

Features:
Robotics team receives new technology before their first competition of the calendar year.



Opinion:
FCPS ignores significant Jewish holidays by not granting days off for religious observation.



Arts&Style:
Participants share cultural traditions and creative talents at International Night.



Sports:
Athletics department adds new nets and backstops for upcoming spring sports.

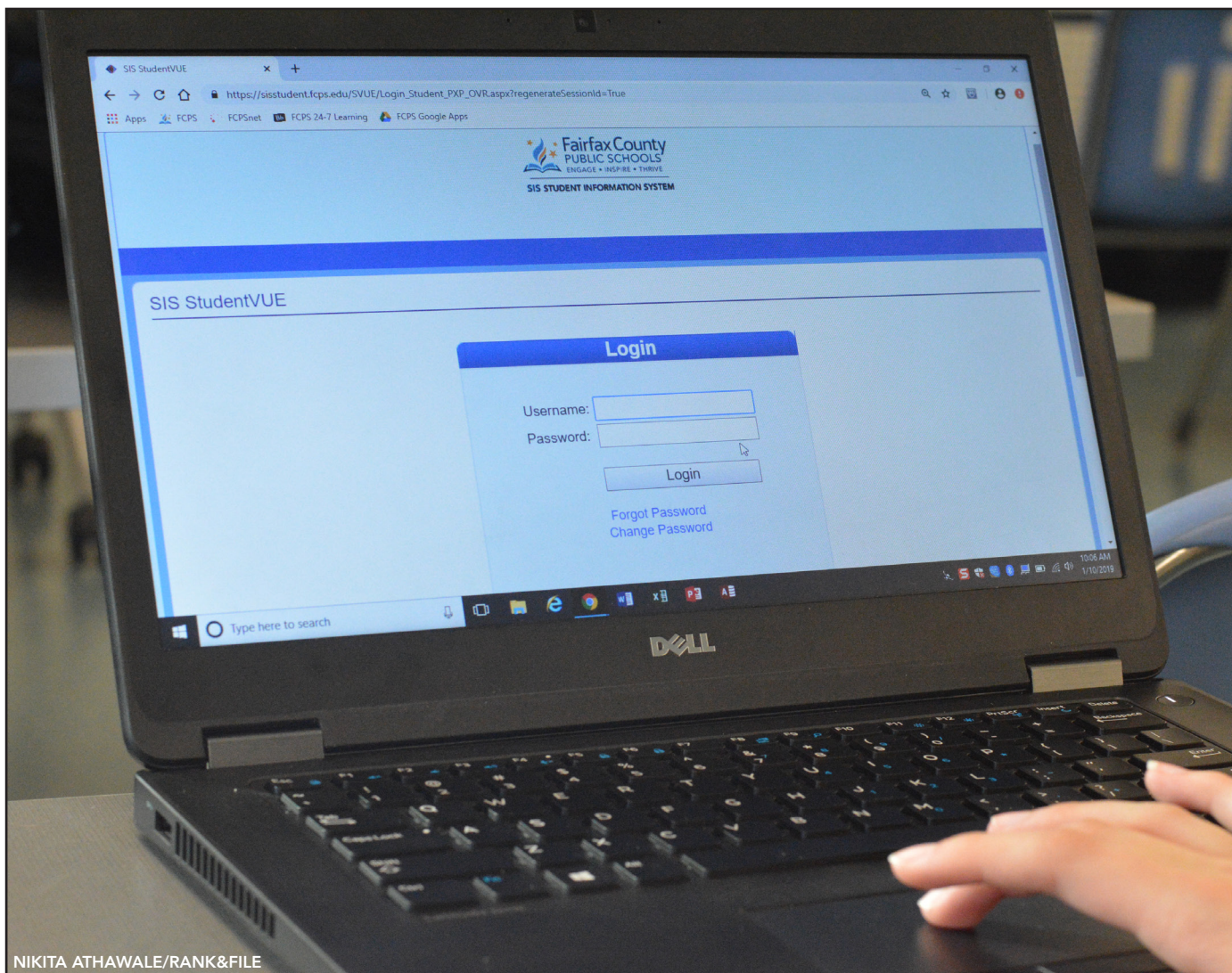


Online:
Students are responsible for keeping the cafeteria clean after having lunch.

rank&file

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NIKITA ATHAWALE/RANK&FILE

Desire for valuable feedback slows grading process Senior Katie Curry: first semester report 'important' to seniors

by nikita athawale

Administration sent an email before winter break that raised concern about teachers not recording grades in the Student Information System (SIS) across various classes.

According to the Fairfax County Public Schools website, one of the requirements for teachers is to enter at least nine grades per quarter. But for a period of time after the quarter started on Nov. 7, numerous classes had no assignments in the gradebook.

"Different teachers have different protocols or procedures that they use with regard to how they put grades in," principal Jeff Litz said. "My expectation is that students are getting regular feedback about how they are doing in their [classes]."

Teachers enter assignments such as homework, classwork, exams and projects into the gradebook on SIS.

"I want teachers to have balance in their lives," Litz said. "It's really up to each teacher to fulfill [the] professional responsibility of entering grades. When and how they do that [...] is going to vary."

English teacher Kelsey Breslin said the delay in recording grades was due to increased rigor of the material students learn, and their progress after the first quarter.

"As the year goes on, we're asking our students to do more challenging things so [...] being able to assess them and giving them really valuable

feedback [...] takes longer because [they're] getting better," Breslin said. "We need to give [them] more specific feedback because [their] knowledge is increasing."

Litz said teachers have more responsibilities during the time semester grades come out.

"Teachers work very hard [...] and a lot of them go the extra mile to make

"It's really up to each teacher to fulfill [the] professional responsibility of entering grades."

Jeff Litz
principal

sure that students have worthwhile assessments," Litz said. "They take their time to make sure they are giving kids quality feedback on their work."

Senior Katie Curry said delayed grades affect seniors the most, who need to send their first semester report cards to colleges, and may not have enough time to remediate late-graded assessments.

"For seniors, first semester grades matter more because they get sent to colleges," Curry said. "Not knowing where you stand is frightening because if your grade ends up lower than you thought [it would be], it might be too late to fix it."

Despite the importance first semester grades carry for seniors, Curry said she thinks students should be more considerate of teachers' personal lives, and not pressure them to grade assignments.

"Teachers have personal lives like everyone, [so] we, as students, should take that into consideration," Curry said. "We have a tendency to hold teachers to high standards because we [often] forget they're just people too."

Teachers receive two periods off, one of which they spend meeting with their curriculum teams at least once a week to plan lessons and create common assessments. They also have teacher workdays at the end of each quarter.

"I spend a lot of my teacher workdays preparing for the entire quarter so that I can focus my time in the quarter [...] grading and giving feedback," Breslin said. "I love that we have teams so that we can rely on each other for creating assessments. Just having a big Marshall family, especially in the English department, really helps my sanity."

Litz said he values the feedback teachers give students more than the grading itself.

"There are multiple ways you can give kids feedback," Litz said. "One [of them] is through a grade. If [students] are getting meaningful feedback about their mastery of content along the way that, to me, is more important than an actual grade."

newsbriefs

IB Topics removes EK tests for second semester

Starting second semester, all seniors in the IB World Topics classes will no longer take Essential Knowledge (EK) tests.

The department decided to remove EKs to address the seniors' poor essay scores, allowing them to focus on preparing for those exams instead. Social studies teacher Matthew Axelrod said seniors will now engage in cognitive skills development, typical for the IB exam.

"We want students to be successful on the IB exam and shift their focus to essays," Axelrod said.

The aim of EKs is to determine the students' understanding of the material they learn each unit. Axelrod said the decision to end EKs would lead to higher essay proficiency.

"We want kids to recognize that the [IB exam] is a challenge and give them the skills to be able to get there," Axelrod said.

Senior Isaac Feldman said he is looking forward to the new change and how it develops.

"I think not testing on EKs is welcomed and it's more of a wait-and-see thing for now," Feldman said.



AMELIA GEE/RANK&FILE

Senior Laura Boyle takes notes on the warm-up lesson in her Topics class, in preparation for their upcoming paper 2. "The decision shows the Topics team's dedication to helping us understand the content and make connections," Boyle said.

Approval process delays senior class privileges

The class of 2019 Student Government Association (SGA) board was unable to secure five minute early releases for the first two Fridays of the year.

Senior and SGA member Luka Gabitsinashvili said the delay came as a result of their late request.

"With the whole approval process, we pitched in the idea late," Gabitsinashvili said. "Everyone was upset they weren't getting the early dismissals on time."

The delayed early dismissals were not the only timeliness issue SGA struggled with. Senior library passes did not become available until Dec. 19.

"When we created the library passes, the school had removed colored printers from the workrooms," senior and SGA member Rohan Shah said. "We had to fill out a purchase order, which took [over] a week to be processed."

briefs by amelia gee

Robotics prepares for FRC challenge with new module

by dmitry butylev

The Gryphon Robotics team began the year with planning, designing and building a robot to compete in the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) with a new module.

FIRST is an international organization that facilitates robotics competitions for grades K through 12. Under strict rules, limited resources and limited time, FRC challenges teams to build and program robots to perform prescribed tasks against a field of competitors.

This year, FRC issued a challenge where two opposing robots will compete against each other to

collect as many rubber balls as possible during periodic “sandstorms,” which impair driver visibility.

“It takes a lot of research to figure out how to structure everything,” junior and programming team member Lee Peterson said. “The programming part is easy, but the key is to make everything work together.”

In previous years, Gryphon Robotics did not have a vision processing application, but one of their sponsors, Nvidia, gave them a module to aid the team in this field: the Nvidia Jetson TX2.

“Nvidia Jetson TX2 makes us able to use visual processing,

which helps us locate and track objects and move [the robot] towards them,” junior and programming captain Parsia Bahrami said.

Bahrami also said using the new module will allow for the robot to operate with full autonomy.

“The fully autonomous [robot helps us] to be able to score points without the need for [human] drivers to operate the robot during the blind [sandstorm] phase of the event,” Bahrami said.

Though the competition is not until June, teams of high school students and their coaches work for a six week period



DMITRY BUTYLEV/RANK&FILE

Junior and programming team member Chris Powers works on visual processing through his laptop's console tab, which will help Gryphon's robot understand its surrounding area.

called “build season” to create a robot that meets the game's requirements.

With the new

parts, senior and team captain Elena Bachman said she looks forward to the season.

“We are planning

to move away from the [FRC]-provided drivetrains and do something we design ourselves, which is

exciting,” Bachman said. “Our team has grown a lot, and I think this season will go better than last year.”

iOS Screen Time

breaking down how the feature works



Screen Time breaks down how much time people spend in a certain category, and color codes each one

Screen Time reports on not only apps, but on website activity as well

iOS Screen Time holds users accountable by providing reports on their app usage

by hannah levitan

Apple's new iOS Screen Time feature allows users to track phone usage and set limits, which leads to an increase in awareness and improved productivity among students.

Screen Time allows Apple users to see their phone usage based on productivity, social networking, entertainment, games and creativity.

The feature also provides users with multiple ways to control their phone usage such as Downtime and App Limits, both of which set restrictions on apps and on the phone itself.

“I do try to cut back because it is kind of embarrassing,” junior Gillian Dumont said. “I’ve spent six hours on my phone which is kind of excessive. I set limits for myself when I’m doing my homework so that I do not use my phone too much and I get my work done.”

Students and staff members both reported attempts to cut down on screen time after seeing their weekly phone usage report.

“Once I saw how much screen time I was [using], which ended up being nine and a half hours, I am now starting to try to use less because I don’t want to spend my whole life on my

phone,” safety and security assistant Renee Royle said.

Teens usually take advantage of winter break to relax, and with school out of the picture, junior Alyson Rees said her weekly report went up by 20 percent.

“My phone [usage] definitely increased because I had more free time to do whatever I wanted and didn’t have to worry about homework or going to school for seven hours a day where I couldn’t use my phone,” Rees said. “I also noticed that my screen time [...] increased by multiple hours which is definitely not good. [My screen time] has definitely increased more over break.”

iOS Screen Time promotes awareness and productivity. Students who have limited time after school to finish homework could use the feature to control the time they spend on their phone and stay focused, which sophomore Patrick Smith said he does.

“Usually, I look at how much [time] I’ve [spent on my phone] over the past week and if it’s more than what I want, then I’ll check to see how much [time I spent] was used for education and how much was used for entertainment,” Smith said. “Screen Time limits are useful especially when you want to keep on track.”

Long term assignments demand work over winter break despite county policy

by sophie tedesco

Winter break is a 12 day hiatus from school that lasts from Dec. 24 to Jan. 4. For students and staff alike, it is a chance to relax and rejuvenate without daily stressors.

While the break is a time to step away from school, long term deadlines for higher level courses make it difficult for students to avoid doing work.

“I’m a big believer that winter break should be free of school,” social studies teacher Dean Wood said. “I 100 percent think kids should not have to do a thing over winter break. However, unfortunately we give these long term assignments to kids, like the HI

[Historical Investigation]. Technically, [kids] don’t have to [do work on the HI over break], but to get it done in a decent way, [they] probably kind of have to.”

Long term assignments affect the winter break workload in other subjects as well. Physics teacher Janet Kahn said the timing of science fair leads a good amount of students to feel the need to work on it over break, though it is not mandatory to do so.

“A student who is really on top of everything may have finished their science fair data collection before winter break,” Kahn said. “[They] certainly could have. But I think winter break is a nice opportunity for students who aren’t

on top of everything to get things done.”

While having a break can be a chance for students to get ahead on assignments or catch up and alleviate pressure, looming projects can also be a source of stress, especially for students who are traveling over break.

“I went to Portugal and Spain,” junior Elizabeth Stern said. “I had [projects] to do, [but] I didn’t have the ability to work on them when I was away. I was definitely more stressed on my trip thinking about my assignments.”

Junior Grace Bir said winter break is an opportunity for her to complete work, but planning time for assignments is difficult

amid her other family commitments during the holiday season.

“I think break is a good time to get some work done,” Bir said. “But the deadlines [...] take away from having fun [and] spending time with family.”

Kahn said while students could work on science fair if they need to, she avoids assigning additional homework because she knows about their other commitments.

“I teach a variety of students from different circumstances,” Kahn said. “I have a lot of students who, when school is out, they work. I can’t send a student off who is working 60 hours a week for two weeks to do a lot of [home]work.”



COURTESY OF GRACE BIR

Junior Grace Bir works on her science fair project over winter break.

“Doing science fair over break [was] especially challenging, because my partner and I [weren’t] in town at the same time for very long,” Bir said. “Coordinating group work and actually doing it [was] difficult.”


Exam



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Listen to this: Are AirPods worth the price tag?

Students overlook the convenience of wireless earbuds and focus on the price

by will shin

Airpods offer numerous advantages over typical earbuds and other Bluetooth products that make the 160 dollar price tag well worth the money.

Convenience alone overshadows any qualms one could have with the hefty price tag. Being wireless, AirPods eliminate the nuisance of having to deal with any cords.

They are also light, sleek and portable, making them very inconspicuous and easy to use.

As a student, there have been several instances where the cords of my earbuds have caught on school bus seats, stair railings and binders, which lead me to drop my phone. AirPods remedy the persistent nuisance of having to deal with wires.

Not only does the absence of wires save users from the hindrance of dealing with them, but it also means there is nothing to plug into the single charging port on the iPhone 7.

Due to the W1 chip inside of each Airpod, they connect automatically when out of their case, they start playing audio when someone inserts them into their ears and they even pause when someone takes them out.

This feature enables users to listen to audio in a more hands-free manner. Since they are only out of their case when

they are in a user's ear, there is no reason for the case or its contents to be anywhere besides that person's hands or pocket.

They are also very user-friendly, as the full battery life of each Airpod is four hours.

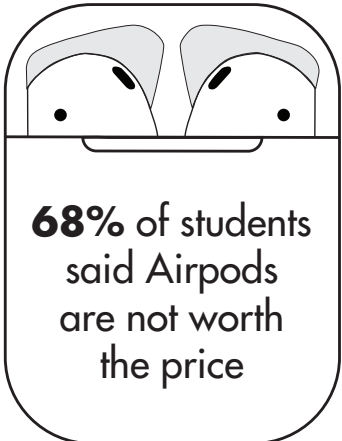
To address what seems to be the main counter argument from Airpod critics, I will say having to spend 160 dollars on any one item is always slightly demoralizing, especially on an item as small and easy to lose as AirPods.

But, while 160 dollars looks like a large sum to pay at first, AirPods are no more expensive than other wireless headsets of a similar caliber.

When considering another pair of wireless earbuds like the Powerbeats3 by Beats Electronics, their retail price is 200 dollars.

They are more expensive than AirPods, plus they have a single cord connecting the two earbuds, making them less convenient.

When weighing the several luxuries having a pair of AirPods gives a user against alternative options and the 160 dollar price tag, sheer convenience wins. I would say they are definitely worth it.



The price of AirPods outweighs its wireless feature and presumed benefits

by grady dillon

Apple demonstrated their tendency to produce unnecessary and dysfunctional products when they released AirPods in December of 2016. Despite the drawbacks, AirPods have been a popular gift among Apple users and the number of students sporting AirPods in the halls has greatly increased since Christmas.

Airpods are wireless, Bluetooth earbuds that pair to your Apple device to allow you to listen to music, videos or podcasts without having to untangle a cord.

They have become popular among high school students and Apple fans. Though AirPods may seem convenient, there are a lot of disadvantages to them.

First off, AirPods are easy to lose and steal. If you ever leave them in your car, classroom, bedroom or other area, they can be difficult to find.

Apple attempted to solve this problem through the "Find my iPhone" app.

On the app, you can track your pair of AirPods, which makes them easier to locate. But a thief could steal

someone's AirPods and connect them to their phone or other Apple device.

Additionally, AirPods look absolutely ridiculous when somebody wears them. When people use AirPods, they look like they are in a low-budget Star Trek film of some sort that could not afford all of the make up for the characters. AirPods look like expensive, dysfunctional hearing aids elderly customers would buy from an "As seen on TV" commercial. This aspect is problematic because t makes them look very unprofessional and unattractive.

Airpods are also extremely overpriced. According to the Apple website, AirPods are 160 dollars, whereas traditional "EarPods" are a much more affordable 29 dollars. It seems ridiculous that removing cords costs a consumer a whopping 131 dollars extra.

For 160 dollars or less you could buy a waterproof Kindle, an Amazon Echo, Nintendo Switch controllers, Fitbits and other high quality electronics rather than spending it on Airpods.

Airpods are easy to lose or steal, their overall design is unappealing, they are way overpriced and there are better alternatives to spending that much money.

Earbuds do the exact same thing, but without the off-putting appearance and price tag of AirPods.

Physics grading proves unreflective of knowledge

by gwyneth murphy

When I signed up to take Physics 1 for my senior year, I had no idea I was signing up for strict grading standards and exam-focused class structures.

As a full IB diploma candidate, my schedule is packed with higher level (HL) and standard level (SL) courses, like IB English Literature II HL, which require significant time and attention.

Faculty and administrators constantly remind IB kids that we overwork ourselves, and they urge us to build classes and activities into our day that will ease up some of the overwhelming responsibilities we take on through this diploma.

One way adults encourage us to give ourselves a break is by enrolling in a regular class, as most candidates can receive the diploma without making all eight of them IB.

For me, I knew my six IB classes and Advanced Journalism would be a lot to handle during college application season, so I enrolled in Physics 1 thinking it would be the well-deserved break in my day adults were always preaching to me about.

Physics 1 is far from a well-deserved break. Despite giving students no GPA bump or college credits, the pace, content, style and expectation of the course mimics an IB curriculum, minus exams like the Paper 1 or the Internal Assessment (IA).

In order to earn an A in the class, a student must receive a "3" across almost every

assessment during the year, which is a near perfect score. As the number of mistakes a student makes rises, their grade for the year rapidly plummets.

Though the department boasts numerous remediation opportunities, it is often small mistakes that lead to a "2.5" or a "2," but similar small mistakes could easily happen again during a reassessment exam.

If writing an answer using the wrong units could keep someone from an A for the year, something is wrong.

Why a non-IB, non-advanced course has a stricter grading structure than any of my IB classes, including my HLs, baffles me.

Gwyneth Murphy
Editor-in-Chief

In most of my other classes, meeting the standards to earn an A typically involves getting a "proficient," which is only getting 70 to 80 percent correct.

For larger exams, students usually only need to get one out of two or three exam attempts to an A-level, or their last attempt is the only one that needs to reach an A.

Why a non-IB, non-advanced course has a stricter grading structure than any of my IB classes, including my HLs, baffles me.

In order to reassess, kids in Physics 1 must undergo "relearning," which is a vague, non-standardized process involving an interaction with their teacher to prove they understand the content better.

It is not just the exam grading that make Physics frustrating. There are homework assignments and lab write-ups throughout the units, yet they rarely, if ever, count for a grade.

This setup means my very limited time at night to complete all work for my IB courses, my CAS hours and my other various activities goes toward assignments that do nothing for my grade.

The ungraded additional assignments also mean nothing is contributing significantly to my grade besides tests, which is incredibly uncommon compared to my other courses. This setup leaves my unit tests as the sole predictor of my understanding, which adds an overwhelming amount of pressure when I take an exam or remediate it.

It is frustrating to see a course that has interesting content and talented teachers who are passionate about Physics causing widespread stress and, ultimately, major damage to senior transcripts.

If the grading system regarding what makes an A does not change, then additional assignments need to count to balance it out, the school needs to fund Physics teachers to attend Saturday School and adults need to refrain from promoting the course as a break from IB courses.



photo
story

International Night



Top Left: Junior Annika Hsu plays “Butterfly Lovers Concerto” on her violin. “I feel like getting exposed to music from different cultures really allows us to see what other traditions are out there,” senior Sophia Williams said. “We don’t just look at American music or only music in English, we get to see different types of music from different types of cultures and that really lets us both grow as musicians and [...] as people.”

Bottom Left: Sophomore Yasmin Mohran presents about Islam, her religion, as a representative of the Muslim Student Association (MSA). Mohran talked about balancing her religious obligations with her busy lifestyle. “If you prioritize your faith, God makes it easier for you to pray and be closer to him because when you take an inch closer to God, God gives you a mile,” Mohran said.

Top Right: Freshman Emma Battista receives an Italian flag tattoo as a symbol of cultural heritage. “The tattoo on my face is meant to be an Italian flag,” Battista said. “Since I am an Italian American, I wanted to show that.” Battista engaged in International Night for the first time as a spectator but she said she would love to represent her own country the following year. She also got her henna done and said she had lots of fun with it.



SAHAR JIWANI/RANK&FILE

Michael Bublé returns to music with the new album “Love” after his son’s cancer recovery

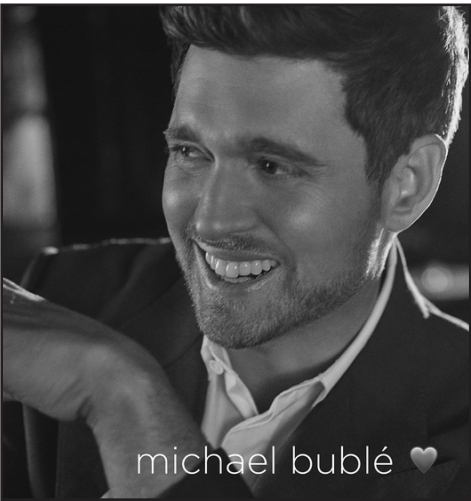
by jay kosumi

Four-time Grammy award winner and Canadian jazz singer Michael Bublé released his tenth studio album, “Love,” as an expression of gratitude for his oldest son Noah’s recovery from cancer. Bublé has been absent from the music scene for the past two years due to his focus on Noah’s health, which he said almost made him consider never returning to music, according to an article by *Billboard*. But after Noah’s recovery, the singer has returned to

the studio to create an album he believes to be a token of his thankfulness. Bublé rose to fame in 2007, when his album “Call Me Irresponsible” hit number one on several international charts. His 2011 holiday album, “Christmas” became the first holiday-themed album to win a Juno Award for Album of the Year. “Christmas,” garners more popularity each holiday season, making the crooner a well-known name in modern Christmas music. Bublé’s son received a diagnosis of liver cancer in

November 2016 at the age of three. The singer expressed how difficult it was for him and his wife, Argentinian actress Luisana Lopilato, to watch their son battle with the illness. “Love” debuted on Nov. 16, after Noah fully recovered from cancer. That same day, Bublé also received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Though a *Daily Mail* article quoted Bublé saying “Love” was his final album, his management team said he would not be retiring from music anytime soon.

Despite his current successes and accomplishments, the jazz singer’s beginnings in the music industry were not easy. He admitted he felt like an outcast when he was young because his music preferences differed from those of other people. “I love that I can battle for radio positions with anyone from Drake to the Weeknd,” Bublé said in a May 2018 interview with *The Globe and Mail*. “But if you told me that I had to go to a desert island and I could only bring one genre of music, it would be Dean Martin, Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra.”



REPRISE RECORDS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

Michael Bublé’s tenth studio album debuted Nov. 16. Bublé released the album as a token of gratitude for his eldest son Noah’s recovery from cancer. The album includes Bublé’s original song “Forever Now” and a cover of Edith Piaf’s “La vie en Rose.”

Spill the tea(chers) ● by isabella gulick

Slang and pop culture references shape the way young people converse. A rank&file staff member interviewed teachers for their guesses on what popular slang terms and phrases mean.

left on read

Read 3:47 AM

definition:
When someone opens your message but does not respond, which is the highest level of disrespect a human can receive.

teacher guess:
“Getting in trouble.”
- ceramics teacher Amanda Kahnell

let’s get this bread

definition:
Bread means money, and the phrase calls upon a higher being for strength in acquiring money or success in life.

teacher guess:
“Let’s go and engage in an activity.”
- social studies teacher Kevin Curtin

lit

definition:
Exciting, fun, high energy or exhilarating.

teacher guess:
“Lit means something is on fire, something’s hot.”
- social studies teacher David Hale

mood

definition:
Expresses something relatable, which is often self-deprecating.

teacher guess:
“That’s one I struggle with but I’ve been described as a mood.”
- social studies teacher Kevin Curtin

shade

definition:
A light comment with slight disrespect.

teacher guess:
“The dark.”
- ceramics teacher Amanda Kahnell

sice

definition:
To casually give someone something upon request. Native to the DMV area.

teacher guess:
“When you cut someone in some way.”
- social studies teacher David Hale

Private lessons help students to achieve advanced level classes

by sahar jiwani

Though teachers do not require students to take private lessons to be successful in their music courses, taking lessons can put them at an advantage over other musicians and enhance the level and skill of their technique.

Orchestra teacher Catherine Bond said students who want to progress at a faster rate or participate in more music-related opportunities should take lessons to advance their success.

“For example, if students want to audition to be in the district or regional orchestra, band or choir, then private lessons are going to help them be able to prepare and succeed in those auditions,” Bond said.

Choir teacher Kelly Pierson recommends taking private lessons, as they will give students an advantage.

“Most of my students that are taking private lessons are the ones who make All-district Choir, All-state Choir, Senior Honors Choir [and] make those top ensembles at the school,” Pierson said. “They are the students who are taking time outside of class to enhance their craft.”

Though most students do not continue music after high school, Pierson said she definitely thinks taking private

lessons is worth it.

“There are always going to be opportunities to sing after high school and I think the more time [students] spend getting to know their voice, the more confident they are going to be,” Pierson said.

Bond said music is very individualized and students who take lessons end up having a better, more successful experience in music.

“I notice the students that are taking lessons not only [get] instructions from their private teachers, but are also then practicing more consistently because they have private teachers and material to prepare for those teachers in addition to their school stuff,” Pierson said.

Sophomore Sarah Kwartin previously took private lessons and said it largely improved her performance with the oboe.

“I think it put me at somewhat of a higher advantage because I have professional experience with someone who had a really good ear and was able to give me very precise comments,” Kwartin said.

On the other hand, sophomore Leslie Kim has never taken private lessons and said it puts her at somewhat of a disadvantage.

“[I’m] not able to get any feedback from someone else that plays the instrument better than [me],” Kim said. “I feel a



KHRISTEN HAMILTON/COLUMBIAN

The statesmen symphonia orchestra played pieces including during all lunches to evoke holiday spirit within Marshall.


little pressured because the kids that are in the lower band who are taking private lessons might eventually beat me later in the year or the year after.”

Bond said the main thing she notices is students who take private lessons typically advance faster in higher level ensembles compared to those who choose not to take or are unable to afford lessons. This trend is because they will not progress as quickly or may never even attain positions in top ensembles when they are juniors or seniors.


“It’s like if you were an athlete and you only did conditioning once a week or once every other week, you’re not going to see as big of an improvement as if [you are] doing a little bit every day and you had a [coach] checking in with you on your skills and making tweaks to your form individually,” Bond said. “You’re going to progress at a much faster rate.”

Bond said private lessons are not required in order for students to be a part of the program, enjoy it nor be successful. They are just not going to advance at a faster rate.


“It’s Academic”
final scores



Blake - 610



Marshall - 400



Hayfield - 250

Marshall Quiz Bowl team competes on DMV area televised game show “It’s Academic”

by ben harper

Junior Robert Chitic Patapievic and freshmen Bharat Karla and Will Tedesco represented the Marshall Quiz Bowl team, placing second on the game show “It’s Academic” against Hayfield secondary school and James Hubert Blake High School on Jan. 12. The final score was 610-400-250.

“It’s Academic” is a game show that has aired on NBC Washington since 1961, and the Guinness Book of World Records recognizes it as the longest running quiz program in TV history. The show consists of three teams made up of three students each who answer a wide variety of questions in multiple fields,

including sports, religion, literature and more. The show consists of a 15 question toss up round, followed by the host asking 10 more to each team and ending with another 15 question toss up round.

“It’s one of the longest running game shows of any kind,” physical education teacher and Quiz Bowl coach Laura Campbell said. “It’s been on NBC Washington for a very long time and it’s good for our students to be able to represent the school and go there and play against other teams.”

Quiz Bowl member Bharat Karla said being on “It’s Academic,” as well as facing his opponents, made him feel intimidated.

“It was nerve-racking

because I didn’t want to mess up,” Karla said. “I felt intimidated because I was going up against kids older than me.”

Karla said he is proud of his team.

“I am very happy with our performance,” Karla said. “Especially mine because I know I have three years to go.”

Quiz Bowl member Robert Chitic Patapievic said “It’s Academic” differs from normal Quiz Bowl competitions. “It’s Academic” has different rounds and the host can also ask questions in a variety of ways compared to a Quiz Bowl competition where the host asks questions.


“‘It’s Academic’ has a toss up round where anyone can buzz in and you can confer with your teammates,”

Patapievic said. “Usually in Quiz Bowl the questions are spoken, but in ‘It’s Academic,’ they can unscramble letters or look at [a] photo or any type of question.”

The team played Blake High School, the first team in the show’s history to win the “It’s Academic” Superbowl three times in a row. Patapievic said their lack of experience in the game show, as well as the team they played, is what lead to them placing second.

“We weren’t as experienced as the team that won,” Patapievic said. “The other team had done the show two times before [Jan. 12].”

The episode will air Mar. 24 at 10:30 a.m. on NBC Washington.



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Vienna/Falls Church/ Annandale Babe Ruth Baseball

Athletic nets address campus safety concerns

by ben harper

In order to increase safety measures for the upcoming spring season, the athletic department installed new nets and backstops on the athletic fields.

The athletic department, Vienna Youth Soccer, Vienna Youth Incorporated Lacrosse and athletic boosters collectively funded the new nets that help make the fields and areas around them safer. Director of student activities Joe Swarm said the athletic department put the nets in place for safety purposes.

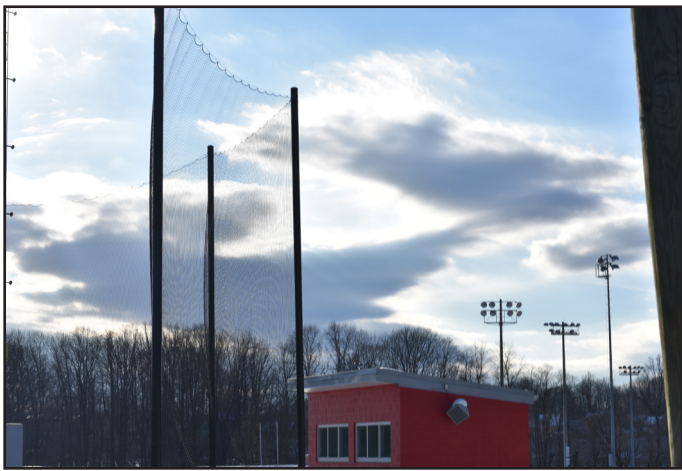
"The whole point for all of this is to make things more safe around here for kids and for community members," Swarm said. "[The nets] are used around the clock, [and] if it's not our school using it, it's the youth groups that are using the fields. You have little kids. It's just a lesser chance for somebody to get hurt. And that's our job, [...] to keep people from getting injured. [The nets] are just a way to help."

Besides making games safer for athletes and spectators, the nets on fields serve as a way to maintain the progression of games by preventing balls from flying over fences. Junior and soccer player Paulina Maldonado said the new nets will likely help with making games go quicker, especially for JV soccer, which does not have people to retrieve the soccer balls like varsity.

"It will probably make [games] a little faster," Maldonado said. "Especially since the bigger problem is with JV, [since] they have a shorter game, so [nets] will help not waste time."

While Maldonado said she is happy with the new nets, she said their small size is a problem, as they cannot stop high balls.

"The one problem is that they made them kind of short, so during games if we don't have a spare ball next to the net or anything it's going to go over the fence and we're going to have to run around [the net to get them]," Maldonado said. "So



EMA BACA/RANK&FILE

The new safety nets on the baseball field prevent foul balls from hitting spectators or the press box.

it kind of makes it a little more of an inconvenience because it's so short, and sometimes people are hitting really powerful and high balls so it's going to go over."

The athletic department installed nets on the baseball field in order to prevent foul balls and popups from flying into the tennis courts, parking lots and other fields. Swarm said 10 to 15 balls on average would go into spectator stands and other athletic fields. FCPS inspected the fields and decided that new nets were necessary.

"I've seen people [get] hit," Swarm said. "We've had the risk assessed by Risk Management in Fairfax

County. We had safety and security [officials] come out and put signs up 'beware of balls,' but that wasn't good enough for our community, myself and the administration here."

Junior and baseball player Andrew Milhorn said the nets not only make the fields less dangerous, but also more professional looking.

"I think the nets being there are really twofold," Milhorn said. "It makes the field more safe for people walking by as well as for people playing softball or in the press box as well as making our fields look a lot better."

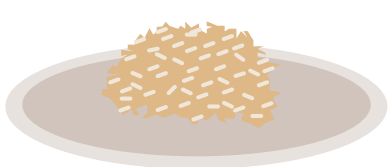
Athlete fueling

How diets vary between sports, athletes and seasons



"Usually before games I like to eat a lot of protein like chicken and meat and things like that. I really like to eat salmon. I think that's one of my favorite foods. Grilled salmon [is] my go-to."

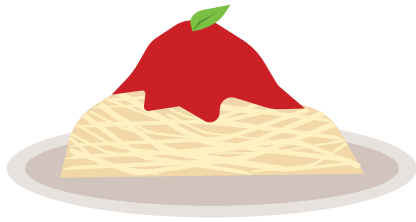
- Katherine Ruess,
junior & field hockey player



"Before meets I like to eat carbs to have enough energy to run. My go-to is brown rice because it also contains protein."

- Jennifer Nguyen,
junior & track runner

● by isabella gulick



"I like to eat carbs before running long distances for energy. Spaghetti is a food I like to eat before games."

- Katriel Reception,
junior & cross country runner

sportsbrief

Low budget limits parka availability for swim team

Senior members of the swim and dive team don parkas instead of traditional team jackets, but this spirit wear is exclusive to seniors only due to budget limitations.

Senior and swimmer Grace Grossmann said only the seniors wear parkas because there is a limited supply, and the team typically recycles them for seniors on the swim team the next year.

"There aren't enough for the entire team," Grossmann said. "They're owned by the school, so they're reused every year by the next class of seniors."

Smith said parkas are better than regular team jackets because of their insulation and convenience.

"It's much warmer than other jackets, plus you don't have to bring three layers to keep you warm during the meet when you have a parka instead," Smith said.

Smith also said parkas are the only school-given spirit wear items for the swim team, and the team has to buy everything else.

"The parkas are the only thing [the school provides]," Smith said. "We don't have warmups or uniforms to hand out to everyone since we have to buy our own suits. We all have a T-shirt every year though."

Senior and swimmer Emma Smith said she likes how the parkas are a senior privilege.

"I think it's something cool and special to give the seniors in their last year," Smith said.

by grady dillon



EMA BACA/RANK&FILE

Senior and swimmer Grace Grossmann said she wears her team parka to school when she wants to show off her team spirit.

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