

THE COMMENTATOR

Vol. XXXX, No. X Douglas Southall Freeman High School Month XXXX

“Commentator” 2021 Seniors: Virtual But Not Forgotten



CARTOON: LANIE MOORE

The Senior “Commentator” Staff

Top (L to R): Mary Cooper Frank, Leo Lombardi, Timmy Dillard, Jacob Brann, Holly Doustout
 Middle (L to R): Riley Wilkes, Emma Burton, Kendall Betz, Ashton Doll, Keya Pokhriyal
 Bottom (L to R): Ella Mortimer, Anastasia Branch, Joseph Harrell, Lanie Moore, Alexa Mosely

Unpopular Opinion:

I Love In-Person School



Anastasia Branch
Editor-in-Chief

Not many people agree with me here, but the last few months at Freeman have been my favorite time in high school.

I know, it sounds crazy. These past two years have been filled with much disappointment from the cancellation of sports, Homecoming, Prom, and more.

Still, I loved the perks of virtual school. Waking up at 9 a.m., snacking whenever I wanted, and staying in my pajamas all day was something I definitely got used to. In fact, I was very hesitant to leave my virtual bubble in March, since I was convinced that in-person school would be disastrous.

After a year of quarantining, however, I am grateful for the opportunity to come back to in-person school. Sure, in-person school is not the same as it was before COVID, but staring at a computer screen all day from inside my house was not exactly how I wanted to close out my senior year. As soon as my first week of in-person school was complete, I realized how much I had missed talking to other human beings at lunch. I had missed driving to school and wearing an actual outfit. I had missed conversations before class with teachers and tablemates. (Shout out to APES and Journalism!) I had missed chatting with people who I don't hang out with outside of school, but am still friendly with--you know the kind. In other words, coming back to school has genuinely been the highlight of my year.

These past two years have altered nearly everyone's lives in significant ways. I've grown a lot as I've quarantined, but these past few months in the actual school building have taught me the value

of being physically connected with teachers, classes, and friends. I certainly didn't appreciate that as I drowned in the junior year grind before COVID.

Ultimately, I've learned that the relationships you build at Freeman are what make school fun! It might sound cliché, but I encourage all students to become actively involved at Freeman. Whether it be a sports team, class, club, or musical--those are the places where you'll make the best memories. Get out there and find people who will make you smile when you look back at these four years. Connections are everything, and in-person school has given me one last opportunity to make fun, goofy, wonderful memories.

Most importantly, I want to thank the Freeman teachers and staff for doing all they can each day to ensure that in-person school is possible. I've absolutely loved the chance to reunite with my peers and teachers for a final farewell before I embark on another chapter of life.

Embracing the New



Lanie Moore
Managing Editor

At the start of ninth grade, I wanted to be a teacher. I ran cross country, and I was just starting to get good. I was taking Art for the second year in a row, and I adored it. I never could've guessed where I'd end up four years later: a cap-tain of a crew team and managing editor of the school newspaper with plans to study environmental science in college. But I wouldn't have it any other way! I have had some amazing experiences as a rower, with the newspaper staff, and on the path to discovering my passion for the outdoors.

way through the maze that is high school: don't be afraid to try new things. In fact, now is the perfect time to purposefully push yourself outside of your comfort zone. Very few of the school-related decisions you make during this time in your life are binding--use that to your advantage! Take creative writing or ceramics or art. Try out for advanced orchestra or show choir or jazz band. Paint a locker or a ceiling tile or a segment of a teacher's wall. Join cross country or gymnastics or volleyball or soccer or swimming or track. Have new experiences! Talk to new people! Make new friends!

That being said, don't be repelled by the familiar. If you're an art kid through and through, Art class just may be your thing. But what's the worst thing that could happen if you took, say, Journalism instead? You could end up running the whole paper... and doing art to boot!

Well, Freeman, it's been real. It's been fun. And frankly, it has been real fun.



CARTOON: LANIE MOORE

The Kiddie Coaster of My High School Years



Joseph Harrell
Editor-in-Chief

What a crazy ride these past four years have been. Every year has presented new obstacles that we've been challenged to overcome.

Looking back at freshman year, I remember the great health and

safety crisis that confronted us; that of course being Freshman Friday. I know for me, a chubby ninth grader in a brand-new school, the fear of an atomic wedgie was indescribable. Every hallway I turned down I watched my back for some mischievous senior ready to prey on his victim. Of course, being barely over five feet tall and nervously clutching a piece of paper with my schedule and room numbers on it did not help me blend in. In the end, however, all my stress was for nothing, as I went to sleep that night in my bed and not in a trash can.

Sophomore year, a new danger presented itself: the CW. The CW

was a breathtaking experience. You could almost feel everyone in the student section simultaneously gasp when the drumline played its iconic sound. You looked to your left and your right and you knew your best friends, the people who had your back no matter what, had no goal other than to send you flying into the front row. The focus of the game shifted from rooting on your team to making sure both your kneecaps stayed where they should. Luckily, I made it out of those Friday nights unscathed--well, almost (only one tiny scar on my right hand).

Junior year, a new death-defying experience presented itself in the

form of the student lot. If you've had the pleasure of being in the student lot at 4 p.m. on a Friday afternoon, you know that yielding to pedestrians is not a law; it's merely a suggestion. Walking through the lot, you realize that everyone is either a psychopath or played way too much CoolMathGames during Driver's Ed and did not listen at all. Danger is at every stop sign. Through all that, my truck and I made it out alive.

This year, we faced a new challenge; one that is much more serious than the few I've just listed. A deadly pandemic is quite a few notches above atomic wedgies, silly football game dances, and jay-

walking in terms of danger. There have been points this year where we've been faced with frustration, anger, sadness, and resentment. While it seemed hard to overcome, we've made it. The fact that we stand here, in the last nine weeks of senior year, shows that we have taken on every challenge placed in our path and conquered them all.

Although our time at Freeman may be coming to a close, the challenges don't stop here. This wild ride has been merely a kiddie coaster compared to the thrill ride of life that is to come. Through all the ups and downs, remember to take it all in. Your Maverick family will always have your back.

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Run Your Own Race



Ashton Doll
Opinions Editor

Originally, I wasn't confident what to talk about in my senior editorial, my final impact on people's minds at Freeman. This is my last call to those who I write for.

In the world of rap, last calls are songs that emphasize the personal issues and lives of rappers, rather than content catered to the masses. This is exactly that: my final message to readers in what I hope is my first, but not last, era of writing for an audience.

Throughout my childhood, I was expected to be more intelligent than I was. My older sister got into IB, then the Leadership Center—the standard I set for myself as I grew. She was happy being a part of a more intelligent group of individuals, and I wanted to be in that group, too. I got into IB and was happy all of middle school, possibly due to the inherent status of being considered more intelligent among the school.

Everything came crashing down with my terrible Leadership application essay. The final nail in the coffin was that, instead of the standard five paragraphs, it contained only four. (A friend informed me of that later, after I turned it in.) Although I knew I would not get into Leadership, the rejection still hurt tremendously. Why could I not reach the scholastic heights of my older sister?

Coming into high school, the mentality of needing to prove myself academically tore me to pieces. My freshman year was

absolutely terrible. Both my older sister and I were depressed, but from different things. She was going through a tough breakup, while I was incredibly self-deprecating in school, with an unattainable standard against me.

Time went on, and I tried out for the junior varsity soccer team. Having played recreational soccer for most of my life, I ended up being cut from the team. Soccer would not act as the solace I desperately needed at the time. However, the coach said I should run cross country instead of play soccer.

Testing this opinion out, I ran the Rebel Run. In this race my afterburners kicked in, a skill I would later use in running seasons. Proud of my result, I decided to train for the next cross country season, which began the August before sophomore year.

Joining the cross country team at first was a bit difficult, but the group was a family. The team was full of characters, from Ethan St. John (AKA Pete) to Ryan Christman, Jacob Brann, Joseph Gilman, Sam Geissler, Gio Mazzeo, Cullen Munro, Lowell Smith, Dante Pellei, and Nurbol Duisenbek. The brutal, summer evening exercises did not matter when your peers were struggling with you.

The older runners introduced a new phrase to me: run your own race. It seemed like a simple concept, but worrying solely about yourself is essential in succeeding as a runner. Once I focused on myself, I could finally break the barriers I wanted to. This mindset got rid of all my stress from unnecessary comparisons. Running is mostly mental, but so is life. Others may be bothered by your strong lead, but it is their hesitation and unhealthy perspectives that keep them behind. Stop comparing yourself to others and put in the effort to get ahead, your own style.



PHOTO: STIRLINGTRIATHLON

Searching for Meaning



Keya Pokhriyal
Opinions Editor

I've never been fond of "closure." I'm not quite sure that there is any such thing. Yet, as a senior in high school, if there is anything I so desire, it's closure—something that will enable me to adequately bid farewell to the first chapter of my life.

It's strange, of course, to think that our last "normal" day of high school was a random Friday in March of junior year. That Friday was the last day we would be so fortunate as to sit in a classroom surrounded by our friends, free from the stress of being a senior during a pandemic, where everyone and everything seems to be enveloped in fear and uncertainty.

I don't know if I would actively search for closure if life were "normal" right now; I think, rather, I would gradually get closure from the natural unwinding of senior year. A legitimate convocation, for instance, would have marked the beginning of the end. A real senior Homecoming and fall football season would have, too—through these "lasts," I believe I would

have, slowly but surely, gotten closure.

Needless to say, that is not quite how our senior year went. There was no real convocation, Homecoming, or fall football season.

But, we made it work. We made the most from the little that we had. The challenge, now, is mustering the courage to say goodbye—and that is no easy feat.

While I recognize how privileged I am for the greatest of my problems to be getting closure, my failure to find any has left me feeling rather unfulfilled with my high school career. How do I successfully navigate the next chapter of my life without satisfactorily closing the one before it?

I wish I could tell you. Perhaps seeking closure is futile; instead, deeply reflecting on the past four years of my life and making sense of it will be much more fruitful than thinking about what senior year could have been.

After all, many of the lessons, memories, and people from this chapter of my life will stay with me forever. With this realization, I am becoming increasingly comfortable with the notion that seeking meaning is significantly more purposeful than seeking closure.

Look, I'm not wise. At all. But if there are any words of wisdom I can offer to my fellow seniors, I will say this: search for meaning, and you will find yourself a little less lost in this hot mess we call "senior year."

He Said



Ashton Doll
Opinions Editor

Satisfied with my time at Freeman. Bye lol.

Love watching people battle for money.

Onwards to Gettysburg College!

Breathe in the sunny air and enjoy the moment.

Most of the things you worry about won't happen.

Peace out, Mavericks.

She Said



Keya Pokhriyal
Opinions Editor

On to the next!

May the best man win.

UVA <3

What Ashton said.

Take it easy x

Trust the process.

Better Late Than Never



Alexa Mosley
Online Editor-in-Chief

Here I sit, 11 p.m. the night before this editorial is due, just now beginning the assignment I've had for over two weeks. Is anyone surprised? I most certainly am not. It's only fitting that I write my last piece for "The Commentator" like I have each of the others: at the last minute.

My tenure at Freeman has brought to light an interesting aspect of my personality: I am a serial procrastinator. I am physically incapable of beginning an assignment, as time-consuming or difficult as it may be, at an appropriate time.

In junior year, my Ethics teacher, Mr. Peck, assigned my class an essay on the nature of truth that he quite literally told us "wasn't something you could do the night before." Well, I couldn't even be bothered the night before to start the essay. I wrote the entirety of my complex dissertation on truth from 3 to 6 a.m. the morning it was due. Mr. Peck was right; it wasn't something I could do the night before, it was something I could do the morning of. And for the record, I pulled off a pretty decent grade, if I do say so myself.

There's plenty more where that particularly stellar example of my flawlessly executed procrastination came from. I wrote each of my AP Literature essays beginning no earlier than 10 p.m. the night before, I routinely outlined the textbook for AP European His-

tory the night before and morning of a quiz, I refused to complete my chemistry homework anywhere but lunch directly prior to the class, and so forth. If there was an assignment, no matter the magnitude, I waited until the last minute to do it. Barring a handful of few-and-far-between exceptions, I have procrastinated on each and every worksheet, essay, and reading assignment.

The source of my deep-rooted desire to push off assignments until the literal last minute is still unknown. Maybe my subconscious really doesn't want to do the work and, consequently, makes me believe that the work doesn't exist until the night before it's due. Or perhaps I get a rush hearing that assignments are hard and that they can't be done in a few hours, then doing them in a few hours and doing them quite well. Or, who knows, maybe I just work better with the added pressure of a rapidly closing period of time. Whatever it is, it works for me.

I'm sure everyone has been given the "don't procrastinate" spiel too many times to count, whether it be going into high school as a whole or going into a class that the teacher swore was going to be too difficult not to stay on top of. Well, I heard that spiel many times and just kept going along my merry, procrastinating way. Not because I was being disrespectful and ignoring educators' expert opinions, but because I knew what worked for me.

If my time at Freeman has taught me anything, it would be to know what works for me. We talked in Ethics class about how the root of wisdom is to "know thyself," and, honestly, I think that is spot-on. Figure out how you learn best, how you study best, and when you do your best work. For me, that just happens to be late at night right before an assignment is due.

And that's fine, because not everyone is going to operate in the same way. Don't feel pressured to conform to the norms of what everyone else is doing. Just because someone started their AP U.S. History identifications two weeks before the due date doesn't mean you have to. Neither approach is more right as long as the work is done before the deadline.

This sentiment of individuality is highly representative of Freeman as a whole. Nowhere else are you going to find a school that does the near-deadly CW, contains plastic babies hidden in every corner, has seniors practically stampeding the hallways to celebrate Halloween, and used math textbooks as a "real life application" (in the words of Mr. Podonly) to stop water from flooding Green Acres during a tornado. My four years at Freeman have been, if nothing else, memorable because of the traditions, strange occurrences, and people that I wouldn't have found anywhere else. I truly could go on for days about all the things that have made people go, "Only at Freeman," like the three-fire-drill afternoon and the time we got evacuated from a smoke-filled cafeteria, but it's now 1 a.m. and I have neither the time nor the energy to do that.

As my time at Douglas Freeman comes to a close, I honestly could not be any more grateful for the wide array of experiences this school has given me. In a weird way, it makes sense that my time at such a unique school is culminating in such a unique year. Regardless of whether or not I got the traditional senior year, Freeman still knows what works for it and sticks with it. I will deeply miss coming to school each day ready for more "Only at Freeman" experiences with such special people. Thanks for the memories, Freeman.

High School Not-So Musical



Kendall Betz
Features Editor

If you're anything like me, your first impression of high school was Disney's "High School Musical." Ten minutes into my first day at Freeman, however, I realized that high school wasn't singing, dancing, and hanging out at lockers between classes. Shocking, right?

I recently re-watched "High School Musical" and "High School Musical 3" to compare my high school experience to Troy and Gabriella's. To say the least, Freeman isn't East High, but I wouldn't trade my experience at Freeman for the world.

Let's start with an obvious difference: where was the singing and dancing? While the students at Freeman seem happy overall, there are no spontaneous outbursts of perfectly choreographed dance routines. I'll admit I don't really want to sing and dance in the cafeteria, but I was rather disappointed to find that lunch in high school was closer to lunch in middle school than lunch at East High.

Another big difference would be time to hang out in the hallways between classes. I don't know how much time Disney thinks

students have, but five minutes doesn't leave much time for relaxing. What I experience is closer to the scramble Troy and Gabriella face when they try to play in the championship basketball game, compete in the scholastic decathlon, and do callback auditions all at the same time.

While I didn't start high school thinking it would be exactly like High School Musical, I certainly had an idea of what I thought my four years should look like. I was determined to have the perfect high school experience... whatever that may be.

Long story short, things didn't go as planned. Maybe I should have gone to more football games and gotten more involved in pep rallies and spirit days, but I didn't. The important thing is that I'm still able to look back on my four years at Freeman and smile.

Re-watching "High School Musical" and "High School Musical 3" now is a bit scary because I'm forced to face the fact that I'm growing up. I recognize the complex problems Gabriella solves from chemistry, and I relate entirely too much to Troy's debate over where to go to college.

Life moves way too fast to waste time dwelling on what did or didn't happen. Rather than getting caught up in the past, I have learned to appreciate the experience I had.

My experience in high school may not have been the journey I expected, but it taught me so much and made me the person I am today. And for that, I am forever grateful.

Baby Bears the Family Legacy



Timmy Dillard
News Editor

After my time at Freeman, I can say without a trace of doubt that the baby of the family has it the hardest.

People always say that the oldest child has it the worst: they have the highest expectations, they're parented the most strictly, they have to do everything themselves, etc. Others even go so far as to say that the middle child is in the toughest position.

As a certified baby, I'm here to claim that those people are wrong. Now, before you question my qualifications--am I trying to claim that I am the youngest of a hundred siblings that all went to Freeman? No. I am, however, the very last in a long list of Dillards to attend Freeman (at least for a very long time).

To be specific, I am the 13th Dillard to attend Freeman. Before me, there were a couple of siblings and an assortment of uncles, cousins, and grandpas. I've got a handful of little cousins that live in Richmond, but they're so annoying that they had to go live in the Godwin district.

The point is, I'm the caboose at the end of a pretty long Dillard train going through Freeman, so there's a lot for me to think about as I graduate.

Was I able to grow as a student and a friend in my four years here? Did I value the opportunities I was given? Will my peers, teachers, and coaches be left with positive memories of how I interacted with them?

As I reflect on my time here at Freeman and think of a way to say

goodbye, I can't help but think about the importance of legacies. When I was in elementary school and middle school, I never believed that my name would actually mean anything to any faculty at Freeman. I thought, there was no way that whoever was crazy enough to *still* be working at Freeman actually remembered my family members. If there is one thing that my time at Freeman has taught me, however, it's that legacies are very much a real thing.

The impression you leave behind, wherever you go in life, matters. This is the biggest lesson I learned in my years at Freeman, and I will always remember it. Every time I see a family member who caused someone at Freeman to remember my last name, I don't just see them and their persona, I see their history and impact on others.

Unsurprisingly, I had no perception of this idea as an eighth grader getting ready to stumble into another four years of school. I had no idea how much my thoughts on my family, my self-image, and my impact on others would change.

Now that I'm a senior, I have learned a lot about legacies. I've grasped the legacy that my family has left for me, and I understand what it means for me to be a final component of it. It has led me to take pride in the respect I show to others, the conscientiousness I show in class, and the activity I show around the campus.

My advice to those just starting out at Freeman is to consider how the people around you will remember you. These are the last years you will spend in lower education--which might sound like the least of your worries right now--but the impression you leave behind is far more important than you might think. So, as you trudge through all the exams and applications these next few years, remember that you are not just a test score, or a sports record, or a last name. You have your own impact, and people will remember it, whether you're the baby of the family or not.

Senior Spotlight

Jeff Newton

What TV show or movie are you obsessed with right now?
"Good Guys" and "Last Chance U"

What are you excited for this summer?

Getting in some beach vacations before college

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I'm planning on studying biology, so I would assume I'm into a medical field. I don't have a specific place I would want to live in mind, but proximity to mountains would be a plus because I enjoy skiing, mountain biking, etc.

Any advice to underclassmen?

Work hard, but not at the expense of having fun. It would also be wise of them to avoid another pandemic.



PHOTO: JEFF NEWTON

Ella Larkins

What TV show or movie are you obsessed with right now?
"Criminal Minds"

What are you excited for this summer?

I am super excited to graduate and have some time between getting started with college to work and go on some family vacations.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

All that I hope for myself in 10 years, is that I have a job that I like and am happy in whatever I am doing.

Any advice to underclassmen?

The academic part of school is very important, but if you do not put yourself out there and get involved, then it is going to be boring and long and not very fun. Just find groups of people who are happy doing the things that make you happy.



PHOTO: ELLA LARKINS

Jianna Young

What TV show or movie are you obsessed with right now?

"Grey's Anatomy"

What are you excited for this summer?

I'm weirdly excited to get ready for college over the summer, figuring out how my TBD roommate and I will design our dorm.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Probably working at a law firm. I also plan to write, but it is yet to be seen whether I will want to publish my work or not. Of course, I will have a pet, probably more than one.

Any advice to underclassmen?

Do what makes you happy. High school can be stressful, but it will be gone before you know it.



PHOTO: JIANNA YOUNG

Simon Atsanyuk

What TV show or movie are you obsessed with right now?

"The Witcher"

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I see myself working a steady job and saving for a house.

What are you excited for this summer?

Playing volleyball with friends. I took up the sport this year and fell in love with it, so I bought a net on Amazon.

Any advice to underclassmen?

My suggestion would be to not be afraid and take the plunge into that sport you know nothing about. [You'll] regret anything you didn't do in high school later.



PHOTO: SIMON ATSANYUK

Thank You, Teachers



Leo Lombardi
Sports Editor

As our collective high school careers draw to a close, we Journalism seniors are offered the chance to write, think about, and reflect on the highs, the lows, the boredom, and the thrills of the past four years.

It's no secret we, as a class, have had a unique high school experience. My time at Freeman has been unforgettable and I feel fortunate to be able to say that. But as I take this opportunity to reflect on my personal experiences, I want to focus on the people who have made it such a success: Freeman's teachers.

I believe what separates Freeman and the type of students who leave

Freeman from other schools in the region is the quality of education we are fortunate enough to get. More specifically, I think the real difference between us and everyone else is the caliber of teachers we're lucky enough to have in our building every day.

From the start of high school in our freshman year up through this year, my teachers have always impressed me. I don't want this to come across as one big kiss up but rather a genuine thank you note to the people who have helped mold me into the student I have become.

In my freshman year, I witnessed the dedication of Mr. Inman in his Introduction to Leadership classroom. His passion for the curriculum was admirable. His will and desire for class engagement made me ten times the participant I would normally be. His occasional witty jokes made that class memorable.

In my sophomore year, it was Ms. Hunnicutt and Mr. Larkins who impacted me the most.

Ms. Hunnicutt had a discerning eye for detail in all of the literature and persuasive writing we worked

on. To this day that class has improved my skill set as a writer more so than any other.

Mr. Larkins's AP Human Geography class initiated my love for political science. What we learned and how we learned it was far and away the most interesting course I have ever taken. He planted the seeds for topics that I will be studying in college and perhaps working with one day, too.

In my junior year, it was Mr. Podolny and Sra. Carroll. Teachers who obviously teach with such passion for their respective subjects is refreshing to see. I didn't even finish out the year in Mr. Podolny's class, but in just one semester I had respect for how much he enjoyed teaching his students. The same goes for Sra. Carroll. She was a teacher who went above and beyond to make her classroom active and engaging.

To all my teachers at Freeman, thank you. I sincerely appreciate the dedication the teachers have to educating at this school and for that I am grateful.

Signed,
Leo Lombardi

Maverick at Heart



Holly Doustout
Features Editor

When I arrived at Freeman as a freshman, I anticipated encountering all the various high school cliques: the jocks, nerds, band kids, theater kids, and every other "High School Musical" group trope. But what the heck was a 'lead' supposed to be? Me, apparently.

As a proud inductee into Freeman's Leadership Center, I was beyond elated to have the title "leadership student." However, I was especially confused by how shocked my friends would be when I revealed that I was a center student.

"I would've never guessed that YOU were in the center."

"You're a lead? No way!"

"You don't seem like you'd be in the center."

I almost took it as a compliment that everyone thought I was just your average zoned Freeman student. Even if I was a 'lead', I was still a Maverick at heart. Nevertheless, after four years of joking about and hearing the same one-liner, I must thank Freeman and the Leadership Center for everything it has given me.

Freeman's center wasn't just an addition to my college application or a bragging right for me. It was a new chapter in my education, it is the reason I am the person I am today. Freeman gave me an entirely new perspective on education and opportunities that I never would have received at my zone school, and I never would have had the chance to attend Freeman at all had it not been for the Center.

While some may see being a leadership kid as being a try hard who cries when their GPA from a 4.400 to a 4.398 (although I do that myself, don't get me wrong), I couldn't be more appreciative of the opportunity the Center gave me -- even if it meant driving an hour round-trip from Varina to

Freeman every day and leaving all my middle school friends behind.

However, it was Freeman's sense of community that connected a non-zoned leadership kid like me to the Freeman Family. Although my teachers knew I wasn't the typical 'lead'-- they could tell from day one that I wasn't accustomed to Freeman's level of rigor--but they still gave me every resource I needed in order to succeed and didn't treat me any differently. Even though students joked with me about being in the center, I still knew they always had my back and knew that I loved Freeman just as much as them. And despite the fact that I lived an hour away from school by bus, my colleagues in the halls, football stadium, and basketball stands all just saw me as another Maverick at heart.

Here at Freeman, both inside and outside the center, I have made friends that I know will stick by my side for a lifetime. So while I thank my colleagues for meaning the best when they say that I don't hold up to the typical tropes, I am a proud 'lead', Maverick, and soon-to-be graduate of Freeman High School.



Class of 2021: Future Plans



College	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	Military	
 Bucknell University Jackson Becker	 College of William & Mary Anderson Broughton Jerry Lin Suzanne Lohr Jeff Newton Daniel Piper Andre Tran Connor Wright	 East Tennessee State University Cole Brincks	 George Washington University Amelle Chanda	 James Madison University Laura Aguirre Lee Allen Anastacia Barlow Jacob Brann Emily Breeden Thomas Brown Iris Cassidy Ashley Delgado Trip Fishburne Lacy Fisher Mary Cooper Frank Leah Glass Joshua Gunn Mary Malone Johnson Lauren Knitter Simone Lawrence Chris Lesley Tanner Meck Emma Melton Carol Ann Moore Nicholas Troutman Lillian Wilson	 Marymount University Ella DeNicola	 Randolph-Macon College Katrene Gaber Elizabeth Jones	 Universal Technical Institute Aman Ball	 University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Anastasia Branch	 University of Tennessee Kate Bivens Jonathan Hundley	 Virginia Tech Connor Coleman Brooke Farrey Megan Frank Josh Hansell Lauren Hargrove Jack Lindeman Jessie Lindeman Leo Lombardi Erin McCaffrey Mikala McGehee Catherine Pinotti Mary Fowler Sharp Mary Thurman Gina Vinson Caroline Wood	 Widener University Claire Rankin			 United States Army Mariposa Seitz
 Christopher Newport University Hannah Gee Benjamin Moody Ethan Rashkind Audrey Riley Jianna Young	 Colorado College Margaux Schimick	 Eckerd College Emma Burton Jamie Edwards	 Hampden-Sydney College William Gallagher William Shepardon Henry Singleton	 New York University Jonah Ratner	 Richard Bland College Maggie Linthicum	 University of California San Diego Andrew Russell	 University of North Carolina Charlotte Kai Stoudmire	 Ursinus College Luke Shourds	 Virginia Wesleyan University Omari DeVeaux	 United States Marine Corps Connor Brown				
 Coastal Carolina University John Ramey Sydney Stokes	 Denison University Caroline Johnson	 Elon University Alexandra Roeber	 Hampshire College Grace Minson	 North Carolina State University Carter Barnes Ella Creason Jack Davis Parker Hill	 Roanoke College Nayeli Benitez Rachel Garland Erik Kratzer Emily Rayl	 University of Florida Wyatt Teysier	 University of North Carolina Wilmington Aidan Duffy	 University of Virginia Emily Ashkani Emilee Brooks Holly Doustout Nurbol Duisenbek Benjamin Edlavitch Amanda Gagen Joseph Harrell Ashley Hemp Emma Hennessey Ethan Johnson Anna Kriebel Archit Kumar Isabel Kump Abby Kupstas Jessica Li Luke Logan Ava Lohmann Lanie Moore Matthew Moore Travis Montgomery Ella Mortimer Alexa Mosley Keya Pokhriyal Emily Toler	 Wake Forest University Alexandra Aker Torren Lewis	 United States Navy Ethan Brantley				
 College of Charleston Page Yauger	 Duke University Kerry Nease	 Empire Beauty School Aliyah Jones	 J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College Ghaida Ahmed Ryan Asch Timmy Barlow Taina Diaz Austin Fisher Jessica Lilly Collin Nguyen Laura Perez Sophia Ridolphi Sherdajah Russell Hamza Salihovic Sarah Shagena Jayden Wright	 Lehigh University Timmy Dillard Kareem Hargrove	 Longwood University Olivia Haynes	 University of Mary Washington Angie Iraheta Gruessing Allie Hahn Gina Rawlings-Davis George Wanis	 University of Pittsburgh Jack Parkhurst	 University of Richmond Nora Parker Camden Thomason	 Washington and Lee University Andrew Bland Lizzie Steilberg	 Workforce Damian Balsom Keonna Chrisley Hien Dinh Courtney Farrar Jaeden Lindsay Kaleigh Lipps Jorge Mendez Edgardo Moscoso Jimmy Van				
 College of the Holy Cross Caleb Kenney	 East Carolina University Riley Weaver	 Furman University Kendall Betz	 George Mason University Devin He Ibrahim Ibrahim Calli McEvoy Allie Meiller Aidan Moriarty Essence Touch	 Loyola University Maryland Adam Shaia	 THE NEW SCHOOL Parsons School of Design A'mya Matthews	 University of Michigan Ryan Strohan	 University of South Carolina Grace Herring Charlie Martin Weston Martin Meredith Paul Hallie Sanderford	 Virginia Commonwealth University Mohammed Ahmad Nour Ahmad Simon Atsanyuk Merna Boules Emma Chan Charlotte Cooper Mekdelawit Fantahun Emma Farnwalt Tanasia Faulk Isabel Fernandez Hanna Irace Farhad Maaida Avery Miller Abraham Morkous Ollie Walker Sara Wanis Kennedy Warren Peyton Woody	 Westminster College Gavin Jones					

Growth in Art



Emma Burton
A&E Editor

High school has been a period of transformation for me, and it has been heavily prevalent in my artwork. Each year I grew and discovered something new, especially when it came to experimenting with art.

Freshman Year: Bubbly and weird pretty much describes my life as a freshman. The artwork, "Teletubbie Toga," was created in light of those characteristics. It was a project for my ninth-grade art class and had to include three things that represented me. I decided on Teletubbies to represent my friendships, bubbles to show how I was quirky, and a toga because I loved Latin.

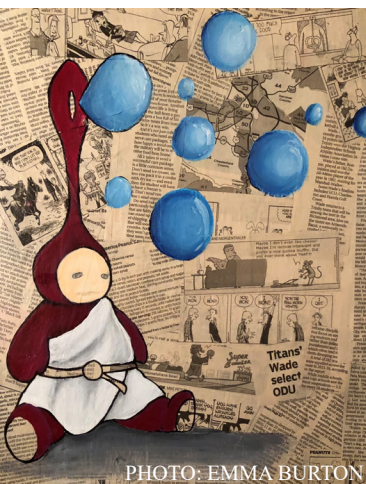


PHOTO: EMMA BURTON
"Teletubbie Toga," freshman year.



PHOTO: EMMA BURTON
Sophomore year sketch with graphite.

Sophomore year: Abstract thinking was out, working with graphite was in. In tenth grade, I chilled out and started to stray from being obsessed with a kids T.V. show. I started to expand my knowledge in the arts and played around with different materials. I also focused on faces and attempted to make them as realistic as I possibly could. My experimentation resulted in a lot of sketches like the one depicted.

Junior Year: Apparently the saying about eleventh grade being the hardest was true. This year I struggled the most and started incorporating my emotions into my artwork. I began to take my skills that ranged from weird cartoons to semi-realistic faces and smashed them together, which resulted in many artworks--like this one --that highlighted both my skills and my feelings.

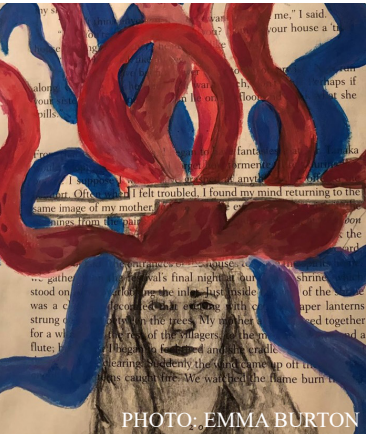


PHOTO: EMMA BURTON
Artwork made during eleventh grade.

Senior Year: Senior year has been all about growth and looking back at the transformations I have gone through. Recently, I have been painting more butterflies, both because they represent change and because it's time for me to spread my wings and fly off into the real world. It's also because they're pretty.



PHOTO: EMMA BURTON
"Growth," senior year.

Hiking Through High School



Ella Mortimer
Online Editor-in-Chief

In senior year, I created a hiking column recommending hikes that have helped me stay sane while spending time in nature. As I reflect on the ups and downs of the past four years, I am so thankful for the experiences and friendships that have brought me to senior year. These four hikes represent my years at Freeman!



PHOTO: VIRGINIAMAP

FRESHMAN YEAR York River State Park



Starting strong, freshman year was a major upgrade from middle school! Adjusting to a new school was definitely challenging, but it kicked off a great four years at Freeman!

SOPHOMORE YEAR Garland-Dodd Park



Take me back, sophomore year! Sophomore year was a breeze compared to the years ahead, and it was great to simply enjoy school, sports, and friends. This hike is similarly enjoyable with a scenic walk over a floating boardwalk.

JUNIOR YEAR Humpback Rock



Humpback Rock is full of rock scrambles and slippery slopes, similar to the difficulty of junior year. A challenging academic year combined with a global pandemic made this year the most difficult one yet.

SENIOR YEAR Rose River Falls



Like senior year, this final hike has many ravines and steep climbs, but has a rewarding, breathtaking waterfall at the very end. Take a deep breath; we've finally arrived at the waterfall at the end of the hike!

Evolution of the Meme



Jacob Brann
News Editor

Because the definition of meme has spread to incorporate parody and humor in various forms, memes have become a major part of pop culture, spreading culture, humor, and even political and religious commentary.

This was the "Dancing Baby", developed by Kinetix.

And today, the word "meme," with its parody, humor, and commentary on everything from the Pope to the President, from video clips to actual humans, continues to grow and evolve.

The original coining of the term "meme," from "memetics," was in a 1976 book by Richard Dawkins. The first meme was essentially a GIF: a mini video clip on a loop.

Here are some examples of prevalent memes from the last four years, with formats that Zoomers have grown up with.



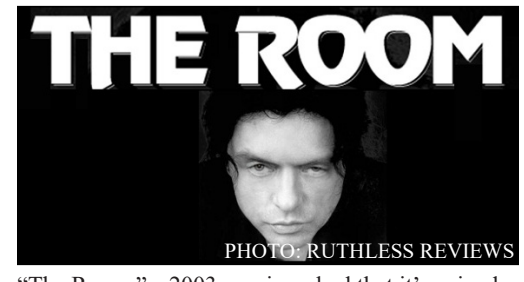
"Burger King Foot Lettuce," Winter 2018-2019



After "Avengers: Endgame" came out in 2019, this Thanos meme became tremendously popular.



Smudge the Cat became arguably the most prolific meme of 2019-2020

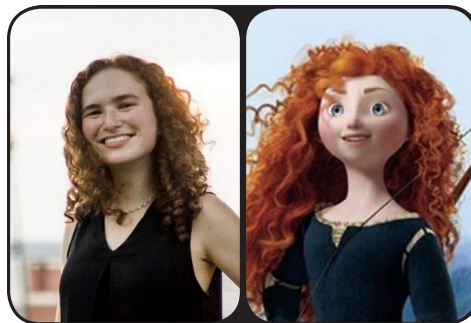


"The Room," a 2003 movie so bad that it's gained a cult following for its meme status, was created by and stars Tommy Wiseau.

SENIOR LOOK-A-LIKES



William Shepardson as Leonardo DiCaprio



Emily Toler as Merida ("Brave")



Thomas Brown as Jackie Chan



Ben Edlavitch as Waldo ("Where's Waldo")



Mary Beth Thurman as Gwyneth Paltrow



Amanda Gagen as Beyoncé



Jamie Edwards as Heath Ledger

Committed Freeman Athletes



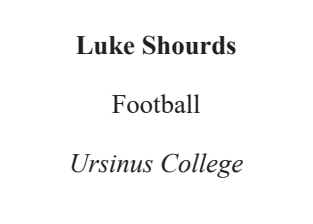
Andrew Bland
Football
Washington and Lee University



Rachel Garland
Swim
Roanoke College



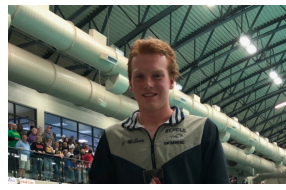
Adam Shaia
Soccer
Loyola University Maryland



Luke Shourds
Football
Ursinus College



Erik Kratzer
Swim
Roanoke College



Kerry Nease
Lacrosse
Duke University



Margaux Schimick
Lacrosse
Colorado College



Lauren Hargrove
Soccer
Virginia Tech



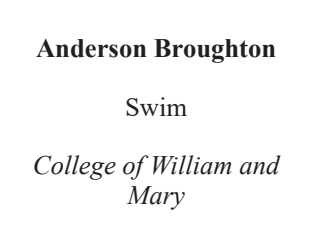
Calli McEvoy
Swim
George Mason University



Aidan Wilson
Lacrosse
Washington College



Maggie Linthicum
Softball
Richard Bland College



Anderson Broughton
Swim
College of William and Mary



Claire Rankin
Swim
Widener University



Omari DeVeaux
Basketball
Virginia Wesleyan University



Will Lynch
Baseball
Samford University



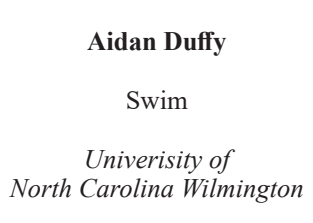
Henry Singleton
Tennis
Hampden-Sydney College



Ella DeNicola
Swim
Marymount University



Caleb Kenney
Basketball
The College of the Holy Cross



Aidan Duffy
Swim
University of North Carolina Wilmington

High School in Playlists



Mary Cooper Frank
A&E Editor

Each year of high school is very different from the others. High school is an exciting, stressful, and important time in our lives, which is why I decided to create playlists describing each year.

Freshman year was exciting and nerve-wracking. You are a small fish in a big pond. My favorite part about freshman year was the football and basketball games. I thought it was so fun to dress up for the themes and to shout the chants at the games. The songs I chose for my freshman year playlist are about finding your identity and living in the moment.

Sophomore year was more

laid back, but also more stressful workload-wise. I took my first two AP classes and didn't know what to expect from those classes.

However, I had adjusted to the school and felt more comfortable. My favorite part of sophomore year was being able to drive. I felt very independent and loved to go on long car rides with my friends, singing at the top of our lungs. My sophomore year playlist is all about freedom.

Junior year was a very emotional and challenging year. It started off as a great year with normal sporting events, homecoming, and in person school. However, it didn't finish that way. The pandemic sent us home in March and it was a huge adjustment. I was upset that we had to miss out on certain activities, but I was also very grateful that we got a normal school year for more than half of the year.

My favorite part of junior year was making memories with my friends. The pandemic made me cherish my relationships with my friends and family and taught me to never take them for granted.

My playlist for junior year is about the workload of junior year and rolling with the punches from the pandemic.

Senior year has been a little disappointing, but understandable due to the circumstances. Adapting to virtual school was a struggle, but it has also allowed me to focus more on myself. I have been able to nanny during the school year and spend more time doing activities that I enjoy.

Although we missed out on sporting events, homecoming, Halloween, etc, I wouldn't change this year. My favorite part of senior year has been the fake prom that a small group of my friends did outside of school. My senior year playlist is sad, but also happy at the same time.

My four years of high school went by in the blink of an eye. I remember when I couldn't wait for freshman, sophomore, and junior year to be over, but this year feels a little different. I will cherish my high school memories forever, and I can't wait for the next chapter of my life!

Freshman Year:

“Fifteen,” Taylor Swift
“Glamorous,” Fergie

“Young Folks,” Peter Bjorn and John

“Walking on a Dram,” Empire of the Sun

“Make Your Own Music,” Cass Elliot

Sophomore Year:

“Ridin’ Solo,” Jason Derulo

“Float On,” Modest Mouse

“Troublemaker,” Weezer

“Miss Independent,” Ne-Yo

“B*tch, Don’t Kill My Vibe,”

Kendrick Lamar

Junior Year:

“No Sleep,” Wiz Khalifa

“Emotions,” Boy Named Banjo

“Laugh Now Cry Later,” Drake

“Hard Work Pays Off,” Future

“The Way Life Goes,” Lil Uzi Vert

Senior Year:

“Closing Time,” Semisonic

“Big Girls Don’t Cry,” Fergie

“Where’d All the Time Go,” Dr.

Dog

“King Gucci,” Gucci Mane

“Come Together,” Beatles

Seniors Then & Now: Sports

Take a look at how much these senior athletes have grown!

Ashley Hemp

Soccer



Then



Now

PHOTO: ASHLEY HEMP

Maggie Linthicum

Softball



Then



Now

PHOTO: MARGIE LINTHICUM

Lauren Hargrove

Soccer



Then



Now

PHOTO: LAUREN HARGROVE

Ethan Johnson

Soccer



Then



Now

PHOTO: ETHAN JOHNSON



Most Likely to Have a Unique Senior Year
DSF Class of 2021

