

# rank&file

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ART BY REBECCA PAZ AND JULIUS SCHMIDT

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Halloween Movie  
Review  
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RACHEL ACKERMAN/RANK&FILE

# rank&file

## volume 61 issue 3

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Rank&File Podcast

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## Letter from the Editor

The time between Halloween and Thanksgiving is an important one for many students. We begin to settle into the year, hit the end of the first quarter and, for some of us, submit our first college applications, all at once. In many ways, November is a litmus test. In the past several weeks, we have observed the impacts of new changes, like the increase of student holidays for religious observance or the free tutoring service made available to students last year. November indicates if these changes were effective.

This second issue is also a litmus test for our publication. In talking with past editors, a consistent goal has been to improve our sports coverage. In this issue, we wanted to show our commitment to bolstering *Rank&File's* sports coverage through an in-depth story on the referee shortage in high school sports, the addition of an athlete of the month, coverage of the Harlem Wizards game and a review/preview of Marshall's own teams. At this junction on the calendar, it is important that we remind ourselves of our goals for the year, even as school gets busier and our workloads get heavier.

Aitana Wells  
Editor-In-Chief  
*Rank&File*

## Correction

In the October issue, sophomore Ben Isaacson was identified incorrectly in a caption. *Rank&File* regrets the error.

# Bus pass initiative includes free access to MetroBus lines in three high schools

by reyna berry and eleanor liang

**T**hanks to a new collaboration with MetroBus, students will now have more access to free public transportation to and from school.

The Fairfax County Public Schools Board of Supervisors discussed the initiative on Sept. 22 of this year. Students at Justice, Annandale, Falls Church and George C. Marshall High Schools can now sign up for free bus cards allowing them to ride the Fairfax Connector, City of Fairfax CUE and select MetroBus lines free of charge.

Systems of Support Advisor Kathleen Sokolove, who organizes the bus pass process at Marshall, said the overall policy has been in place since 2018. However, she said the recent addition of MetroBus to the initiative has made it more well-known.

"I feel like there's been a push from the county," Sokolove said. "They've been advertising it more [and] they gave me a big giant sign to hang up."

Sokolove said there hasn't been much interest in the program in previous years.



ELEANOR LIANG/RANK&FILE

"I'm not sure people were jumping on public transportation buses last year," she said. "And then [the] COVID-19 year, not as much."

This year, however, is different, she said.

"Last year 35 students total signed up to get a bus pass," Sokolove said. "This year, at least 31 have signed up just in first quarter."

To sign up, students can visit room A102 to get a permission slip, which must be signed by a parent or guardian even if the student is over 18.

The process is "super easy," Sokolove said. "I just have to enter in the information and you get a bus card."

Sokolove said students can find bus routes easily by using MetroBus's Trip Planner ([wmata.com/schedules](http://wmata.com/schedules)) to map out their travel plan.

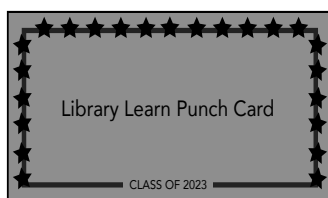
"It's a great service," she said. "Even if you're not planning to take the bus, come get a bus card in A102!"

Find suggested bus routes at  
[wmata.com/schedules](http://wmata.com/schedules).

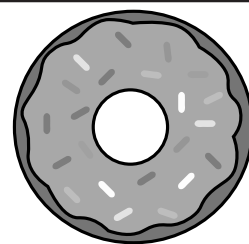
## Class of 2023 enjoys senior privileges:

• compiled by will blackburn and eleanor mcaden

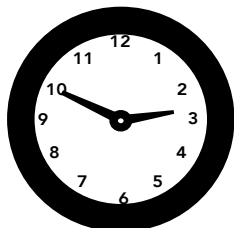
A punch card for 23 days of access to the library during Learn, no ticket required.



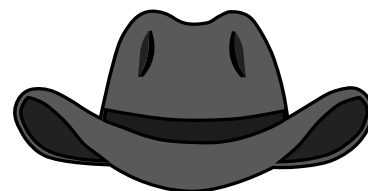
Donuts at the end of every quarter, courtesy of Principal Litz.



Every Friday, seniors are allowed to leave school five minutes early, at 2:50.



Senior-specific spirit days on the 23rd of each month.



Information courtesy of SGA member and senior Oriana Piazza



# Table Talk: *Dean of Students*

Dean Brian  
Staton  
comments on  
hall sweeps

TARDY SLIP	
ADMIT	_____
TO (CLASS)	_____
TIME	_____
REASON	_____
_____ PRINCIPAL	

## Why are the hall sweeps important?

The Administration team and the Security team worked together to develop a plan: (1) to ensure that we have a safe and secure school, and (2) to ensure that students are where they need to be when they need to be there. So the tardy sweeps are for the purpose of making sure that we get the students in class on time so that they can learn and get the full content.

## Do you see a pattern regarding grade levels?

We do have a database now that we use, and this database can allow us to break down the grade levels for the students caught on the sweep. We do notice patterns, and I'm not afraid to say that juniors and seniors seem to be the highest offenders with getting to class on time.

## What are the repercussions of being caught in a hall sweep?

After we sweep the students to class and they get their pass and warning, we do upload [their student IDs]. We save a spreadsheet so we can track if they're the same students being caught in sweeps. The goal is to compare that data, and once the student gets to multiple, then we will issue consequential work makeup sessions to include detention.

● compiled by melanie george and marie kah

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# Review

● compiled by will blackburn, ben pyatt and aitana wells

## Volleyball

10/3 3-1 W @ McLean  
 10/11 3-0 W @ WL  
 10/13 3-1 W vs. Wakefield  
 10/18 2-3 L @ Yorktown  
 Playoffs:  
 10/25 3-0 W vs. W&L  
 10/27 3-0 L @ Langley  
 11/1 3-1 W vs. Madison  
 11/3 3-0 L @ Chantilly

## Football

10/14 0-35 L @ Yorktown  
 10/21 20-35 L @ Langley  
 10/28 63-0 W vs. Wakefield  
 11/4 22-21 W vs. Herndon

## Cheer

10/1 Cheer places fifth at District Finals

## Field Hockey

Fourth in the district regular season  
 10/7 1-4 L @ Yorktown  
 10/10 2-1 W @ Herdon  
 10/12 2-1 W @ Langley

## Cross Country

10/15 Third battle invitational  
 varsity girls place 20th and boys 6th  
 10/27 Liberty District Finals girls  
 place 6th and boys 1st

## Gymnastics

10/3 3-1 W @ Mclean    10/11 3-0 W @ WL    10/13 3-1 W @ Wakefield

# Preview

Winter sports tryouts were held the week of Nov. 7

## Girls Basketball

First game 11/29 @ Madison  
 Game 12/7 vs. Justice

## Swim & Dive

First meet 12/2 vs. Langely @ Providence recreation center

## Boys Basketball

First game 11/29 @ Madison  
 Tournament 12/2 @ Marshall

## Wrestling

First duel 12/14 @ Madison

## Cross Country

First meet 12/3 @ Marshall

## Athletes of the Month

Senior Jake Peksens  
 varsity football



RISHI VANKA/RANK&FILE

"I love playing high school football. Before the game, when I hear my friends calling my name, it gets me hype. When I'm playing, I'm just locked in on the game. I got to remind myself to focus on the little things and execute."

Junior Samia Sayd  
 varsity girls volleyball



MADDIE BISHOP/RANK&FILE

"I have fun playing, so it's really easy to work hard because I enjoy what I'm doing. It's easy to put in effort when the rest of the team is putting in the same amount of work as you are."

# Horn makes career switch to teach kids

by rishi vanka

After a career in the military, ninth grade Health and PE teacher Michael Horn brings his experience to his classes.

Horn started teaching as an instructor for firearms and tactics around eight years ago.

"I started instructing while I was in the First Ranger Battalion, overseas and here," he said.

He chose to start teaching adults when he joined the military.

"When I got in the military, there's not a lot of jobs for infantry," he said. "So I started teaching at a range, doing firearms and different classes."

A year ago, he shifted to teaching kids.

"I got into the career switcher

program and completed level one this spring. Then, going into level two is getting a job and start teaching," he said.

Horn did the job fair online over the summer and said this was what drew him to Marshall.

"I think talking with Joe Swarm, it was the way he talked about school and how it was, the programs here," Horn said. "He kind of drew me to the school itself."

Horn said classroom management will be the hardest part for him since he is switching from teaching adults to 9th graders. Still, he is excited about his career change.

"I think the most rewarding part of this is there's an endpoint, there's a purpose to it," Horn said. "[With] teaching adults versus teaching kids, you're molding the future."



WILL BLACKBURN/RANK&FILE

New Health and Physical Education teacher Michael Horn poses after explaining the career change he made.

# Cheer pushes through season of challenges

by sophie hauber and aitana wells

The varsity cheer team has persevered through many roadblocks this season.

The team placed first in the Liberty District semi-finals, a stark improvement from the beginning of the season.

"Our first competition was a little rough because we came in fifth," varsity cheerleader and sophomore Calla Spignardo said.

The team has faced many injuries during the season.

"Before district semi-finals one of our back spots got a concussion, and we had to sub someone in again really quickly," Spignardo said. "People are just ready to go and always there to help step up."

Absences during practice were not only due to injuries, but many players were out with illnesses.

"This year, cheer faced a COVID-19 outbreak which forced us to put many of our practices on hold," cheer captain and senior Aila Seaman said.

Spignardo said she thought the spread of the illness was due to the unique manner of cheer.

"Because it's such a close contact

sport," Spignardo said, "those illnesses spread a lot. At one point, I think maybe half our team was out, but we quickly recovered and rested and got better."

Changes were made to the routines, and the team had to adjust to the new choreography and stunts.

"We made many changes in our routine throughout the season with the main reason being that athletes were getting injured," Seaman said.

The team placed first at district semi-finals.

"We were really excited when it happened," Spignardo said. "We all stood up and cheered and it was a really great experience."

"We are a very close-knit team and thrive off of positivity and words of encouragement from each other."

- Cheer captain Aila Seaman

Despite the many challenges faced, the team has kept a positive attitude and



RISHI VANKA/RANK&FILE

The cheer team performs to entertain the crowd during halftime during the football game against.

are a close group of people.

"The team feels closer than it has ever been before," Seaman said.

The team kept persevering and continuing to perform at a high level, not letting their struggles stop them from competing well.

"The team had success throughout the season because we are all very passionate about cheer, and always push each other to try our hardest," Seaman said.

They placed fifth at district finals and finished their season on Oct. 1.



# Referee shortage impacts sports scheduling

Director of student activities, varsity volleyball coach and referees share their personal thoughts and experiences on the shortage



by maddie bishop and  
rebecca paz

Along with nearby high schools, Marshall has faced a shortage of officials to work at sporting events.

According to the Director of Student Activities, Joseph Swarm, many associations have said the reason for the shortage is the treatment referees sometimes receive from spectators, coaches and players for little pay.

"It's unfortunate because people watch college and professional contests and think it is okay to treat them poorly," Swarm said. "It is never okay to treat people like this, and worse at the high school level, because they are professionals in other fields essentially donating their time to run high school contests."

Swarm said that in previous years, officials used to choose to work at Marshall. Since last year, this hasn't been the case.

"Unfortunately, we lost our manners and the strong sportsmanship reputation we built over the years," Swarm said. "We forgot how

*"We have already recieved a long list of basketball dates the officials have asked us to avoid."*

*- Director of student activities Joeshph Swarm*

to have fun and cheer for our athletes. I think when the spectators are loud and cheering on their own classmates competing, it is an incredible atmosphere."

While Swarm doesn't believe the shortage has

impacted the outcome of the games played, he said the scheduling problem with referees is his greatest concern.

"We have already received a long list of basketball dates the officials have asked us to avoid," Swarm said. "I think due to the volume of basketball games, it will be

tough to cover everything. We are constantly preaching good spectator behavior here because officials pick games to cover and can opt away from schools with issues. In turn, we would receive lower quality officials willing to work our contests."

In order to improve reputation, Swarm said students should give grace towards officials.

"We need to be more lenient knowing the men and women calling the contests are not picking a side and there are always questionable calls, there always have been," Swarm said.

Varsity volleyball head coach and math teacher Michael Carroll said he has not found the shortage to affect the outcomes at games.

"In any given year you have your group of referees that have been doing well and know what they're doing, but you're always going to have

the new ones," Carroll said.

During district playoffs each year, there are normally line judges. However, there are none during the regular season.

"Some other districts I know they are occasionally able to get line judges more frequently, but we've always just had them only in the playoffs," Carroll said.

While he said he thinks it could be beneficial, Carroll said he doesn't find line judges to be the main priority, especially with a struggle to find referees.

"If we're already struggling to find referees during the regular season, having line judges might be pretty tough to do," Carroll said.

Carroll notes the challenges that come with reffing a highschool game.

"It's a position especially in volleyball, where the referees are so close to the fans and they are going to constantly hear from them," Carroll said.

Carroll said he understands the commitment that comes with reffing.

"It's a stressful job," he said. "To do it and not get paid a lot of money is a tough thing to ask people."

Football official Bob Anderson shared his personal experience as a referee.

"I do it because I love it," Anderson said. "I've been [reffing] for 18 years now."

Anderson said he believes audience behavior is a contributing factor to the



Football referees call for a touchdown during the game against Wakefield on Oct. 28.

shortage.

"A lot of it is sportsmanship from the players, coaches, fans and the whole nine yards," he said.

According to Anderson, being understanding towards officials should be a priority.

"This also does take a little bit more time and a lot of people realize to do it, and to come out here and do what we do," he said.

Anderson said in contrast to the time-consuming responsibilities of being an official, people have to find joy in reffing.

"Especially if you have a family," he said. "I don't have kids. A lot of these guys who ref are married and have kids. I don't really know how they do it."

Volleyball official

Dvilyaun Deve said some referees may find the job physically tiring.

"A lot of referees ref multiple games. Some support multiple teams, so they'll do basketball and volleyball," Deve said. "A lot of times they get burnt out."

Deve also mentions parents being a factor.

"At some events, some of the parents are sort of aggressive. Sometimes you don't want to deal with that," Deve said. "They're excited about their kids, but they beat up on the refs."

Despite the challenges of reffing, Deve said she enjoys her job because she played volleyball growing up.

"I'm not really playing anymore, but [reffing] still allows me to go to the games and different areas," Deve

said. "I live in Prince George's County, so I drive all the way out to Virginia and get to watch a totally different set of teams that I normally wouldn't see."

Both officials said despite refereeing being a difficult job, they do it because they enjoy it.

"You have to have the right attitude," Anderson said.

Swarm said he has seen better crowd behavior and said he hopes for the positivity to continue to increase.

"I have been very impressed with the Statesmen student sections at games this year," Swarm said. "I hope our student leaders continue the high expectations in the stands, cheer hard and loudly for their classmates working hard."



A line judge and ref officiate on Nov. 1 at the volleyball district quarterfinals.



ART BY MADDIE BISHOP AND REBECCA PAZ

# Teachers vs. Harlem Wizards: PTSA holds fundraiser for All Night Grad Celebration

by julius schmidt

On Oct. 7, the PTSA hosted the Harlem Wizards basketball team to play teachers from all grade levels to raise money for the All Night Grad Celebration which happens at the end of the year.

The event made money through ticket sales, food and merchandise. However, it also created an opportunity for many to give back to their community. Many Marshall basketball players volunteered at the event

Harlem Wizard Robert Young, who goes by Smooth, played high school basketball in New York City and later for Division 2 Bloomfield college in New Jersey. He said as someone who grew up in a "poverty-stricken area," he values giving back.

"Fundraisers really helped [my community] out," Young said.

Varsity basketball player and senior Brandon Lee supported the Harlem Wizards throughout the night by

volunteering at the event.

"We're doing this because we're here to have a good time and come be with friends,"

Freshman Eric Clark, who plans on playing basketball, is always looking for a way to get back to his community. This event was an opportunity for him to display that.

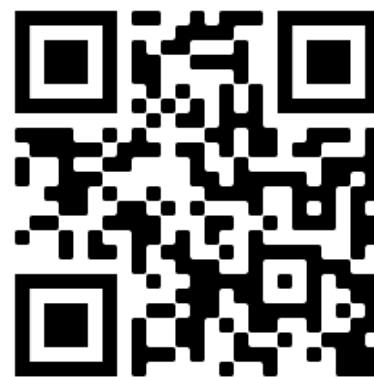
"It's always good to help people from where you come from and just make a positive impact on the community," Clark said.

Teachers from across the county representing different schools had the opportunity to play. Chemistry teacher Theresa How played against the Harlem Wizards in front of a crowd containing some of her students.

"Some said 'hi'. Some greeted me. It was great," How said.

Community members all came together to raise money for the senior's All Night Grad Celebration, but they also all gave back to their community and tried to make a difference.

**Rank&File  
MultiMedia:**  
Harlem Wizards Video



Check out our  
YouTube videos here:  
[tinyurl.com/rankandfileyoutube](https://tinyurl.com/rankandfileyoutube)

# Choir performance starts off the new year



During an after-school rehearsal, choir members rehearse dance steps with choreographer Ahmad Maaty for their opening number, "The Greatest Show" from the musical *The Greatest Showman*.

The choir show, titled "Hollywood Music from the Movies," had many opportunities for solos from individual performers throughout. "I was really excited because I got to show other people how much I love to sing," sophomore Apoorva Navale said. "Music is a big part of my life." Navale's been singing her whole life and loved the energy of this performance.



## Annual spring show moved to fall: New choir teacher explains why

New choir teacher Tiffany Powell decided to move the show to October this year.

"Coming from Oakton, we had done a big show most years as well," Powell said. "I just really like starting the year with it."

Powell said moving the show has had a positive impact on students.

"Getting the members excited about our year and working together in a collaborative way...it's a bonding experience," she said.

Though moving the show forward means pushing some curriculum until later in the year, Powell said the new date creates a favorable learning environment.

"I hope that it gives us that little extra boost of energy to then drive the rest of the year," Powell said.

"Getting the members excited about our year and working together in a collaborative way [is] a bonding experience."

- Choir teacher Tiffany Powell



Marshall Harmony choir (top) sings "City of Stars" from the 2016 Academy Award winning movie *La La Land*.

Singing "Speechless" from the Disney production *Aladin*, choirs Vocal Clarity and Harmony Treble (bottom) use stools as props.



Earning a unanimous laugh from the audience for their pictures of Adam Levine, the lead singer of Maroon 5, juniors Kate Butterworth and Sophia Welch along with senior Lia Davila sing "Hopelessly Devoted To You" from *Grease*.

● compiled by rachel ackerman



# Cindy Blakeley receives faculty support

by **virgil dongre and melanie george**

On Tuesday, Oct. 18, our Director of Student Services entered her office to see it covered in pink balloons, streamers and chocolates to advocate for breast cancer awareness.

Math teachers Helen Snyder, Nevine Spicer and Abeer El-Baz decorated the office in secret with help from principal Jeffrey Litz.

"I talked to Litz a few times on email just trying to find out when [Blakeley] was coming," Snyder said. "Spicer went out and bought some chocolates, and I went out and bought the decorations during my planning period on Monday."

Spicer and Snyder planned the decor, and all three purchased the decorations. Then El-Baz and Snyder decorated Blakeley's room during sixth period on Monday, Oct. 17.

"I was very surprised," Blakeley said. "This is going to be tricky...[but] I feel very cared for."

Blakeley will be taking leave from her position for a couple months. Snyder wanted the decorations to give Blakeley some "positive energy" and strength be-



VIRGIL DONGRE/RANK&FILE

fore she departs.

"I just thought it would be fun to decorate her office and use the pink theme that's used worldwide to just kind of make her happy," Snyder said.

Coordinated impromptu decor,

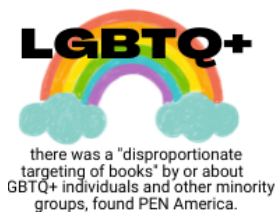
however, is not the only way staff are encouraging Blakeley. Litz also sent out an email to every faculty member encouraging them to dress in pink on Wednesday, Oct 19, and Snyder said she has future plans for assistance.

"A lot of people who go through something like this do a care page where you can put donations," Snyder said. "I was thinking of organizing meals or something [to] bring to her."

Blakeley's family has also encouraged support for her, making dozens of "Team Cindy" buttons and distributing them schoolwide. There is also a donation site set up to help pay for her medical expenses.

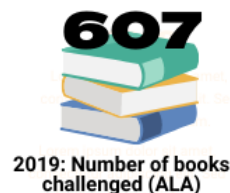
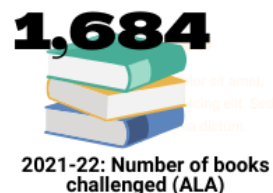
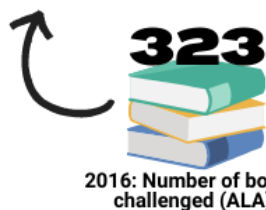
"[Every] little bit helps," Snyder said, "but I think if you want to make more of an impact, you would help in the ways that she's specifically asking for."

The fundraising website, caring-bridge.com, is still accepting donations under the name of "TeamCindyBlakeley" to best support Blakeley.



## BANNED

A history of challenged books in U.S. public schools



A South Carolina branch of the Fraternal Order of Police challenged Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*. Their president, John Blackmon, said the book was "almost an indoctrination of distrust in police" (ALA).

Information from the American Library Association, PEN America and Smithsonian Magazine

● compiled by rank&file staff

# Seniors explore early admission opportunities

Ethan Taylor

by esther lee

An in-the-moment accidental click led to Senior Ethan Taylor discovering the letter of admissions offer he had received from his long-time dream school: the University of Pittsburgh.

"It was a really special moment because I got to celebrate that moment with my family," he said.

Taylor said his decision to apply for rolling admission at colleges has lifted a weight off his shoulders during this school year.

"The application process for me has actually been really easy," he said. "I got all of the stressful parts done over the summer."

Taylor said he has had a lot of support from his parents throughout the process, which for him started much earlier than his peers.

"My parents were super supportive," Taylor said. "They knew very early what my plans were."

Taylor said his faculty

recommenders have been supportive of his decisions.

"I let my teachers and counselors know what my plans were over the summer, if some of them needed to be involved in the process," he said. "They were all super responsive to that."

The choice to apply with rolling admissions was beneficial to Taylor.

"I think finding a school with rolling admissions, or doing early acceptance is a really awesome opportunity," he said. "It has allowed me to escape so much of the stress that I see my friends going through."



ESTHER LEE/RANK&FILE

Taylor poses wearing merchandise from the University of Pittsburgh.

Zayan Meah

by emma mobley

November first marks a big deadline for students applying to schools using early decision. Senior Zayan Meah used these binding deadlines to his advantage.

"I applied to The University of Virginia, early deci-

Meah used his first generation status to find admission opportunities.

"For Virginia Tech, I just wrote an essay," Meah said. "Then Mr. Humphreys helped me, and so I got in there earlier than everyone else."

Virginia Tech offered underrepresented and first

*"[Being first generation] probably helped a lot because colleges like first generation students because they need to meet a certain quota."*

- Senior Zayan Meah

sion," Meah said. "So I think I'm going to get in there."

Meah also used guaranteed admissions programs for additional schools he was interested in.

"For Virginia Commonwealth University and Boston University, [there]'s a program where you apply to a specific major, and then you finish it early," Meah said. "I'm doing dentistry, so I'm done in less years."

In addition to a good essay and overall application,

generation students an early look at the school and Meah used this program to receive his decision in early October.

"[Being first generation] probably helped a lot because colleges like first generation students because they know that they need to meet a certain quota," Meah said.

As colleges look to break the gap, Meah said he hopes to be the first in his family to attend school after high school.

Sara Porjosh

by virgil dongre

On midnight, Oct. 15, senior Sara Porjosh learned she had been accepted into Boston Conservatory's vocal performance program.

Porjosh said she didn't have the school on her radar at first.

"I ended up doing a two week summer program this past summer," Porjosh said. "I just fell in love with the school, the people and the environment."

About a month after sending in her initial application, Porjosh received an invitation to audition live. She said the process was more stressful than other auditions she has attended.

"It was a Zoom audition," Porjosh

said, "but there were six people at my audition. One of them was the chair of voice at the school and so I was like, oh my god."

Porjosh said she recalls being too surprised to react when she found out she'd been accepted.

"I found out that they gave me a pretty big scholarship too," she said. "It was one of those things [where] as the days passed I got more and more excited about it."

As of now, Porjosh said her top university choices are Boston Conservatory and Carnegie Mellon. She also said she wants to build her interests outside of music but will always be passionate about singing.

"Nothing has piqued my interest and stimulates my brain more," Porjosh said. "I just know that I honestly can't see myself doing anything else."



RHEA NEWNAHA/RANK&FILE

Senior Sara Porjosh (right) rehearses for the fall play, "Blue Stockings."

# Types of College Admissions

## Rolling Admission

These applications are not reviewed on a specific date; rather the college will review them as they come in and students will get a response generally a few weeks later.

## Early Decision

This is a binding college application that lets students hear back from colleges earlier in the year. If the college you apply Early Decision to accepts you, you must go there.

## Early Action

This is a nonbinding college application that lets students hear back from colleges earlier in the year.

## Regular Decision

This is the standard college application. It is nonbinding and happens later in the year than the other three application types.

Information courtesy of College and Career Advisor Gardener Humphreys

# Junior Samia Sayd details what pushes her to play

by marie kah

Junior Samia Sayd's love for her teammates and the sport of volleyball carries her team in their bid for a regional title.

Sayd has played volleyball since the third grade and places her drive to succeed in her teammates.

"I like the bond I have with both my highschool and club teammates," Sayd said. "I love spending time with them on the court and off because they bring such good energy wherever we are."

Sayd was named the athlete of the month this October because of her performance on the court.

"It feels great to be able to win any award," Sayd said. "My team and I have worked really hard this season and have been successful

because of all of the hard work."

In speaking about her motivation to play Sayd credits her love for volleyball, her teammates

"I have fun playing so it's really easy to work hard because I enjoy what I'm doing," Sayd said. "It's easy to put in effort when the rest of the team is putting in the same amount of work as you are."

Sayd believes that a key component of her success is also the atmosphere in the gym when she's playing.

"The crowd can also have a big effect on my in-game playing," Sayd said. "When the stands are hype and really energetic I think I play better, now that were in regionals it's nice to have people supporting you to win."



MADDIE BISHOP/RANK&FILE

Sayd aces during the regional quarterfinals match against Madison, scoring the winning point.

# The Frankenfile

The iconic duo returns to review this spooky season's movies



## "Smile"

● compiled by eleanor mcaden and rishi vanka



Smile? Or should it be called "It Follows": The High Budget Not as Good Sequel? Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed watching "Smile". It just wasn't something new to me. The concept of a creature only you can see plaguing your life, taking the shape of different people is, let's say, inspired by "It Follows". Both movies incorporate this concept, but "Smile" takes a stab at connecting the curse to a deeper meaning: escaping trauma. It was underdeveloped and ruined by the ending. The idea was only offered, and not followed through. I found myself wishing the movie was a little more psychological, but I was let down by the emphasis it placed on a spooky looking creature rather than developing a unique message. That being said, I don't regret watching it.

There were a couple flinch-inducing jumpscare. At one point I heard a high pitched scream, and I looked around for a small child, only to find poor Rishi looking aghast. I, personally, could never be that scared, but a feeling the movie cultivated well was second hand embarrassment. My favorite part was when the main character's nephew opens up her gift at his birthday party, only to find it is something no one expected, not even the main character. The judgy millennial parents at the party were almost as horrified as Rishi was, and I was embarrassed to my core. The rest of the movie followed a pretty formulaic plot, but again, it was familiar in a comfortable way. If you enjoy a classic horror movie, I highly recommend "Smile." Just don't look for something new or profound, because you will not find it.

I am not embarrassed to admit that I screamed during a jumpscare in "Smile". Most of the scares were jumpscare, and some worked a lot better than others. When I screamed, I looked over at Eleanor, and she was unfazed. I think the movie was scary enough to justify it. Before we watched the movie, Eleanor and I heard mixed reviews about "Smile". One of my friends didn't think the jumpscare were scary, but another texted me in the middle of the night about how scared he was. At first I thought he was joking, but now I'm not so sure. The most memorable part of the movie for me was the first victim's

smile. I don't know how they cast that role, but if I ever see her in real life, I'm running as far from her as I can. As scary as I found the movie, I don't think the ending was as good as the rest of it. I won't spoil the movie, but I found it disappointing that the "bad guy" was given a physical form. It would've been much scarier if it was left to the audience's imagination. In its place, we were left with something that wasn't even scary, just ugly. Sometimes the scariest thing a horror movie can do is let its audience's imagination run wild, and Smile failed to do this.



## "Werewolf by Night"



When Rishi told me "Werewolf by Night" was a Marvel movie my first thought was, "oh". I'm not against Marvel movies, but they've just never really interested me. "Werewolf by Night" is different, and I think it would appeal to non-Marvel fans and Marvel fans alike. With a 53 minute run-time, and an almost entirely black and white presentation, it seemed like an homage to early horror movies from the 30s, while still incorporating some modern touches. There is a friendship similar to Groot and Star-Lord's relationship in Guardians of the Galaxy, which seemed like one of the few truly noticeable modern and Marvel-like elements. The

director, Michael Giacchino, is also a composer, and the score was a strong highlight of the movie for me. Just like the rest of the movie, it was campy and charming. My love for the movie centers more around these style elements than its status as a gem of the horror genre. It is rated TV-14 and is available on Disney+, so don't go into it expecting a terrifying experience. It's the kind of movie you'd watch on a dark and stormy night with your younger sibling, stealing their leftover Halloween candy. Ironically, unlike "Smile", this movie made me smile. I felt good after watching it. It's delightful, and I suggest you give it a try, even if you're not a Marvel maniac like Rishi tends to be.





ART BY WILL BLACKBURN AND REBECCA PAZ



I was excited to watch “Werewolf by Night” because it showed that the Marvel Cinematic Universe is experimenting with different genres of TV and movies. Before this, “Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” had some horror scenes and was directed by Sam Raimi, who is known for his horror movies. I hoped “Werewolf by Night” would go further than “Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness”, but instead it went the opposite direction. Every opportunity for a genuinely scary scene was instead replaced with comedy. I was disappointed that it did not live up to the horror genre expectations Marvel had set up

for it, but I still thought it was entertaining. Despite an only hour-long run time, the main character’s were well-developed and their motivations were clearly understood. Since this special is set in the MCU, I’m assuming that these characters will return in the future, but for now I was content with how their stories ended. I thought that the fight scenes were entertaining and was once again surprised by the MCU’s transition into more violent movies. Though I enjoyed “Werewolf by Night” overall, I still think Marvel should have taken the risk of a true attempt at the horror genre, because taking risks is something that has paid for them in past movies, and something I wanted.

## “Halloween Ends”

“Is this a rom-com,” Reyna questioned. “Why is there so much blood,” Rishi pondered. “Zzzzzzz,” Julius snored. Quite frankly, “Halloween Ends” is a disaster. There have been 13 Halloween movies since the first one in 1978, and I’ve seen quite a few of them. “Halloween Ends” might just be the worst I’ve seen. Rishi and I were accompanied by Reyna and Julius, two other Rank & File reporters, and not one of us enjoyed the movie. Instead of constructing an end to the previous movie’s events, “Halloween Ends” introduces a new antagonist and a very poorly written young romance that takes up an absurd amount of screen time—prompting Reyna to wonder if this movie was even a horror movie. When all of the love scenes

finally died down and the horror began, my boredom remained. Not even a small scream from Rishi, and that’s saying something. What the movie lacked in scary factor it tried to make up for with gore that seemed out of place and overdone. In this haphazard and ugly vessel, the movie attempted to insert a commentary on the nature of good and evil that didn’t land in a compelling way. I could gather what they were trying to say, but my appreciation of the message ended there. Don’t waste your time on “Halloween Ends”, or else you will be longing for its promise of an ending. When the ending finally comes, it’s a downright strange one, but it’s very fitting for a downright strange movie.



Disclaimer: I have not watched any of the “Halloween” movies before. Still, on its own, this movie was not good. The new villain was poorly written and his motivations for becoming a murderer didn’t make sense. He was a random character thrown in for more over the top gore. The ending fight looked like it had more blood than a person physically has, and none of it felt justified by the character’s actions earlier in the plot. There was one good jump scare in the movie, when the new villain pops out

behind the main character. While it did a good job foreshadowing who he would become, it didn’t make sense why he had chosen to become a murderer. Overall, “Halloween Ends” did not feel like a horror movie. Most of the time was spent on fight scenes, and while they were gruesome, they weren’t scary. If the movie had spent more time explaining its characters’ actions than having them kill each other, it could’ve been worthwhile. As is, “Halloween Ends” is not worthwhile.



JULIUS SCHMIDT/RANK&FILE

# Controversial Musicians: Separating the art from the artist in the modern age

by mona farah  
and maha jiwani

On Oct. 10, musician Rex Orange County was charged with several counts of sexual assault, causing a wave of reaction from the public.

Many fans of the popular alternative indie artist, who was formally known as Alex O'Connor, were devastated when the news aired. This situation represents a commonly found trend in the music industry regarding artists who have acted or said something controversial.

Some students, much like sophomore Taylor Devanney, believe Rex Orange County's music should not be listened to.

truly a separation between a musician and their music.

"I think it depends on what the artist did, especially when they made it," senior Haley Spoden said.

Many students approached by the Rank&File were able to recall an artist they had listened to in the past that had done something problematic. Some referenced R&B artist R. Kelly and the charges against him.

"I used to think that R. Kelly was alright," Devanney said, "and then I heard about some of the stuff he was doing to girls. It's disgusting, I immediately stopped. You can't listen to their music when they're doing all that stuff; it's just not the same. They're just not good."

*"Whenever I listen to art, I think deeply about what inspired that art. A lot of times it comes from the artist's history and what that artist does as a person."*

- Junior Nathan Estep

"I think it's disgusting," Devanney said. "Honestly, I never really listen to Rex that much, but a few of my friends did. Finding out everything is so gross."

Others don't feel as strongly.

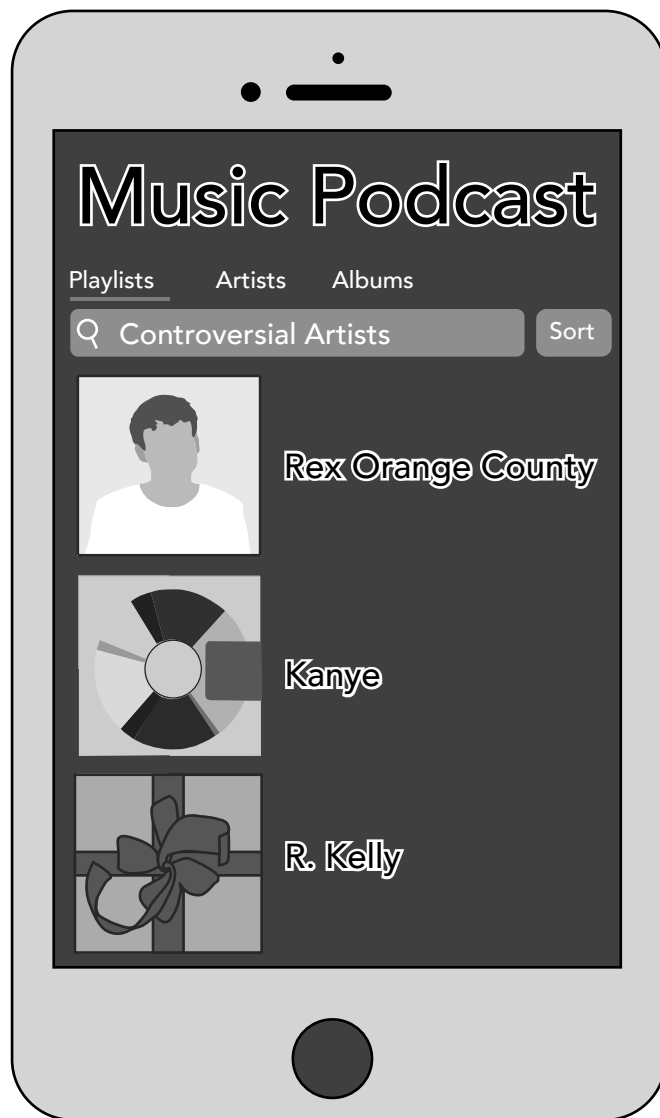
"I would not go out of my way to listen to his music," junior Mishti Chowbey said, "but if it came on, I don't care enough to play another song."

News like O'Connor's charges have caused fans to question whether there is

Junior Nathan Estep agreed.

"Whenever I listen to art, I think deeply about what inspired that art," Estep said. "A lot of times it comes from the artist's history and what that artist does as a person."

O'Connor is scheduled to go on trial for the charges in Jan. 2023. Meanwhile, fans of O'Connor continue to debate the relevancy of an artist's actions or opinions in the value of their music.



ART BY MONA FARAH AND MAHA JIWANI

Is there an issue you feel passionate about? Fill out the google form, and let us know about it!





## Letter to the Editor

## Publications can and should include humor

Like many in the school, I read the Rank&File monthly issues. The journalism is superb and offers great perspectives into our Marshall community news. This being said, criticizing any establishment is always an entertaining venture, so I do have some thoughts I'd like to share.

When reading this newspaper, I find two things to be missing: a humor column and cartoons. I am not saying these would be a necessary addition for every issue, though I do think it would be an enjoyable option for a few issues every year.

Humor columns would draw the attention of new readers; they might only have the intent to read the humor column, then venture into reading the rest of the articles. This creates a broader

audience of those who read the Rank&File and those who provide their opinions in future articles.

In addition, cartoons extend the outreach of the newspaper to artists and those interested in providing humorous captions. This will attract readers to the paper, not only for the humor of the cartoon, but for the gratifying result of getting their art and/or caption published.

Some might offer the opinion that a humor column and cartoons hurt the integrity of the newspaper, and undermine their journalism. I disagree. Distinguished national newspapers and news magazines have humor columns and cartoons, such as The New Yorker, The Washington Post, and The New York Times. People don't see these news organizations as lesser than others, nor

does it hurt the integrity of their factual reporting.

Others might say to create a separate entity, such as the Harvard Crimson and Harvard Lampoon being different organizations.

In this situation, I also disagree. High school publications' resources are thin. The allocation of resources is directed toward the publication with the larger staff and following, therefore a smaller entity would be ineffective without any funding to publish its works.

Of course, I am not saying the person writing the column needs to be the next Andy Borowitz or David Sedaris, just someone who has enough of a sense of humor.

- Junior Ainsley McCoy

## Satire

## Ode to an advanced diploma graduate

by reyna berry

It was time: graduation. The 27 chords strung across my neck were swaying artfully and my smile was as bright as a midday sun. I knew this was the day I had waited for since I was two months old, crying out to my mama, "what's dat famed paypa on da wall?" This was, finally, my time to shine.

Mr. Litz held out his hand at the other side of the stage, congratulating some poor "standard diploma" kid. Ha! As if that could ever be me!

No, no, no, when I made it across that stage I would not be a disappointment. I would not graduate without that coveted stamp, that glorious mark delicately pressed onto the top of the golden-white paper which read, in wonderful, beautiful cursive:

"Advanced Diploma."

Oh, how I would celebrate when I received it in my shaking hands! How I would dance upon the glossy linoleum stage of Constitution Hall and cackle at my silly silly classmates who hadn't

forced themselves into three years of foreign language or cried themselves to sleep when they got a B+ in HOA! Today I was Napoleon, and graduation would be my Waterloo!!

(Of course, I wasn't like those IB diploma students, either. They were just crazy.)

Suddenly, a voice: "Reyna Berry," the announcer announced.

Holy moly! My eyes started to water. This was it. This was it!

I straightened my shoulders and raised my chin. Step by step, I carried myself towards my goal. The music swelled. The crowd erupted. I spotted a the next diploma—my diploma—being lifted up from the table into the sunlight.

I reached my hand out, felt the edge of the blue cardstock brush my fingertips—

SLAM!

Oh, god.

Slowly, I lifted my face up from the floor. My glasses, squished and bent, fell to the floor. My left toe was stinging.

No—where was the diploma?? I

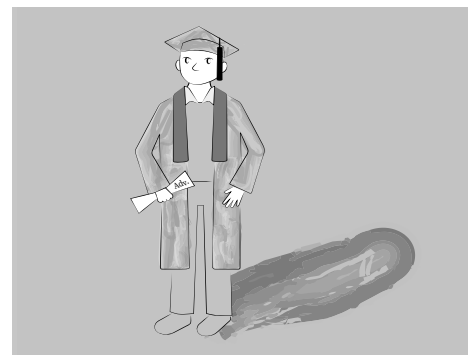
searched frantically, holding the broken frames of my glasses up to my face in order to see. Suddenly I understood how Velma must feel.

And then, there it was: crumpled beneath my chest, the cover folded back onto itself. I gingerly lifted the paper out, still lying on the floor.

"Advanced Diploma," the sticker read.

Tears spilled from my eyes.

Today was the best day of my life!!



ART BY ELEANOR LIANG

Author's Note: This spring I will be graduating, proudly, with the standard diploma in my hand.

## Editorial

# Vote! It's your right and your privilege

As young people in America it can be easy to believe we don't have a voice. This is entirely inaccurate. By leaning into the idea that voting is useless, we open ourselves up to present—and future—harm.

In light of the most recent local election, held on Nov. 8, 2022, our staff would like to emphasize the importance of voting. A student holiday, this Tuesday gave us the opportunity to directly impact local legislature without the risk of falling behind in school. Opportunities like this will come again, and we need to take advantage of them.

Voting itself takes half an hour. The effects of choosing not to vote, however, will last for years.

Of course, this truth exists alongside the historical fact that underprivileged communities have consistently been disenfranchised by harsh regulations and short voting windows. According to journalist Vann Newkirk, to this day, voter suppression mostly impacts minority

voters. This year, both early voting and vote-by-mail options are available in Virginia. We urge you to take advantage of these services if you can.

We're all high schoolers with a lot to do and a lot on our minds, but being well-informed is crucial to the voting process. Do you really want to casually

pick our next House Representative because you were too busy studying to do a Google search?

Even if you aren't 18, it's a good idea to know who's representing you. Being a minor does not mean you don't matter! Encourage those who can to vote. Drive someone to the polls if they can't get there on their own. Do whatever you can, when you can. Every choice matters.

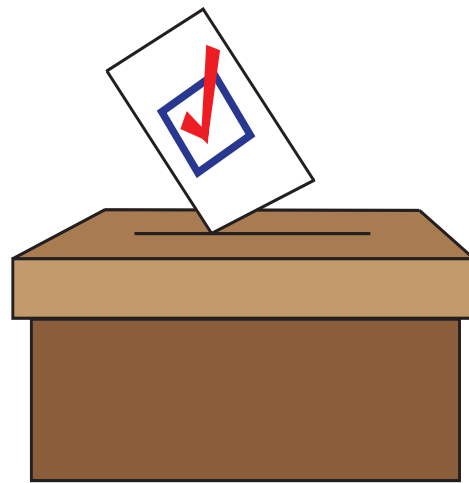
Of the 195 countries on this planet, the United States of America is one of 74 which are at least partially democratic, shows data from the 2022 Democracy Index report.

74 out of 195 countries. That's just below 40%. That number includes flawed democracies, democracies like our very own which discourage their own inhabitants from voting.

Not everyone in this world is allowed to have a voice. We are.

So don't throw yours away.

There are 365 days in a year, and we are asking you to use one of them to vote.



ART BY REBECCA PAZ

# Coaches largely influence athletes' motivation

by ben pyatt

It is inevitable that some athletes end up leaving their childhood sports as they get older. Some leave because of school, or disinterest, but more often than ever, it's because of a bad coaching experience.

Youth sports are becoming more and more competitive, meaning coaching isn't all fun and games. Coaches continue to take practices and games too seriously, demotivating players, and causing them to dread practices.

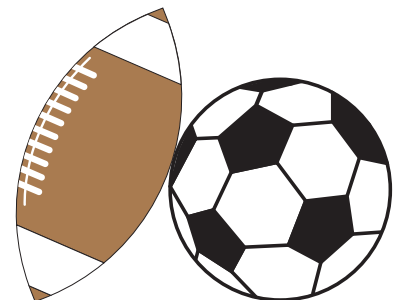
As a two sport athlete, playing sports my whole life, I have had countless coaches over the years. When I look back at the different sports I have played, I continue to notice that the years I enjoyed the most weren't because of how well the team did, it was because of what the coaching was like.

Having fun at practice is such an

important thing in keeping kids engaged, even at the high school level, attention spans are short and motivation is low. With coaches taking practices so seriously, attention levels drop and so does morale. Having occasional fun parts of practice or competitions that engages the team helps youth athletes enjoy the sport so much more.

Playing in games is the best and most efficient way to develop as a player, regardless of the level of play. When youth coaches deprive athletes of playing time, it not only demotivates players, but also deprives them of the easiest way to get better. This effectively gives them less and less of an opportunity to play. If a coach is hardly giving a player playing time, they are also not letting the player develop as much as the starters. This makes the coach even less inclined to play them, because they haven't developed as much as other players.

Youth coaches need to understand not all kids receive criticism the same way, some may take it as motivation to getting better, but others could take it as they aren't good enough to be playing for the coach. There is a very thin line between motivating athletes to play their best, and making them lose the will to play the game they've loved for years.



ART BY ELEANOR LIANG AND MILES FELICIANO

# Podcasters Discuss: Who is Jack Harlow?

• compiled by will blackburn, eleanor mcaden and rhea newnaha

Here's a snippet of the most recent *Rank&File* podcast. Follow along as seniors Reyna Berry, Will Blackburn and Eleanor McAden discuss teachers, Jack Harlow and Reyna's singing skills.

Starting from 11:48 of episode two

## Reyna:

From the science department, there's Jeremy Wade, who has worked at Marshall before but left for a bit and came back. Apparently, fun fact, everyone thinks that he looks like Jack Harlow, and also my math teacher, Mr. Fisher, says that Mr. Wade looks a lot like him.

## Eleanor:

Who then logically would also look like...

## Reyna and Eleanor:

...Jack Harlow.

## Eleanor:

I also have Mr. Fisher, and I do see the Jack Harlow.

## Reyna:

Yeah, I see more [Jack Harlow] in [Mr. Fisher] than Mr. Wade.

## Will:

We should bring them in and quiz them on Jack Harlow.

## Reyna and Eleanor:

Yes!

## Eleanor:

Mr. Fisher is a Jack Harlow type though.

## Reyna:

Oh, yes.

## Eleanor:

Do any of us really know concretely who Jack Harlow is? He's a musician. And... okay, he makes music.

## Will:

No way!

## Eleanor:

Honestly have any of us ever heard...

## Reyna:

...a Jack Harlow song?

## Will:

I would say lets play one, but I don't know if we can because of copyright.

## Reyna:

Yeah, we can sing it though.

## Eleanor:

Okay, next time. We promise that we'll learn the song.

## Reyna:

Oh, First class! Did you guys hear that? It like came out recently. It's like, *first class, into the sky*.

## Will:

Okay, sorry but I have not heard "First Class."

## Eleanor:

I just heard it, but I have not heard it from Jack Harlow.

## Reyna:

Okay, that was embarrassing.

## Eleanor:

No, that was good, Reyna.



For more content, check out our Podcast:



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