



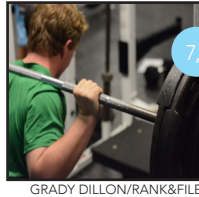
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New science course increases variety of options for freshmen classes.



**Opinion:**  
New ungendered language in the dress code policy addresses the sexualization of female students.



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*Crazy Rich Asians* brings much needed representation to mainstream movie industry.



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# rank & file

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## Administrative team implements stricter security procedures

by will shin

The administrative team has made a number of changes to security procedures in order to create a safer environment. In an effort to maximize school security, administrators have implemented several changes to the fire drill and lockdown procedures.

In light of the upward trend of school shootings in recent years, as well as the fire at Woodson High School in 2015, school resource officer Mike Allen said there should be more accountability for students.

"If there is a big incident, then the school needs to know where every kid is, [and] who's possibly still in the building so they can relay that information to first responders," Allen said. "I think the Woodson [fire] made people realize that we need to do a better job."

Changes to policies include requiring teachers to

take attendance during fire drills, as well as specifying exactly where to crouch during the lockdowns.

"We're trying to be a little better at getting people [safer] even when they're inside the classroom," head of security Steve Williams said. "If somebody had a gun and they were shooting through that [classroom] door [...] the safest place would be the back of the room, away from that door. We're emphasizing that more this year."

Although the security team decided to enact the changes independent from the county, Williams said they used county research to decide how to change procedures.

"The county went through and said that it was a better way to conduct lockdowns," Williams said. "So instead of just checking doorknobs now like we used to, we actually look in to see if they've moved their class out of the view of the actual



GWYNETH MURPHY/RANK&FILE

In an effort to make it easier for his students to find him during a fire drill, science teacher Andrew Litterst holds up a handmade sign to let his class know where he is.

door."

Despite the team's efforts to promote safety and have more accountability, there are students that say there is no difference.

"Even though the school changed how they do fire drills with the teachers having to take attendance, it's hardly any different," junior Wilson Tryon said. "People still move around a lot and go talk to their friends. It's not any more organized."

Williams said security could always improve.

"I think we are doing as much as we can right now

with what we have," Williams said. "We're always trying to get better. We're lucky [to be] in probably one of the most progressive school systems in the country as far as improvements go."

Allen also said there could be other potential changes to implement.

"There was talk of trying to get teachers to be in certain areas, but that has not happened yet and I don't know that it will," Allen said.

The administration will continue to work toward increased student security, as well as accountability.

## GCM ditches complimentary agendas, lockers

*Litz: providing free planners to student body 'cost prohibitive'*

by hannah levitan

This year, Marshall will no longer provide complimentary agendas or lockers for sophomores and upperclassmen. With the increase in student population, the overall cost of agendas rose to approximately 12,000 dollars, making buying agendas for everyone cost-prohibitive. Students from grades 10 to 12 may now choose to purchase an agenda for five dollars and request a locker.

"[Most of] our kids do not use a locker," principal Jeff Litz said. "Because we have more kids than lockers, rather than issue lockers to every student, we decided to offer up the ability for students to fill out the Google Form if they wanted a locker. So we're still offering lockers to kids, it's just opt-in and not opt-out."

Only six percent of 100 polled students requested a locker this year.

"[Requesting a locker is a good thing] because students last year that didn't use lockers [had] lockers that were closer to the gym, which isn't necessarily fair to those that actually use their lockers [for sports]," senior Anabelle Lee said.

Due to the fact that there are 39 more students than there are lockers, Litz said he only chose to assign freshmen lockers as a way to ease them into high school.

"I wanted to assign the freshmen

**"We're still offering lockers to kids, it's just opt-in and not opt-out."**

Jeff Litz, Principal

lockers because that's what they're used to from middle school, and I'm trying to make that transition from middle school to high school as comfortable as possible," Litz said. "That's also why I made sure to give [them] agendas. I [spoke to] my high school principal colleagues and only about two or three of them still purchase agendas for all of the kids."

According to a poll of 100 Marshall students, only five percent said they bought an agenda.

"[I purchased a school agenda because] the other agendas are too expensive and the schools' is only five dollars," senior Isabella De Mesa said.

Although students from grades 10 to 12 are no longer receiving agendas free of cost, next year, all Fairfax County Public School students will have the option to receive laptops as a way to organize their work online, replacing the need for agendas.

Because of Litz's decision not to provide school-issued agendas, the FCPS board approved the full county budget.

"I'm happy that our full county budget was funded this year," Litz said. "It's the first time in a long time."

Additionally, Litz said he plans to introduce a new app made specifically for Marshall students after he had a discussion with the principal of Westfield High School.

"My long-term goal is to create an app that will have the red and blue day calendar on it and some other [features]," Litz said. "Westfield High School's principal worked with a company for two years to make an app for kids. I've been talking to them about how we might do that for kids here."

## newsbriefs

### PTSA fundraiser raises money for new modulars

The Parent Teacher Student Association is raising money for the 12 new classroom modulars in order to provide the classes with the materials necessary to create a better learning environment.

The "armchair" fundraiser allows people to donate to the cause without leaving their home, simply by going online to the PTSA website.

"I think [the fundraiser] is wonderful," entrepreneurship teacher Shelley Gaffin said. "Any little bit goes a long way and benefits the students, which is our end goal."

The objective of the fundraiser is to collect more than 8,000 dollars to cover the costs of resources for the modulars. The PTSA will also allocate a part of the funds to teachers in order to elevate the quality of their rooms and modify the path from the trailers to the rest of the school.

"[I] would invest in technology for the classroom," marketing teacher Angie Rogers said. "There are lots of great things available that we can definitely take advantage of."

by nikita athawale



NIKITA ATHAWALE/RANK&FILE

Trailer classes upgrade over the summer to a modular building near the tennis courts.

### Social studies department changes EK testing format

World History II, IB History of the Americas and IB Topics classes will have a curriculum change regarding their Essential Knowledge tests.

"In World [History] II, we're mixing EKs with inquiries, Paper 3s and Project Based Learning (PBL) assessments," social studies department chair Dean Wood said.

Social studies teacher Rebecca Crawford said they will incorporate at least two new formats in the IB Topics course.

"We are trying to find ways for students to demonstrate what they know and help them make connections between the otherwise 'island topics'," Crawford said.

Wood said the goal of this curriculum change is for students to have a different way of learning their content.

"PBL looks like it's the way of the future for Fairfax County," Wood said. "We are trying to implement that as much as possible."

by grady dillon



# New environmental science course offers additional option for rising freshmen

by nikita athawale

Rising freshmen are now allowed to select a science course that is not the conventional Biology class. The Virginia Department of Education authorized Environmental Science as a freshmen-only course, effective this school year.

IB Environmental Systems and Societies teacher Andrew Litterst now teaches this course to freshmen who choose not to take Biology.

“[This class] was something I really wanted to take advantage of,” Litterst said. “As it stands, most freshmen are forced to go into Biology, which is very heavy on terminology. If they want to deal with stuff they can actually see, but not necessarily on a microscopic level, this gives them an option for a science [course] they can see in front of them.”

Marshall is currently one of the only high schools in Fairfax County that is offering Environmental Science to freshmen.

In previous years, students had to register in either standard-level Biology or Honors Biology, with no other course to choose from.

“The county decided to pilot [this

class] in certain high schools that were interested, and we are one of the schools,” science department chair Janet Kahn said. “Some students aren’t ready for that fairly abstract Biology class, and it can be helpful to do something that’s a little more project based, like this Environmental Science class is supposed to be.”

Although this class mainly targets the students who did not enjoy Life Science while in seventh grade, the course also appeals to students who have a genuine passion for the environment. One such student is freshman Joseph Brooks, who is among the 42 students currently enrolled in the class.

“I’m more interested in the environment than I am about Biology,” Brooks said. “When I found out there was a class about it, I was sold. [This class] is making my understanding of the environment better.”

Environmental Science is meant to be a more project-based and hands-on class, in an effort to decrease testing for students. As a result, it does not have a Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment at the end of the year.

“[This course] is science at a standard level; there is no honors version of it at



AMELIA GEE/RANK&FILE

Science teacher Andrew Litterst and freshman Bashig Alwazir look at the difference between independent and dependent variables while investigating the effect of various liquids on plant growth.

this point,” Kahn said. “But it’s a regular high school credit without the possibility of an SOL exam at the end.”

There is currently no discussion of offering Honors Environmental Science to freshmen. But, once they become upper-classmen, they have the option of choosing to enroll in IB ESS. Litterst teaches this higher level class in addition to its freshman counterpart.

“[An honors course for Environmental Science] might be a couple of years down the road,” Litterst said. “Honestly,

we would probably say that IB Environmental Science would be the honors version of this. It’s mostly for juniors and seniors, but there is already kind of that college level option for those who are interested.”

Although the class is rather new, Litterst said he considers it engaging to teach.

“[Environmental Sciences] is really kind of interesting; it’s all about the problems of Earth that we created,” Litterst said.



BEN HARPER/RANK&FILE

Social studies teacher Phillip Zane guides student presentations during his World History class in order to help them understand content knowledge about the Ottoman Empire.

# Former professional fencer joins social studies department this year

by ben harper

New social studies teacher Phillip Zane has been fencing on and off since he was 8 years old throughout both Europe and the U.S.

Zane, who teaches World History and Government classes, learned how to fence from his father, and has fenced with all three swords available for fencing: epee, foil and sabre.

“A sabre is like a cavalry or pirate sword, where you wound the other guy by slashing instead of sticking,” Zane said. “In a sabre competition, the target is anywhere from the waist up. Hitting the head counts as a point. Each of the swords have a different target. In foil, the target is the chest and the back, and in epee it’s the whole body.”

While he has experience in all three disciplines, Zane said sabre is his specialty.

“I got into sabre because when I was fencing in high school, [sabre] was our only team,” Zane said. “We didn’t have a foil or epee team.”

Zane said one of the major highlights of his career was placing third in a sabre competition in Stockholm, Sweden.

“I was having a good day and other people were having a bad day,” Zane said. “I got out of the first round and I didn’t have a loss, and I thought ‘well I’m doing really well today and I didn’t expect to [perform] this well even with a small field.’ Some days you are on, and I was on that day.”

While Zane said he got lucky, he said he was still proud about his win, as he was fencing in a different continent.

“I was extraordinarily excited because I was fencing in Europe,” Zane said. “Fencing still isn’t a big deal in the U.S., but it was much less [of a deal back] then. We’ve had champion fencers in the 30 years since this, but it had been decades since we had a champion fencer [at the time].”

While he said he knew very little about the sport, social studies teacher Kevin Curtin said he was interested in learning more about Zane’s past.

“I’m always interested in finding out colleagues’ hobbies and interests,” Curtin said. “It’s sort of a way to get to know people better.”

Freshman Manas Atluri, one of Zane’s students, said he enjoys Zane’s class, and was unaware of his past as a fencer.

“Mr. Zane is really cool,” Atluri said. “He is really nice to us and is really chill, and he teaches us in a really good way.”

As a social studies teacher, Zane said he took different aspects from some of his studies and applied it to fencing.

“The cool thing about fencing is that it’s not just a sport for the body, but for the mind,” Zane said. “So, there’s a lot of strategic decision making. There’s a tool of analysis used in social studies, especially economics, called game theory. And I had studied game theory in college and applied it to fencing.”

Zane said although the sport is not all too popular in the U.S., he believes more students should get into fencing.

“It’s a great sport,” Zane said. “It’s a great way to stay in shape, a great way to work the mind and body, it is a load of fun and you can get your aggressions out.”

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COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER JIANG

Christopher Jiang practices walking with a chest tube two days after surgery. “It was extremely painful,” Jiang said. “I was holding onto my mom and a nurse and just walking around the hospital.” Jiang must now deal with the workload of returning to school while continuing with his recovery.

Freshman Fears:

Freshmen Sarah Caso and Matthew Savage give their take on their concerns about high school so far

With the beginning of every school year comes a new batch of freshmen added into the high school mix. By making the transition from junior high, students must not only deal with the issues that come along with returning to school, they must also acclimate to a new environment filled with a number of unfamiliar attributes. The interviewed freshmen cited consternations such as the larger facilities, extensive workloads, longer classes and alternating class days. Although these new factors of academic life have become common to upperclassmen over the years, in this issue Rank&File explores the stories of two such freshmen.

● compiled by ben harper



“The classes are much longer and I’m not used to it. I’m also afraid of the work. It’s going to get harder and more complicated. Marshall is also much bigger than my middle school. There’s two floors and the timing to get to class seems different.”



“I’m afraid that I won’t like my teachers or the administrators because of our disagreements on certain issues and how they teach us useless stuff. It’s also hard to get around. I’m confused about the markings on the walls and I don’t know where the stairs are. Kilm-er [Middle School] was much easier to get around.”

New Food Sustainability club strives to promote healthier and cleaner lifestyle choices

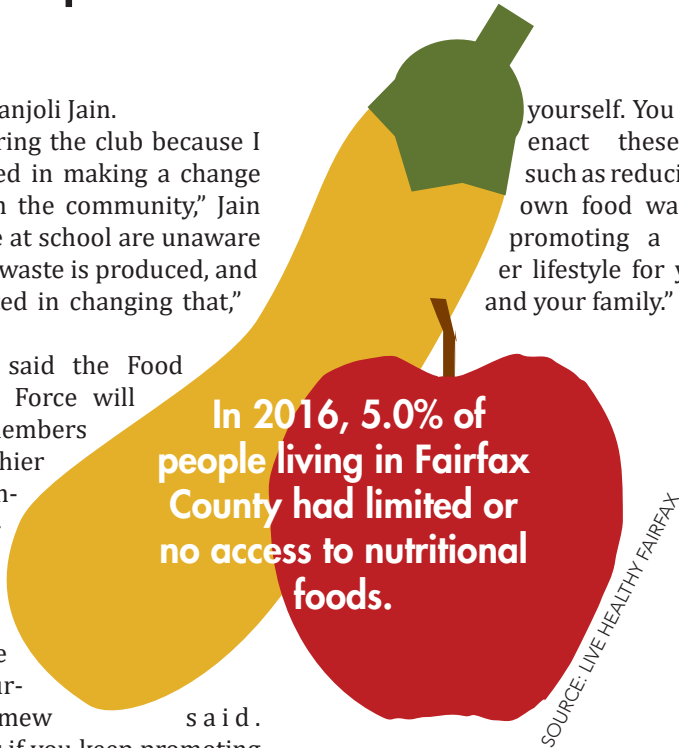
by ema baca

Senior Garreth Bartholemew is in the process of creating the Food and Hunger Task Force Club in order to promote food security at schools. The club focuses on the environmental and social aspects of food and hunger in the community. Although the activities office has not approved the club yet, Bartholemew has set three goals for the year: reducing food waste in the community, promoting healthier options and getting involved in volunteer work. He said the club is a policy and action-oriented task force. “The Octagon Club and Key Club do a lot of good work, but I feel like [they’re] trying to do a lot of things around the program instead of getting into it and actually dealing with a lot of the systemic problems that we face,” Bartholemew said. “I

thought that the best way is not only to do some of the volunteer-oriented work, but also get in and make systematic changes.” Club sponsor and Biology teacher Kristine Kuhlman is working on partnering with the Smithsonian Conservation Commons and Global Co Lab Network, which collaborates with students in the D.C. area to promote environmental sustainability. Although Kuhlman is the sponsor, she prefers guiding them through the process as opposed to instructing them. “I am just along for the ride,” Kuhlman said. “I am here to support Garreth. This is not my project, it’s their project, and this is an opportunity. I am just opening the door for the Food and Hunger Task Force to take part and be involved with the [Smithsonian Conservation Commons and Global Co Lab Network].” The club received over 70 signatures during Statesmen Start, including one

from sophomore Sanjoli Jain. “I am considering the club because I want to be involved in making a change at Marshall and in the community,” Jain said. “Many people at school are unaware of how much food waste is produced, and I am very interested in changing that,” Jain said. Bartholemew said the Food and Hunger Task Force will be successful if members try living a healthier and more environmentally friendly lifestyle and volunteer in the community. “Try to act the lifestyle for yourself,” Bartholemew said. “It only goes so far if you keep promoting volunteering and doing volunteering for

yourself. You need to enact these goals such as reducing your own food waste and promoting a healthier lifestyle for yourself and your family.”





# volume 56 issue 2 rank&file

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## Gender-neutral dress code passes

by gwyneth murphy

In response to repeated complaints from female students, the Fairfax County School Board has finally addressed the age-old dress code debate with an updated policy. Over the summer, the Board voted on a proposal to include more ungendered language and has since received immense support, as well as some criticism, from FCPS residents.

The primary edits to the Students Rights and Responsibilities dress code section addressed any mention of “cleavage”, in an attempt to correct the inclusion of female body parts without mention of male body parts. The policy unfairly targeted girls, and gave staff members permission to publicly draw attention to and shame the sexuality of female students. The policy more appropriately uses “private

areas” now, so as to give equal consideration to all genders.

In the updated dress code, the Board also removed references to sexually provocative clothing, and instead uses “excessive amount[s] of bare skin.” This change shifts the focus on student’s uncovered skin from being of a sexual nature to being inappropriate for the school setting. Although opponents of the new wording argue it is now too vague to be effective, if schools properly train their staff to understand the purpose of the changes and what that means for unified implementation, it will not matter in the long term how specific the word choice is.

When a staff member is able to humiliate a student in front of all of their peers, the dress code becomes a way of isolating and embarrassing kids, as opposed to a way of maintaining appropriate

standards. The biggest modification to rules regarding the behavior of authority figures is that they must now approach students as privately as possible, so as to “maintain the dignity of the student.”

The original policy was also based on the antiquated idea that men have so little self control that the bra straps or shoulders of their peers would distract them. Hopefully, the new policy will allow students to feel less scrutiny for physical attributes out of their control, while also giving more credit to teenagers and their ability to keep their hormones in check.

The public should commend those students who shared their stories and spoke up against former practices, as well as Board Member Ryan McElveen for listening and constructing an appropriate response. Even though it is not perfect, at a bare minimum it

clothing should not:



brings attention to the need for a more united policy, where teachers and administrators are not using their personal judgement, but rather a unified and gender-neutral county standard.

## Google Classroom outperforms Blackboard

by sophie tedesco

Budget difficulties were startlingly apparent to the student body this year. While only an inconvenience, the lack of agendas for all students illustrated the harsh truth about money in the Fairfax County Public School system (FCPS): there simply is not enough.

A lack of money forces an evaluation of how schools use available resources. According to the approved budget for 2019, Fairfax County will spend 2.2 million dollars on Blackboard, also known as FCPS 24-7 Learning, for the year.

In the budget document, FCPS credits Blackboard as “an online resource that allows FCPS to extend learning beyond the traditional school day, provid[ing] students with immediate access to the classes in which they are enrolled.”

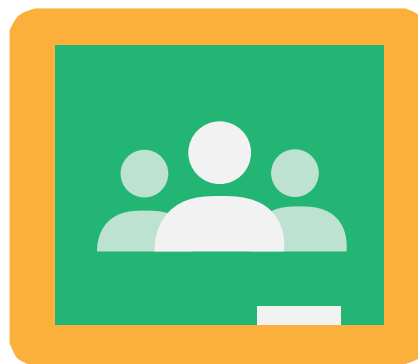
Making classroom materials constantly and consistently available and giving students the ability to interact with their teachers and peers outside of school is incredibly beneficial. But despite the money FCPS is pouring in to Blackboard, it is not serving that purpose.

Of my seven classes this year, one teacher actively uses Blackboard. Five of my teachers use Google Classroom or other Google education resources as their primary means of interaction with their classes. In my three years at Marshall, I have only had four teachers actively use

Blackboard, and they all also relied on Google Drive.

At my brother’s elementary school, his teachers have used Google Classroom instead of Blackboard since third grade. This year, multiple clubs I am involved in are also using Google Classroom to communicate and share resources.

Google Classroom and Blackboard allow teachers to both email their students and post homework and classroom notes.



Google Classroom, however, also allows students to directly comment on assignments for their teacher or classmates to respond. Furthermore, Google Classroom ties in all of the facets of Google Drive, including Google Forms, Docs, Sheets and Slides. These additional tools allow students to submit more complex and engaging projects and share them with their class. Having assignments and submissions in the same place helps with student organization as well.

Beyond Google Classroom’s superior capabilities, the service has one insurmountable advantage over Blackboard. It is free. It is inexcusable to dump precious financial resources into a service that students rarely use, when there is a free alternative.

Even for teachers that currently use Blackboard, the switch to Google Classroom would be easy and ultimately beneficial, as all of their notes and resources would be on a server that any computer can access.

Even Family Connection, a tool to guide families through the college process that is accessible through Blackboard, is not unique to the Blackboard site. College and career specialist Gardner Humphries said Family Connection is a separate service from Blackboard. The resources on Family Connections could link to another site for ease of access. Humphries said he even uses Google Classroom over Blackboard.

There is no significant drawback to Google Classroom, but there is an incapable problem with Blackboard: the 2.2 million dollar price tag.

FCPS is not justified in wasting money on Blackboard when a free and better service exists. FCPS should stop using Blackboard, a dated and expensive system, and move towards the future with Google Classroom.

## What the HECK

*Swearing in the classroom improves information retention*

by wade devinney

Be it casually, accidentally or passionately, cussing in the classroom is much more prevalent in higher grade levels. The same language that has middle school students gasping and parents emailing the principal seems to be a natural part of a high school class. But swearing in the classroom actually benefits a student’s learning experience.

According to the Chicago Tribune, high schoolers curse an average of 80 times a day, roughly four times per hour. Teachers who do not curse in class omit a significant part of a student’s vocabulary, thus missing an opportunity to better engage their students. The class is much more likely

to retain information from a teacher who employs vocabulary similar to theirs than from a teacher who uses vocabulary that students do not.

Although high schoolers swear many times throughout the day, it still only makes up about 0.01 percent of the words they say in one day. So there is still an element of surprise when a teacher swears in the classroom.

This behavior helps students stay alert, focusing on the subconscious knowledge that a teacher could likely swear at any given time.

Research has shown that cursing is actually linked to higher IQ. According to a study at Marist College by Kristin L. Jay,



swearing is indicative of a higher vocabulary and greater ability to express oneself. The study showed that swearing can even have positive effects on the quality of writing. Based on the findings of this study, teachers who often use explicit language are more capable of communicating with their students in both oral and written communication, thus bettering their ability to teach.

# FCPS WiFi blocks majority of social networks

by dmitry butylev

Since the first day of school I noticed that a majority of my apps stopped working properly. Snapchat was not loading at all, whereas last year I was able to send snaps. In previous years, only its texting feature was not available as a result of school WiFi restrictions.

According to the Fairfax County Public Schools' website, "online gaming has the potential to be a major 'bandwidth-hog' as well as interfere with productive curriculum work. Music files generate 'bursty' traffic and generally require long download times."

This was clearly the main reason for the school to restrict access for its students. It sounds quite reasonable to save the traffic. It is smart move for the school to keep us away from social media, but it also makes us

somewhat frustrated about it. Fairfax County cares about the quality of teaching and minimizing the level of distraction for students of all grades. It seems like schools tried to prioritize the usage of wireless internet for educational purposes. However, their efforts went somewhat too far.

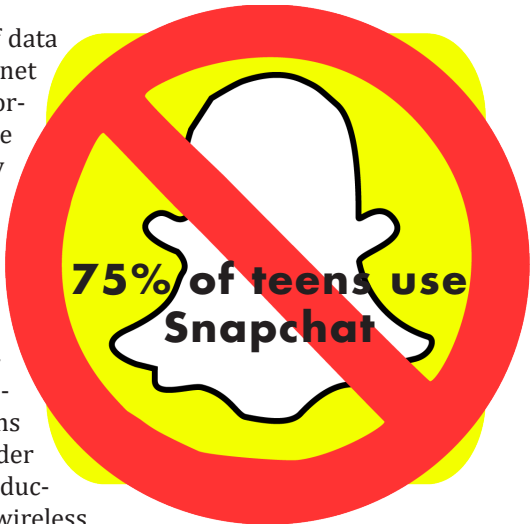
In 2015, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) reported 73 percent of teens in high schools from the ages of 14 to 17 use more than three gigabytes of school-provided wireless service on a daily basis. Thus, high schools are being cautious and assuming social networks are a big source of distraction for students.

I knew that the school banned both Snapchat and Netflix due to high internet traffic consumption, while general websites do not usually require

a decent amount of data or wireless internet connection. A majority of my peers use new or nearly new cell-phone devices for a variety of purposes during the school day.

Fairfax County Public Schools estimated the data losses those applications created and, in order to improve the productivity of schools' wireless internet, they added both Snapchat and Netflix to the list of on-line restrictions.

Honestly, even if I use my cellular data it will not affect my study process due to the internet speed that my carrier provides. In this case, using individual mobile data would even increase the speed at which these social media and communication apps



The county restricted access in most of the school applications not only to students, but also to teachers. We will have to accept this restriction as it is, because our frequent actions on the Internet make it difficult for everyone, including us, to work efficiently inside of the school.

# New online attendance form increases accuracy

by hannah levitan

This year, parents are able to submit absence requests through a form on the Marshall website. The administration created the form as a 21st century approach to documenting absence requests.

Over the past two years, I faced multiple



issues with the old attendance system. My attendance was inaccurate and as a result, I had to explain the mistaken tardies to the

attendance office.

With the the new online form, attendance-taking is more efficient for parents, teachers and students. Moving towards a 21st century platform of documentation ensures accurate, real-time information and records for students whereabouts.

According to a research brief from the Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center, many school districts do not look at all the right data to improve and track school attendance. They track how many students show up every day and how many are skipping school without an excuse, rather than how many miss school consistently. Admin overlooks many absences with poor documentation systems, but this new system intends to combat the previous issues.

The system promotes absence awareness, resulting in a decrease in absences.

Last year, the attendance office incorrectly documented me as absent several times, proving the old system to be faulty.

In addition to the incorrect tardies, students could easily forge a signed pass, but the new system sends an automatic reply to the guardian's email address, linked to SIS, to confirm the received request.

The previous procedure backed up the attendance office's voicemail and was a slower process compared to the current on-line system.

The new system is highly beneficial and increases productivity. Additionally, Marshall is unique in that it is the only school in Fairfax County that has an online attendance platform. Marshall's increase of technology use boosts productivity levels, furthering Marshall's future success.

# Rank & File to diversify coverage through concentration on digital, multimedia platforms

As we began crafting our 56th volume of the Rank&File in August, my staff and I made it a priority to embrace our role in the community by striving to be an all-encompassing hub for student and local news.

As journalism becomes an increasingly digital field, we want to adapt and mold to our readers' needs by providing instant coverage across multiple platforms. By re-launching our website in June and

committing ourselves to more regular Twitter use, the newspaper will no longer confine itself to monthly, in-print reporting. We plan to incorporate multimedia projects and utilize our now daily class during third period as a way to ensure we tell the stories of as many individuals, teams and organizations as we can in a timely, relevant manner.

This year our class shrank from over 40

writers to only 15. Although it has been an adjustment, we see this as an opportunity for everyone's voice to be heard through more open and

streamlined staff communication. It is to our advantage that we can now focus on enhancing the newspaper, rather than on managing a large,

inexperienced staff.

It is my personal goal to elevate our publication from the inside out, improving how our staff functions in order to ultimately develop a better product. Our eight new editors are already making significant contributions to the overall vision of the paper through their innovative ideas, dedication to their craft, and devotion to raising our photography standards, so our visual

art can better match the quality of our writing.

Keeping these objectives in mind, I have full confidence in this staff and our ability to have more transparency and communication within our team, so as to produce a higher quality product across both print and digital mediums and, most importantly, uphold the legacy of our 55 preceding volumes.

Gwyneth Murphy  
Editor-in-Chief

## letter from the editor

## tweets

I'm so proud of @gcmfootball and @gcm\_cheer for welcoming our war heroes to Washington DC this morning. #honorflight #marshallpride



Jeff Litz  
Principal  
@GCMPrincipal

Marshall Cheer and Football. After a long week of school and athletics... you got up at 5AM and on a bus at 6 and spent your morning cheering and thanking our vets. The entire airport was impressed on how you conducted yourselves. We are so PROUD of you. Go Statesmen!

MarshallHS Atheletics



@GCMsports\_1

Another great Honor Flight.

GCM Cheer

@gcm\_cheer



## letters

### Horseback riding teaches discipline

I've been riding since I was 10 years old. I am not a professional but I've learned a lot in that time. I enjoy riding because I get to experience the great outdoors and it helped me become more athletic. I love the bond that I developed with my horse and I made new friends. I also learned an important, valuable lesson: patience. Horses do not always go where you tell them to. You have to teach them that you are in charge, and that did not come easily. Over time, I've grown to love horseback riding. It is one of my favorite hobbies and I usually go riding every weekend. I want other people to give it a try, because it also has health benefits.

Sammy Rakasi  
Sophomore

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## Crazy Rich Asians film opposes against tokenization in Hollywood

by will shin

The highly anticipated movie adaptation of Kevin Kwan's book *Crazy Rich Asians* has garnered much attention in the months before its release on Aug. 15. It is currently dominating the box office, and with good reason.

At its surface, the film is not all too exciting: Rachel Chu (Constance Wu), a Chinese-American economics professor at New York University, is in a relationship with Nick Young (Henry Golding), one of Singapore's most eligible bachelors. Unaware of his family's riches and clout, she agrees to travel with him to Singapore for a family friend's wedding. Upon arrival, Rachel is immediately thrust into an unfamiliar and hostile environment, complete with Nick's intimidating mother, a number of vicious rivals and extravagant flaunting of money. While the movie remains a simple, mildly cliché romantic comedy, it is anything but run-of-the mill.

The film has been highly anticipated due to it being the first Hollywood movie in 25 years to feature an all-Asian cast. Despite its predictability, the sheer level of

representation makes up for nearly every complaint one could make about the tired plot. Everything from the fun Chinese pop music, to the boujee outfits, to the bustling streets with all kinds of strange street food create a vivid picture of Asian culture. The all-star cast, including hip-hop artist Awkwafina and American comedy staple Ken Jeong, Rachel's desire to to be good enough for Nick's disapproving mother and even the characters' mannerisms resonated with me on a wavelength I did not know existed.

As an Asian-American myself, watching the stories of Asian people come to life in a major Hollywood film without exoticization and tokenization offered a viewing experience that felt pleasantly familiar, yet also entirely new. The movie does an outstanding job in telling a classic fish-out-of-water and love story while weaving in all of the cultural aspects that come with an all-Asian cast. While I definitely do not think it was particularly subversive or ground-breaking, it was a solid step forward in ridding Hollywood of pre-disposed stigma.

Despite all of the joy the film brought



WARNER BROS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

From left to right: Nick Young (Henry Golding) and Rachel Chu (Constance Wu) pose at the end of *Crazy Rich Asians*. It is the first major Hollywood film since *The Joy Luck Club* (1993) to feature an all Asian cast. The film has already grossed over 189.9 million dollars in the box office and has already been confirmed for a sequel by Warner Bros. They will base the film off the book's sequel *China Rich Girlfriend* which will follow Nick and Rachel's wedding.

me, it does have one caveat: its pacing. There is simply too much story to be telling in a runtime of two hours. After following a snail's pace up until Rachel's fateful mahjong-playing scene, the movie suddenly switched gears and tried to reach the resolution as quickly as possible. While it was not sloppy per se, it

certainly felt a little disappointing to see such a rushed ending.

Despite the pacing issues, the movie expertly navigates between interlocking stories of conflict, the weaving in of culture and other more cinema-specific details, such as cinematography, set design and acting.



SAHAR JIWANI/RANK&FILE

Temporary orchestra director Tanya Ratner conducts the students in her third period orchestra class. "In Australia we often miss the fun of playing together," Ratner said. "That is really what keeps most people playing."

## Tanya Ratner fills in as interim orchestra director

by sahar jiwani

While orchestra teacher Catherine Bond is on maternity leave, Tanya Ratner is temporarily taking her place. Ratner is a professional orchestra conductor who taught at universities in Australia before coming to Marshall.

Music education in Australia is different than it is in the U.S. because choir, orchestra and band are not subjects in school, and all instrumental music is taught after school.

"Students strive for several hours [of practice] on the weekend to [eventually] play together," Ratner said. "We all spend a lot of time practicing on our own and it can be very isolatory so doing it with people [...] makes us want to keep going."

Ratner said the excitement of practicing music in a big group is an entirely different experience.

"I remember the first time I was in

a choir and there were 600 kids making the most amazing sound," Ratner said.

Even though the music teaching systems have few similarities, Ratner said the results are identical.

"We all get to the same place in the end but just in a different way," Ratner said.

Sophomore Sophia Song said Ratner is different from other orchestra teachers.

"She teaches at a very fast pace [and] it's helpful as we can get more things done and move on to different sections of music or start working on a different piece," Song said.

Sophomore Medha Annam also said there is a difference in Ratner's teaching style compared to Bond's.

"I think she tries to let us fix our mistakes and figure out how to play a part of a song on our own before telling us how to do it, which is helpful," Annam said.

Song said the students will have to get used to having a new teacher with different conducting patterns, but they will also get to experience something new.

"[We] get to be taught with a different style and play different music pieces than what our normal director would pick," Song said.

Song said she enjoys Ratner's class and that she is a good teacher.

"I like how fun the new teacher is" Song said. "She has a really nice accent and often plays music for us over the speakers."

For the three weeks that Ratner has been at Marshall, she said she has loved the environment and communicating with her students. "I think Catherine Bond must have been a really good teacher," Ratner said. "[The students] are really nice and really receptive and it's just fun making music with them. It feels more collaborative, which is what I like."

## Play and former screenwriter Bernard DeLeo replaces Jason Tamborini as theater director

by wade devinney

Bernard DeLeo has been writing plays and screenplays since the late '80s, and will be replacing former theater teacher Jason Tamborini this year.

DeLeo has had six years of teaching experience at West Springfield High School. Before coming to Marshall this year, he has been writing his own plays in the past, including *Beached* which has been performed in theaters all over the United States and in Canada for 30 years.

The school has afforded DeLeo more leeway in the plays that he writes and produces ever since moving to Marshall.

"I am here because I have a little more creative freedom," DeLeo said. "West Springfield was a great school with really talented kids, but it was a little more conservative in that area and I kind of wanted to push the envelope a little bit more."

DeLeo has written 13 screenplays, including plays, sitcoms and movies such as the sitcom *Life's Work*.

"[Writing for *Life's Work*] was fun, but I ultimately didn't like Los Angeles, and [I] wanted to stay in New

York City," DeLeo said. "I did it as a way to make money, but when you write for a sitcom, the studio kind of owns you."

DeLeo also worked as an independent film producer in California with two of his colleagues.

"[While] we were in Silicon Valley, we made three movies," DeLeo said. "One of them won the Audience Choice award at the Sundance Film Festival in 2000 which was amazing."

DeLeo will be putting on some of his favorite self-written plays that he said will be the most fitting for the Statesmen theatre to perform, which has led to some success in the past.

"For school I've written student plays before one of which made it all the way to state finals at the VHSL tournament," DeLeo said.

Sophomore and Theatre Club member Josh Gurdak said DeLeo has been very popular within his classes.

"[DeLeo] is a nice and organized guy," Gurdak said. "He is very neat and has precise ideas about what he wants to do and knows how to execute those ideas."

Theatre students in particular have been highly



WADE DEVINNEY/RANK&FILE

Left to right: Senior Kaylsa Johnson, Choir teacher Kelli Pierson and Theater teacher Bernard DeLeo discuss auditions for the new play *Be More Chill*.

anticipating DeLeo's production lineup for this school year.

"Marshall theatre has been consistently amazing for the last three years and I see no reason for that to change," senior Adrian Lamb said.





**Above:** A camera crew films Cross Country coach Darrell General giving instructions to the runners. The crew is filming for the Quicken Loans Hometown Heroes award, which highlights local who make a large impact on their community.



**Left:** General times his runners as they complete their lap around the track. He is conditioning them to be able to run at a consistent pace for long distances so that they can maintain constant paces in a three mile race and improve their times.

# General receives nomination for Hometown Heroes national award

by jay kosumi

Cross country head coach Darrell General is one of the top five nominees for the Quicken Loans Hometown Heroes national award. This award, which aims to bring recognition to the most impactful coaches in Virginia, is taking place for a second year.

General said receiving the nomination was, to him, an unexpected surprise.

“I was caught off guard a little bit,” General said. “Being nominated is a nice honor, and I appreciate the kids nominating me, but they know they’re the most important thing.”

General has been a coach for the track and field and cross country teams since 2002. He also holds the title of former Marine Corps Marathon two-time winner, in 1995 and 1997. He has competed in five Olympic time trials, and won the Army Ten Miler three times. Despite his achievements as a runner, General said working with the athletes is his favorite part about his job.

“I just want to help them grow and be the best they can be,” General said. “That’s the biggest part of coaching for me. Everything else, as far as winning medals or state championships, comes later, but the biggest thing is just making sure that even in four years, [the students] feel confident about themselves.”

The nominations for the award closed to the public on June 30. After the announcement of the nomination, General participated in a film about his experience in coaching cross country, and his

past as an Olympic runner. The film will go up on the website *Flotrack* against those of the four other nominees. There will be a voting process for people to choose who they believe has the best one.

Senior and cross country runner Abi Schlechty also took part in the filming of the video.

“Coach chose me to [do the] interview because he knows how much I respect him,” Schlechty said. “During the filming, I was just asked questions about [him...] what our school would be like without him and the contribution he has made to my life.”

Slechty said General’s biggest contribution to the team is the amount of effort he puts in helping the team members.

“He has made running at Marshall a sport that everyone is able to do and a place where everyone, despite their ability, can fit in,” Schlechty said. “He is always doing all he can to help us, even if it means that life is harder for him.”

Head football coach and colleague Matt Hochstrasser, who coaches during the same season as General, said he was happy to hear about the nomination, and that General earned it.

“He deserves it,” Hochstrasser said. “He’s a great coach. He is motivated, and he gets the best out of the athletes. The kids love him.”

The filming crew visited General again on Sept. 18 to shoot clips of him coaching the team members during one of the cross country practices. The winner of the Hometown Heroes award will receive nationwide recognition, as well as a monetary prize of 25,000 dollars.

## Class of 2019 chooses mob leaders

by brynn norwood

Each year, the senior class elects new mob leaders. The leaders came into this position through their passion for the school and enthusiastic spirit.

As each class of seniors graduates, former mob leaders pass on their title to the new generation of student section heads. For the class of 2019, those students are seniors Eliza Roth and Robbie Axtell.

“One of my favorite parts of Marshall early on was the spirit aspect,” Roth said.

While school spirit is a large part of the job description, there are other aspects of being a mob leader. Roth and Axtell are also responsible for managing the Marshall Mob Twitter account, as well as selecting the color outs during spirit week.

Roth said encouraging the student body to participate in events is what she hopes to do with her role as inciter of school spirit.

“This job gives us such a sense of responsibility and community,” Roth said. “I really hope everyone looks up to us and follows our lead.”

Roth said she has had an interest in being a mob leader since her freshman year. Axtell, on the other hand, said he was not aware of the position until recently.

“It never really occurred to me to be a mob leader until this year,” Axtell said. “It was never a goal of mine freshman year, it just kind of happened.”

Axtell said sports have always been a passion of his, and he particularly enjoys attending school basketball games because the close proximity of the attendees in the crowd creates a strong sense of community.

“Personally I like basketball games a little more than football games,” Axtell said. “Specifically if we make a buzzer-beater. Big plays make me really hyped.”

Roth and Axtell said they have a good relationship. Roth

and Axtell bonded over the challenge of being transfer students and needing to make a brand new group of friends.

“Me and Eliza go way back,” Axtell said. “We’ve been friends since middle school and we both came here as opposed to going to Langley [High School],”

Axtell sought out former 2018 graduate and mob leader Nicolas Hauser last year to discuss the position, after Axtell’s friends told him he would be a good fit for the role.

Like Axtell, Roth enjoys basketball games. She said of all of the games, watching Marshall play Madison is her favorite part of the season.

“I think that’s my favorite, the Marshall versus Madison game,” Roth said. “Last year’s [game] was so much fun.”

Both Roth and Axtell said they want to represent the spirit of Marshall to the fullest and encourage others to get involved with school events and activities.



**Left to right:** Seniors Eliza Roth, Devon Lussier and Robbie Axtell cheer for the Statesmen with the Marshall Mob at a football game at Herndon High School. Axtell and Roth represent the Mob both at home and away games.

Roth said that fewer people attend away games, but the mob leaders strive to show strong spirit despite the inconvenience of traveling to other schools.

“There was a game against Annandale [High School that] very few people came to because it was really far away,” Roth said. “We came back from three touchdowns and we were playing really well. It was great.”

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# Powerlifting team gains popularity with athletes

by grady dillon

The Marshall powerlifting team will be in its fifth year running this season. Personal Fitness teacher and wrestling strength coach Ryan Wood started the powerlifting team in 2014 when he first came to Marshall.

Although powerlifting is not necessarily seasonal, Wood prefers to work with the powerlifting team during the spring because athletes are more available.

"We have kind of gotten away from doing the winter [meets] because we just have a good bit of people that are football players, or wrestlers or cheerleaders," Wood said. "We just have a lot of winter and fall sports athletes. So we just try to put it in the spring now. We get more people out that way."

Wood said he prefers that the powerlifting athletes be a part of one of his Personal Fitness classes to watch them train.

"In rare exceptions I have allowed people to do [powerlifting] that were not doing Personal Fitness," Wood said. "But I'm also trying to get away from that because if they're not in class, I can't see them training. There's been probably one or two exceptions, but in the future, I am trying to keep it just to Personal Fitness so I can be there to coach them and teach them everyday."

He has never held any typical tryouts for the powerlifting team, but Wood would, instead, ask kids if they wanted to try powerlifting.

"In the past, I [would] go up to kids who seem to be very into fitness and working out, whether they are an athlete or not an athlete, and I just ask them 'would you be good at [powerlifting]? Would you be interested in doing it?' Wood said. "Then they do it for a year, and they want to do it next year.



GRADY DILLON/RANK&FILE

Senior Owen Usowski lifts weights during personal fitness to train for his upcoming meets. He said he likes competing and surrounding himself with the supportive environment of his team.

Now it has gotten more popular. Kids kind of come up to me and ask me [to join the powerlifting team]."

Since the team's start, there are more kids every year who want to get involved on the team, making Wood question if he should cap the amount of athletes.

"With 22 [athletes], that was a lot," Wood said. "That was probably the most I could have to try and coach. I do not know what we will do this year. I do not know if we will cap [the team]. I would hate to cap it because I think powerlifting is one of the sports that is for everyone, whether you're an athlete or not an athlete, whether you're female or male."

Senior Owen Usowski said he thinks other kids around Marshall should join the powerlifting team because of how much he has enjoyed his experience.

"It is so fun," Usowski said. "The meet is amazing. You just go there, and you have a lot of support from everyone on the team. You just go up and lift your weights, and it is pretty great."

Senior Kayla O'Brien said she has enjoyed being on the powerlifting team because she has learned so many things.

"[Powerlifting] has taught me a lot of lessons," O'Brien said. "It is a lot of fun. It has made me a lot stronger. It has taught me to be very dedicated, very disciplined, compassionate, all the good things. It also helps with my wrestling. It has also taught me to be very [...] motivated."

The powerlifting team is not a VHSL sport, nor is it a club, but rather it is in the middle ground between the two.

"[The powerlifting team] is kind of in [between VHSL and club sport status]," Wood said. "There is just a lot of red tape around clubs, and I don't want to put a lot of restrictions on things. Because we're not school sponsored, and we do [meets] through other [powerlifting] federations, it wouldn't make sense for it to be a club."

The powerlifting team is one of the most unique programs in Fairfax County Public Schools, as there is no other program like this.

"As far as I know, there's no other school with an actual powerlifting team," Wood said. "We are the only one's doing it, so it wouldn't be a VHSL sport. It is kind of like an in between kind of thing."

The powerlifting team no longer has any practices, although there was a time when they would regularly do so.

"We used to train during physical fitness and after school every Friday," Wood said. "But we don't do that anymore. We just do everything during personal fitness."

## sportsbrief

### Freshman cheerleading tryouts produce largest turnout of recent years

The freshman cheer team had one of the biggest turnouts this season, despite not everyone being aware of tryouts.

Freshman Cheer head coach Dominic Borello said fewer students try out because they are not aware of tryouts.

"Most freshman are not aware of tryouts, which is why we notify them over the announcements."

In past years, the team would have around six or seven people and this year there are nine members on the freshman team with over 50 students that tried out for cheer this year.

"There were three freshman that went straight to varsity and six that went to JV because of their skills out of the eighteen freshman who tried out," Borello said.

In addition, Marshall's cheer program is increasing, making it one of the biggest in Fairfax County.

"Marshall is one of few schools with a freshman cheer team in Fairfax County and we are one of the largest cheer programs in the county," Borello said. "The team has been progressing well and doing a great job."

Assistant coach Anne Hoffman also said she felt very proud.

"Most of the freshman have never done this before, so they're really getting the concept," Hoffman said.

Being on the team has helped members grow with skills and build strong relationships.

"I got to learn a bunch of new techniques with my cheer team," Nguyen said. "Teamwork plays a super huge role in stunting, and I got to really understand how working together makes us stronger."

Sophomore and JV Cheerleader Amani Akkoub said she appreciates the mentality of the freshman cheerleaders.

"The freshmen are super dedicated and we're all excited to have them in our cheer team," Akkoub said.

For freshman member Nhi Nguyen, being a part of cheer has helped her communicate with others and build relationships with those around her. She said being on the team has helped members grow with skills and build strong relationships.

"I got to learn a bunch of new techniques with my cheer team," Nguyen said. "Teamwork plays a super huge role in stunting, and I got to really understand how working together makes us stronger."

by amelia gee



AMELIA GEE/RANK&FILE

Left to right: Freshmen Jazli Rodriguez, Jania Patterson, Priscilla Kelly, Nhi Nguyen and Elin Yim practice for the upcoming football games.

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