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English teacher Brenna Killeen draws teaching inspiration from unconventional experiences.



Opinion:
Coconut oil user praises the increasingly popular product for its versatility and affordability.



C-Spread:
Black students discuss their voice and role models during Black History Month.



Arts&Style:
Theater receives fourth place for their performance of *Emil and the Detectives*.



Sports:
Swim and dive place second at Capitol Conference despite low crowd turnout this season.

rank&file

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George C. Marshall High School
7731 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22043
(703) 714-5511
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Orientation introduces IB

by johann young

Student Services held its annual Freshmen Orientation on Feb 8 to introduce the class of 2021 to their high school career and the course requirements to follow an IB track.

The event laid out every curricular and extracurricular activity with the hope of creating a welcoming atmosphere for prospective students.

"Tonight is all about choosing what they're going to take next year and to make sure they've taken things into consideration, like balancing life," Student Services Director Cindy Blakeley said.

But students weren't the only focus of the night. Families were also a focal point of the event, with many of the presenters focusing their booths on information that parents consider crucial to their child's success.

"Another important thing they get to learn at the freshmen transition program is that it can help the student [and their family] get the feel for the high school environment so they're comfortable when they get here," Student registrar Suzanna Pangilinan said.

Langley School eighth grader Grace Kellermen expressed satisfaction with the organization of the event, which engaged both parents and prospective students in the introduction of their future classes.

"I was at McLean last night and



JOHANN YOUNG/RANK&FILE

Junior Reza Mirzaiee paints at the Freshmen Orientation in order to promote the GCM art department. "I was projecting a medieval rendition of my IB English teacher, Mr. Macindoe onto the canvas," Mirzaiee said.

Marshall's is much better," Kellermen said. "It's much more welcoming and organized. There are more students, teacher and administrators [making it] more interactive and interesting."

Many of the curricular presentations outlined the courses the students would be taking in their high school career, with a focus on informing them of the IB track.

"I want them to know that they have options to take standard level and honors level, but that both courses in the ninth grade are gonna give them the opportunity to move into the IB track later in Marshall," social studies

department chair Dean Wood said.

The night established the necessary steps rising freshmen would need to take in order to qualify for the IB Diploma. Luther Jackson eighth grader Drew Hiller said attending the event gave him insight into what Marshall and the IB Diploma would be like.

"It's a good experience, I'm getting to know people, I'm getting to know classes and what I need to pass and get the IB diploma," Hiller said.

By the end of the night, the rising freshmen received a candid picture of what attending high school would be like.

newsbriefs

Gap Year Fair poses post graduation alternatives

USA Gap Year Fairs hosted an event in the cafeteria on Feb 7 for all Fairfax County high schoolers, to promote non-traditional programs available post graduation.

"[The fair] taught me all of the benefits of gap years," sophomore Kristen Ellis said. "They talked about a lot of things I never thought about, like how taking a gap year can inspire you and help you figure out what direction to take."

Preceding the fair, president of the Center of Interim Affairs Holly Bull gave a speech on her experience counseling potential gap year candidates.

"I think it's important that the gap time is something that you're using with intention and that there is work that goes into it," Bull said. "With gap time, you're starting to explore the question of, 'Who am I?' In my mind, it's the beginning of personal power."

by lauren elias



LAUREN ELIAS/RANK&FILE

A Fairfax County student expresses his interest in a gap year program at the fair.

Counselor Week celebrates staff dedication

by chloe pignano

During the week of Feb 6 to 10, student services celebrated National School Counselor Week.

To celebrate, the PTSA, administrative assistants and students at the Davis Center fed the counselors meals to express their gratitude.

"Our PTSA takes such good care of us," counselor Miriam Filvarof said. "They are so generous."

Not only did the counselors receive meals, but students and parents alike expressed their appreciation for the counselors through notes.

"I don't think I've gotten this [treatment] any other year, so I feel like either we are doing a really good job this year or people have noticed and the signs are working," counselor Cara Engle said. "Last year everyone forgot, so we didn't have anything. This year has been a really good year for us."

With the addition of signs advertising the week hung up in the hallways, counselors noticed an increase in thank you letters.

"I've gotten super nice notes from students, I got 10 emails from parents. Teachers have been really nice," Engle said.

Senior Kira Miller made her counselor a note that ties in their common interest of exotic food.

"I gave her a card that had a bunch of puns about sushi and other Japanese food," Miller said. "I like making puns and I love my counselor. She's a pretty awesome person."

Along with the cards, some counselors also received baked goods to recognize them for their dedication.

"I made my counselor cookies. She's done so much for me," senior Ally Thring said. "Just through all four years she's been so amazing and wonderful with every problem I've had. The least I could do was bake her cookies."

The week is a celebration of how the school community embraces the counselors and everything they do.

According to counselor Jim Rixse, the job is for those who want to give support to young people.

"In the world of education, it isn't a profession that people get paid the most money so I think that people go into it because they want to feel like they are helping people," Rixse said. "It's good to hear some reinforcement that you are having a good impact."

The week is a joined celebration by students, parents and staff to demonstrate their acknowledgment for how much the counselors work for the entire school.

"It's nice to have reinforcement of that from time to time," Rixse said. "Someone to say 'hey we realize what you are doing.'"

Just through all four years [Christy Hanlon] has been so amazing and wonderful with every problem I've had."

ally thring senior

Humans of Marshall

Humans of Marshall is a student driven initiative fostering unity, acceptance and tolerance of different identities in the community by sharing stories on their website, gcmhome.org.

"My name is Ruaa; I'm an ESOL student. I moved to the U.S. because of my father's work. I didn't move with my family at the same time. I had to stay in my country [Sudan] to finish high school, but didn't start school until the middle of the school year because of my father. I couldn't keep track of all my classes because we didn't have finals at the end of the semester, we had the finals at the end of the school year.

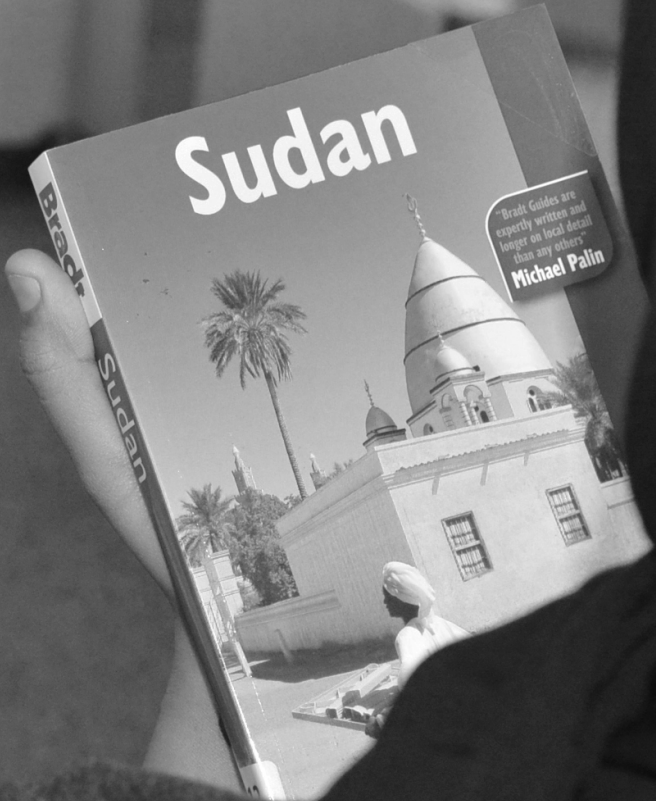
Coming to the U.S. made me so happy, to see my family, meet new people and experience new things. I started taking some English classes at Northern Virginia Community College and I liked it there, but I had to face the fact that I had to go back to high school. They told me that I would be with my youngest sister in the same grade and we would have the same classes together.

I changed schools seven times and Marshall is my eighth. I had a lot of friends, and all the students and teachers knew me. At Marshall it was so different

and complicated, not because I didn't speak or understand English so well, but because I thought that the students wouldn't accept me because I didn't speak like them. I guess I wasn't strong enough to show the people my real personality.

The ESOL class was like my home. I felt that [the students and I] are a family and we took the same classes together. I could be myself in that class and they wouldn't judge me. We felt equal because we were all learning a new language and we encouraged each other to do better. The students always ask us about our age and why we [are still in 11th] grade and why we [stayed] in high school for too long. I hope that someday in my non-ESOL classes I can express myself without having language as a barrier."

— junior Ruaa Shamseldin



compiled by janan iranbomy
JANAN IRANBOMY/RANK&FILE

Killeen brings culture to class

by gwyneth murphy

With an art degree from Northwestern University and teaching experience from Japan, English teacher Brenna Killeen uses her non-traditional path to teaching as a way to be innovative in the classroom.

Killeen majored in art and animation and minored in creative nonfiction writing. Despite not having majored in English, she believes the art program taught her skills that transcend all subjects.

"Gathering information, thinking critically, sorting things and then drawing relationships between them," Killeen said. "That's mostly what we did in the art department, which is exactly what we do when we read something and talk about its meaning."

The diversity of her college studies led Killeen to take into account the variety of interests and skills of her students.

"There are so many kids who are really interested in writing but they might not love literature, and we assume those are the same thing but they're not really," Killeen said. "So we should all work together more. I would love for us to do some interdisciplinary stuff."

Art is not the only source of

inspiration Killeen pulls from to improve her teaching methods. After her Japanese professor introduced her to a teaching study abroad program, Killeen decided to apply to teach English to kids in Japan.

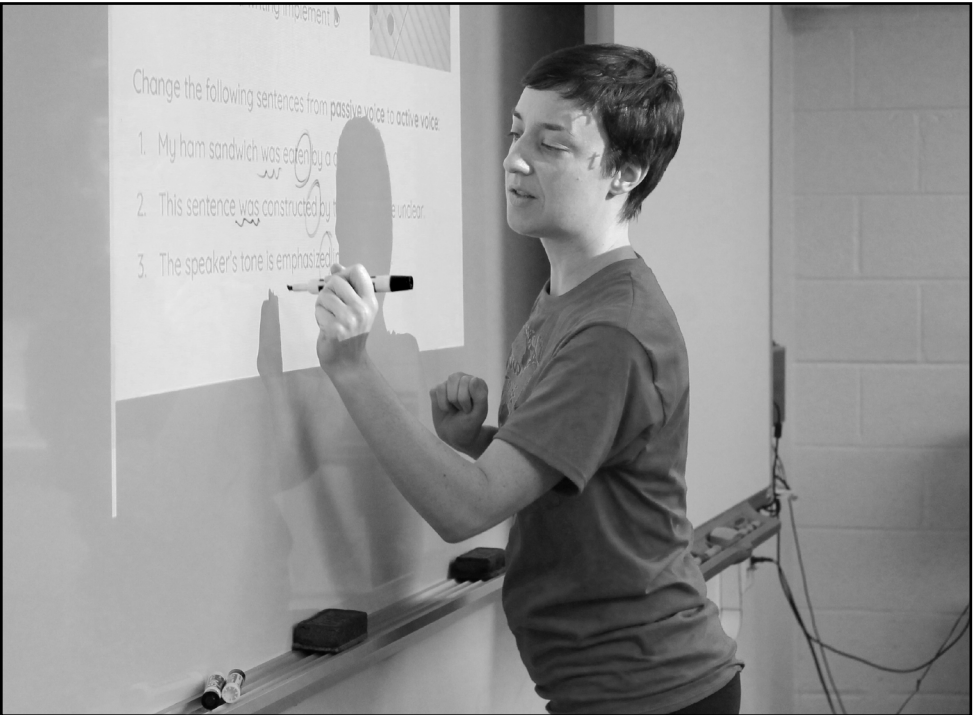
"I taught English in Japan for three years, so that's where a majority of my classroom experience is," Killeen said. "I thought this was my chance, I'll just go for a year and then I'll come back and this will be my study abroad experience that I never got to have. But then I just loved it so much and I just kept renewing my contract."

According to Killeen, the Japanese education has one value not taught by the United States: It's better to try and fail than to succeed without trying.

"There's a lot of importance put on putting forth effort," Killeen said. "It's not about doing things perfectly, it's not about being the best. It's just about, did you earnestly try?"

Killeen didn't just internalize these lessons and move on, she applies them every day to her English classes as a way to share Japanese values with her students.

"To my second period I said we were going to do this Japanese style," Killeen said. "So at the beginning of every class



GWYNETH MURPHY/RANK&FILE

Killeen teaches her sixth period English 10 Honors class about the importance of recognizing passive voice in preparation for a Paper 1 exam later in the period.

there's a spokesperson who says 'everybody stand up' and then we all bow and we say good morning and then we all sit down."

Before teaching in Japan, Killeen had reservations about becoming a teacher. But her teaching abroad experience taught her that you can instruct students and still show your personality.

"I thought that to be a teacher you had to be authoritarian and you had to have a façade all the time and you couldn't be yourself, and I was so goofy so I didn't think I could do it," Killeen said. "But then when I finally got into the classroom and was teaching in Japan I realized this is actually really fun."

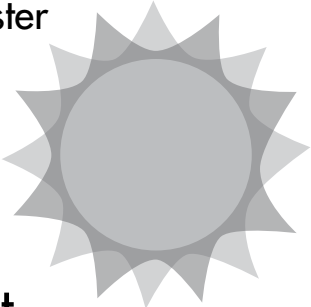
>>> see extended story online

stress relief

three ways to relax in the new semester

1. go outside

Studies have shown that going outside increases your mood and motivation.



2. work out

Exercise releases feel-good endorphins to boost your mood and self confidence.

3. sleep

Sleeping for at least eight hours a night can improve your mind, weight and heart.

SOURCE: DUE.COM



New semester spurs motivation

by tenzin tsering

Homework, sports and college applications are all factors to consider as a new semester rolls around.

Both the upperclassmen and underclassmen have a large amount of work to do in this new semester, not to mention their after-school activities.

Freshman Michael Pepito says that he wants to start off with a solid base to ensure he has a model to follow for the rest of his high school career.

"If I work hard this year it creates a good work ethic that will influence me throughout my high school life," Pepito said.

Sophomore Siraj Syed says that the work he did so far in the year is one of the main motivations he has to work hard in

the second semester.

"I want to work hard because I have done so much and it would be wasted if I didn't finish through," Syed said.

Upperclassmen face the added work of college applications and performing to possibly attain a scholarship.

Junior Elysa Warren says that the second semester is critical for her life after high school.

"Colleges really look hard at junior year, so I am going to try and work even harder," Warren said.

The second semester has arrived, and now is time to make the decision on how to handle the rest of this year and whether or not to ramp up effort.

"I'm going to work harder, because I want to achieve the best grades I can get," Pepito said.

Best Buddies builds close bonds with all participants

by kiley moriarty

The Best Buddies club is an opportunity for members to make friends with volunteers. In groups of two to three students, they get to know each other better.

Juniors Carolina McCabe and Roshana G-mariam say that the relationships that they form with the other students in the club are cheerful and positive.

“We have a very joyous and close relationship,” McCabe said. “Doing simple things like going to pizza are always so much fun with [my buddy]. He always brings so much happiness to me with his infectious joy and constant hugs.”

Roshana G-mariam said that she and her buddy bonded over shared interests such as their favorite movie and favorite food.

“I noticed that we have so much in common [...] we bonded over our love for [High School Musical], and later we

went out for pizza, our favorite food,” G-mariam said. “I can’t help to feel overtaken by her constantly happy personality, it’s infectious. She’s such a joy and I can’t wait to hang out with her more and have a deeper bond.”

Sophomore Thomas Rothman says that he and his buddy also bond over various activities as well as just spending time together.

“I would describe our relationship as a very good and happy one,” Rothman said. “We always have lots of fun together [...] our favorite thing is just talking to each other.”

A significant element of the Best Buddies club is acceptance; it is important for everybody to feel welcome.

“Now more than ever is a time in our society to set aside differences and not stigmatize people,” G-mariam said. “We should be more accepting, like [my buddy] is with all of her peers and of me.”



KILEY MORIARTY/RANK&FILE

Sophomore Rachel Newman and senior Emma Cynkar prepare for their turn in a game of beanbag toss. The Best Buddies club threw the party as an opportunity to come together and have fun on Jan. 28. The night consisted of activities such as making s’mores, playing various games and watching a movie.

IN ONE WEEK

Swapping shower schedules by ethan zack and lauren elias

In One Week is a feature where one or more staff members take on a new habit for a week. In this IOW, two staffers switch their typical shower schedules.

The rules

Ethan: I have to shower in the evening right before I go to bed.

Lauren: I have to shower in the morning before school.

Pre-week thoughts

E: I’ve always showered in the morning. I’m used to feeling refreshed immediately before school starts.

L: I am dreading setting my alarm half an hour earlier and dragging myself out of bed at the crack of dawn.

Mid-week thoughts

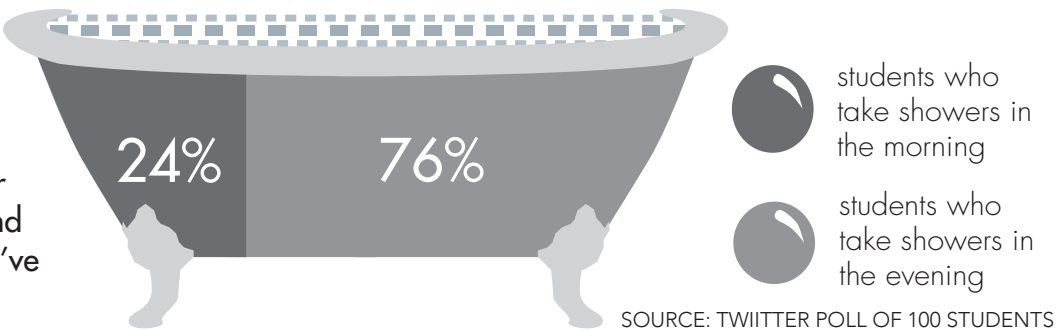
E: I didn’t feel as put-together throughout the day. I would take my “evening shower” at 1 in the morning, only to wake up exhausted. The extra half hour of sleep I saved by not showering in the morning was nice, but it was outweighed by the sleep I lost from putting off night showers.

L: I am happy to report that the week has gone much better than expected. I feel more awake in my first period class and more motivated throughout the day. The biggest downside I’ve faced is that I don’t have time to properly dry my hair.

Post-week thoughts

E: Despite what my mid-week experiences may suggest, showering at night wasn’t very bad at all. The night showers would allow me to decompress from long days and the amount of things I had to do in the mornings did decrease. I’m certainly glad to be back to showering in the mornings, but I know that if I committed to the inverted cycle long-term and restructured my time management for mornings and nights, I would be comfortable.

L: The week was very much a trade off. As someone who cares more about sleep than anything, I really don’t think it’s something I could sustain. But while I did rush to re-set my alarm the first day back, I set it 10 minutes earlier than I had prior to the week, and I’m proud of that small impact. Before doing this, I never understood why people would force themselves to shower in the morning because it seemed like such a chore. I can now say that I get it. I get how efficiency and alertness can take priority over sleep. I don’t like it, but I get it.



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staff editorials

Trump's decisions reflect ideals of platform

In a campaign marked by outlandish promises, President Donald Trump won a wide voter base by appealing to diametrically opposed viewpoints. His most famous promise, to build "a great wall along the southern border" of the United States serves as a microcosm for what his campaign philosophy entailed; xenophobia, American exceptionalism, and the vague yet effective promise to "Make America Great Again."

To anybody who followed the election, it comes as no surprise that Trump has decided to sidestep the legislative branch entirely, and use his Constitutionally derived executive authority to conduct his planned policies. While some of these are routine and expected, as most new presidents issue orders contradicting those of their predecessors before them, he has taken drastic steps to assert his position as president.

On Dec 7, 2015, five days after a shooting by self-described jihadists, then-candidate Donald Trump issued a dictated statement that read, in part: "Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." At the time it seemed ludicrous. On Jan 27, he issued an executive order completely halting the flow of citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States.

On Nov 21, 2016, President-Elect

Trump issued a statement declaring his intent to withdraw the United States entirely from the Trans-Pacific Partnership; on Jan 23, he took executive action and did just that. On Aug 8, he declared that he would greenlight the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines; on Jan 24, the Office of President of the United States issued an executive order paving the way for TransCanada to resume construction. To his supporters, it is a boon; they got the policies that they voted for. To his opposition, it reinforces their distaste for the new administration.

However, Trump has made multiple decisions that have bipartisan support. To replace the empty seat of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, Trump's administration nominated Neil Gorsuch, a highly regarded Judge from the Tenth Circuit Court. Gorsuch is a prominent proponent of original interpretation of the Constitution; effectively, he is a legal continuation of Scalia's ideas. The Democrats recognize Gorsuch as a return to the status quo of the court, and will not likely contest the selection, choosing instead to conserve political capital for Trump's theoretical second selection.

In the end, Trump has done mostly what he said he would do. Those who supported him during the campaign will continue to do so, and those who didn't, won't. Insofar as whether he has done a good job, the jury remains out.

president trump's promises

Which promises has the president delivered on?



Promise: Withdraw from Trans-Pacific Partnership

Result: Executive action to withdraw on Jan 23

Promise: Slash pre-existing federal regulations



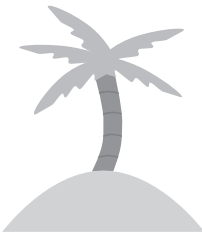
Result: Executive order to reduce regulation on Jan 30



Promise: Eliminate Common Core

Result: No new legislation about Common Core

Promise: No presidential vacations while in office



Result: Multiple vacations to Mar-a-Lago

Community college offers valid alternative path

Going to community college is often unnecessarily looked down upon by the student community. As college applications approach deadline, more often than not, students want to leave this area purely because they dislike northern Virginia. This area may not be what everyone is searching for, but it is a shame that students automatically don't look into attending local schools such as the Northern Virginia Community College (also known as NOVA). It's a built in bias for students to ignore valid options such as community college.

Going to NOVA is not the standard route of going to school for four years and then getting a job, but this option should not immediately be ruled out for students looking to save money and stay local. NOVA has a stigma around it that going there is not a respectable choice for students. More often than not, many graduates from NOVA go on to attend other bigger universities in Virginia.

Even if someone is only interested in pursuing an associate's degree, that is a perfectly valid educational path that shouldn't be judged as harshly as it is.

NOVA and other community colleges

are great options for people looking for an easier transition from secondary education into post-secondary education. Community colleges offer more time flexibility for students who have a job. They also can save students thousands of dollars in tuition cost and room and board cost. Going to community college also can offer a more direct route into studying for more of a trade oriented careers such as fire-fighting, advanced technicians, and registered nursing.

Attending community college has many benefits that are ignored and is a valid choice that should be embraced more by the community.

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editor-in-chief
ethan zack

news editor
gwyneth murphy

features editor
lauren elias

arts & style editor
ethan zack

sports editor
kate carniol

news designer
kate guardado

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centerspread designers
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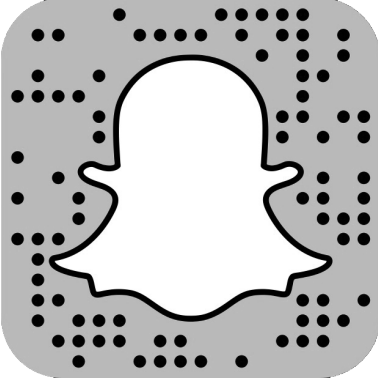
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Coconut oil yields positive effects for daily users

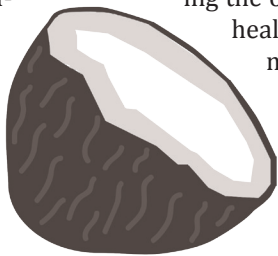
by ethan zack

To say I was skeptical of the widespread surge of use for coconut oil would be an understatement. Strictly speaking, I don't believe in magical cure-alls, so when I heard that you could use coconut oil to assist pretty much any physical health issue, it just seemed too good to be true. Imagine my surprise at the validity of these claims when I finally relented and gave it a try.

Coconut oil is a bit of a strange idea. It's primarily used for cooking and you usually find in the food section of stores. In fact, many of the positive effects of the oil come through ingesting a small portion of it each day. According to Organic Facts, the oil contains two anti-viral properties known as

lauric acid and caprylic acid, which bolster the immune system and help fight against viruses like HIV and influenza. Generally, taking a tablespoon of coconut oil can have very positive long-term effects on the body. The way the oil is ingested can vary. You can take it by itself or add it to something else like coffee. When melted down, it even makes a decent popcorn topper.

But just stopping there would be a missed opportunity. When they say that coconut oil can be used for pretty much anything, they mean it. You can use some to moisturize your face and have healthier-looking skin, you can put



some in your hair if it's dry or damaged, you can even reduce dark circles with a bit under the eyes. In terms of my own experiences, my hair is normally pretty coarse, but using the oil daily made it both look and feel healthier. Additionally, I added a bit to my cuticles to lessen irritation and they quickly looked healthier.

The uses of coconut oil aren't exclusive to people either. According to Pet MD, adding a bit of coconut oil to a dog's diet will yield a healthier coat. Coconut oil can also soothe irritated or dry spots of skin from a pet scratching itself. Coconut oil is extremely versatile and I definitely recommend keeping an open mind and giving it a shot.

Uses of Coconut Oil

Rank & File samples some of the various benefits of coconut oil

- 1 Blend with essential oils and dab on temples and back of neck for aromatherapy
- 2 Melt down and slather coconut oil on exposed areas to repel insects in the summer
- 3 Rub some coconut oil over ink stains and wipe them away after a minute passes

SOURCE: AUTHORITY NUTRITION

Parking lot presents issues for student drivers

by kate carnio

After school, I find myself waiting until 3:15 before leaving so I can avoid the mess and chaos of the parking lot. Unless you are one of the first people out of the building, or you parked in the front couple of rows, you are destined to be stuck in the parking lot for 20 minutes, just waiting to move.

The design of the lot is where the problem stems from. There's only one exit and masses of cars are all vying to stream into the same giant train of cars. It doesn't help that as soon as you manage to make it out of the parking lot and onto Marshall Drive, you have to wait for people crossing the street and the backup of cars due to all three lanes being packed. Not to mention the catastrophe that

comes from letting the busses in and other vehicles leaving the front parking lot. The upper lot is truly a mess and unless I wait before leaving, I'm caught sitting in my car, barely moving.

There's little that can be done to fix this issue. While the layout is a major problem, the location hinders the flow of the cars as well. Of course, there are worse designs and places for a school parking lot but it's hard to restrain myself from being frustrated every time I pull into the lot.

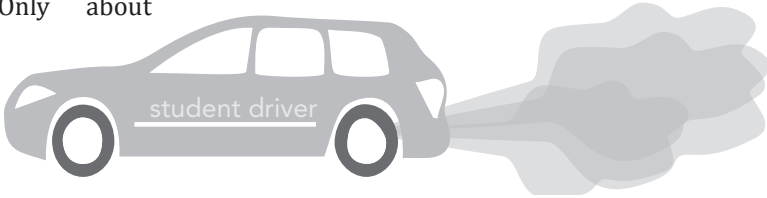
The mess isn't limited to after school only. In the mornings the traffic outside Marshall is horrendous and is a common reason for why a student arrives late. There have been plenty of times I've left my house early and still come late because the traffic just before the school was

horrible. There are days where I've found myself parking in the lower lot next to the field to arrive to class on time. The amount of backups on Route 7 in front of the school and on Marshall Drive is enormous. The upper parking lot isn't necessarily packed itself, but the number of cars slowly turning into the lot, or paused to wait for students crossing, is remarkable.

The first three rows of parking in the upper lot are saved for faculty only, which is also an issue. Student parking is filled by the time the bell rings but the rows reserved for the faculty have plenty of open spots. Only about

three of the spots in the third row are taken, leaving 25 vacant spaces that could be filled with students vehicles. It's an unnecessary regulation that leads to more irritation towards the lot.

In an ideal world the parking lot wouldn't be an issue. However, in this reality, that's not the case. The only way to avoid the craziness of the parking lot is to come early in the mornings, and to be one of the first cars out in the afternoon. If that doesn't work, your best bet is to wait until it's mostly cleared out after 20 minutes.



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I'm crashing your Super Bowl party with a grocery store generic sheet cake that reads, "Go, team!"

Pierce Bello
English teacher
@askmrbello

If the patriots can make that big of a come back so can my grades this semester #SuperBowl

Madison Mohajerin
Sophomore
@blaireandwhite

letters

English speakers essential for ESOL

As parent liaison in this school, I work closely with many of our ESOL students and their families, from registration to follow up. One thing we tell new learners of English is that they must "practice" the language as much as possible in order to learn it quickly. For many of our students, the opportunity to practice English outside Marshall is very limited because they live with family members who do not speak English at home. For many, working hard in the class is not enough to improve language fluency.

The purpose of this letter is to initiate a dialogue on how we can provide opportunities for ESOL students to practice English while they are here in school. What ideas do you have that would make it possible for someone new to our school or country to practice English outside of the classroom with peers who are native or fluent English speakers? I see an invisible wall in the halls of Marshall that segregates ESOL and non-ESOL students. Our ESOL teachers are doing their part in the classroom. As a Statesman, you can help too in this effort.

Mrs. Dilkash Ahmed
Parent Liasion

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 paper's opinion.

Black History Month commemorates African American figures

compiled by mia toser
& anna zelenski

February is Black History Month, an annual celebration of black Americans and a recognition of African American roles throughout history that helped strengthen equality across the nation. The month is popular for events, movie screenings and marches in support of pride for black culture.

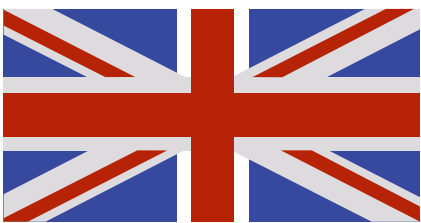
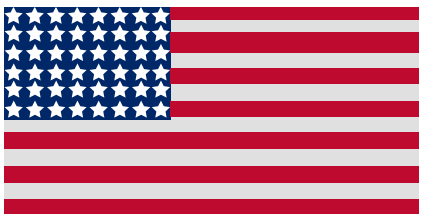
background

Dr. Carter G. Woodson started Black History Month in 1936, when he named the second week in February Negro History Week. He chose February to honor the birthdays of the leaders Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, who helped abolish slavery in the United States and supported black rights in a time of segregation and prejudice. In 1976, the federal government assigned February as Black History Month. Woodson created the month to honor the achievements of black people. Designing a month around the culture

and accomplishments of African Americans spreads awareness and appreciation for their contributions. While the month may be well promoted and accepted in the U.S., only two other countries participate in Black History Month. However, U.S. African American history confined to one month is frowned upon by some. People, such as Morgan Freeman, believe the month is ridiculous because black history is American history, and there should be no need for the separation. Trudy Bourgeois is the president and CEO of The Cen-

ter for Workforce Excellence, an organizational cultural change, consulting, training and coaching company. Being an advocate for African American rights, she has similar opinions on Black History Month. "Black history, as well Hispanic history and others, needs to be integrated into our educational system and curricula and taught at all levels," Bourgeois said. "Not just during one month of the year." Regardless of the debate surrounding the connotations of reserving a month for Black History, activists agree that education of the history is essential.

Participating countries:



In the past, African Americans have been through a lot of pain, and this month is a good way to remember them and how strong they were. There are also other races of people that have also been through hardship and I think designating just one month to black history is just another way to separate us.

— Lewis Horne, junior

Black History Month honors historic black leaders who fought to be treated equally. It's important for everyone of all nationalities to participate, so that we can educate ourselves about the history involving blacks in the U.S. This month provides an excellent opportunity for us as young people to grow and learn about the history of America.

— Hannah Washington, sophomore

Black History Month is extremely important because we should never forget the tragedy that befell my people years ago. Black history is American history and we should be educated in afrocentrism, black culture and celebrate as a community of diverse brothers and sisters. My role model is Martin Luther King Jr. I liked his peaceful approach to show that black and whites can coexist.

— Ose Esangbedo, junior



MIA TOSER/RANK&FILE

ANNA ZELENKI/RANK&FILE

ANNA ZELENKI/RANK&FILE

BSU provides initiative training to members

by mia toser

Several members of the Black Student Union met for the Leadership Speaker Series, a collection of meetings and events to inspire young members of the community to use their full potential to be successful.

Various FCPS staff, in an effort to motivate and inspire black students, joined local business personnel to guide the youth in tactics and strategies to use in the real world.

They gathered multiple leaders from the community who have high ranking jobs such as business owners, CEOs and school Superintendents to speak to the

attendees about how to use their voice.

Successful role models taught good business behavior, such as proper handshakes and having good eye contact, in an effort to set up the members of the community to be future leaders.

"It was helpful because they gave me a lot of advice and it was from a lot of different people, so I got a lot of different perspectives from it," freshman Brianna Brown said.

The Leadership Speaker Series is just one of the numerous community-wide events the Black Student Union held during February for Black History Month.

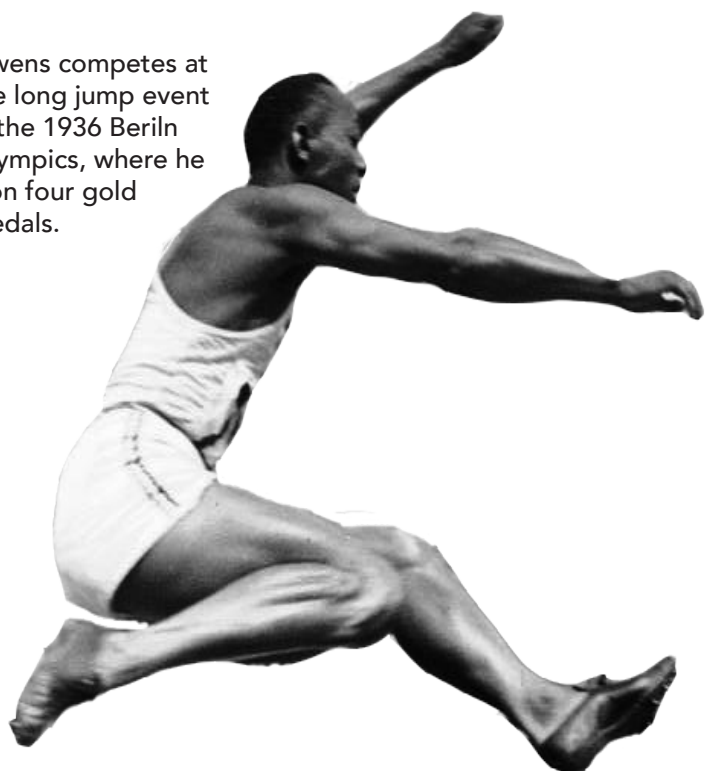


ANNA ZELENSKI/ RANK&FILE

Fairfax County Public School's Assistant Superintendent Douglas A. Tyson, emphasizes the importance of self confidence to freshman and Black Student Union member Brianna Brown.

entertainment figures

Owens competes at the long jump event in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, where he won four gold medals.



REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

Jesse Owens was a track and field olympic athlete for the United States, and won four gold medals in the 1936 summer Olympics held in Berlin, Germany. Owens competed under criticism and prejudice. He became one of the first African Americans to win a gold medal in the Olympic games, as well as setting

new records. Owens' victory gives hope to young black athletes like senior Thando Muchemenyi.

"Jesse Owens is the athlete I strive to be like and his motivation and strength are truly inspiring," Muchemenyi said.



ANNA ZELENSKI/RANK&FILE

Music has been a part of black culture throughout history. African American music consists of a diverse range of musical genres. It evolved through historical conditions as a means of unity and togetherness for African Americans. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Temptations, a group known for their choreography, distinct harmonies and flashy wardrobe, were highly influential in the evolution of R&B and soul music. Junior Setota Tesfu recently watched a documentary on the Temptations.

"They started out small, but became a huge classic," Tesfu said. "They lived the American dream."



BILLBOARD. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.



MIA TOSER/RANK&FILE



REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

Earvin "Magic" Johnson is one of the 50 greatest NBA players in 1996.



Louis Armstrong was a trumpeter and one of the first popular African American entertainers in the 1920s.

JAN ARKESTEIJN

Teachers form Toast Ghost, release album of non-sequitors

by aparna mathew

With Toast Ghost, the newly formed musical group consisting of English teachers Matthew Horne, Jonathan Super and Paul Fauteux and the performing arts on the rise, a spotlight has shone on artistry and musical originality.

"The hope would be that it would be used to inspire students that anyone can make music and have fun with it; you don't need a studio or skill or talent, just the desire to have fun and an idea worth sharing," Horne said.

Toast Ghost's work went public earlier this year, with Super composing beats and Horne improvisationally writing lyrics. Fauteux joined the band during the creation of their song "Burnt Toast (get em)."

"We make songs rather quickly in this fashion," Horne said.

While Toast Ghost approaches music very forwardly, sophomore Nica Albertson publicizes her work in a more subtle, yet effective way. Albertson has been posting videos on YouTube for a year and continues to upload her videos, ranging from covers of popular songs to short-film-type messages.

"Mainly I find myself doing it for others to enjoy," Albertson said. "I truly enjoy sharing my music with others and hearing what they have to say about it because

it's nice and constructive."

In terms of expanding her channel and pursuing it full time, Albertson doesn't want to transform her channel into anything more than a small music project.

"I truthfully wanted to be this famous person, but as I get older I realize I don't want that," Albertson said. "I post these videos because it brings me joy and is an outlet for my creativity and love for music."

Junior Adi Wineland, an avid participant in the choral department, finds comfort in his music and expresses the importance of surrounding himself with a strong group of singers.

"When you are surrounded by so many other amazing people, it's easy to forget that the only competition is with yourself," Wineland said. "Improvement doesn't necessarily happen overnight, but it's a wonderful feeling when you feel like you did a good job or made someone smile."

The various methods of expression exemplify that music doesn't conform to a uniform approach. Musicians and artists have different ideas and content, and everyone expresses their individuality differently.

"We want kids to know that creativity is fun," Horne said. "Music is fun. Making shirts is fun. Making moves is fun."



ALEXANDRA LYALIKOV/COLUMBIAN



ALEXANDRA LYALIKOV/COLUMBIAN

Top: English teachers Matthew Horne and Paul Fauteux perform new songs from their band Toast Ghost in the cafeteria for all students to see.

Bottom: Matthew Horne sings with a crowd of enthusiastic students. "We want to perform if more students are getting inspired by the Toast Ghost aesthetic," Horne said. "We don't just want to sing our songs, but to have students making the music with us and without us and to be having a good time."

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The Space Between Us fails to leave lasting impact on target audience

By lauren elias

Gardner Elliot is the first human born on Mars. After his mother died in childbirth while aboard a spacecraft, Gardner, played by Asa Butterfield, grows up with little knowledge of life on Earth. His only contact with life beyond Mars is with Tulsa, played by Britt Robertson. Tulsa is a rebellious high school student whose only wish is to age out of the foster system. Together they go on a quest to find Gardner’s father and, in the process, discover what makes life on Earth so beautiful.

The cinematography in this movie is incredible. The locations where the film shot had beautiful nature scenery and the colors were complimentary in every shot. It was overall a very visually pleasing movie, as they also played with contrast and unique angles. Additionally, the CGI is incredibly realistic.

Hands down, my favorite part of the movie was its soundtrack. From Ingrid

Michaelson’s heartfelt “Smallest Light” to the Crystal Fighter’s feel-good “At Home” to many serene instrumentals by Andrew Lockington, I shamelessly went home and downloaded the entire playlist.

But this movie is nothing if not clich  . The plot barely progresses up until the last 20 minutes or so, where all of the sudden all of the plot lines converge at once. One would think that in an hour and a half of barely any plot progression, there would at least be a chance to form deep and well rounded connections to the characters, but unfortunately this wasn’t the case. The empathy formed between myself and the characters was surface level affection. Tulsa, the main love interest, particularly bothered me, as she fell perfectly into the manic pixie dream girl trope. She is a classic example of the motorcycle riding rebel from a broken home that fools the audience into thinking her character is more complex than it actually is. She has little backstory and really only aids Gardner in his own self exploration.



STX ENTERTAINMENT. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

Tulsa (Britt Robertson) and Gardner (Asa Butterfield) float in mid-air onboard a space ship. The movie’s main conflict stems from Gardner’s inability to survive in Earth’s conditions.

Their infatuation with each other felt a bit rushed at times, but I didn’t mind because Butterfield and Robertson executed the roles in a very authentic and emotional way. None of this is to say that I didn’t feel invested in their storylines, but if you’re

looking for a movie to make you question what it means to be human or look differently at the world around you, this isn’t it. Instead, this is a movie meant to tug at the heartstrings and centers around idealistic notions of love.

New Indian BBQ restaurant caters to anyone’s taste buds

by aqsa rashid

NAME/LOCATION:
The Choolaah Indian BBQ restaurant that everyone has been awaiting recently opened up at the Mosaic district. The originality of the place is in the intriguing aspects of Indian cuisine, that now includes barbecued meat, turning the place into a modernized place for Indian food.

MENU:
The menu offers a very diverse range of foods to cater to anyone’s taste buds, including vegetarian and non-vegetarian options alike. Options range from wraps to salads, rice bowls and various other specialties. I chose the pick 4 plan- where I ordered one of the tandoor barbecue bowls that came with chicken and rice, a traditional black lentil bowl, and a freshly baked naan bread. Although I enjoyed my meal, I did not think it was anything extraordinary because it really was not so different from other Indian chains.

RATING: ★★★★★

ATMOSPHERE/DECOR:
As you enter, you are welcomed by a lavish setting, very spacious with the luxuries of modernity. Tables on the lower floor were separated by a glass panels, with long white ceiling lights hanging all around the room. Sitting at any table gives you the view of the workshop-like kitchen where you can see the chefs working.

INGREDIENTS/PRICES:
All products were fresh and served many health concerns- options on the menu included gluten, egg, onion, garlic, vegan, dairy and meat free for those conscious of such things. The prices remained feasible for almost all dishes.

SERVICE/WAITERS:
The only fault I found of this place had to do with the service given by the waiters. I waited long for my order and they essentially ended up forgetting about it. But I was reimbursed with additional free items off the menu when it was brought up to them.

Sweet Potato Toast

[gluten free, vegan]
serves: 2-3

Ingredients:

- ½ cup of finely chopped fresh parsley	- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 clove of crushed garlic	- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- ½ teaspoon of fennel seeds	- ¼ teaspoon of salt
- ½ tablespoon of lemon zest	- 1 zucchini
- 1 ½ tablespoons of maple syrup	- 1 can of drained cannellini beans
- 1 large sweet potato	

Cooking corner: Healthy alternative

by gwyneth murphy

1. Prep the ingredients. Finely chop the fresh parsley and garlic, and then zest the lemon until you reach about ½ tablespoon of zest. Drain the liquid out of the can of cannellini beans, and pour the beans into a strainer and wash until the water runs clear with no bubbles.
2. Mix all of the ingredients together in a large mixing bowl, besides the beans, zucchini and sweet potato.
3. Stir the beans into the bowl, thoroughly coating them with the dressing.
4. Cut each end off of the zucchini and then peel the skin off with a vegetable peeler. Using the same tool, peel the zucchini into thin ribbons until the entire vegetable is peeled. Place each ribbon in the bowl with the beans and dressing, and mix thoroughly with a rubber spatula. Set aside to soak, stirring occasionally.
5. Using a large knife, slice the sweet potato lengthways into pieces about half an inch thick.
6. Put one piece in the toaster and toast until it has brown spots and bubbles, indicating it is soft enough to eat. (Try toasting at a medium heat, repeating the toasting cycle five or six times, or until the surface is soft) Repeat with every piece of sweet potato
7. Place sweet potato toast on a plate and scoop the bean, zucchini and dressing mixture out of the bowl and onto each piece of toast.

Enjoy!

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Swim and dive excels despite turnout

by aparna mathew

Regardless of swim and dive’s successful season, the teams were unable to attract a large spectator turnout at events, even during the Capitol Conference meets in which they placed second overall.

Swimmers and divers bring intense effort throughout the week, devoting a large portion of their time to different meets and practices.

“We have practices Mondays through Thursdays for an hour,” senior and varsity swimmer Eve Grill said. “Every Friday, we have a meet and those pretty much take up our entire afternoons. We have to be at school around four and don’t get home until around 10:30.”

The lack of turnout at swim and dive events could be credited to both the unstable start and end times of meets and the inconvenience of the locations.

“For most people, getting to swim meets is really hard,” Grill said. “There are no set start times since dive goes first which can affect when the swimming portion will actually start.”

Even though meets receive low spectator turnout, much of it could be credited to the manner of the sport in itself.

“While [a larger turnout] could motivate swimmers more, swimming is generally a pretty independent sport,” Grill said. “I think that the amount of spectators and its correlation to swimmer’s performance is pretty minor.”

But sophomore Calley Lwin expresses the benefits of having a lot of support, especially during the more important times in the season, such as conference meets.

“Swim is actually a very interesting sport to watch, and it would be amazing to have more people show up to support the team,” Lwin said.

“I think people dwell too much on the inconvenience of the locations, so they don’t think that it’s worth it to show up.”

Because Marshall doesn’t have a pool, the teams have to travel by bus to different schools in the county.

“I understand that it’s probably difficult to arrange rides and make time to drive to wherever we’re meeting, but if more people just tried it out I think they would realize how much fun you can have watching a swim meet,” Lwin said. “It’s so fast-paced. You’re never bored.”

Swim and dive is a winter sport, so it competes for attention with basketball, a sport that attracts a lot of attention from the students.

“I think basketball is such a fast-paced, exciting sport and it’s very easy to hype yourself up for a good game,” sophomore Liam McNulty said.

Much like football, basketball is a favorite amongst the student section, subsequently lessening the spotlight on the swim and dive teams.

“It’s not that I wouldn’t want to watch a swim meet,” McNulty said. “It’s just that for basketball, the student section is always so much more present and they just have a louder and brighter feel to them overall.”

But while the teams could potentially benefit from more attention, their record proves that the lack of support from the school has done little in terms of negatively effecting their seasons.

“Of course, everyone loves support and it’s very beneficial to have, but we made it this far due to hard work and confidence in our abilities, which I think is all that we really need,” sophomore and varsity swimmer Lauren Cook said.



HELEN OKER/COLUMBIAN

Freshman and varsity diver Riya Saran executes a backward dive during the Capitol Conference meet that took place at Wakefield High School from Jan 26 to 28. Despite successful performances given by both the swim and dive teams, they have been unable to attract a high spectator turnout at various meets and events. Regardless of the lack of support from school, the teams excelled during their season with the swim team placing second in the conference and the dive team advancing to Regionals.

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Bag restriction combats drunk driving

by johann young

The administration implemented a no bag policy for varsity football games, in order to prevent the possibility of illegal materials coming onto school grounds, in an attempt to stop drunk driving. This policy prevents anyone from being able to bring any opened containers or bags to the games because the games tend to have a larger attendance than other sporting events.

"We noticed that other schools [had the same policy] in previous years," director of student activities Joseph Swarm said. "I know that locally Madison [High School] was doing the same thing we are doing, and it seemed to help with the issue of people bringing in alcohol that shouldn't be at the facility, so it's a way to go about doing that."

Though attendance at other events is generally lower than that of varsity football games, the lower turnout makes it easier to monitor the event.

"At basketball games it's a little bit easier," assistant athletic director Cornell Williams said. "We have staff here and it's easy for us to see if a student has signs of intoxication, so we can address that right away."

The safety of the students and families that attend the games is the major focus of this policy by preventing the possibility of anyone getting hurt because of contraband that was brought in. One of the leaders of the Marshall Mob, senior Joseph Welsh, sides with the implementation of this policy.

"I understand that the school is trying to prevent kids from bringing in substances and making the Marshall Mob and student section not what it's supposed to be," Welsh said. "So I understand and appreciate that they're trying to making a better and more fun environment."

Williams said that outside of the no bag policy there is not much the school can do in preventing the consumption of illegal materials off of school grounds, but the school does provide an educational course in raising awareness against underage drinking.

"As a school the only thing we can do to prevent teen drinking before or after our events is education," Williams said. "We have a health education class and we talk about consumption of alcohol and that's really all we can do at a safety and security standpoint. We can't go through and check every car that comes in or breathalyze everyone."

The sudden implementation of the policy also managed to catch attendees off guard with its initial release, but principal Jeff Litz gave a reason for its sudden appearance.

"I think certainly it's important to have it now

bag policy in review



69 percent of people believe that the no bag policy creates a safer environment



Nearly 72 percent of students have consumed alcohol by the end of high school



For every 100,000 Americans under the age of 21, 1.2 people were killed in drunk driving fatalities in 2015

SOURCES: TWITTER POLL OF 97 STUDENTS, SADD.ORG AND RESPONSIBILITY.ORG

particularly as we get larger and we have more students coming to games," Litz said.

Swarm said that the policy is just for the safety of teachers and students alike, with a focus on preventing any harm from illegal substances.

"This isn't a target on the students," Swarm said. "We don't want adults coming with anything either. This is the entire population [we're focusing on]. That is the hope, that everyone is coming, enjoying the event and heading home safe to and from the game. Anything we do here that is our first priority."

sports**briefs**

Gymnastics prevails over Capitol Conference

The gymnastics team is the Capitol Conference 13 champion for the fourth year in a row.

Seniors Lindsey Price and Kiran Sullivan qualified for Regionals, along with junior Grace Cusack, sophomore Jemalyn Dacanay and freshman Jennifer Soto.

"As a team I think we did really well," Dacanay said. "We got a lot of new gymnasts this year that helped bring our team score up."

The seniors who have been on the team since their freshman year have never lost a conference title all through their high school careers.

"It's amazing because all of our hard work and dedication has paid off," Sullivan said.

But, for the freshmen, joining a winning program can cause some pressure.

"[The pressure] motivates me to try my hardest seeing that my peers have won the last four years," freshman Daniela Cacciapaglia said.

The gymnastics team is aiming to win a fifth consecutive conference title next season.

by tenzin tsering



CEARA REDD/COLUMBIAN

Sophomore Jemalyn Dacanay performs her beam routine at the Jan 30 meet.

Super Bowl commercials peak political interest

The New England Patriots defeated the Atlanta Falcons, 34-28, in Super Bowl 51.

"It was definitely the best [Super Bowl], out of the last seven or eight I've watched," junior Oliver Church said.

Other students preferred the advertisements to the game.

"I watched it with a bunch of friends, and we didn't really pay attention," junior Alex Schmid said. "We just focused on the commercials."

Recently, the television promotions during the game have become a cultural phenomenon.

"The commercials were interesting," Church said. "It was definitely more political. It was pretty obvious, the point they were trying to get across."

by jackson coerr

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