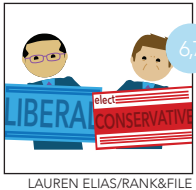
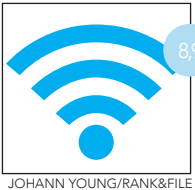




**Features:**  
A staff writer shares her week-long experience in Denmark with an exchange program.



**C-Spread:**  
Young Republicans and Democrats expand as a result of the current election.



**Opinion:**  
Poor, unusable Wi-Fi forces Apple users to be offline during the school day.



**Arts&Style:**  
Theater program takes on former student's play about re-defining gender roles.



**Sports:**  
Varsity cheerleading makes history with their first Conference 13 victory.

# rank&file

Wednesday, October 26, 2016  
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George C. Marshall High School  
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gcmnews.net

## Rivals unite in support of #JustinStrong

by kate carniol

Justin Lee was set to graduate in 2017 before doctors diagnosed him during his sophomore year with Acute Flaccid Myelitis, a virus similar to polio that has devastating effects by attacking a person's nervous system and spinal cord. The entirety of the community rallied behind Lee and his family, creating t-shirts and bracelets and raising money to help support them.

The virus is so rare that there have only been 121 cases confirmed since August 2014, with only three of the victims making full recoveries. Despite the odds, Justin's friends and family have not given up hope that he will become the fourth survivor of this disease.

For the past year-and-a-half, Justin has been in and out of the hospital and has to live with 24 hour nursing, something that his mother struggled to find. To help the Lee family pay for the medical expenses, friends created a GoFundMe in April 2015, and have since raised over \$120,000 in donations.

"The community support for Justin has been so amazing and really shows what an integral part Justin is to our class," senior Gillian McIntyre said. "Support has been unreal from the crazy number of friends he has from so many schools."

In order to raise more awareness for Justin's condition, both Marshall and James Madison High School decided to make the traditional rivalry game a purple-out for both schools. The impact of this gesture is very valuable to friends of Justin.



GWYNETH MURPHY/RANK&FILE

The Marshall Mob led a "purple-out" in support of Lee at the varsity football game on Oct. 6. Madison High School put their rivalry aside and joined the Mob by wearing all purple in their student section to cheer on Lee, who made a brief appearance at the game.

"It really means so much to all of us to see everyone come together and put aside the differences between Madison and Marshall for someone that we all care about so much," McIntyre said.

The football team recognizes Lee each game by carrying out his jersey and playing for people who are unable to participate anymore, a tradition continued in the game against Madison.

"Having the [game] dedicated to Justin was more than anyone could have asked for," senior and varsity football player Paul Plawin said. "I know since this would've been his senior year that doing that meant a lot to Justin and his family."

Lee's friends and family hope the support from the Marshall community continues on past the 2016-17 school year.

"It was amazing to see the Marshall and Madison community come together around football and Justin," Plawin said. "It's something I hope Marshall will continue long after Justin would've graduated."

The senior class carries with them memories and lessons that they gained from Lee.

"He's taught us so much about the meaning of toughness and strength," McIntyre said. "Our senior year is without a doubt for him."

## newsbriefs

### Class of 2019 elects dog to homecoming court

The class of 2019 is making history this homecoming season as the first class to not only elect two female students to be crowned as members of homecoming court, but a dog as well.

Athena, the one-and-a-half year old Cavachon, garnered the most votes through Blackboard's nomination system, along with sophomore Lydia Coldwell.

However, concerns arose regarding a dog on campus, which would violate FCPS health code regulations. She could potentially lessen the formality of the event and draw attention away from the others elected.

Instead, so as to honor Athena's election, the crown will go to her owner and sophomore Gabriela Stapleton, alongside Coldwell.

"At first I thought only a few of my friends would vote for Athena but then a lot of people actually did and I thought it was really funny," Stapleton said. "I know it would be a big hassle to get her to come to the game, which is a bummer, but I am super glad to still be a part of the homecoming court myself."

by lauren elias



E. TRIANA

Stapleton poses with Athena at the beach in Ocean City during the summer of 2014, when she first got her dog.

### FCPS drives the success of county economy

The Fairfax County Public School system is a major source of economic activity within Fairfax County.

"A lot of FCPS is super dependent on taxpayer money for funding, as everything is pretty highly regulated," junior and campaigner for FCPS tax reform Alexandra Lyalikov said.

These taxes generate employment, wages and salaries throughout the county, making FCPS the largest employer by accounting for about four percent of Fairfax County's employment.

According to the FCPS economic impact report, FCPS invests \$1.6 billion to be re-spent in support of the local economy, contributing \$2.2 billion to the county's economy overall by supporting local retail and consumer businesses.

by janan iranbomy

## Population growth spurs policy changes

by kiley moriarty

The increasing student and staff population impacts the structure of Learn, class sizes, bus crowding, and teacher classrooms. According to Principal Jeff Litz, there are 2,164 students and a total of 207 faculty and staff members as of September.

Due to the rising population, transportation services such as school buses are also seeing an increase in their occupants. For example, Bus Two now has 25 to 30 people on average.

For some, the abundance of people on the bus is overwhelming.

"I find it cramped, squished, and uncomfortable," junior and Bus Two rider Michelle Fuhrer said.

Another effect of the overpopulation is the enforcement of a new Learn policy this year. This policy prevents visiting multiple classrooms during one Learn period, library access without a library ticket and wandering the hallways. According to senior Molly McQueen, the policy has a highly

negative impact.

"I really think the new rules, especially that we can't leave a teacher after 9:50, are completely unnecessary for the majority of people," senior Molly McQueen said.

However, not everyone shares McQueen's dissatisfaction with the changes.

"I think the new rules of Learn have been thought out well and actually will help the student body to use their time more productively," junior Christopher Margiotta said. "The new rules are still pretty fair and give us a lot of freedom."

The increase in school population also impacted student teacher ratios. There is approximately 10 times more students than there are teachers.

In some teachers' cases, they have to move between two or three classes to teach because of the abundance of people taking each course.

Due to this population growth, Marshall is no longer a "small school, big heart", but rather a "medium school, big heart."

"I find [the buses to be] cramped, squished, and uncomfortable."

Michelle Fuhrer  
junior



# New tutoring center provides central location for assistance

by aqsa rashid

The General Tutoring Center has recently opened for all grades so that those struggling in a class can receive personalized help in core subjects and electives like computer science, world language and even ESOL.

Tutoring Center sponsor and English teacher Chynna Wendell began an early form of a tutoring center in her own room last year during Learn.

"Last year I saw that many of my current and former students were struggling with various subjects, so I enlisted tutors, mostly upperclassmen, to come to my room during Learn to help these kids," Wendell said.

Other teachers now co-supervise the center for similar reasons.

"I saw [the center] as an opportunity to get to know students that are not in my classes," history teacher Ross Naquin said. "I also thought it would be a great way to help struggling students, and this gives students another way to ask for help here at Marshall."

The center is open Tuesdays through Fridays in the cafeteria during Learn.

"It really has been a good environment to get help and to get work done," Naquin said.

Foreign language tutors are students who are in an advanced level foreign language classes like French and Spanish.

The ESOL tutors are students who have been through the ESOL program themselves, and thus are better able to relate to the students they tutor.

Teachers recommend certain students to complete the application process and become peer tutors, while others come from various honor societies to earn hours at the center.

"We prefer our tutors to be upperclassmen because they will have had more teachers and more classes by then," Wendell said.

Tutors assign themselves to specific marked tables so that people can come in and know exactly where to go. No sign-up is required to visit the center.

In addition to the school subjects offered, the CyberPatriot club is starting to assimilate into the center too. The Cyber club is offering tutors to interested students who want to further prepare for the CyberPatriot competition. They will also assist in any cyber-related topics upon request.

"Tutoring computer science and Cyber is actually really easy, we start with a broad topic and do hands-on learning to get familiar with that subject, then move on to the next," senior Jared Zell said.

As the school year progresses and the workload heavies, all classes can come to the General Tutoring Center to ask for help on a certain subject or simply to have a quiet place to get work done.



AQSA RASHID/RANK&FILE

**Top:** Junior and tutor Roisin O'Dowd explains the steps on how to solve an algebra problem to sophomore Jane Hurley as she works on completing her math corrections.



**Left:** Sophomore Jackson Gurdak works on his math homework while senior and tutor James Hargrove answers questions related to an Algebra worksheet.

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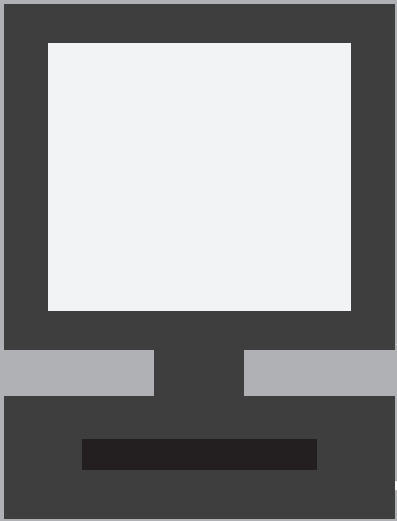
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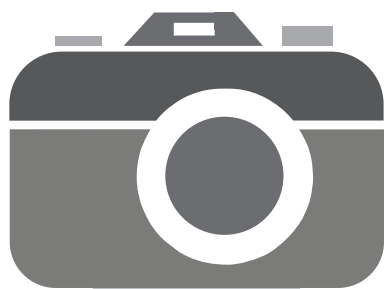


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# homecoming hot spots

compiled by lauren elias and gwyneth murphy

*Regardless of the strong annual turnout for the dance, according to these homecoming groups, the more popular part of the night is the dinner and pictures.*



## At home

"We aren't going somewhere super fancy for taking pictures. We went to my house last year and we're going to do that this year, too. I think it's just a lot more relaxed and that it will take away the stress of the dance in general. There's just so much that builds up to it, like buying dresses or reservations that would've happened if you went to somewhere more formal for dinner."

—Emma Flye, sophomore



## Maggiano's

"We're going to Maggiano's for dinner because they have a great, friendly, atmosphere and a family-type environment. The majority of the people in my group are my friends, and Maggiano's has the nicer dinner feel while being a causal restaurant."

—Lauren Pelzner, junior



## IHOP

"Last year for food [my group and I] went to Silver Diner and to go along with that theme, this year we're going it iHop. I think it's kind of fun to not go somewhere super fancy because then you're not stressed out about the place you're eating or the people around you and you can just have fun."

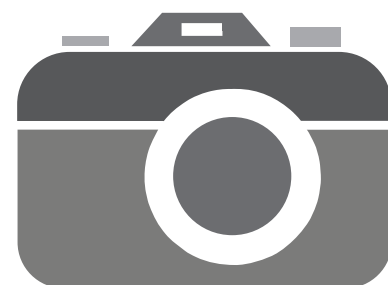
—Emma Flye, sophomore



## Meadowlark Park

"My group is taking pictures at Meadowlark Park because it a beautiful place that has the crisp fall colors in the leaves that will complement the dresses and suits of all members."

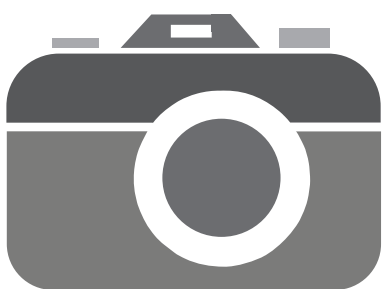
—Lauren Pelzner, junior



## Mosaic District

"Normally, I know people go to super fancy restaurants but there's just three of us, so we thought we'd go to someplace healthy and more casual. The three of us aren't super rich or anything so we thought we'd hang around the Mosaic District for a while. Plus, there are more options there so we don't need to stick to one cuisine."

—Sanya Gulati, sophomore



## At home

"My friends are going to come to my house because we have a big porch in front where's there's nice sunlight. I also have my own camera because I'm a photography student. Although, if we have enough time and the sunlight is still looking nice on camera then we might take pictures outside of where we're eating. My house has a lot of windows, so it's super open with a lot of natural sunlight and I feel that looks good in pictures. I feel when you're at home you can get ready at your own pace. You don't need to feel rushed or anything. It's just much more convenient."

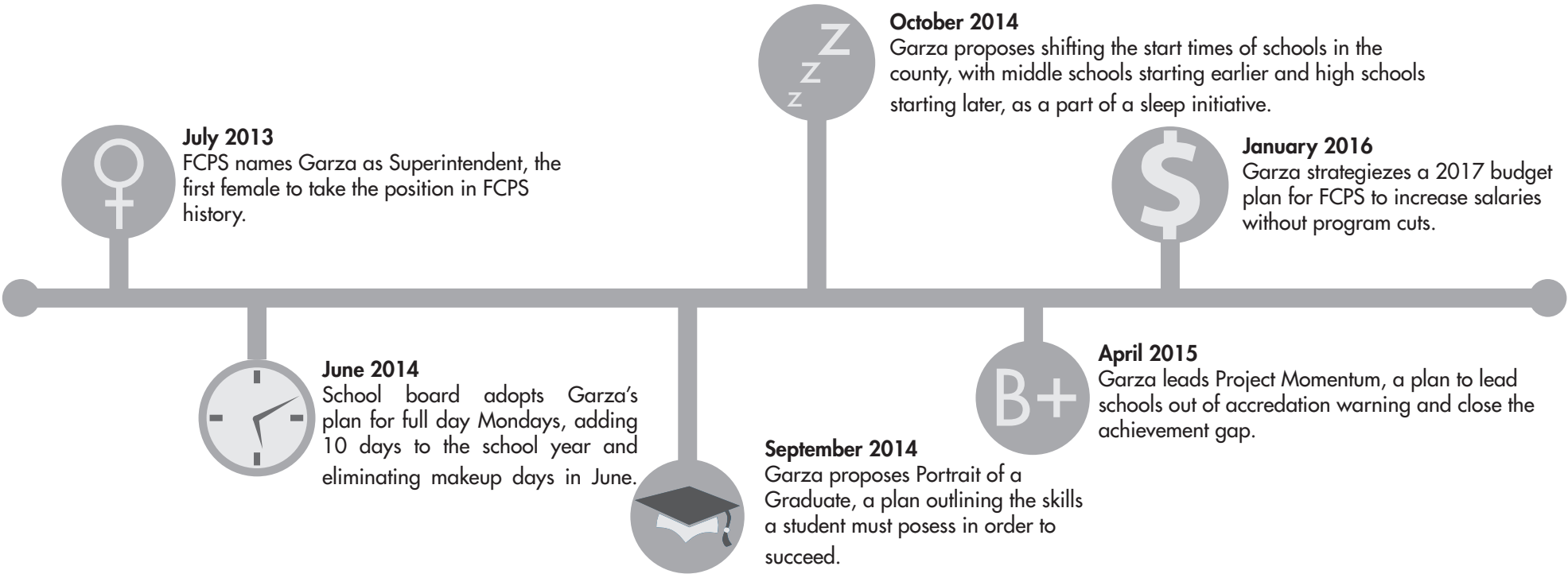
—Sanya Gulati, sophomore



# Tenure of Superintendent Garza

compiled by lauren elias

In light of Dr. Karen Garza’s resignation as Superintendent, this timeline depicts some of Garza’s most impactful moments during her time at FCPS.



## Choir split benefits beginners

by aparna mathew

The choral department’s introductory-level ensemble has been split into two groups, Treble choir and Men’s choir, to give less experienced singers a chance to perform.

While the ensembles are beginner-level groups, all grades are encouraged to participate if they are interested in singing, but lack the experience to join a higher-level ensemble.

Students also have the opportunity to audition and move on to different ensembles, such as Camerata or Statesmen Singers, that require a more advanced skill-set.

Both Men’s and Treble choir focus on honing vocal techniques as well as learning about musical periods and styles. They also work on basic singing techniques, such as learning to properly read and sing scales.

Camerata and Statesmen Singers are ensembles that work on material that

requires extensive skills and experience.

Despite this, choral director Kelli Pierson stresses the importance of not labeling the choir groups based on skill level.

“I don’t want anyone to think that if you’re in Treble, then you’re not as good a singer as the people in Camerata,” Pierson said. Camerata member and sophomore Audrey Fauvel thinks that these two ensembles are beneficial due to the increasingly large number of students who are interested in the choral department.

“We have about 35 people in Camerata, and since the Marshall choir is so well known, we tend to have a lot of students,” Fauvel said.

Sophomore and Treble choir member Tavia Hale also thinks Treble choir is a positive change to the choral department that benefits the students.

“[Treble choir] gives students who maybe aren’t that into choir a chance to see what the department is like without



APARNA MATHEW/RANK&FILE

Left to right: senior Emma Ward, junior Tulsi Mehta and seniors Meghan Ward and Alexandra Stenseth start their vocal warmups for Statesmen Singers.

the pressure of auditioning,” Hale said.

Regardless of the split into different ensembles, the choral department offers a diverse group of singers, who unify as

one group.

“Choir is a great community to be a part of and it somehow manages to feel like my second family,” Hale said.

IN ONE WEEK

## The Denmark Lifestyle

by mia toser

### destinations

One of the prettiest places I went to was Nyhavn. Nyhavn is a canal bordered with vividly colored 17th and early 18th century townhouses and filled with hundreds of historical ships. It was the most submerged I was into the Danish society. I also saw the Little Mermaid Statue. It was smaller than I anticipated, but it was interesting to see something so well known in the United States that originated in Denmark. Christiania is a neighborhood in downtown Copenhagen that is living outside of the law. It is free to live in the neighborhood, but you must be accepted by the other residents. I think that it is very strange that this town has lasted so long without being shut down. Inside the gates of Christiania, there are many abandoned houses, spray painted skate parks, small stores and people on crazy self-made bikes.



### food

As part of the exchange program, the Danish students were required to make a film starring the Americans, and they made us try strange Danish foods. We ate gross stuff like sild, fish in a jar, torskerogn, a mix between cat food and tuna, and gajol, which is extra salty licorice. Aside from those things, all of the food is much better than in the United States. I had this dessert called flødeboller, which is a pastry containing egg whites, sugar and chocolate, which literally crumbles in your mouth and I have never tasted anything more beautiful.

### transportation

For the most part, we got around on the metro and train. On the metro, paying is on the honor code and you swipe your card on an ungated platform. This is interesting to me because it is so trusting, and I would expect the policy to be abused, but it rarely is. I only ran into a problem once, when three other people and I did not get off at a stop when the rest of the Americans did and we were lost in Denmark for 15 minutes. Although I never did this, most people in Denmark get around by bikes. These bikers are not your average, slow bikers, they are as fast as cars in lanes right next to them.

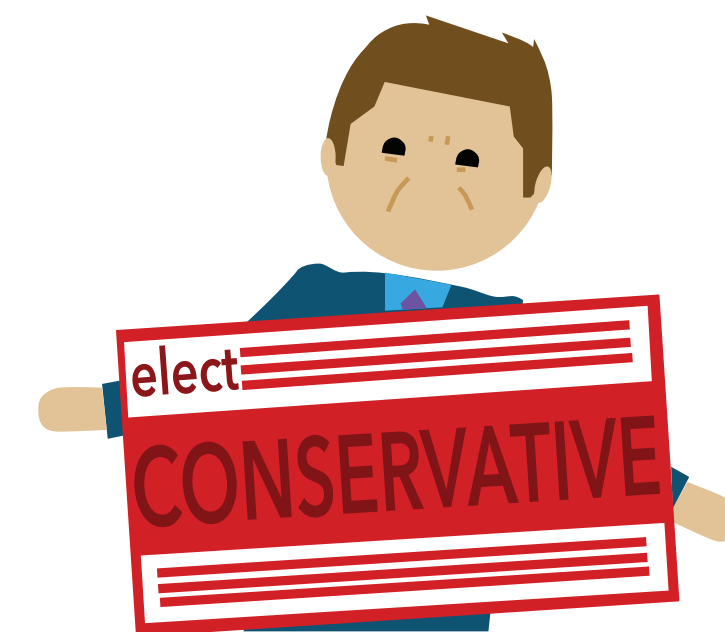
### flight

Eight hours on a plane may seem like a long time and I can assure you that it is. Thankfully, we got to move around on the plane to sit near our friends. However, I barely got two hours of sleep. Instead, I played games on the airplane entertainment screen and watched movies. The trip to Denmark was much tougher than the returning flight because it felt like I stayed up for 35 hours, due to the six hour time difference. Denmark is a beautiful place and I will never forget the great memories I made.

# Red, white & bipartisanship

Political participation in the Young Republicans and Democrats Marshall chapters surges in preparation for the upcoming presidential election

by lauren elias and gwyneth murphy



## Growing Organizations

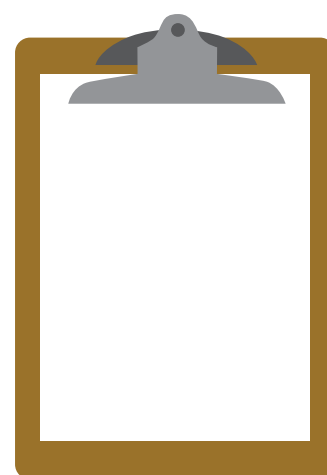
In the last few years, political participation among Marshall students has drastically increased due to the growth of the Young Republicans and Young Democrats chapters.

This past year, club leadership accomplished their goal to give a forum for their peers' voices to be heard.

"The Marshall Young Democrats was started when I first got to Marshall. From my understanding, the club had existed during the 2012 election, but fizzled out after that," senior and Young Democrats president Raman Khanna said. "[But] we have reached a milestone to be proud of: over one hundred Statesmen are a part of the club."

Similar growth can be seen in the Young Republicans club. One could attribute this to their goal of being an active and large political voice.

"I would really like the Young Republicans club to take on a bigger role in the Marshall community," junior and Young Republicans member Ethan Hsu said.



## Collaboration

In order to unite members of both parties, the two clubs made it a point to have collaboration at the top of their agendas for the year.

A debate between select members from each club, focused on topics related to young people, is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 4. Both chapters have already begun their preparation, and believe that this will be a great first step towards opening a dialogue between the two sides.

"[Debating] would also be a good way for people to form stances on the different issues and become more informed about the current political climate," Hsu said.

The Young Democrats want to move away from any previous divides that existed between the clubs and emphasize that any political voice, despite party, is valid.

"Soon after we formed, the Marshall Young Republicans formed, another great avenue for students to participate. It proves what is the core of our club's values: the voice of all students is important no matter political affiliation," Khanna said.



## Club Goals

Though both organizations made large strides towards growing their member count, hosting guest speaker events and collaborating with the opposing club, the Young Republicans hope to get more involved in the local campaigning process.

"I would love to have some field trips to D.C. such as touring the Capitol building. We would also like to get involved with helping the Fairfax County Republican Party campaign," Margiotta said.

Young Democrats also shares those goals, along with increasing peer engagement and awareness of government issues.

"Even though lots of us can't vote, it's important to be aware about what's going on in our government. Young Democrats promotes political activity among students. We are the future generation, so we want everyone to get involved in the political process," Metzger said.

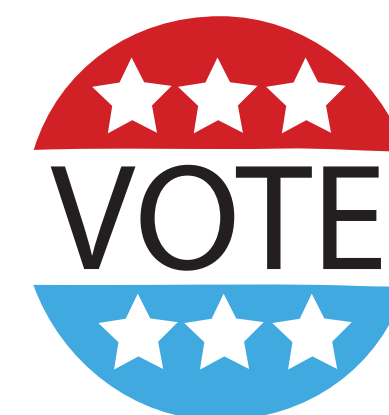
## Projects and Events

Both of these clubs have a history of participating in all kinds of service and political projects. But this year, both the Young Democrats and the Young Republicans hope to have speakers lined up as well.

"We'd love to get some local representatives in as guest speakers, such as assemblymen or even some national leaders since D.C. is right here," junior and Young Republican member Chris Margiotta said.

The Young Democrats club officers planned their first speaker event for Oct. 28, featuring Marc Elias, General Counsel to Hillary Clinton and father of Rank & File editor Lauren Elias. In addition to speakers, they plan to carry out a myriad of events past election day.

"We're going to have service projects and social events to get everyone involved and build the democratic community at Marshall," junior and Young Democrats projects and events coordinator Kristin Metzger said.



## young democrats on the issues

Climate change is one of the most important irreversible issues that define[s] this millennium. It's not whether or not we recognize the threats that define our future, but the actions we take that actually change the way we function. We need to invest our money in safe, clean energy production and ensure that our oil dependence is something that can be estranged in the near future. When we think of climate change, we think of a different world for our children and grandchildren. We want our world today to be the same as it will be tomorrow and for the days after.

— Alexandra Lyalikov, junior

Tariffs seem like such an easy solution to dealing with foreign competitors, but it's definitely not foolproof. If we put a tariff on Chinese goods, what's to stop producers in China from going to other foreign nations that have cheaper production costs? The goal with a tariff is to protect domestic production. But with less competition from foreign markets, domestic producers can increase their prices. Tariffs put the burden on consumers, who end up paying more and they have less choice. Lastly, China could retaliate to Trump's tariffs by implementing their own protections, ultimately leading to a trade war, which could halt world trade and be disastrous to the world economy.

— Kristen Metzger, junior

I believe that abortion is a personal choice, one only the woman in the position to need it should make. While an individual can personally view it however they please, they have no right to deny a woman the choice. This exact idea is the reason people call themselves pro-choice over pro-abortion, since while one person might be able to handle the responsibilities of a baby if they fell pregnant, not everyone is. I once stumbled across a horrifying video of a woman who lived in a country where abortion wasn't legal... women should never have to go through [unsafe abortions].

— Jennifer Cole, sophomore

## young republicans on the issues

An issue that [concerns me is] the recent bombings and attacks that ISIS has claimed responsibility for. It is clear that our homeland security is not as strong as it should be. Because of our government's current refrain from taking actions to prevent terrorists attacks against the United States we look weaker as a country which may cause more attacks in the future as ISIS or other terrorist groups take advantage of our passiveness. I strongly believe more drastic measures should be taken by the government to ensure safety for Americans. It is important to me that our future president is concerned and passionate about our safety as a country.

— Erin Williams, junior

I think that limiting the free market through taxes and regulations will hinder the free market and cause America to lag behind other super powers in terms of innovation. The Constitution lists the requirements of a market economy and it also states the need to promote the general welfare, which supports a more command economy. These two ideas are realized in the mixed economy that the United States has, and I think that moving towards a more socialist economy would ruin the American economy by taking away the survival of the fittest business climate that made America a titan in the world economy.

— Ethan Hsu, junior

As a devout Catholic, I truly believe that abortion is wrong. Life begins at conception and ends at natural birth. Murder, euthanasia, suicide and abortion are all ending a life and are morally wrong. There are always other options. I also believe that the Second Amendment should be taken exactly as it is written. Each law abiding American citizen had a right to own a firearm. Proposed bans on certain weapons and registration of guns will only hurt the law abiding citizens' freedom, it will not stop criminals and terrorists from acquiring weapons.

— Chris Margiotta, junior



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# staff editorials

## Learn tickets violate library's original purpose

The new version of Learn in the library has caused unnecessary difficulties within the academic habits of students. The library underwent a change in policy regarding Learn usage at the beginning of the year. Now, students must visit either the day before or the morning of the day they wish to attend Learn to receive a ticket that allows them to enter the library, up to the first 150 students. This policy is detrimental to students; by restricting the library, the administration is effectively restricting learning, and a new solution must be found.

Up to the end of last year, the library had become an area that was used to allow groups of people to meet, socialize and relax, rather than use it for studying and academic work as was intended. Last school year, the library had 93,000 visits during the school year, an average of 602 students daily, according to the Marshall library official statistics. Of these, 35 percent came during Learn, totaling to roughly 32,000 visits.

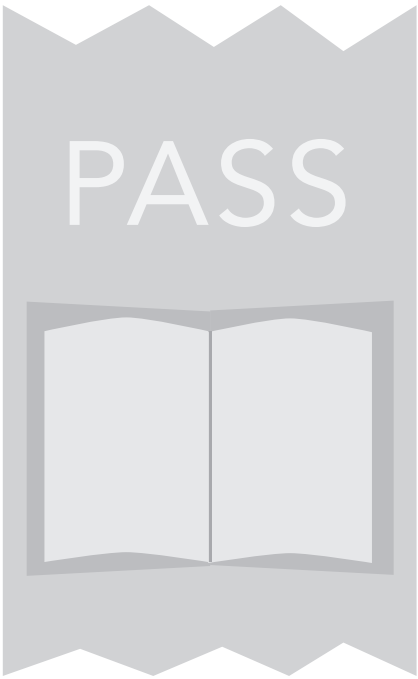
Nearly 100,000 visits is an enormous number for a school with a population of roughly 2,000, and demonstrates that the library is a very powerful tool for students

to use. Yet, clearly, the administration feels that students were mishandling the privilege.

All this begs the question of whether the value of reducing the crowds in Learn is worth the added effort for students trying to use the library for studious purposes.

It is unfair to force students to effectively reserve a spot in the library a day beforehand. Instead, if the librarians want to make the library into a quiet study hall area, they should enforce a policy of silence, similar to many of the policies implemented by other teachers during Learn. That way, attendees can still use the library on short or no notice, and it will return to its previous status as a place for them to use for academic purposes during Learn.

It is understandable why the school decided to implement a ticket system. The library was disastrous last year in terms of organization, and something had to be done in order to prevent the same chaos during this coming year. However, there must be a better system than to simply limit its availability as a resource to the community. The library is an incredibly valuable resource and it is ridiculous for students to be restricted on its use. The ticket policy should be repealed.



## Wi-Fi fails to meet necessary internet standards

Wi-Fi is a service that many people can't live without. They may use it for school work or just to go through Youtube when they're bored, but everyone knows how hard it can be to do those things when the internet is slow or not even usable, which seems to be a recurring problem when it comes to the district's Wi-Fi.

To gain access to the school's Wi-Fi, a certain software has to be downloaded to allow for the device to connect. This software allows for users to connect to the Wi-Fi; however, because many cannot download the service, they are left behind and unable to connect. This problem happens predominantly with Apple devices.

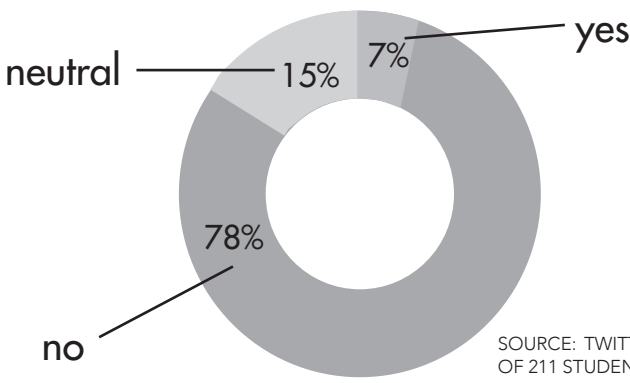
Once connected to the Wi-Fi, many other problems appear, even with things like simple Google searches taking ages to load. Accessing Blackboard and using Google Docs is also affected by the poor Wi-Fi and make working harder than it should be. This is a big inconvenience because it makes getting simple necessities for academic work almost impossible. The slow connection even affects the teachers who use it to teach their class and complete the work they have as well.

The cause of this poor connection is most likely due to high traffic, with the sheer number of people who use the Wi-Fi daily. However, this doesn't really excuse the fact that it can barely load a simple website.

The slow internet connection is a problem that many will have to deal with this school year. It is what's been given to us and we need to use it accordingly until it changes, but this can be a simple fix on the county's part. An upgrade of the connection would help immensely and would make everyone work more efficiently with a stronger internet connection. Until this problem gets solved, everyone will just have to live with it.

## community poll

Is the school Wi-Fi satisfactory?



SOURCE: TWITTER POLL OF 211 STUDENTS

## Rank & File to emphasize social media presence

To inherit leadership of this publication is simultaneously a privilege and a responsibility. Last year, Rank & File earned an All-American designation with five marks of distinction from the National Scholastic Press Association, the best the publication has done in the past ten years. This was accomplished with a modest staff of 12 journalists. We enter this coming year with a larger staff of 16 and a brand-new staff adviser. As such, the pressure is on to continue its legacy as an informative, interesting and community-oriented public forum.

I don't intend to drastically alter the face of Rank & File from how it has been before. For over two years, I have seen it continue to evolve in terms of content, style and design and I have gained a deep respect for the reputation for quality it has built. Rather, I intend to expand the limits

of this publication. I want it to reach larger audiences, appeal to all demographics and become a voice for an even greater community.

Our primary method of achieving these goals is a marked emphasis on Rank & File's online presence. The fact of the

### letter from the editor

matter is that a very large percentage of the community gains their knowledge from the internet and if we wish to remain relevant, we must follow the direction of the tide. This will constitute itself as Rank & File maintaining a greater presence on social media such as Twitter and Snapchat, where readers will be able to view

exclusive quotes, footage of events and consistent, informative reporting.

In terms of Rank & File's website, the site will become home for numerous exclusive articles in each monthly print issue. By the end of the year, the design of the site will receive a remarkable overhaul that is more in keeping with our current style.

We hope that this consistent presence will serve to build more support for our endeavours and potentially inspire journalists-to-be, including those 19 currently enrolled in the Journalism 1 class.

We thank returning patrons for their continued support and welcome new readers to Rank & File. We hope for a year full of both growth and continued quality.

Ethan Zack  
Editor-in-Chief

# Strict English class options limit opportunities

by gwyneth murphy

In the mathematics curriculum, students are expected to be well above their grade’s natural course level, however those same expectations do not carry over to English.

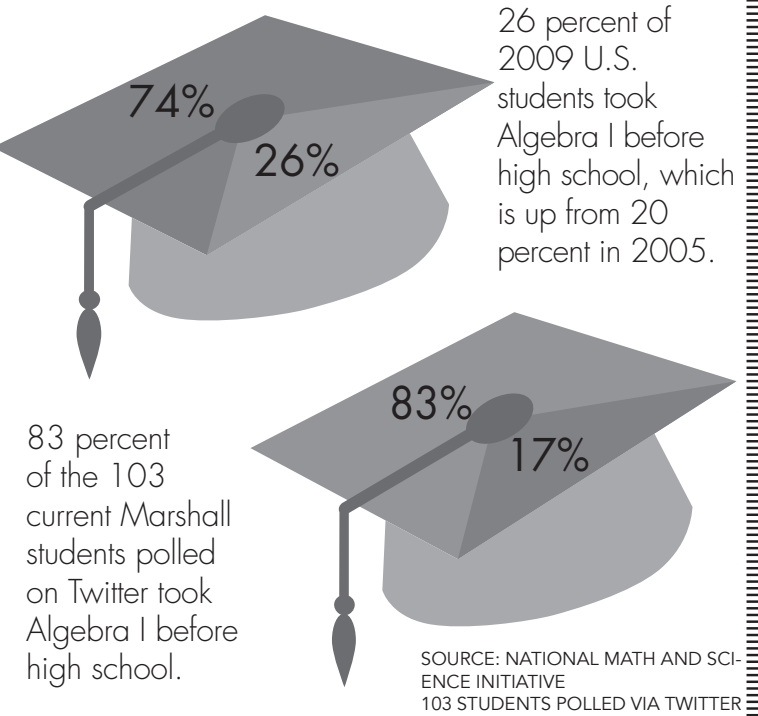
Ideally, someone should have the ability to move up in any class where they feel they are not being intellectually challenged.

Instead, we have a system in which those who are high performing in math skip three or four years of courses, leaving those who are not math-oriented in the dust.

They are then able to put more advanced courses on their transcript and applications, making it appear that they are better than one of their peers who only takes their grade’s normal math course.

The way the system operates entirely ignores the fact that these people could be in the normal course because they are better at another subject, and not because they are “stupid” or “lazy,” which is the unfair conclusion peers and

## takers of Algebra 1 before high school



adults tend to jump to.

But take those same people and put them in English and you see those who excel in math sitting comfortably in the curriculum that coincides with their grade and those who are more advanced in the subject desiring an increase in pace and challenge, but are unable to move up.

They get no credit for their abilities in English while struggling to be in the highest math class to keep up with expectations and standards of what a “smart person” is supposed to be like.

So why is Math considered a more valuable intellectual indicator than English? Why must a hardworking and talented English student receive zero credit for their understanding, while a hardworking and talented math student receives the opportunity and acknowledgement of moving up course after course above their peers?

While it is challenging to gauge whether someone is more advanced in English than someone else, that’s true of anything in that subject.

That’s just another reason why advancing your skills in English is so important. It is the only subject that features a broad life skill uninfluenced by a strict answer. If someone feels that they need to be further challenged by a skill like that, it is their prerogative.

At the end of the day, it is a matter of leaving it up to the student to decide their capabilities and to have an opportunity to excel in any subject.

But the unfortunate reality is, those that are four Math courses above their peers are more respected as driven and ambitious by colleges, businesses, teachers, adults and their peers than someone who isn’t ahead in that same way.

Even participation in school activities like honor societies are affected. A freshman or sophomore in a higher level math class can join the math honor society before the typical entrance in junior year, but a freshman or sophomore with the ability and interest to tutor people in English can’t join the English honor society because their course is not advanced enough.

If the goal of a high school is to reinvent a million different images of what an intelligent, hard working person can look like, be interested in and excel in, this system come up a bit short.

Teaching young learners that certain talents are more valued and can lead to greater recognition over others isn’t valuable for the encouragement and celebration of everyone’s individual and unique calling.

## tweets

- 1st time in Marshall’s history, Conference Champions in cheer. Way to go ladies and Coach Dom!!!.

Jeff Litz  
Principal  
@GCMPrincipal
- Takin’ banners and makin’ history

Alyx Dela Rosa  
Senior  
@alyxdr14
- YOUR STATESMEN CHEERLEADERS JUST WON THE CONFERENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.

Haley Tonizzo  
Junior  
@haley\_t13

## letters

### Schools should teach life skills

I’ve been in a committed, emotional rollercoaster of a relationship with school for as long as some short-lived marriages.

It is forever the lurking shadow that follows me everywhere, yet I feel that it has failed to prepare me for the real world. Yes, education is very important and allows us to understand our world and better it. The real world, however, also consists of paying rent or bills, paying college loans and overall new responsibility. School does not prepare me for these things. I don’t know how to pay taxes, apply for a loan or balance a checkbook. Yes, you can take an elective to learn these concepts, but not everyone has time for that.

School also pressures me to decide my future, without supplying the knowledge of what’s out there. The system does not inform you of careers you could follow, yet somehow, I am supposed to figure out my future life by going through four years of tests and projects. This is what I despise about school.

Imey Inyang  
Sophomore

Send your signed letters (50 to 125 words) to room D211. Letters can also be submitted to letters@gcmnews.net, but will only be considered upon in-person verification. Letters will be published at the editors’ discretion. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the paper.

# School board rushes nondiscrimination policy

by chloe pignano

The Fairfax County School board voted to include sexual orientation and later gender identity to its nondiscrimination guide within the Students Rights & Responsibilities handbook about a year and a half ago. That means up until the start of last school year it wasn’t against FCPS policy to openly discriminate against a student, staff member or job applicant who is not heterosexual and/or gender nonconforming. It is great that this policy was passed. I am a huge advocate for the LGBT community, but I feel that this ruling did more harm than good.

The school board is being criticized for the process of approving the policy to be rushed. The new policy protecting gender nonconforming people was passed only two months after the Virginia Attorney General issued an opinion allowing school boards to expand protections to transgender people.

“[It took] 10 years of study to institute later high school start times,” school board member Patty Reed said, who abstained from voting on adding the new policy to the SR&R handbook.

“After we pass this policy tonight, nothing will change in how we handle cases of transgender and gender nonconforming students and employees,” school board member Ryan McElveen said at the school board meeting where the anti-discrimination towards gender nonconforming people was being passed.

It was entirely unnecessary to rush the passing of the new policy because, according to McElveen, nothing will change. By rushing the passing of this new policy, the school board garnered more negative attention than positive.

“This board has never received a concern regarding a bathroom incident,” McElveen said at the same school board meeting. “We have never received a concern

about a transgender staff member. And we have never received a concern about a transgender student playing on a sports team. Never.”

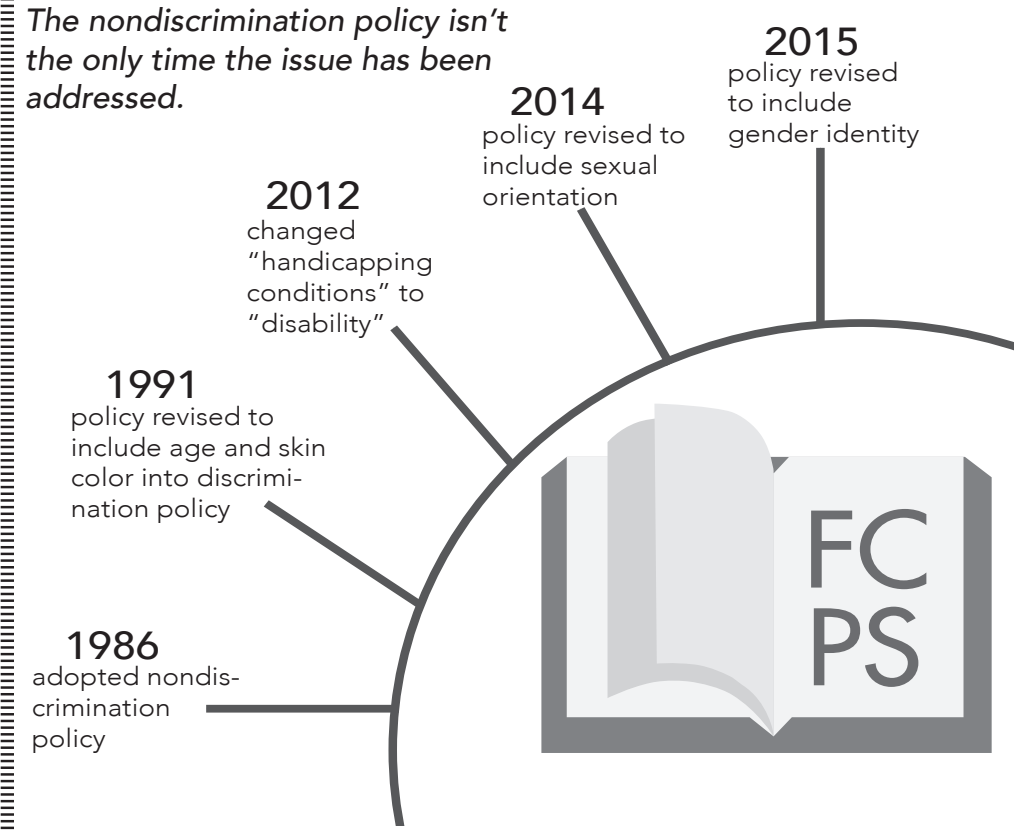
If the school board never had an issue involving any transgender school member then why was it necessary to rush the policy passing? It wasn’t. It’s one thing if schools had issues involving discrimination, but according to McElveen, there was none. There was no legitimate reason for the policy to have been rushed.

In December of last year, an unnamed student and the head of the Traditional Values Coalition filed a suit against the school board for overstepping its bounds when it changed the policy to bar discrimination of students and staff based on their gender identity or sexual orientation.

I think that FCPS did a good job in protecting individuals who fall under the LGBT umbrella, but they did overstep their bounds by rushing the new policy. If the passing of the new policy wasn’t rushed then the suit wouldn’t have been filed.

By rushing the implementation of this bill into the SR&R policy, the school board negatively affected the quality of an extremely important step forward in equality. The school board should have waited until they could properly introduce the proposed changes and heard opinions from the community about the changes before full on voting on the issue.

## changes in SR&R policies over the years





# Theatre program produces play written by 2015 alumna

by anna zelenski

The theatre program produced class of 2015 graduate Liz Carlson’s adapted play, *The Sea Cook: A Story For Girls*. The cast had been preparing for the show as early as the first week of school and premiered on Oct. 13.

“We [the theatre program] have 18 people in the cast,” junior Sonali Doshi said. “The work ethic among cast members is great. Everybody in the cast is really committed and excited about the production, and it makes rehearsal in general a really positive atmosphere.”

While 18 cast members might seem like a lot compared to past performances, the size along with the play itself has some differences that make it stand out from the others. Liz Carlson, a former theatre performer herself, rewrote the story to make it special to her and the theatre program. She took a spin off of the famous *Treasure Island* and focused on strong female roles,

“Liz’s story is special because it gender reversed all roles,” junior Courtney Johnson said. “Typically there is no or very few girls while the show is centered around the idea of the girls empowering

the guys.”

The theatre program has gained attention for its raw talent in the singing and dance department, which in the past have won several awards for other productions. The play that the program produced last year, *Loserville*, was a huge success, and contributed to this reputation.

“That show was different primarily because [it was] a musical, so it had singing and dancing, which this show doesn’t have,” Doshi said, “The cast of *Loserville* was also a bit bigger, closer to 30, which made the whole process a little bit different.”

The cast will be interpreting new techniques to the play that they have never tried before. They will be simulating a beach, similar to the one found in the National Building Museum this summer.

“Our set for *The Sea Cook* consists of many multi level platforms that form together into the ship, the *Hispaniola*,” junior Isaac Feldman said. “The ball pit contains over 160,000 balls that originally came from the National Building Museum’s beach exhibit.

Even with the challenges of new techniques that the cast will use and a



ANNA ZELENSKI/RANK&FILE  
Junior Tanaka Muvavarirwa and senior Amelia Lindsay act out a fight scene in the theatre department’s new show “*The Sea Cook*” written by former student Liz Carlson.

smaller cast in general, they couldn’t be more excited to produce a play from one of the theatre department’s own.

“I’m not nervous at all about doing a production written by a former GCM student,” Doshi said.

The community as a whole has taken a big interest in the show, which has been noted for featuring solemn lessons and topics of discussion while still being full of action packed scenes and frequent interjections of humor.

Carlson’s production has been something the cast of the theatre program has enjoyed producing and has been enjoyed by all ages who have been a part of witnessing the production.

“In general, I think our gender swapped version of “*The Sea Cook*” is really amazing and means something really important,” Doshi said. “It’s really amazing to be a part of a show that is so close to the Statesmen Theatre Community.”



WARNER BROS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.  
Christian Wolff (Ben Affleck) explains his findings to Dana Cummings (Anna Kendrick) who works at the Robotics company that hired him.

rating:

5/5

# The Accountant refreshes thrillers

by johann young

The *Accountant* premiered on Oct. 14th and is a fresh entry into the action-thriller genre. Ben Affleck plays Christian Wolff, a math genius with high-functioning autism who handles the books for some of the deadliest criminals in the world. This makes it hard for Wolff to form close bonds with people, while also being tormented by the memories of growing up with his military father.

The story focuses around Chris finding out that his seemingly legitimate client, a robotics company run by Lamar Black (John Lithgow), may not be as clean as he thought, and a pair of treasury agents (J.K. Simmons and Cynthia Addai-Robinson) are close to figuring out who he is.

Some of the more interesting moments in the film are when it focuses on Ben Affleck’s character as a whole. Ben Affleck managed to pull off a lot of expression while doing very little, and even put some humor into most scenes. Affleck even excels in his combat scenes with intense hand-to-hand

combat and gun play. Simmons, Kendrick and Bernthal do give strong performances but don’t bring anything to the table that we haven’t seen them do before.

Out of all the supporting actors, Cynthia Addai-Robinson, who’s mostly done TV roles, shines the strongest compared to her other stars. Addai-Robinson plays the treasury agent tasked with figuring out who Cristian really is. Her performance made her character intriguing to watch solve the mystery of who the *Accountant* really is. The chemistry she and Simmons shared also helped boost her performance by giving her character a reason for finding Chris and his associates.

Director Gavin O’Connor has given moviegoers one of the best action-thrillers in recent years. Ben Affleck’s quiet but deadly Christian Wolff is a character I hope he plays again in other films. While it was disappointing to not see anything new in their performances, Simmons, Kendrick and Bernthal were terrific casting choices. The *Accountant* is definitely a movie that an action fan must see.

## Upcoming movies in November



MARVEL STUDIOS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

November 4

Dr. Steven Strange’s (Benedict Cumberbatch) life changes after a car accident robs him of being able to use his hands. After traditional medicine fails, he finds the enclave and discovers a world of magic. Before long he is forced to help defend the worlds from an evil force and become the Sorcerer Supreme.



WARNER BROTHERS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

November 18

Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) has just finished a global excursion to find an array of magical creatures. However, after a No-Maj (non-wizard) named Jacob lets out some of the captured creatures, he must help recapture them and defend both the No-Maj and magic world.

Byte-Sized News

Rank & File’s online blog centered around video game reviews, opinions on the gaming industry and general updates on all things pixelated. Byte-Sized News, run by editor Johann Young, is the go-to place for keeping up with this ever-evolving medium.

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# Powderpuff unfair to fall athletes

by kate carniol

I’ve been waiting four years to finally play in the Powderpuff game, and now I’m being told I can’t. There’s a new rule being implemented that says that fall varsity athletes can-not participate in Powderpuff, with the reason being coaches are afraid of their athletes getting injured. While I understand wanting to preserve your athletes for future games and playoffs, the risk of getting injured during flag football is the same as getting injured during a practice. Flag football is essentially just running and pulling off tags from people’s hips. How is that any more dangerous than lifting and throwing people into the air or spiking balls at others?

I will admit that yes, you can get injured during the Powderpuff game, however, the risk of injury during the game is the same as the risk of injury during a practice. Multiple cheerleaders have gotten hurt during practice, myself included, and we now take over the athletic trainer’s room before practice. I understand coaches want to preserve their athletes for their own games and competitions, but there is nothing in flag football that turns it into an increased threat. If anything, it’s more dangerous having people who don’t normally play sports be on the team because that increases the risk for their own personal injury. I’m not saying the girls playing are incompetent and unathletic, but if they don’t normally play an intensive sport, they may make mistakes that result in someone else or themselves getting hurt.

Maybe some of the coaches were worried

## Opinion

about Powderpuff practices conflicting with varsity practices, but the only sport this would have been a problem for is cross country, because they practice right after school. For the rest of the varsity sports, they all practice later in the afternoon to accommodate for seniors taking Theory of Knowledge after school. Additionally with Powderpuff practices, they only run for an hour, which is almost no time at all, compared to the three hour cheer practices I face every week. It just makes no sense when actually thought about.

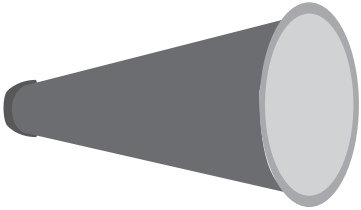
The way Powderpuff was promoted was misleading as well considering announcements and Twitter posts asked for girls “not playing a fall sport” to come and participate, however, the varsity volleyball coach allowed his athletes to play. Choosing to advertise the game for all girls who are not currently in season is deceptive and unclear if there is going to be an exception if coaches permit their athletes to be a part of the Powderpuff team.

Fall athletes aren’t allowed to participate, but members of the SGA can, which seems like a conflict of interest. You wouldn’t see the newspaper using someone else on staff as a source for an article, so why can people on student government get to play in the game?

The entire way Powderpuff has been set-up is simply unfair. If an athlete wants to play in a simple game of flag football, they should be allowed to. At the end of the day it comes down to wanting to have fun. It really isn’t that complicated and is put in place so people can catch a break and have a good time.

## community poll

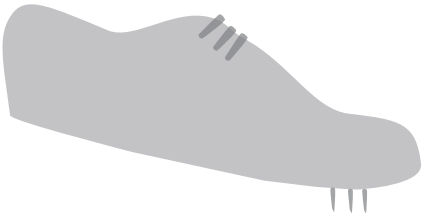
Did you want to play Powderpuff?



Cheerleading  
yes - 5 juniors  
5 seniors

Cross Country

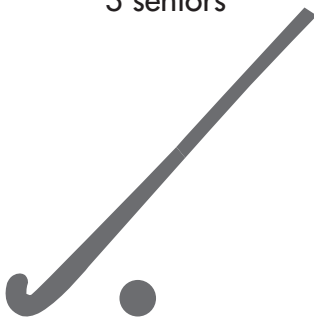
yes - 4 juniors  
2 seniors  
no - 3 seniors



Volleyball  
yes - 2 juniors  
2 seniors  
no - 1 junior  
3 seniors

Field Hockey

yes - 10 juniors  
6 seniors



SOURCE: SURVERY OF 43 JUNIOR AND SENIOR FEMALE VARSITY ATHLETES

this week in  
**varsity sports**

volleyball  
**Tonight**  
at Wakefield

cross country  
**Tonight**  
at Burke Lake

football  
**Friday**  
vs. Stuart

cheer  
**Saturday**  
Regionals at  
Stafford

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# Cheer dominates Conference 13

by anna zelenski

The varsity cheer team ditched the football sidelines and traveled to Wakefield High School to compete in their annual Capitol Conference Competition. They hoped to be a part of the 'GCM rising' movement, the new generation of winning athletes, by placing first this year. In past years, the team had placed seventh and eighth, with lower scores than they strived to achieve. With a new coach and talented freshmen, the team was determined to beat out their competitors and dominated at the conference competition, winning first place.

"Everyone on the team has the same goal, which is to win conference for the first time," senior and varsity cheerleader Alyx Dela Rosa said. "Everyone builds each other up to make sure we reach our goals and hit our stunts."

Although the cheerleaders have strong work ethic, with four practices a week and games on Friday nights, the team push themselves and their teammates to be better during practice.

"We have found a happy medium of a 'working hard and intensive' practice," Dela Rosa said. "[It's] a fun three hours with great girls. It's everything I wanted to see for my senior year."

The team doesn't get to demonstrate all of their intricate stunts at Friday night football games, but the annual conference competition emphasizes the importance of consistent practice of them nonetheless. As a result, they have put countless hours into working on their routines, and have a new found confidence for competition.

"It's the most productive year we've ever had" Dela Rosa said. "Our new coach brings more experience and skills to the team and has made us into a much better team than last year."

This new spark of motivation and intensive training is thanks to Varsity's new head coach, Dominic Borello. With an extensive background himself, he believes the strengths of a team lie within their integrity, self-motivation and dependability.

"Athletes who are committed, selfless and driven make up a strong team," Borello said. "Marshall cheer is full of hardworking, dedicated and selfless athletes who understand that success of their team is more important than their individual needs."

The team's motivation and drive is something that Borello noticed right from the beginning.

"From day one, the girls have embraced the new standard of Marshall cheer and are definitely prepared and feel



KAREN ESPALDON

From left to right: senior Alyx Dela Rosa, freshmen Kara-Dove Mutombo and Jillian Pignano, senior Chloe Pignano and junior Taylor Booth dance during varsity cheerleading's conference winning routine on Oct. 18 at Wakefield High School.

confident for their conference competitions" Borello said.

Although the intense practices are a major part to how the team planned to beat out the competition and impress the judges, their friendships and bonds encourage them to do well.

"We've had our cheer sleepover, and I don't think there is anything else we could do to get closer," sophomore and varsity cheerleader Emma Sahlgren said. "We are already a very close knit team."

Varsity cheerleading is on its way to becoming one of the most successful sports teams in history at Marshall and have proved themselves as such not only on the sidelines, cheering the statesmen football team to victory throughout their season, but by embracing their status as one of the top competitive and familial sports available.

## Kaepernick protest sparks debate amongst athletes

by tenzin tsering

Colin Kaepernick didn't care if anyone would pay attention to his protests when they started. In fact, he said in an interview with Business Insider that he wasn't "looking for approval," but he definitely received it. The national outcry of support came in various forms including the players who followed his example and the presidential candidates talking about the subject. Kaepernick went from a backup quarterback to the face of the Black Lives Matter movement in a matter of days.

Kaepernick first sat during the national anthem in protest of police brutality and racism during the pre-season, but did not gain attention until a picture was taken of him sitting, and he explained the reasoning behind his actions at a post game press conference. LeBron James even weighed in the issue of it, in the Cavalier's media day, by saying that standing for the national anthem is, "something [he] will do, it's who [he] is."

The protest has sparked many debates about police brutality and modern day racism, and both sides feel strongly about this issue.

"They don't have to be forced to do something they don't want to," junior and varsity golf player Gianmarco Starke said. While liberals feel that this is constitutional and that veterans fought for our right to protest and have freedom, conservatives say that him not standing to honor the flag is disrespecting all of the fallen soldiers and people who risked their lives for the country.

"I would support them in their thinking but would not join them in doing so," freshman football player Mayuk Sengupta said.

There hasn't been a case of someone kneeling on a sports team at Marshall yet, however there are still two more seasons before the year ends. With sports such as basketball, wrestling and soccer coming up, there is most likely going to be at least one person protesting.

"They have the freedom of speech to do it, but it's not the right place to [use it]," sophomore and varsity lacrosse player Ryan Therborn said.

This protest has spread across sports and has driven the issue of racial inequality to the forefront of American issues. With more seasons of professional and Marshall sports coming up, anything could happen.



HELEN OKER/COLUMBIAN

Varsity football player and sophomore Nicholas Laurine carries out the American flag onto the sidelines on the Oct. 6 game against Madison High School. Athletes have weighed in on their opinion if a teammate were to protest during the national anthem, however, there is yet to be a case.

## sports**brief**

### Athletics switch into 6A region for next year

For athletes participating in sports next year, the scope of conferences could become that much grander in scale. As a result of the increasing population, the administration has proposed a shift upwards in classification from the 5A Region to the 6A Region. Should the proposal go into effect, athletes would then be facing the largest schools in the district.

Director of Student Activities Joseph Swarm contributed to the plan and will argue in its defense before the final decision is made.

"We'll cross that bridge, I'll put up a fight and if I get outvoted, I get outvoted," Swarm said. "They'll do what's best for the students."

The actual shifting of classification occurs within the district every two or three years, following a gauge of population. One misconception is that the actual conferences themselves are changing, however, they are remaining constant from previous years.

"[VHSL] want us to stay, we're staying, we're not going anywhere," Swarm said.

Though the policy would go into effect for the next academic year, current athletes are already considering what the shift means for the future of the department.

"I'm actually kind of excited, because we're going to be playing more schools that I know people [at]," freshman volleyball player Rachel South said. "So I [would] get to play against friends and beat friends, which is way more fun than beating strangers."

The shift also has teams considering their approach to training, particularly toward a more intensive effort. South offered some advice to any of those participating in athletics next year.

"Get focused, don't fool around in practice and actually pay attention to the coach," South said.

by ethan zack



ETHAN ZACK/RANK&FILE

Senior Renee Zaky sets the ball for junior Sydney Alloy during varsity volleyball's Oct. 7 game against Falls Church High School. Following the shift into the 6A region, the Statesmen will no longer face the Jaguars.