the same popularity it had several years ago, but what has kept this app so relevant?

Junior Preston Trevey seems to think it has to do with how they update the app. "I've been playing since elementary school and the only reason I keep playing is because the developers listen to their fans. Everything the community has wanted has come within the next update. I also can play with all my friends. My friend who moved in the seventh grade still plays every week with me," said Preston.

Some others feel as if it's more of a chore than anything else. Freshman Owen Fallen doesn't want all of his initial hard work to go away. "I put a lot of time into the game when I was in middle and elementary school, so that's really why I still have the app. I'll check for a couple

minutes every couple of days, but that's really only because if I ever do want to get back into it I can pick up where I left off."

Some have never gotten tired of them game. Junior Hayden Martin has been playing Clash for as long as she can remember. Some diehard fans like her feel as if the games never lost its charm. "I'll check the app every hour to see if anything has updated, or if anyone in my clan needs help. It's a responsibility being the head of a clan, especially one with almost 50 kids in it. It's become a distraction from my other interests." However, Hayden feels as if she needs to get her money's worth. "I 'accidentally' took my mom's credit card to spend hundreds on my account when I was younger and didn't know any better, so I feel like I owe it here to stay as passionate as I have for the game." Hayden guessed her total budget on the game has been close to \$750, and has been working and babysitting to eventually pay her mom back.

Clash of Clans continues to be updated monthly. The most recent update involves a new base upgrades, events, and attacker: The Ice Golem. "The game is completely different when started. I stopped playing a couple years back and when I recently picked it back up it feels like a whole new game," said Preston. Supercell, Clash of Clans parent company, continues to surprise its fans with creative updates, which is what is keeping the students at Freeman engaged.

Coffee at the RVA Cat Cafe



1704 East Main
St. Richmond, Va.
23223



Maggie Flournoy
Grace Powers
A&E Editors

Step aside dog lovers, this new café is purr-fect for grabbing a quick drink and meeting some furry friends. Central Purrrk, a cat café in downtown Richmond, offers a variety of rescue cats ready for adoption. Located next to Main Street Station, this café provides an experience

that is both comforting and exciting.

As we first walked in, we met Sally, a frisky black cat chilling in a box on the windowsill. Our appointment was at 1:30 p.m. We were a little late, but the owner didn't seem to mind. We walked through the gate into the first room, and were met with two adorable faces. This room didn't have any refreshments, but it was a nice introduction into the café.

However, the real fun started in the second room. It was filled to the brim with cats; they were on the floor, on the counters, and in fun little tubes. In the corner there was a Keurig machine, which wasn't exactly what we expected after being told it was a "café," but we both enjoyed a nice hot chocolate.

The second room is where we met our favorite cat, Ari. We both played with him for the majority of our stay. His silly personality attracted many other café goers, and he was constantly

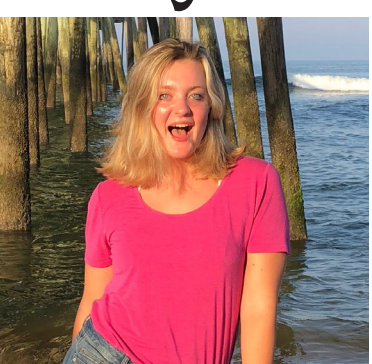
entertained by the large array of cat toys available to the guests.

As fun of an experience the café was, there were some issues. The parking lot was hard to find, and the storefront even more so. Don't anticipate finding street parking, but at least if you are able to find the parking lot, your first hour is free.

Despite this difficulty, the booking process was super easy. We were able to book our 30-minute session the day before, which was only \$6 and included a complimentary beverage. If you're looking for some more cat time, which we do recommend, an hour long stay is only \$4 more. If cats really are your cup of tea, the café offers various group activities at varying prices with the kitties including knitting, painting, doing yoga, or even playing Dungeons and Dragons.

If you want to check out Central Purrrk for yourself, visit centralpurrrk.com or stop by the location!

Day in the Life of a Girl Without Her Phone



Laney Van Lenten
News Editor

On Jan. 25, 2019, I embarked upon what would be the most rigorous and eye-opening experience I have ever encountered: going a full school day without a phone. Given the idea by Dave Inman, English and Leadership

teacher, who is putting together a similar challenge for the rest of the student body, I challenged myself to spend one full school day without access to my phone.

I do almost everything on my phone. I check emails, connect with friends, maintain a healthy social media presence, and play games. Over the past seven days, I have spent a total of 51 hours on my phone. Some may say this is extremely unhealthy, but I say this is just a daily routine.

The day in question began like any other. As I drove to school, I put on Spotify's "Top Hits" playlist to help kick start my day. This was my first mistake. As I pulled into the parking lot, "Beautiful" by Bazzi was playing. This is arguably a very bad song. When I turned off the music, and started walking towards the door of

Lauren Lombard, English and Journalism teacher, to hand in my phone, I realized that I was humming "The way that Gucci look on you amazing." It was already too late to get a different song stuck in my head; I had no access to a phone to play different music.

The first few blocks without my phone went by pretty quickly. The classes are work-heavy, and I barely noticed that I didn't have a phone to check. I got comments from people familiar with my situation, telling me that I seemed to be handling myself pretty well without my constant plus one.

It was lunch when I realized that I had chosen the worst day to not have a phone. Everyone was discussing weekend plans, and I felt so out of the loop. My friend Teagan Fenderson turned to me

to ask, "Did you see that Rachel wanted to hang out tonight?" No, Teagan, I didn't. I have no access to a phone and am thus forced to watch as my friends make plans easily through the use of a groupchat.

Resigned to my fate, I traveled to my next class in solemn form, reflecting on the ease at which I could communicate with my friends before.

Normally, I spend my fifth period annoying my friend with stupid videos I've found on Twitter, but today, she reminded me that we had an entire essay due next period that I hadn't started. That's when grind time began.

Never in my entire life have I ever been so productive. Without a phone to distract me, I read an entire article, wrote a full paper, and worked on research for gov-

ernment with time to spare.

Suddenly, I was thinking, "Maybe not having a phone helps you be productive?"

However, nothing was more eye-opening than when my friend turned to me in Journalism and said, "Typically, when I see you, you're always texting or snapping or playing that dumb Ball Blast game. You should look up more."

This above all shook me a little bit. One of my best friends telling me I spend too much time on my phone?

Had I become one of those annoying people who can't even take one look away from Instagram to experience life around them? I was taken aback.

Immediately I created time limits on all of my apps so I wouldn't use them as much.

Saving the Day is Not Just a Man's Job



CARTOON BY: ABBY TAYLOR

Maddie Sherman
Staff Writer

I've been a fan of superhero movies since 2012 when my dad took my brother and me to see *The Avengers* in theaters. Before this, I had already been partial to movies supposedly geared more towards boys (I was practically raised on all of the *Star Wars* films). But I was 10 when I saw my very first Marvel movie. I left the theater with an odd sense of excitement, perhaps knowing that this was the beginning of an obsession. After that day, I went back and watched all of the previous Marvel movies and have been a fan of superhero movies ever since.

I also remember the first time I saw DC's "Wonder Woman" in 2017. I had been anticipating the movie for months. I was constantly watching new trailers and content, following the real life wonder woman (Gal Gadot) on Instagram, and generally geeking out over the movie to anyone who would listen.

I was so excited because this was the first modern superhero film where the main character was a woman. Yes, there have been fe-

male superhero movies before, but there weren't nearly as many as those featuring men and they didn't always have the most success (I'm looking at you, Halle Berry's "Catwoman"). But "Wonder Woman" changed all of that, and, in my opinion, has begun a new era for superhero movies. Marvel Studios followed the release of "Wonder Woman" with their film "Ant-Man and the Wasp," which was the first Marvel movie to have a female superhero's name in the title, and plans to release the highly anticipated "Captain Marvel" in March.

These movies depict their female heroes as strong and completely capable, but this isn't necessarily the most groundbreaking aspect. While the majority of the Marvel and DC lineups still consist of men, both companies have introduced a number of powerful female characters over the years. Black Widow was introduced in "Iron Man 2" in 2010 and has been a major player in the Marvel Cinematic Universe ever since.

It's not that these movies are the first time audiences are seeing strong female characters, but it is the first time audiences are seeing female superheroes as THE main

character. To me, this is the reason why DC's Wonder Woman was so powerful. The story was about Wonder Woman. She wasn't a side character, a single woman outnumbered in a group full of men. She was the main character. The story belonged to her and that was clear to the audience.

This is so important because it's finally saying that the stories and experiences of women are equally as important as the stories and experiences of men. Women are no longer taking the side role, but are finally becoming the focus. Little girls watching these movies are able to see themselves as a powerful individual, who is important and worthy of their own story.

Representation is especially important in the entertainment industry. When a kid, or anyone really, sees a character on a screen who looks and acts like how they aspire to look and act, they get it in their head that they can accomplish anything they set their mind to. While I understand that watching "Wonder Woman" didn't make myself and other female audience members believe we could legitimately lead a charge with nothing but a shield across a World War I battleground, it made us believe in the power that women hold. It inspired us to take charge of our own situations, become leaders in our own right, and never listen to people who tell us that we are incapable.

Watching "Wonder Woman," I saw myself on the screen. I saw myself as the main character, a character who has depth and layers, and I saw her in a position of power. The feeling I had leaving that theater was empowerment.

This is the reason why I absolutely cannot wait for "Captain Marvel" to be released. The story of Carol Danvers is nothing short of spectacular, and her movie takes the next step in continuing a pattern of representation on the silver screen. The feeling of relating to a character and seeing that character accomplish amazing things is truly inspiring and I hope that in the years to come everyone will get the chance to see themselves as a hero on the big screen.

Creative Writing Meets Ceramics

Wiley Hunnicutt's creative writing class and Beth Jones' ceramics class teamed up to fuse sculptures with words. Each of Ms. Jones' ceramics students first created a non-descript "blob," which were sent to Ms. Hunnicutt's creative writing students to use as inspiration for a piece of writing. Below are a couple of samples of how the students put a story into their blobs.

elephant kisses by Kayla Mertz

baby blue elephant
soft and affectionate

is lost and afraid
delicate in detriment

with long droopy eyes
ears so big he could fly

he searches for his mother
under the great blue sky

trampling over silky grass
little animals watch him pass

he fumbles over his trunk
and comes to an impasse

with a long sigh
he laid down and cried

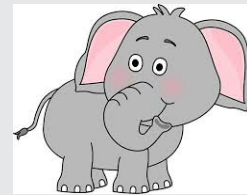
dreaming of his mother
he slept until sunrise

and when he awoke
he felt a warm stroke

across his pudgy belly
as daylight broke

above him was his mother's face
gazing down at him with grace

she planted a kiss on his head
and wrapped him in a warm embrace

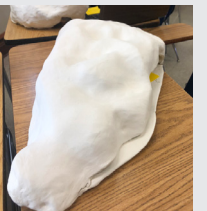


SCULPTURE: SARAH KLOTZ

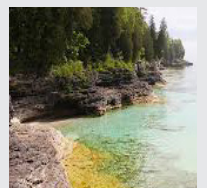


The Pacific by Hannah Sjovold

Sand scrunches between my toes, standing on the damp beach. Wave after wave breaks on the shore, and I find myself lulling into the repetition, my breath falling in sync with the coming and going tides. I make a mad dash for the sea, crashing into the foaming blue and white water. Then the waves pound inside my head, drenching my hair and body. I float towards the crest of a wave, my board beneath me. Paddling out into the salty spray awakens my senses, every particle on my body is focused on the water around me. Sitting peacefully as the waves rock me forwards and backwards, I look out back at the beach. The twisting curls of white sea foam beautifully contrast the deep blue and green hues of the sea water. Each time I return to the water, I am enchanted.



SCULPTURE: ABBEY COLLIER



The creative writings students sent their final drafts back to the ceramics students. They will read the pieces of writing and add that interpretation back into the blob to finalize their sculptures.

What does this blob look like?



SCULPTURE: SARAH CLOUD

Check out the blog see the story to this blob and more:
~dsfcommentator.org~

Fashion Hot Takes with R&G

Remy Schimick
Online Editor-in-Chief

Greer Peacock
Sports Editor

We're Remy and Greer, and we wanted to give you our thoughts on a few fashion trends of today. We'll warn you: we're not professionals, so prepare to get offended if you do, indeed, dress like a highlighter.



Plaid

G: Good for Catholic school kilts (I would know).

R: Good for pajamas and Youtubers.



Tie-Dye

G: Not a fan.
R: Only okay if you're in third grade at YMCA summer camp.



Camo

G: Literally everything I buy is camo.
R: I can't see it.



Combat Boots

G: You have to pair them with the right outfit.

R: Make me feel tough.



Neon

G: Not for winter
R: You're not a traffic cone; don't dress like it.



Uggs

G: Comfortable, but not cute. Can't judge because I wear them.
R: Comfy but UGGly.



Summer Opportunity to Make Five Hundred Dollars
Sabereh Saleh



Rebels' Resolutions
Taylor Pounders



Officer Proffitt Helps Save a Man's Life
Marcus Rand



Quiz Bowl Team Competes at Maggie Walker
Addison Gorenflo

Freeman's first-runner-up 5B Super Regional One Act Competition
By Katie Cooper and Remy Schimick