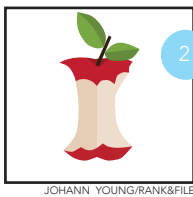




News:
1 For the first time in three years, VHSL features IB films at their festival.



Opinion:
2 Eating the entire apple helps to cut down on wasteful food practices.



Arts&Style:
4.5 *Avengers: Infinity War* breaks box office records, living up to expectations.



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rank&file

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IB films receive nominations for VHSL festival

by ryan doucette & wade devinney

The Virginia High School League officially selected two short films from IB Film classes, “Bear Dance” and “Be A Leader” to premiere at their annual Film Festival.

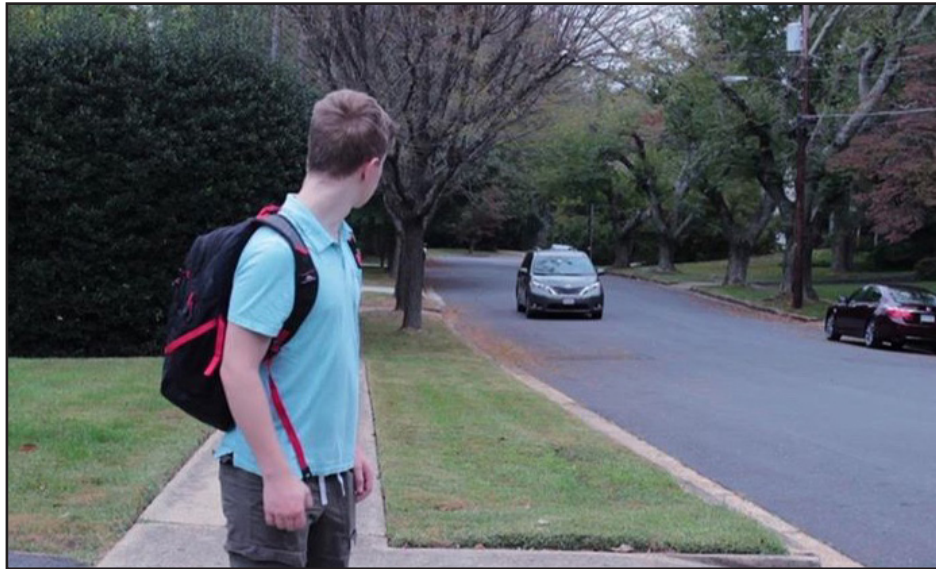
This year, the state wide festival nominated GCM students for the first time since 2015. The festival will take place at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville on June 2.

Seniors Jack Feenick, Grace Cusack and Emma Choi created “Bear Dance,” which received the nomination for the narrative category. The film tells the story of a professional dancer who falls from fame after being attacked by a bear, and tries to revive his career.

“The premise may seem pretty strange, but I think the bold characters and other absurd elements of our film are what make it funny,” Feenick said.

Feenick was both the cinematographer and an actor in “Bear Dance”.

Junior Isaac Feldman created “Be A



COURTESY OF ISAAC FELDMAN

In a scene from junior Isaac Feldman’s film “Be A Leader,” character James Fischer, played by junior Will Hemmingson, walks home from school and notices a suspicious car following him. The plot centers around kidnapers who are spokespeople for a specific brand of duct tape.

Leader,” which VHSL nominated for the public service announcement category.

“The nomination really means a lot to me,” Feldman said. “I couldn’t have made the film without my friends and I hope this nomination means just as much to them as it does to me.”

IB film teacher Pierce Bello said the film was different from other films normally created.

“[The film is] fun, very creative and

light in tone,” Bello said. “It is enjoyable and well-filmed.”

Bello predicted the film would do well at the festival.

“I feel confident that [Feldman’s] film will likely win an award because of how funny it is,” Bello said.

The nominated films, along with other IB films, will also premiere on May 18 in the auditorium for the annual George C. Marshall Film Festival.

FCPS calendar changes generate controversy

by sarah assaf & rohan jain

Conflicting emotions arose following the release of the 2018-2019 calendar for Fairfax County Public Schools. Changes in the calendar include a delayed winter break and three-hour early releases.

According to an FCPS School Board news release, the reason behind the board’s decisions is to focus on instruction and learning time for students, as well as improved opportunities for staff.

“The reason for the three-hour early dismissals is to give teachers more time to do productive professional development,” FCPS School Board Member At-Large Ryan McElveen said via text message. “Two hours each time is not enough to engage in thorough and useful trainings.”

A total of 14 teacher workdays, staff development and school planning days are embedded into the calendar. For teachers, the extra development time is needed to prepare for classes and complete other school-related tasks.

“I think anything that

gives teachers more time to do the non-instructional work that we do is good because we do not have enough time to do that now,” math teacher Linda Della Corna said. “Most teachers spend at least four to five hours outside of every workday doing work because the one plan-

“I think anything that gives teachers more time to do the non-instructional work that we do is good.”

Linda Della Corna
math teacher

ning period we get is never enough.”

Next school year, winter break will begin on Dec. 24 and end on Jan. 4, as opposed to this school year when it started on Dec. 18 and ended on Jan. 1. Although some use the break for religious activities, McElveen said the break is a time provided for students to rejuvenate and spend time with family.

“Personally, I appreciated having the week before Christmas off,” sophomore Angie Loayza said. “My church does a lot of activities

that week, including volunteer opportunities and charity events, and I would have loved to participate and give back to my community and church.”

According to the FCPS 2018-2019 calendar, the school board decided to push spring break back three

weeks, now from Apr. 15 to Apr. 19. The break centers around Easter this upcoming year, as it was in the past.

“We have a lot of breaks in February and March but not in April or May, so it’s nice to have spring break a little later to have something to look forward to,” sophomore Soven Bhagat said.

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, which was previously a two-hour early release, is now a day off.

“I think it’s nice especially for people who are traveling because it gives them

time to make Thanksgiving Break more substantial,” Bhagat said. “We would [not] do that much on early release days.”

The board also eliminated the two-hour early dismissals that previously took place on the last day of each quarter. However, there are five three-hour early release days spread throughout the school year.

“Dismissals on the day the quarter ends are a waste,” Loayza said. “I think it’s more beneficial to have the releases throughout the year, so students actually have assignments to work on, which is usually not the case at the end of the quarter.”

As stated on the FCPS 2018-2019 calendar, during these three-hour early release days, teachers remain in school for planning and development.

“Teachers have so many other obligations using up the time that we’re here during the day,” Della Corna said. “So we are using our time in the evenings and on weekends, and that almost becomes unsustainable. We can’t do everything we are asked without sacrificing our health and personal life.”

newsbriefs

Senior dinner fails to attract high turn out

The annual senior dinner, which took place on May 7, had a turn out of only 214 attendees due to scheduling conflicts for seniors. Although the dinner was open to all 521 seniors, many could not attend due to other responsibilities or studying for IB exams.

Although many could not make it to the dinner, families that attended enjoyed the evening. The parent organizer, Mina Raskin, said the senior dinner was a time for families to have fun, socialize and learn about upcoming events.

“[The Senior Dinner] is an opportunity for seniors and their families to interact, and to hear from Principal Jeff Litz and other administrators about end-of-the-year activities,” Raskin said.

Senior Rachel Slafsky said the dinner was a memorable experience and she would recommend it to others for the following year.

“I would promote this event to the rising seniors since it’s a chance to be with friends and family before graduating,” Slafsky said.

by ema baca & amelia gee



AMELIA GEE/RANK&FILE

Senior Brady Watts and his mother serve themselves salad at the senior dinner.

Credit union visits to open student accounts

Apple Federal Credit Union recently visited to try and gain new credit accounts from those eligible. This visit provided an opportunity for individuals to create an account without traveling to an Apple Federal office.

“If someone actually wants to create an account, I’d bet it’s a lot easier for them to have the credit union come to them rather than them having to drive to some random office,” senior Jayan Zachariah said. Zachariah also said he didn’t think many people would end up making accounts, despite the easy opportunity.

“I really don’t think anyone will actually make an account,” Zachariah said. “Most people are focused on school and their friends. No one really cares about their credit right now.”

Senior Jason Gracia said he believes it’s not necessary for the credit union to come to the school.

“I don’t understand why they are here,” Gracia said. “I doubt many people care about making a credit union account right now.”

by matt scopa

Rank & File is a public forum for students of George C. Marshall High School. Columns are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the whole newspaper. *Rank & File* makes a Fair-Use claim when printing photographs and illustrations not produced by staff members. *Rank & File* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style and/or to eliminate inappropriate statements. Businesses and organizations that wish to advertise in *Rank & File* can call (703) 714-5511 or e-mail advertising@gcmnews.net. *Rank & File* is printed by School Paper Express, with a circulation of 1200. Subscriptions are available for \$15 per school year. **Rank & File is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, and the Virginia High School League.**

End of the dis-core-d: it's safe to eat the whole apple

by lauren elias

I'll never forget the first time I saw someone eat an apple whole. I was in English class, minding my own business, when I caught my friend out of the corner of my eye devouring a honey crisp apple down to the seeds. Imagine my surprise when she blurted out, "The apple core doesn't exist! It's all a lie!"

Obviously, I needed to investigate further.

What I discovered was that it's time we take control of our fruit consumption, and that starts by getting to the "core" of the problem.

Indeed, we often eat apples to their perceived core, discarding the rest. We've been trained to believe that there is this elusive, inedible aspect to the apples we eat

everyday.

Dr. James Hamblin of *The Atlantic* points out the flaw in this habit. "What do you think an apple core is? What's the thing we throw away?" Hamblin said. "It is a ghost."

Hamblin supports the claim that eating an entire apple while leaving nothing behind is not only possible but safe, in a video he published online where he consumes the entire apple, seeds and all.

Hamblin notes that the average person discards about 30 percent of each apple they eat, and adds that the best way to eat an apple is vertically rather than horizontally — from the bottom to the top.

Additionally, our tendency to eat only parts of our apples could actually amount to a significant waste of money.

According to Ham-

blin, "If each of us eats an apple a day [...] and we are all wasting 30 percent of our apples at \$1.30 per pound, that's about \$42 wasted per person per year — which is \$13.2 billion

annually, thrown in the trash or fed to pigs."

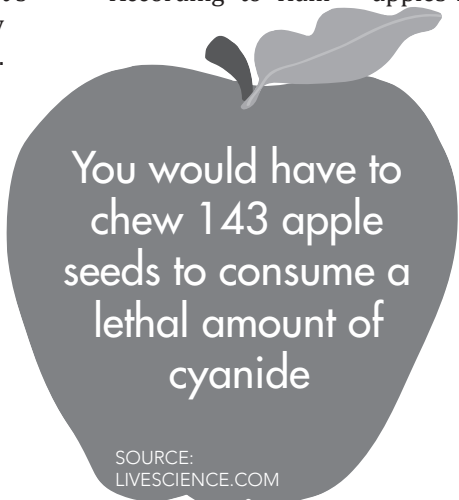
Though the estimates may not be entirely precise, eating our apples whole serves as a reminder to cut down on food waste. If we can take care to eat those extra bites of our apples, perhaps we'll be more likely to curb wastefulness in other aspects of our lives.

Apples are also full of nutrition, including pectin, a form of fiber that lowers blood pressure and glucose levels. Apples contain vitamins A, C, E and beta carotene, all of which help reduce the risk of heart disease, asthma

and diabetes. In 2008, a Cornell University study reported that bananas, oranges and apples might reduce Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative disorders.

When I started mentioning that eating apples whole was not only harmless, but perhaps beneficial, I was told that eating too many apple seeds could be dangerous, since apple seeds contain cyanide, which is essentially a poison. But, eating a few apple seeds along with your apple won't harm you, as the levels of cyanide are extremely low in each seed.

So the next time you pick up an apple and start chewing, don't be afraid to blurt out, "The apple core doesn't exist! It's all a lie!"



Persistent CAS reminders cause unnecessary stress

by jay kosumi

Theory of Knowledge is a critical thinking and epistemological philosophy course, the successful completion of which is a requirement for all IB diploma candidates. TOK follows the standard-based grading class procedure, where the final grade is determined by five components: written reflections, class participation and discussion, the TOK presentation, Extended Essay and CAS progress.

One thing that I have an issue with regarding this course is the emphasis that is placed on CAS, the Community-Action-Service component that asks students to volunteer a certain amount of hours for each of these three strands by the end of the year. CAS is an imperative aspect of the diploma, as completing the requirements by the end of the year helps students more than just grade-wise. It shapes them into well-rounded community members by getting them involved in a range of activities alongside their academic studies, which strengthen their skills and push them out of their comfort zones.

The problem with the high emphasis on CAS is that it gets stressful to receive constant reminder emails about getting the

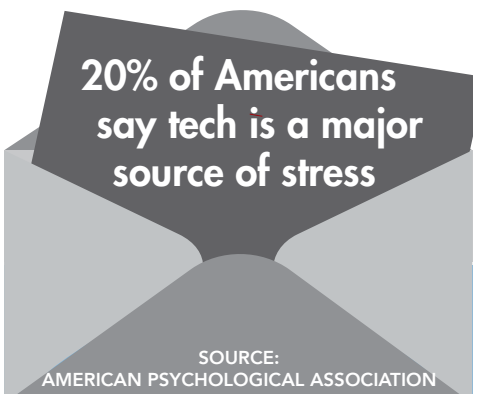
CAS hours completed.

Constantly existing in a position of alarm in hopes of eventually getting work done is an ineffective strategy. For IB diploma students, who have taken up the responsibility of handling both TOK requirements and six rigorous higher level and standard level classes from the beginning of the year without backing down, this choice is an indication of their dedication to the diploma. Although the amount of commitment and effort varies among students individually, I would appreciate if we were trusted more to make our own decisions in terms of time management as long as we met the required amount of hours by the end of the year. Even though I understand the reminder emails about getting work done intend to help and not blame, they begin to wear diploma candidates down with the passing of time.

The purpose behind these reminders is certainly well-meaning, but the method comes across as a way of finding fault, which makes students feel incompetent, and as a result, has a counterproductive effect. We need to be trusted more as independent learners to not need this type of adult supervision and pressure to complete our work. I struggle to see the purpose

behind this deep emphasis on CAS, especially considering that it is only one of the five components of the overall TOK grade. Therefore, the impact it has on the grade is much lower compared to the presentation and essay, which are the major elements of the IB score for the course, that all this stress laid on it is out of proportion.

CAS provides, by design, a counterbalance to the academic rigor of the educational program. However, consistent pressure to complete its requirements makes it feel like the exact opposite. Not only does it generate stress and tension, but it even takes the fun out of CAS, diminishing the value that this component of the course holds in the first place.



Rank & File continues to evolve with new leadership

As I finish my fourth year on *Rank & File* and second year as Editor in Chief, I find myself reflecting on when I began journalism in my freshman year. As a transfer student, I knew very few people in the community. I was nervous, not to mention unsure of my skills and what exactly a field like journalism demanded. I observed, I practiced, and when my editors offered me an editor position at the end of that first year, I felt for the first time that I was truly working toward something important.

Flash forward to the present, and I've dedicated my time in

leadership to not only trying to maintain the level of quality set by my predecessors, but introducing new concepts for coverage and style in an effort to keep *Rank & File* modern. As the days until the final print cycle dwindled though, my attention began to turn toward the future. *Rank & File* gave so much to me. It gave me a welcoming environment to practice my skills in writing, design, and photography. It gave me some of my closest friends and most memorable experiences. I wanted to make sure that environment remained available to

people who felt like me that first year: nervous yet excited to learn and develop. Thus, my final goal as an editor was to set up the leadership system in a manner that would allow my successors to continue *Rank &*

letter from the editor

File's mantra of quality reporting and its reputation as a positive environment to develop individual identity.

I can say with full confidence that the new leadership for the next volume will carry on this legacy. Though some of

them have only a year's experience, all of them have shown a marked understanding of the amount of effort *Rank & File* demands and the welcoming environment it should represent. I am especially proud of my immediate successor as Editor-in-Chief, Gwyneth Murphy. Over the three years I have worked with her, she has not only deeply impressed me with her work ethic and writing skills, but has also inspired me with her wisdom and kindness to try and be the best sort of leader I could be. I wholeheartedly believe the publication will flourish under

her leadership.

This newspaper's potential has always stemmed directly from the people who contribute to it. It is the sum of its parts, a product of the cooperation of numerous exceptional individuals dedicated to the continued accessibility of information. I am extremely thankful for the wonderful people I had the pleasure of growing and working with through these past four years and I look forward to following *Rank & File* as it continues to evolve alongside its membership.

Ethan Zack
Editor-in-Chief



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student review: *beerbongs & bentleys*

compiled by johann young

Rank & File compiles the most popular opinions on artist Post Malone's newest release



REPUBLIC RECORDS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE

rating:  4/5

"Better Now"

"I feel like this is a lot like his older songs, and I love the beat. I like the lyrics a lot too because I feel like it's easy for a lot of people to relate to"

— **emaan khan**, junior

"I've always liked Post Malone. This song is better than the others, but the entire album isn't that good"

— **jeremy dillon**, senior

"Better Now is a really good song. It can get you hyped, and the beat is sick. You can dance to it really easily. It's kind of repetitive, but that makes it more catchy"

— **timmy bradley**, freshman

"Stay"

"I think it's easily the best song on the album. [Post Malone] is definitely known for a very specific type of sound, and I love that he was able to channel his voice into something softer and more meaningful. It's always interesting to be able to develop your own opinions on an artist as you listen to an album because they've made it such a diverse soundtrack."

— **lauren marsh**, junior

"Paranoid"

This is definitely the underdog of the album. Not only does the music itself have this great vibe, but the lyrics are actually super deep and relatable. That isn't generally a characteristic that comes to mind when you think about rap.

— **erin villaronga**, senior

"Rich & Sad"

"It's got a good beat and I like how easy it is to listen to without over analyzing it much. Sometimes you need a song that you can just listen to while getting ready or hanging out with your friends"

— **annaliese wan**, junior

Commentary: "This is America" raises awareness to American society through music video

by ryan doucette

Donald Glover, known famously as Childish Gambino, stunned fans after the release of his new song and music video, "This is America." Directed by Hiro Murai, the video features a multitude of symbols and metaphors that relate to the past and present of American society.

The video creatively tackles gun violence, police brutality, inequality and white supremacy. While the video is graphic, it does a good job on portraying the violence that exists in many communities.

The upbeat rhythm juxtaposes the deeper meaning of the song. This contradiction is most apparent with the use of a church choir vocals. Normally a joyful sound, Glover uses the choir to recreate the 2015 shooting of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

After watching the music video, I was shocked to see Glover recreate the horrific shooting, but it serves as a reminder that white supremacy still exists in our society.

The scene also shows that guns have a large impact in our communities. Whenever Glover shoots a gun, he gently places it down in the hands of another black man. His carefulness placing the gun points to the fact that there are people who value guns above human lives.

The significance that he places with the gun in the hands of another black man acts as a reminder that violent actions of one black man are commonly associated with another. Between both of the scenes, I found the message to be incredibly impactful.

Among the most noticeable aspects of the video is Glover's dancing. The dancing draws similarities to "Jump Jim Crow," a racially insensitive dance of the Jim Crow era. The dancing distracts from the riots and gang violence taking place around him.

The distraction betokens media misdirection. This comes after criticism of media outlets using incidents in predominantly black communities for political purposes.

There should be a focus on a majority of issues for the sake of humanity, not politics. There should be a push to reform both gun laws and police departments.

As Glover dances, a group of kids huddle around him despite the violence. The kids are not fazed by what they see and continue to follow his bizarre dance moves. Glover represents America throughout the video. He represents the shootings and inequality that exist. He also represents the racism and brutality, but he acts as a symbol for change.

Towards the end of the video, Glover dances on the roof of



RCA RECORDS/REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE

Glover dances amongst a group of schoolchildren while a riot takes place in the background. "This is America" aimed to highlight and identify many of the current issues in American society, specifically to African Americans. "I think it is important for artists to recognize issues such as gun control and racial injustice," junior Sally Pedrozo said. "I appreciated how artistically [Glover] managed to portray these problems."

an older car. The car acts as a reminder that many things in predominantly black communities haven't changed in a long time. Another call to action from Glover.

The decision to film the video inside a warehouse acts as a metaphor itself. The warehouse is a contained space to help display how many African Americans' voices are not normally heard beyond their immediate communities.

The video ends with Glover running from a crowd of angry people, who are meant to symbolize white supremacy. The scene closely resembles Jordan Peele's "Get Out," a satirical horror movie about the effects of white supremacy. The

comparison between the Academy Award winning movie and music videos help evolve the effect of Glover's message.

While the message can be up for debate, the music video serves as a reminder of issues people have to deal with daily.

Glover implies that gun control is not as simple as banning a gun and there is a larger underlying issue that should be fixed. While there are incidents where the police are at fault, the police are typically defenders of all people.

This video should be reflected on, no matter your political views. It serves as a call to arms for reform, something we need in society. We have an opportunity to fix the system to where

opportunities are not restricted by zip code.

The video deserves awards and praise. It not only succeeds as a piece of art, it succeeds in impacting countless people. The video gives all of us a chance to reflect and ask ourselves, what went wrong? What could we do better? What do we have to change?

Whatever changes are necessary, there is work to be done in all of our communities, especially those ravaged with violence. In order for anything to change though, we all need to come to the table and act as a community for once. And despite the issues we have, "This is America" and I know we can and will overcome.

Avengers: Infinity War lives up to ambitious expectations

by ethan zack

When I imagined what I would be feeling as I finally entered the line to see *Avengers: Infinity War*, the emotions that immediately sprung to mind were excitement, happiness and eager anticipation. To see nearly all of Marvel Studios' established superheroes unite against a universe-spanning threat was nothing short of an event. Not once did I ever think to include pure, unadulterated dread in that category of emotions. Yet, that's exactly what I felt as I sat down in the theater to see the biggest blockbuster movie of all time.

This moment is when I truly realized the sheer genius of what Marvel Studios has accomplished in the last 10 years. Across 18 different films, I had developed a great emotional investment in the characters that starred in *Infinity War*, and by all indications, not all of them were going to survive the events of this massive crossover. However much I was excited to witness the culmination of plots threads which started way back in the first *Iron Man* film, I was just as scared to lose these well-developed heroes I had come to know so well. In this way, the set-up from previous Marvel movies allows *Infinity War* to get away with following a decidedly unique plot structure. The film manages to entirely skip over the requisite explanations and set-up and focus entirely on payoff, while retaining an emotional core few other modern movies can provide.

Surprisingly, much of this emotional core stems from Josh Brolin's performance as the galactic villain Thanos. A vast notch above some of the cookie-cutter antagonists that plagued previous films, Thanos is a surprisingly complex figure with an air of tragedy surrounding him and his motivations. Since much of the film's narrative follows Brolin's character, the tone is notably darker than some of the other Marvel outings. Themes of death, loss and hopelessness permeate the plight of the protagonists as they fight against increasingly unfavorable odds. The action and choreography is visceral and brutal, and I visibly winced several times as characters struck blows against one another.

That's not to say the film is entirely without levity. The traditional Marvel humor still shines through and the novelty of seeing extremely disparate characters like Captain America and Groot interact never gets old. Action sequences with a jaw-dropping amount of characters and stunning visual effects keep the audience on the edge of their seat between the more emotional sequences. The standout protagonist of the film is Chris Hemsworth's Thor, who gives an extremely entertaining performance, ranging from hilarious to heart wrenching, as his quest to kill Thanos becomes more and more personal.

The score is also a decided step-up from previous movies. The orchestration in some parts really hammers home the idea that this film is a galaxy-spanning epic tragedy, yet it is also dynamic enough to know when to be reticent and to let a



MARVEL STUDIOS. REPRODUCED UNDER FAIR USE.

From left to right: Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.), Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), and Wong (Benedict Wong) band together to defeat followers of Thanos (Josh Brolin, not pictured).

scene or performance stand on its own. Unfortunately, the score doesn't retain these strengths consistently throughout, and some parts suffer from the relatively generic sound that others have criticized in previous movies.

On the topic of generic, perhaps the greatest shortcoming of *Infinity War* is that, in the grand scheme of things, it doesn't have as much a unique identity as some of the films that have preceded it. This issue was to be expected, as the Russo brothers needed to strike a tone and format that could believably combine the tone and format of characters like Black

Panther and the Guardians of the Galaxy. The film accomplishes this combination effortlessly, but I can't help but wish *Infinity War* had more of an ability to create its own unique identity apart from those set up in previous movies.

As the biggest blockbuster movie of all time with some of the loftiest expectations ever set, it's a marvel that *Infinity War* holds up as well as it does under pressure. The film isn't perfect, but it closely approaches the word like few other films before it. The year-long wait for the second part already feels longer than the months leading up to the original.

Avengers: Infinity War Expectations vs. Reality

Marvel's long awaited third installment to the Avengers franchise prompted high expectations, and moviegoers said the final product properly delivered.

compiled by
aamir qureshi and
milad salangi

Expectations

"It is expected to do so much with it's storyline, and I'm afraid that [Marvel] might get too caught up in the excitement of this large-scale crossover

— Rosy Simonelli, junior

"Of course Marvel movies always live up to their hype and expectations, so I'm very sure that it will be great movie."

— Katuta Kapinka, freshman

"I'm really excited for all these characters from different storylines to meet and interact, because I think it will be thoroughly entertaining."

— Emily Brunner, junior



Reality

"I can't think of a dull moment throughout the movie. I'm surprised at how well they managed all the chaos."

— Rosy Simonelli, junior

"It was really good. The plot was unlike any other Marvel movie, and it flowed smoothly to compliment the overall climax"

— Katuta Kapinka, freshman

"[Infinity War] managed to introduce all this amazing banter between characters that really sold the authenticity of the entire storyline"

— Emily Brunner, junior

MARVEL STUDIOS.
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Ramadan interferes with testing season for third year in a row

by nikita athawale & sahar jiwani

SOL testing and final exams are an especially stressful time for students, as they must balance homework with increased studying and extracurriculars. The Muslim student body must also incorporate faith and fasting to their already packed schedules. This year, Ramadan begins on May 15 and ends on Jun. 14, which coincides with both SOL and final exam testing.

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and practices such as this are part of the foundation of the religion.

Students and teachers said they have differing perspectives on the coincidental overlap between the testing days.

Muslim Student Association sponsor and math teacher Abeer El-Baz said she does not think fasting drastically affects the results of exams as long as students create a strategy that works for themselves.

El-Baz said she supports those who choose to fast, regardless of the overlap of end-of-year testing.

"I would encourage fasting because it will help students organize their time and prioritize," El-Baz said. "Pace yourself very wisely and use your energy in only important things; this is one of the goals of Ramadan."

El-Baz said from the religious point of view, Muslims have been fasting all year

because they follow the lunar calendar.

At the time of the Prophets and early Muslims, people fasted while fighting battles and during their daily lives. El-Baz said fasting during a test should not be difficult, especially if students are determined and prepared.

"The first couple of days will be hard, but that's why it is a good idea to practice now while you don't have exams in the month of Shaban, so that when Ramadan comes, you're ready," El-Baz said. "Shaban is the month that comes before Ramadan so some people are fasting now to train their system."

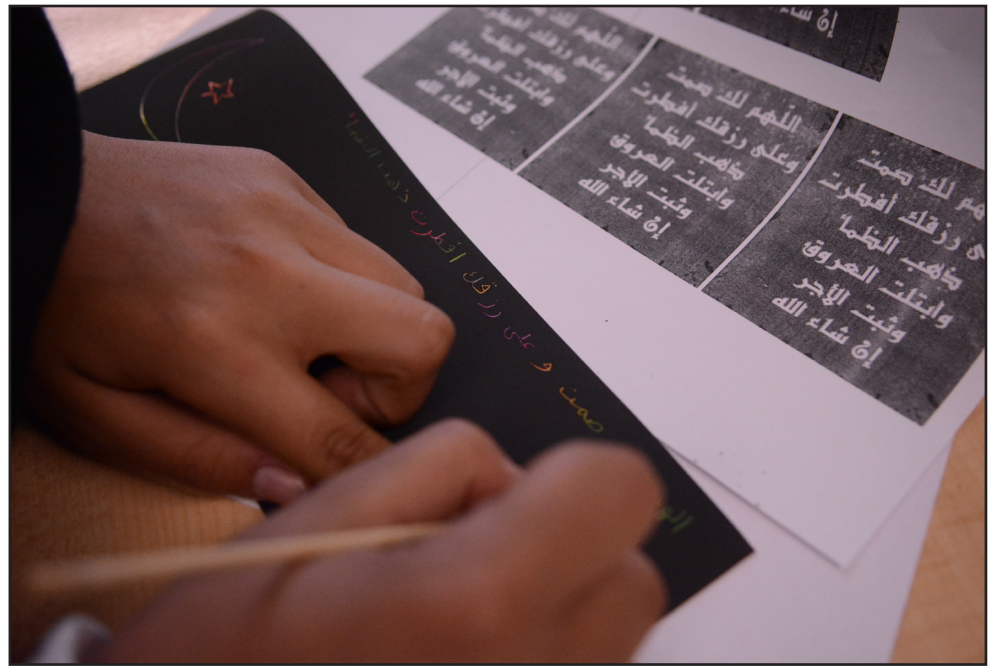
Senior and president of the Muslim Student Association Zainub Qureshi also said fasting during Ramadan is a benefit rather than a disadvantage.

Qureshi said fasting allows her to experience what others less fortunate than her have to undergo on a regular basis.

"It makes you a better person if you're fasting and it shows you what other people go through if they don't have food," Qureshi said. "Fasting might feel like it is bringing you down in the beginning but once you get used to it, it's a lot better."

Qureshi said even though fasting is hard at times, it does not affect her exam scores because it allows her to concentrate more on the assessment rather than her hunger.

"[Fasting] relies on focus," Qureshi said. "If you are not eating or drinking you put more focus into work because



SAHAR JIWANI/RANK&FILE

The Muslim Student Association began Ramadan preparation by writing the Dua Al-Iftar, a prayer that is said before breaking one's fast. MSA and the Interfaith Club will host a Ramadan feast, or Iftar, tomorrow, May 17. Currently, the club members are making an effort to raise awareness about the month.

you need to do something to stop yourself from thinking about fasting."

Freshman Yasmin Mohran said even though the purpose and actual process of fasting has a positive effect, they're also downsides to it, such as distraction during the testing environment and unexpected results.

"It is hard to take an exam while fasting since I don't get to eat breakfast right before the exam and I'm constantly focused on how hungry I am," Mohran said. "But it gives you patience and it helps put you in other people's shoes who do not have food."

Freshman Amelia Magee said although fasting seems difficult, she praises Muslims who are able to do it while encountering all of the obstacles.

Magee also said that she may be more encouraged to fast if she was devoted to it.

"It seems tough because I really like food and I don't know whether I would be able to give that up, but I really admire them and their ability to stay true to their faith in that way," Magee said. "If I were devoted to a religion like that and I felt that it would be a good representation of my faith, then maybe I would [fast]."

Marshall Mark program offers an alternative to senioritis

by grady dillon

The English department will sponsor Marshall Mark for its second year running, in which seniors intern for businesses and various charities in the community.

Administration does not require seniors to do Marshall Mark, but English teacher Kelsey Breslin highly recommends her seniors to participate in it.

"I've recommended that all of my seniors do Marshall Mark because when we did it last year a lot of kids said that it was really beneficial since they were actually doing something," Breslin said. "The reason they don't want

to come to class at the end of the year is because they're not really doing that much in their classes, and they really want to be doing something else, so this sort of gives them that opportunity."

English teacher Hendrick Booz leads the program and said that he supports seniors doing it who might want to do something differently with their time at the end of the school year.

"Frustratingly, [teachers] have been finding that fewer and fewer students are engaged in



school because they have really tightening exams or SOL courses and stuff like that," Booz said. "Ultimately, there doesn't seem to be any sort of culmination to senior year in Fairfax County, whereas it's required of Arlington County schools that they have a senior project, and others do an internship program. I felt like this would be a great final project for seniors."

Senior Claire Sparrowgrove said she wants to take advantage of free time by participating in Marshall Mark.

"I thought it would be a good chance to volunteer," Sparrowgrove said. "Since we don't do much at the end of the year, I wanted to take advantage of it."

Marshall Mark will occur from May 21 to Jun. 4.

"[Seniors] can do work, if they have a job," Breslin said. "They can use their extra hours to get extra money. They can do an internship somewhere, or volunteer. If they have a freelance business, they can work with that. They can shadow a teacher. They can pretty much do anything that they couldn't have done if they were in school for those last two weeks."

FCPS implements new PBL learning system

by hannah levitan

The social studies department said they plan to implement the Project Based Learning (PBL) system into their curriculum this year to increase student engagement.

"PBL is the idea of students taking ownership of the material," social studies teacher Kevin Curtin said. "We certainly teach them a fair amount of it, but the idea is that the students are taking in the information and synthesizing it and analyzing the information on their own. We don't want to give them too much guidance."

Curtin said PBL is a county-wide initiative that increases student engagement in the material and allows students to utilize different analytical skills in the projects since they are required to present their projects.

"I think it's a different way to access student knowledge," Curtin said. "I think

it's applicable in a lot of senses, but I don't see it replacing essays anytime soon. It gives students a variety of ways to show their knowledge."

Social studies teacher Christie McCormick said PBL enhances students' creativity as their projects are more exciting and engaging, resulting in more research and participation.

"Project Based Learning is when students take up a real-world scenario and design some sort of product or project that will explain what they've learned in a more engaging and hopefully fun, creative way," McCormick said.

McCormick said that in addition to PBL increasing student engagement in class content, it also improves test scores as the students are more involved with the content.

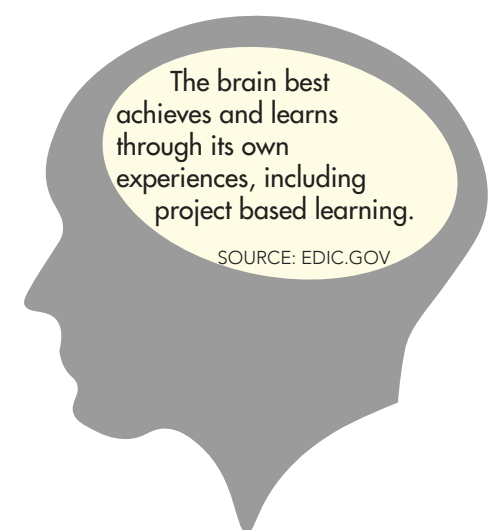
"We've noticed that on the units we've used PBL, our test scores are higher," McCormick said. "It seems like the students

are actually learning the content a lot better and our students seem more excited about what they're doing."

McCormick's freshmen proposed new ways to showcase the history of World War II to the Smithsonian Museum as their unit project.

Students also presented their work to other students, teachers and experts in the field.

"I feel like having to give that presentation and being prepared to answer questions made us work harder and we were definitely more prepared for the World War II test than we were with any other unit," freshman Sarina Bell said. "There was definitely more of an incentive to learn more about our [topic] when [we were] presenting in front of professionals [considering that] we all wanted to give a good representation of our school in a positive way. I think that especially makes us want to work harder."



McCormick said PBL enforces many skills such as analysis, communication and collaboration that will additionally help students prepare for the IB exams.

"We hope that by engaging in more of these skill-building activities, it will help them not only on the IB exam, but also in their lives," McCormick said.

No Place for Hate aims to combat bullying and racism

by benjamin harper

In an effort to make the community hate free, juniors Jackson Gurdack, Sabir Shamlal and Declan Lynch have worked to create the No Place for Hate club. “No Place for Hate” is a subsection of the Anti Defamation League, a Jewish non-governmental organization. The No Place for Hate club said they want to remove prejudice and spread tolerance. “We feel Marshall today has lost some comradery and celebration of differences,” club founder Gurdack said. “Declan, Sabir and I wanted to move the students back to that place of acceptance, tolerance and love.”

Lynch said he thinks intolerance is very common on school grounds. He also said that he thinks this affects the way student’s feel about bullying. “While we may not see it constantly happening, bullying and discrimination is still prevalent in our community,” Lynch said. The club partnered with the National

Honor Society (NHS). Senior and President of NHS Neel Simpson said No Place for Hate corresponds with the mission statement of their organization. “We want to promote their message because students are best able to succeed in supportive environments and positive interactions,” Simpson said. Club Sponsor David Barkley said that No Place for Hate will bring more students together and make students realize each other’s differences. “My hope is that this club can make us more self aware that discrimination is happening,” Barkley said. “I want us to realize as a community that these things can easily happen and I know we’re better than that.” Despite starting very late in the school year, the club has already formed a committee of students, designating the community as a No Place for Hate environment. Shamlal said he feels confident that their club is doing a good job at the time. “I feel we are doing very well as of now because we formed our committee



BEN HARPER/RANK&FILE
Junior Will Hemmington, sophomore Soven Bhagat and junior Carolyn Nee work on a video in order to raise awareness for the purpose of their new club. “We want to promote our club during the SOL period,” junior Carolyn Nee said.

and dealt with all of the other things that had to be done to start our club,” Shamlal said. “The administration gave us the designation because they felt that we were motivated in the mission of the club.” Shamlal also said the club’s goals in the future pertains to raising awareness about the bright side of things, to show

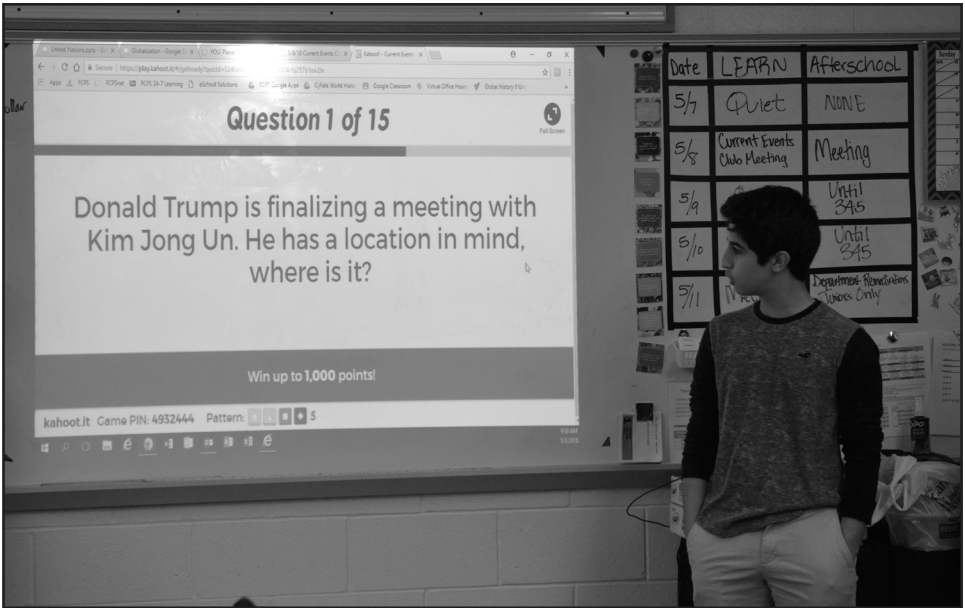
solidarity and to show what they hope the club will lead to. “We want to get around three fourths of the school to sign the No Place for Hate pledge through our rally on Jun. 12,” Shamlal said. “We hope to show people that there is a bright side to every bad situation and that they are not alone.”

Current Events club promotes discussion about recent news

by aqsa rashid

For sophomores Shivane Anand and Rohan Jain, discussion groups that don’t solve problems are fine, as long as the members open up while they chat. Anand and Jain recently implemented the current event club in February, which has now been running meetings weekly to discuss and debate news events with other students. Club meetings typically begin with a current events Kahoot game that consists of topics ranging from political to athletic. From there, club members go over headlines from the previous week, giving students the opportunity to discuss the topics than debate. The leadership of the club asks open ended questions in order to give the members an opportunity to express their views or ask questions on the topic. Sophomore and public relations chair

Hannah Altman said that she thinks the club is important because it allows for others to both agree and disagree on topics. “That’s something that other political clubs don’t do,” Altman said. “I also feel that as high schoolers, sometimes people feel that they don’t need to be involved and I wanted to make sure students knew there was a way to be involved and informed. While the club does speak on political events, members said that the purpose of the club isn’t to persuade people into a political affiliation. “We try to stay neutral, so we won’t be coordinating with other political clubs,” Anand said. “Our goal is to give students a platform to share their opinion with students who hold differentiating views, not to all agree on something.” Outside of regular meetings, the club also occasionally invites public speakers



CHRISTIE SMUDGE/RANK&FILE
Sophomore Shivane Anand begins a club meeting with a Kahoot game that pertained to several topics ranging from sports to politics and trivia questions. Members said that they enjoy partaking in the events of the club because of the relaxed environment. “I think it’s important for students to



COURTESY OF VIENNA IDOL
Sophomore William Blackwell sings “Afire Love” by Ed Sheeran in the first round of auditions, accompanied by sophomore Kyle Quigley on the guitar. Blackwell said he chose “Afire Love” because it fit his voice well, and he enjoyed the rhythm and lyrics of the song. Although Quigley was not competing in the event, he agreed to perform with Blackwell, after the previous guitarist was unable to attend. Blackwell chose to compete for the chance to perform on stage at Viva Vienna.

Singers compete at Vienna Idol

by sophie tedesco

Singers competed in the Vienna Idol performance competition for the chance to win prize money and time at a recording studio. Participants auditioned in front of a panel of three local musician judges. The auditions began on Apr. 10 and ended on May 16. The competition takes places in three stages. After the audition round, singers wait to hear if they advance to the next part of the competition, which takes place at Viva Vienna. Sophomore William Blackwell said he auditioned for Vienna Idol because it was an avenue for him to further pursue singing outside of choir. “I love singing, but I can’t do all of the musicals and

performances that I want to be because of other activities,” Blackwell said. “[Vienna Idol] was another opportunity to sing.” Sophomore Grace Schmorow was also driven to audition because of her passion for singing. “I wanted to audition for Vienna Idol because I love singing and playing instruments,” Schmorow said. “I really enjoy performing in front of people.” Competitors choose two songs to perform in front of the judging panel. Songs are supposed to showcase the voices and performance styles of participants. “I plan to sing ‘Million Years Ago’ by Adele and ‘Mercy’ by Duffy [to] show my vocal style, range and ability,” sophomore Sofia Vergara said. Schmorow incorporated

instruments into her performance as well. “I sang ‘Jolene’ by Dolly Parton and played guitar,” Schmorow said. “I also sang ‘Riptide’ by Vance Joy and played ukelele. I chose Jolene because I love Dolly Parton, but I chose ‘Riptide’ because it’s my favorite songs to play on the ukulele.” Part of the Vienna Idol experience includes the judges providing competitors with constructive feedback. “The judges had a lot of helpful feedback and they were very positive and encouraging,” Schmorow said. For Schmorow, competing in Vienna Idol was about overcoming her nerves in order to perform. “After I get over that, it gets more fun,” Schmorow said.

Leap plays despite rare heart condition

by **aparna matthew**

For sophomore Annie Leap, playing basketball extends further than sportsmanship and athletics. Doctors diagnosed Leap with the rare heart condition Long QT Syndrome (LQTS) Type 2 at age 12, but she managed to overcome a multitude of hurdles to achieve her goals of continuing to pursue sports in her life.

Leap's parents adopted her from Vietnam at two months old and she said she quickly realized her passion for sportsmanship and athletics.

"I realized I was blessed with the gift of playing sports [...] I played soccer, travel basketball and lacrosse," Leap said.

LQTS specifically affects the rhythm of the heart and

can cause irrational and impatient heartbeats.

Leap said the contraction of this condition majorly impacted the variety of sports in which she could participate in.

"[LQTS] stopped me from continuing travel lacrosse, but I could still play basketball because it was at a pace that I could keep up with," Leap said.

Although Leap's rare heart condition prohibited her from playing lacrosse, she said she learned to accept her reality and motivate herself to craft her basketball skills.

"At first, I was heartbroken," Leap said. "So, I started to change the way I looked at life. I accepted my condition and gave it my all in the sports that I was still able to participate in. I counted my



ALYSON REYNOLDS/COLUMBIAN

Sophomore Annie Leap dribbles past a Chantilly High School player during a regular season game.

heart condition as a blessing, rather than something that holds me down."

Leap said the opportunity to play on a varsity level team motivated her to succeed.

"I wanted to take the privilege to have successful team," Leap said. "I think we did just that this year. We got to quarter finals for states."

Leap said her condition has taught her to adapt to physical boundaries, as well as lead as an example to others dealing with similar issues.

"Life does not end at the hard moments," Leap said. "It is only a new beginning to become a new and stronger person."

Committed athletes participate in Signing Day

by **mary trivisonno & christina trivisonno**

On May 4, Signing Day allowed college committed athletes to officially sign to their selected colleges

in front of coaches, friends and family. 16 seniors formally completed their path to playing college sports on Signing Day.

Senior and Virginia Military Institute swimming

commit Jeffrey Vahiny said his mental approach towards his races enabled him to consistently beat his competition.

"I would visualize my races and think about beating the people in my heat rather than thinking about my times," Vahiny said.

Vahiny also said there were times throughout his high school experience where he doubted whether he was a Division 1 caliber athlete, but he used the support from his coaches and teammates to grow in self-assurance.

"There have been times where I doubted my ability to perform at the level I do today," Vahiny said. "But with the support of my peers I am definitely more confident in

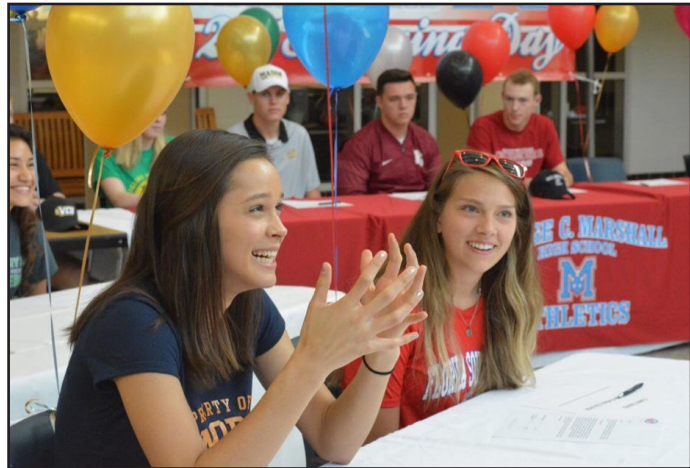
my ability to perform as a Division 1 athlete."

Senior and Hollins basketball commit Charlotte Donnellan said Signing Day came as a relief and a source of pride.

"I feel very accomplished and proud to play in college and experience Signing Day," Donnellan said. "Throughout my recruiting process I was really nervous."

Senior, soccer player and Virginia Commonwealth University commit Jared Valdes said how he wants to face tougher competition in college sports.

"I think for all the committed athletes actually competing with college athletes will be a good challenge," Valdes said.



MARY TRIVISONNO/RANK&FILE

Seniors Roisin O'Dowd (left) and Curry Ward (right) both officially signed to volleyball programs on Signing Day.

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sportsbriefs

Varsity soccer prepares for 5A playoffs as two-seed

The boys varsity soccer team entered the 5A playoffs following a 6-5-2 record in conference during the 2018 season. The team lost the first seed by tying the final conference game against Edison High School at the end of the year, but still gained a high seed.

"It was frustrating to lose the one seed, especially on a tie," senior and captain Jared Valdes said. "I still believe we can go deep in the playoffs though. We are way too good to lose in the first round this year."

Senior and player Connor Thompson said he hopes the team can go farther after losing in the first round last year.

"When we got knocked out in the first round last year it was pretty disappointing," senior and player Connor Thompson said. "I really think this year with the high seed we can make it at least through the first round."

In single-elimination playoffs, the seniors face their final game of high school sports every match they play.

"There is a lot of pressure on the whole team, but specifically the seniors in their last year," Valdes said. "If we lose, that's it in terms of high school soccer for most of us."

Senior and player Casey Tabatabai said he does not care if they go far in the playoffs as long as they play well.

"Whether we get eliminated in the first round or win states as long as we are playing the best we can I don't care," Tabatabai said.

by **matt scopa**



MATT SCOPA/RANK&FILE

Senior Connor Thompson passes a ball during a varsity soccer game on route to the teams 6-5-2 in conference record.

Baseball team faces 6A competition in playoffs

The varsity baseball team went undefeated against 5A opponents during the regular season, but will play against 6A teams in the playoffs. The team plays against 6A teams in non-district play to compete against more difficult opponents.

"In every sport, we try, and get the hardest 6A teams that will play us," athletic director Joe Swarm said. "If you look at out of our district schedule it is extremely difficult in all of our sports."

The team only went 2-2 against 6A teams during regular season play, but freshman and catcher Drew Hiller said he believes that the team can beat 6A teams in the playoffs.

"I think that we can do very well against the higher level [6A] teams and we are very capable of beating them," Hiller said.

Senior Connor Freeman said he wishes the team played 6A teams all year and he's happy the team plays in the 6A playoffs because 5A teams do not present as tough a challenge.

"I'm glad we get the chance to play in 6A for the playoffs because it's a nice change of pace," Freeman said. "It's a more competitive atmosphere and I think that with our success in 5A, we will have a good chance."

by **matt scopa, evan mazur & owen maguire**