

rank&file



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Behind the instrument:
Four band kids discuss

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UVA STRONG

1 ★ 15 ★ 41



See "Recent UVA shooting gives rise to questions of school safety for college students, HS seniors" p. 8

BY KRISHNA GIRISH KUMAR

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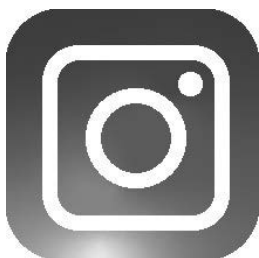
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Rank&File Podcast

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Letter from the Editor

Fifty people nationwide are killed and 1,100 are threatened with a gun daily according to the Center for American Progress. We've seen the nation bicker about several responses as shootings have continued, but all of these have been met with failure. Each new shooting poses the same question, where is the gun regulation? Shootings have occurred recently regardless of geography, from Colorado to Iowa and especially locally. The recent shooting at the University of Virginia brought together a school, city, state and nation, but solidarity does not go far enough. Devin Chandler, D'Sean Perry, Lavel Davis Jr. are three young adults who will never see their families again. Three young men who left their mark on the field, but also on their community. Tragedies like these continue to strike and the reform is minimal.

As we mourn the loss of these lives, it's important to remember the lasting effects that it has on UVA students and their relatives. In this issue, we felt the need to amplify the voices of those who have been affected by this event. Through a collection of experiences, *Rank&File* has profiled the perspectives of Marshall alumni, UVA siblings and a teacher with a daughter attending UVA.

Aitana Wells
Editor-In-Chief
Rank&File

Teacher charged on two counts of assault

by rhea newnaha

On Friday, Dec. 2, Fairfax County Police arrested and charged a Marshall special education teacher on two counts of assault.

Amy Bonzano was allegedly witnessed assaulting a student on Sept. 28 by a staff member who reported the assault. On Oct. 13, police were notified of the event and opened an investigation.

During an investigation into the school, another teacher reported witnessing a similar event involving

Bonzano and the student six months prior, but the event was never reported.

In a schoolwide email from Principal Jeff Litz on Dec. 2, Litz discussed the effect on the community.

"As educators, we are entrusted with the well-being of the children in our care every day," Litz said. "It deeply affects us when someone appears to have broken that trust."

He said the charged teacher was placed on administrative leave as well as the staff member who witnessed but did not report the previous incident.

"Please contact Fairfax County Police Major Crimes Bureau if you have any information you would like to share at 703-246-7800, option 4."

— Principal Litz in a schoolwide email

Students wonder whether mental health surveys are as necessary as county believes

by will blackburn and eleanor mcaden

Sophomores and seniors recently took the Fairfax County Public Schools Youth Survey, which aims to gain information about student wellbeing. Last year's data, available on the FCPS website, yielded the highest rates of depressive tendencies in a decade.

Though the Youth Survey is anonymous, students do take non-anonymous mental health surveys at the beginning and end of the school year. However, senior Lizzy Windt said giving parents and teachers access to student responses could be problematic.

"Students don't want their parents to know about what's going on with them mentally, especially teachers," Windt said. "It feels invasive, and they are scared something might happen to them if it gets out."

Windt said this fear of repercussions impacts how students answer.

"I think if you ask most people at the school, they probably lie," Windt said.

Sophomore Emerson Karimi agreed.

"When you're giving an honest answer, that could change the way that people see you, or it can change the way that you see yourself," Karimi said.

Karimi just took the Youth Survey, and said he suspects anonymous

surveys are not immune to untruthful responses either.

"Even for the anonymous surveys, it still feels kind of weird answering honestly, even if you know that no one is going to see it," Karimi said.

Due to this problem, Karimi said there could be discrepancies in the data FCPS collects from surveys like the Youth Survey.

"Without students being honest, they can't really get the help they would want or need."

- Senior Lizzy Windt

"I don't think that the results can be trusted too much because I feel like there is a good portion of people who are just not answering honestly," Karimi said.

Still, junior Jonathan Larkin said there could be some value in the information collected, even if it's limited.

"I imagine [students] are sort of just bending the truth," Larkin said. "Like, instead of saying that they have suicidal thoughts they are saying they have negative thoughts. So I think it still shows a negative direction in students' mental

health, but it's understated."

Windt said a lack of truthful answers prevents effective county response.

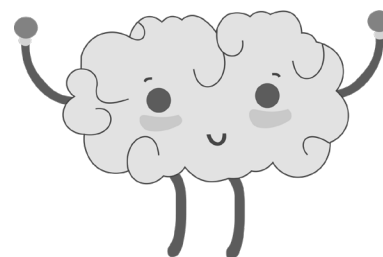
"Without students being honest, they can't really get the help they would want or need," Windt said.

Windt also said this help is needed due to the stress of academics at Marshall—and she urges staff to "take notes" on this issue.

"A lot of students feel like they need to do the IB Diploma or take a bunch of IB classes to succeed," Windt said. "That is causing a lot of stress, lack of sleep and mental health problems."

Last year, 38.1% of respondents claimed they felt sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row according to the FCPS website.

The results of this year's Youth Survey have not been released yet, and it is unclear whether the prevalence of depression will change this year.



ELEANOR MCADEN/RANK&FILE

SaulPaul speaks to 'Be the Change' at assembly

by rhea newnaha

Appearing on TEDx, Dancing with the Stars and even sporting a Grammy Award nomination consideration, musician SaulPaul spoke and sang to freshmen in an Advisory assembly.

On his "Be the Change" tour, consisting of 100 schools in 32 states, the artist

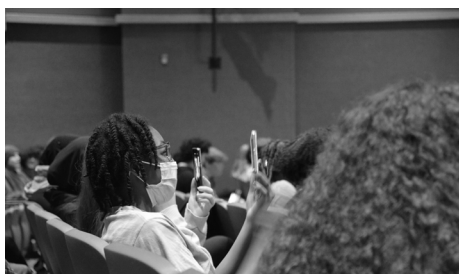


played music and spoke of his own life experiences in hopes of getting his message across. The artist had one goal: inspire students to change the world they live in for the better.

"Though I didn't have much growing up, my grandmother taught me that as long as you have something, you have something to give," SaulPaul said. "Whether it's time, talent or treasure, I

saw my grandmother do the most with the least, and that's what I'm sharing while I'm on tour."

Systems of Support Adviser Kathleen Sokolove said the school won a lottery to have SaulPaul speak to students. At the beginning of the year, a counselor heard about the opportunity when the artist presented at the back-to-school



conference for FCPS School Counselors.

"SaulPaul's positive message about being a positive force for change and being a leader in your life seemed ideal for ninth graders who will help to shape the Marshall community over the next four years," Sokolove said.

Freshman Simon Rodham said the event was a fun alternative to the assemblies the school has had in the past.

"The assembly went well," Rodham said. "It was fun, and Saul was chill."

Freshman Layla Mohran agreed.

"He was fun, and he had a good, non-boring story," Mohran said.

SaulPaul said he believes his message is even more resonant because of the time we are all currently living in right now.



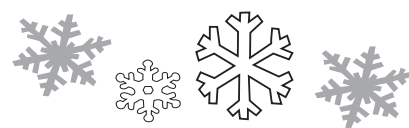
RHEA NEWNAHA/RANK&FILE

Grammy nomination considered SaulPaul freestyled in auditorium at a freshman assembly during Advisory.

"We may all live on the same planet, but we each live in our own world," SaulPaul said. "My encouragement to my audience is for everyone to be the change in the world they live in."



Winter Spirit Days



Monday 1/9

Blizzard
(Whiteout)



"I hope that the spirit days help unify the students, and it's a fun and festive way of celebrating the winter season."

— Leadership student and sophomore Eliina Seaman

Friday 1/13

Flannel Friday



Tuesday 1/10

Mountain Trip
(Ski and winter gear)



Wednesday 1/11

PJ Day



Thursday 1/12

Winter Sports
Jerseys



● compiled by maddie bishop, sophie hauber and re-

Final Fall Sports Review

Volleyball

Volleyball finished the season 18-7. They placed second in the district, third in the region, losing to the region champions on the regional semifinals.

Football

Football finished the season 3-7. After winning their last two district games, they ranked fifth place in the district.

Field Hockey

Field hockey finished the season 7-6. They gained playoff birth but lost in the quarterfinals, ending the season fourth in the district.

Cross Country

Boys cross country finished first in the district, went to regionals and placed fourth. Girls cross country finished off sixth in the district.

Cheer

Cheer ended the season fifth in the district.

Golf

Golf ended the season 5-2 in district matches. They finished fourth at district tournament.

Winter Sports Update

Gymnastics

11/28 meet at Marshall placed third
12/6 meet at Mclean placed second

Wrestling

First duel 12/14 @ Madison

Girls Basketball

11/29 L 42-53 @ Madison
12/7 W 37-34 vs. Justice

Boys Basketball

11/29 W 46-45 @ Madison
12/2 L 43-49 vs. Colgan
12/3 W 65-32 vs. Unity Reed

Swim & Dive

12/2 vs. Langley @ Providence
Girls placed first
Boys placed second

Winter Track

First meet 12/3 @ Marshall
Girls placed sixth
Boys placed fourth

● compiled by ben pyatt and aitana wells

Athletes of the Month

Cayley Sullivan, Senior
Varsity Field Hockey



PHOTO BY JIM HALLING OF DL ACTION SPORTS

"Playing at Marshall is different than playing elsewhere because of the people. Coach Kiki makes playing a fun environment, but also a competitive one where we still practice for games."

Seth Oliver, Senior
Boys Varsity Track



COURTESY OF SETH OLIVER

"I started running because it was a way to do what my father was doing, and I saw progress. It just stuck with me. Seeing my name on the electronic board outside Marshall isn't bad."

Boys basketball trains to exceed high expectations

by ben pyatt and julius schmidt

Last season, boys basketball took a run to the State Quarterfinals while gaining a cult-like following of fans within the school. After the success of last year, the student community continues to have high expectations for the team this year.

Senior and varsity basketball player Cam Jones made the move to Virginia from Arkansas prior to his junior year, but immediately found a home in the boys program.

"I think it was a good season," Jones said. "I'm not from this area so it was a good experience to get into the

culture and learn how things go," Jones said.

Offseason work is a part of what goes into the team's success and for the team. This summer has been no exception. The team has prepared themselves for the season by aiming to be successful both athletically and academically.

"Working hard in the weightroom, on the court, in the classroom, all that stuff," junior and varsity guard Jason Penn said.

Last season, injuries and sickness plagued the beginning of the year. This year, they are looking to start the season strong.

"We're all going to get back healthy before the season starts and kick it off



EMMA MOBLEY/RANK&FILE

Sophomore Anderson Krisko goes for a layup at practice.

against Madison," Jones said.

With a returning core team, the program knows the importance of collaboration and playing together.

"I feel like [winning] is the same as losing as a team. It's doing it together and using everybody what they're

good for, working as a cohesive unit," Jones said.

With an early win in the rivalry matchup against Madison the team starts out the season on a positive note.

"I just know we're gonna have a good season. We've got a really good team," Penn said.

Rank&Roundtable: Girls Wrestling Sit-Down

What do you think is the most important thing in getting recognition?

Senior Oriana Piazza - If people never realize we're actually doing it and we're doing well in it, then we won't have more interest and won't do better. People want to join a winning team, fully recognizing the fact that we do well and get no credit for it.

Senior Sophie Mazhari - Last year, I placed third in the state girls tournament. At the winter sports ceremony, all the boys had their names and where they placed in the state. They didn't include any of the girls state placements, though me and one other girl both placed.

Sophomore Ava Wise - That's definitely a big way to promote girls wrestling by showing that it actually matters and there are actually girls doing it that are good.

Mazhari - Throughout the years, there have been like a couple more girls tournaments. This year specifically has been a particular big year for women's wrestling, but we are hopefully being given more tournament opportunities.

Seniors, what are your roles in influencing girls to join the program?

Mazhari - I tell people that it can be scary to start something new and something that you know might be unconventional for some girls. It kind of changed my life in a way where I've been able to shine through and show my talents in a different sport. Compared to maybe soccer, this is a sport that is not entirely female dominated. But it is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States, and to be a part of that is pretty cool.

Piazza - From my perspective, I've seen a lot more younger kids get involved. When we first joined there [were] three of us. Girls wrestling is getting more cemented into sports every single year. Before there had been gap years where no new girls joined the team, but now I think we're finally getting to the age where it's becoming more socially acceptable for girls to wrestle and everything that comes along with it. I think girls tournaments are also gonna become a lot more popular.

● compiled by marie kah and julius schmidt

Recent UVA shooting gives rise to questions of school safety for college students, HS seniors

by **rachel ackerman, rhea newnaha and aitana wells**

At 7 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 14, senior Ava Grim frantically spams her sister. She's met with silence. Grim quickly checks her sister's location to find she's sleeping safe and sound in her dorm. She's relieved—but the initial shock was frightening.

The day before, Christopher Jones Jr. killed three students and wounded two at the University of Virginia. The students were on a bus back from a class field trip for their African American playwrights class. The three deceased, Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr. and D'Sean Perry, were members of the school's football team.

Grim said her UVA sophomore sister fell asleep at 8 p.m. the day of the shooting, unaware of the chaos at her school and the fear of her family. Like all other parents of UVA students, Isabella Grim's family was informed of the shooting via email.

"She just woke up to her school in lockdown," Grim said. "She had an interview in the morning and was stressed about studying for it. So originally, she was like 'Oh, I get more time to study for my interview,' before she realized how serious the situation was."

UVA freshman and Marshall alumnus Krishna Girish Kumar said he was on his way back to his dorm when he saw a fire truck racing past him.

"I get into my dorm and then, like five to 10 minutes later, I get the alert that there was a shooting and we were ordered to shelter in place

after that," Girish Kumar said.

Another UVA freshman and Marshall alumna, Elin Yim, said she was especially worried for her friends who had to take shelter in libraries and gyms once the order was put in place.

"I feel like living on campus intensifies the need to protect schools and make them a safe space," Yim said. "At the end of the day, students aren't going to leave campus because campus is their home."



PHOTO BY KRISHNA GIRISH KUMAR

UVA held annual Lighting of the Lawn ceremony, an event originally created to unite the student body, in honor of the students who were killed during the shooting on Nov. 13.

Since the shooting took place close to Thanksgiving break, Yim said most students chose to leave early for home.

"Campus was eerily silent and isolating on the days following the shooting," she said. "I barely saw anyone walking to classes or at the dining halls because most people seized the opportunity to go back home and distance themselves from UVA for their mental health."

Senior Téa Murphy, who has a sibling at the school, said she found out about the incident the next morning.

"It was very unsettling to

hear," Murphy said. "I felt very scared for my sister because I know that it can be scary to already be in a new place and now in a place where you don't feel safe."

Murphy said she applied to UVA and that the incident would not influence her decision to attend. She said she believes the shooting was tied to violence in general and not the school itself.

Math teacher Nevine Spicer, whose daughter attends UVA, said she agrees

Grim said she has heard of other recent shootings. One shooting was in D.C., close to her soccer teammates' school.

"I think the UVA school shooting was more publicized because it was the football team that drew a lot of press," Grim said. "One other school started posting about it and created support through the football community. That made it more publicized than a school in D.C."

Girish Kumar said despite the tragedy on campus, the UVA community came together to mourn its loss.

"It's so unfortunate that it was the shooting that brought us all together, but it really showed me how together the community is here at UVA," Girish Kumar said.

He said he thinks the university is doing a good job at acknowledging what happened.

"We did Lighting up the Lawn, which we do every year, but this year, it was specifically in honor of the three football players that, unfortunately, passed away because of the shooting," Girish Kumar said.

Yim said there were other opportunities for students to grieve and feel supported, including vigils for the students who passed, therapy dogs and a new grading policy to alleviate end-of-semester stress.

Girish Kumar said the impact of the shooting will be part of UVA's memory, especially for the freshmen.

"It's such a hard memory to keep, but I don't think anyone will ever get over what happened, no matter how normal we go back to," he said.

Forum invites student opinions

by maddie bishop and rebecca paz

In order to create a better environment for students, Fairfax County Public Schools conducts strategic plan surveys every few years to determine their goals.

This year, in conjunction with the survey, Principal Jeff Litz set up meetings with students to hear about their experiences at school. Some of the meetings were canceled due to conflicts in Litz's schedule, but others still occurred.

"We principals were directed to hold these focus groups with at least 20 of our students," Litz said. "I've done at this point closer to 40 or 45."

Litz said he commonly asks students what they feel is going well in their educational experience, what the school could be doing better and one wish they had in regards to their education.

After one of his teacher's recommended it, senior Seth Oliver decided to sign up and share his perspective.

"The one thing that I hoped to get out of it was to just tell them that this school still has flaws," Oliver said. "Administrators need to pick up on it really, because there are some behaviors and actions that are not good."

Junior Romeo Canes said he had a few things he wanted to discuss.

"I wanted to talk about social issues in our school, [and] why certain things shouldn't be joked about," Canes said.

Senior Ally Jimenez said her goal when signing up for the meeting amplify the concerns of herself and others.

"I feel like a lot of students voice their concerns and don't really get heard," Jimenez said.

She also said she wanted to address flawed communication among teachers.

"The majority of the teachers have piled on a lot of tests at the same time," Jimenez said.

However, Jimenez was unable to meet with Litz due to a cancellation.

"I was kind of disappointed, because I feel like it was important to the students at least," Jimenez said.

Litz said he thinks it is important to meet with students face-to-face. He also said he plans to announce monthly meetings, called student voice groups, in order to hear perspectives from more students on a regular basis.

"Kids [could] sign up probably 20 to 30 at a time during LEARN and just come meet with me and tell me whatever they want to tell me," Litz said.

Oliver said there are pros and cons that come with both in-person conversations and online surveys.



ART BY REBECCA PAZ

"In person, you're going to get a live reaction to how people feel, and you're going to see their facial expressions," Oliver said. "But online, you'll get a more honest opinion because they're not going to be speaking to someone within power."

Litz said he hopes to make positive changes around the school by taking student feedback into consideration.

"When I was in high school, no one really ever asked me what I thought about school," Litz said. "I very much believe as the principal and the leader of this small city, that it's important that I stay focused on how we can become better, while also celebrating what kids think we do really well."

Wave of sickness causes stress, missed work for student body

by mona farah, maha jiwani and eleanor liang

In the past month, over 12700 student and teacher absences have been reported, according to administrative assistant Maribel Sanchez.

"It takes more time for students to learn," Sanchez said. "Students get behind, and it's so hard to keep up with homework."

Sophomore Katherine Shatokhin agreed.

"There was a lot of work that I missed, especially in math and in chemistry, because those are my toughest classes," Shatokhin said.

Some teachers have also

noticed the recent influx of student absences.

Diane Clark, who teaches Advanced Chemistry 1 and IB Chemistry 2 HL, said low attendance pushes not only students, but also teachers to put in extra work.

"It requires a lot of outside time to get the students back up to speed on what they missed," she said.

Clark also said that learning missed content at home can be harder than learning in school.

"They definitely miss the nuances of the content that you usually get while sitting in class, as well as the extra practice that you usually get

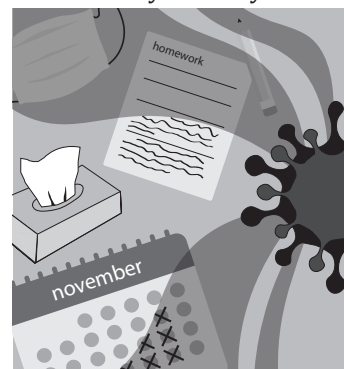
sitting in class with the teacher there to help catch mistakes immediately," she said.

December also marks the start of winter sports and holiday arts performances. For orchestra director Catherine Bond, sickness can play a detrimental role for musicians.

"Students missing rehearsal makes it difficult because then the students have missed things that we might have rehearsed [like] cleaning up rhythms, changing bowings, and getting the ensemble part learned," Bond said.

Bond said she advises sick students to stay home and rest.

"Unfortunately, in a music ensemble, when you miss a performance, you miss a performance," she said. "But you know, it is what it is. Get lots of rest, drink plenty of good water, eat healthy. Just take care of your body."



ART BY MAHA JIWANI & ELEANOR LIANG

"It's Called Soccer"

Students share their thoughts as they support a myriad of countries in the FIFA World Cup hosted by Qatar

- compiled by rebecca paz, rhea newnaha, aitana wells and rishi vanka

"I was definitely disappointed when they were eliminated; however, I still feel a sense of pride concerning how they played."

- Junior Emma Heren on Germany

"No comment."

- Sophomore Sara Elliot on Costa Rica's 7-0 loss to Spain

"I have recently become a fan of fútbol, but my family has always been a fan of it. I think they have been doing great so far, except for that one loss against Saudi Arabia."

- Junior Valentin Galas on Argentina

"Seeing them play in the World Cup along with other West African nations such as Cameroon and Senegal is great to see."

- Junior Zoe Jones on Ghana



"They beat Argentina. Last game, they didn't win. It was a huge disappointment. But if I was coaching, they would have won."

- Senior Mohammed Alshubaily
on Saudi Arabia

"I've always loved how Mexico comes together to genuinely love our team. It's hard not to want to love them too."

- Senior Ally Jimenez on Mexico

"They are doing so good considering the fact that they got placed in the group of death and beat Germany."

- Senior Masato Terao
on Japan

"My dad and are whole family is from Croatia; I also have citizenship there. They weren't playing their best in their one match so far, but they won the friendly match, so I think they'll pull it together."

- Senior Sophia Reskusic on Croatia

"I used to live in Qatar. I think it's really cool that they're able to host it because it shows a different side of the Middle East, not just what everyone perceives it as. The World Cup is all about the countries, and I think it's important to have different countries and different cultures host."

- Sophomore Ayah Qutub on Qatar

Behind the instrument: Four band kids discuss

• compiled by melanie george



Drum major, senior Pasha Ryutov

"I'd say, for me, I didn't really have a lot to connect with other people. And so music in particular was kind of like one big social point for me. It allowed me to connect with some of my best friends. Entering ninth grade, I was really nervous initially, but the community is just so amazing. We're all super nice to each other. We'll make mean jokes, but it's always light-hearted and fun."



Color guard, junior Romeo Canes

"I remember during band camp, our coach [Alex Stenseth] encouraged us to make friends with the band kids. She was like, you have to make friends with at least one person a day. You have to tell me about them because these people are going to be your biggest supporters. And she was right."



Flutist, junior Diana Colón

"[Marching band is] sort of like the dog sitting in a burning building while saying 'this is fine,' but like in a good way. So it's kind of chaotic, but it's the good kind of chaotic because like you can be chaotic and everyone else is chaotic. And you sort of fit in."



Clarinetist, sophomore Sean Alfaro

"I think a lot of people don't realize that being a band kid or being whatever we want to say, isn't all just about playing your instruments, and trying to be the best. A lot of people think it's like, 'Oh, first chair, I want to be really good and do the best I can.' But I think a lot of it is that going to marching band competitions and practices and rehearsals are just so fun, because it's the same people every day and it's just so much time put into it that I feel like [I have known] these people for so long."

ART COURTESY OF ROMEO CANES, DIANA COLÓN & SEAN ALFARO

Table Talk: Gabi Kondé

Clarinetist by day, Spider-Man by night, sophomore Gabi Kondé comments on her costumed role in marching band show

• compiled by melanie george



COURTESY OF GABI KONDÉ

What led to your role as Spider-Man in the performance?

I do gymnastics and I've had to miss a bunch of band for it. One day, [band director Paul Vesilind] was just like, "Hey, do you want to just do some gymnastics in the show?" So I was like, "Sure." I would just go to the front and do a couple back handsprings. And then we were talking about it, and he was like, "Wouldn't it be so cool if you were just Spider-Man?" So he ordered a costume, and then it just evolved from there.

How did the quick-change work?

I only have 30 seconds to change, and normally it takes me a lot more than that. [The Band Parents Organization] made my jacket Velcro, so instead of having someone else zip, unzip it, or whatever, I can just rip it off.

Why are effects like this important for a show?

In recent years, marching band has become less about who can march the cleanest. Now it's like, who has the coolest show? And when we chose Spider-Man as the theme, you kind of have to go all in, especially with the competition we're going up against. We wanted to stand out.

Marching band earns top marks on two fronts with morale, tech advancements

by melanie george

On Oct. 8, Statesmen Marching Band took first place in the Oakton Classic competition, winning superiors in every category in their assessment two weeks later.

In addition to motivated members, band director Paul Vesilind said improvement in the team's technical effects influenced their scoring.

"We took a really big step up from last year in performance, execution and value," Vesilind said. "And even the show itself was a little more advanced and had more elements to it."

Vesilind said marching shows are always a challenge.

"Marching band has so many elements between the sound and the visuals, and it's always difficult to get a good marching band show on the field," he said.

With a Spider-Man theme, some elements included web-themed drill or choreography, platforms representing skyscrapers, a web sheet and their very own Spider-Man doing back handsprings across the field.

"I think I've been in the marching band with my kids for nine years," Band Parents Organization

President Rose-Ellen Eastman said. "This is one of my top three favorite shows," Eastman said the pandemic decreased the size of the band but provided a new enthusiasm to play.

"Coming off of the pandemic, some of these kids hadn't played in a group for a while," she said. "They learned the motions really quickly. They were just super motivated."

Drum major and senior Pasha Ryutov said for the second season after COVID-19 it went well, but that there could always be improvements.

"Considering our circumstances, it was an amazing season," Ryutov said. "The most important thing is that we taught our rookies how to launch. My biggest point is that this season is kind of the best preparation for underclassmen for the next season."

Last year, the band was one point away from a superior rating in their assessment.

"While we were putting a lot of effort in, it wasn't as focused and dedicated," Ryutov said. "It was really frustrating because we put in all this work, and we just didn't

get the best thing that we could have done."

The assessment ratings come from the Virginia Band Orchestra Directors Association. If the marching band earns superior again in the spring, they will be titled a Virginia Honor Band for the first time in years.

"It'd be nice to do that again this year," Vesilind said.

However, Vesilind said his focus for the band is not necessarily on the trophies and awards.

"If you do that, you know you're setting yourself up for disappointment," he said. "It's really more about the camaraderie and the pride in the work that we're doing and how far we've gotten in the execution."

Ryutov said although some "band kid" stereotypes are true, he said it is different from other extracurriculars.

"Being a 'band kid' is like one of the most fun



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ART BY MELANIE GEORGE
& JULIUS SCHMIDT



Eras Tour Presale (*rank&file's* version)

Ticketmaster's presale servers couldn't handle tickets demand

by sophie hauber and emma mobley

Maybe the presale got lost in translation, maybe fans asked for too much, but maybe this tour was a masterpiece 'til Ticketmaster tore it all up.

"Unprecedented demand" were the words that blared on fans screens after sitting in the Verified Fan Presale for hours. Taylor Swift's Eras Tour shattered records of ticket sales, but some fans still weren't able to secure tickets. Students and staff attempted to get tour tickets. Ever since becoming a "Swiftie" in fourth grade, sophomore Nia Gouvis said she was excited to see Swift's Eras Tour.

"I was really excited about her tour because she hasn't been in concert since Reputation, and I really wanted to go," Gouvis said.

The Eras tour will be Swift's first tour since 2018. Since then, she's released four new albums and two re-recorded albums with dozens of brand new songs. This tour comes only a few months after her record-shattering *Midnights* album.

"Midnights is a solid album, but I think Red is one of her best works," Honors Algebra 2 and IB Computer Science teacher Steven Willmore said. "This tour would've been my first time seeing her."

Junior Ava Mentzer went to a previous concert and was excited for an opportunity to see Swift again.

"I really liked the 1989 tour," Mentzer said. "It was one of my favorite days ever in the world. When she announced her tour, I knew I had to go again."

In order to be eligible for the Verified Fan presale, fans who wanted tickets had to wait in long lines on Ticketmaster to register. Once registered, some fans were sent codes the night before presale began, but others weren't so lucky.

"I [signed up] for presale, and I was one of the only ones who didn't get an email back," Gouvis said.

Willmore was able to get around the Verified Fan presale by using his Capital One card. The Capital One presale was scheduled a few hours after the Verified Fan presale. This allowed Willmore to get further in the process than Gouvis.

"I was able to try to [get tickets]," Willmore said. "It froze, so I had to come [to my classroom], and I thought I would try again, and I couldn't get on."

Mentzer was one of the fans who were able to get tickets during the presale.

"I've been a fan since I was five, and I was so excited that I started crying."

Mentzer and her friends opened the presale on four different devices in hopes one would load fast enough for tickets. Three never got out of the queue, but the fourth only took five minutes.

"I was able to get a presale code and got tickets for night three in Philadelphia," Mentzer said. "I got front row floor tickets and spent a little over 1,000 dollars per ticket after fees."

Although she received tickets, she didn't think the process was fair.

"There's a lot of people who didn't get tickets even when they had presale codes," Mentzer said. "I feel like people who had to get refunds for her last tour because of COVID-19 probably should have gotten priority. And that didn't happen."

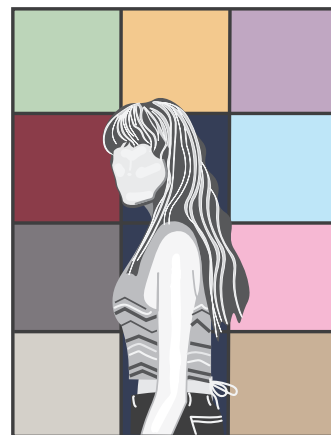
Willmore agreed that the process was not fair.

"The resale prices are unbelievable," Willmore said. "They canceled the general sale, and I think that's complete bogus. I missed out during the presale, so it would've been nice to get in general sale," Mentzer said.

One day after Ticketmaster canceled the general sale, Swift released a statement apologizing to fans who were unable to get tickets.

"She's an artist of the people," Willmore said. "She really cares about her fans and wanted them at shows. She was very upset, we're all upset."

For the fans who got tickets, one thing for sure, they'll remember it all too well.



TAYLOR SWIFT
THE ERAS TOUR

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Select students participate in Senior Regional Orchestra

● compiled by rhea newnaha and aitana wells



"I used to get stressed when playing, but...because I went to Governor's school in the summer for music, it really did change my perspective about playing music. I think when I first started in first grade, I was just forced by my parents. An eight-year-old kid is not gonna be like 'I want to play the violin.' But now I'm like, 'I actually want to play it.'"

—Senior Eujin Lee

The Senior Regional Orchestra is a full orchestra ensemble in which membership is determined through auditions in September. The orchestra rehearses for three days before performing one concert in November. *Rank&File* talked to these students who placed in the top 20 of the Northern Region.



"Sometimes when my household is too hectic, I'll play music on the piano or violin and play music and then I feel way better...I've been able to make a lot of friends through music. Music is the main center of my life."

—Sophomore Zabrina Lee



"I didn't make it my first three years of high school, and so that was always like, not an insecurity necessarily, but more like, 'do I deserve to do well in school and get the chair that I have,' so it was very validating to actually make it."

—Senior Sophia Lee

Piece by piece: students build the community through puzzle pieces, a LEGO station under way

by virgil dongre and melanie george

Scenes of banned books and Starry nights fit together every day as students work on the library's daily puzzles. However, puzzles are no longer the only avenue of entertainment in the library.

Librarian Elizabeth Toledo said the library released a call for LEGO donations, and for the last couple weeks the librarians have received some free-form blocks and kits for students to use.

"If any students want to come and share their ideas, just come in and tell us you're interested," she said.

Toledo said relaxing

activities have shown to be beneficial for students in the past. In fact, sophomore Isabella Tran said she has enjoyed building puzzles.

"I work on them whenever I'm bored," Tran said. "The fact that they're in the library makes it even better because I frequent the library a lot, so I can do the puzzle whenever I want to."

Senior Jordan Lee agreed.

"Having puzzles in the library gives students a way to do something fun before school starts," Lee said.

Aside from its recreational nature, junior Zoe Mazur highlighted the therapeutic qualities of puzzling.

"While working on it, I



MELANIE GEORGE/RANK&FILE

Students work on the glow-in-the-dark puzzle on Nov. 15.

can choose to focus solely on the puzzle and not think about my stressors for a little bit, or I can choose to let my mind wander," Mazur said.

Mazur works on the puzzle about three times a week and said they loved seeing the progress made in their absence.

"I love the unspoken, anonymous community of puzzle-people," Mazur said. "It's like writing messages in the sand."

Toledo said she hoped the LEGOs will continue to improve the recreational aspects of the library.

Review

Reyna "& Juliet":

A Broadway hit takes humor and queer joy center stage

by reyna berry

What would Juliet's life look like if she didn't die for Romeo?

Broadway's new performance of the 2019 hit "& Juliet" aims to answer this question with iconic pop songs and fun new twists on the classic story. The musical also features queer characters—none of whom are demonized or end up dead, a rare and inspiring instance in the "progressive" world of Broadway.

I was slightly anxious going into it. Would the show use outdated slang? Try to relate to Gen Z with half-hearted references to gender diversity?

Then, we were sitting in the theater, and the lights came up on the bright purple set and it was beautiful. There was something about the glowing set, the curl of the J hanging, prominent and proud at center—that gave me hope.

In the show Juliet (Rachel

On Nov. 19, theatre students traveled to NYC to watch two Broadway shows, including "& Juliet."

View full story on gcmnews.net

Webb) has a best friend named May, played by Justin David Sullivan. This was the key to "& Juliet," the reason it flew instead of flopped.

When May sings their first solo song, "I'm Not A Girl... Not Yet A Woman" by Britney Spears, as a way of expressing their journey with gender, it's not meaningless pop. Probably, it never was.

Queerness in "& Juliet" is not the butt of the joke or a lesson in pain. May's life is chaotic, but joyous. And their gender isn't the only focus of their character, either. May is sweet, kind and a wonderful friend. Being queer is not their purpose, just part of who they are.

The magic of "& Juliet" for me lay in



ART BY RISHI VANKA.

ORIGINAL SOURCE: "& JULIET" SET DESIGN. (ADAPTED VIA FAIR USE.)

its joy. When François Du Bois (Philippe Arroyo) kissed May in the first happy depiction of a queer couple I had ever seen on a Broadway stage, I looked over and saw my two friends (who happen to be a beautiful queer couple of their own) grin and whisper to themselves, "That's us!"

It's beautiful. It's silly and hilarious and wacky and profound and just beautiful. On the bus ride back to Virginia, everyone was smiling.

And that's what it's all about, right? The play, the theatre, the world. Juliet gets to smile. May gets to smile.

We all deserve a little neon-lit joy.

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Editorial: Mental health surveys provide insight on student wellbeing and necessary support

For some people, mental health surveys are a lifeline. Especially the non-anonymous ones.

If someone is suffering from conditions like depression, reaching out can feel impossible.

Asking for help from a dark place requires vulnerability, honesty and confidence. Most importantly, it requires you to realize what you are grappling with and admit to yourself that you cannot tackle it alone.

The truth is, hesitations often result in people never reaching out. Seeking assistance proves especially difficult in a culture entrenched with a sense of self-reliance and lingering stigma around mental health; the U.S. has some of the highest suicide rates among wealthy nations according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Attitudes towards masculinity create another barrier, with men committing suicide nearly four times the amount women did in 2020.

Non-anonymous mental health surveys provide a unique solution to any hesitancy you may be feeling: it flags certain responses and informs your parents without your consent. Although certainly invasive, this forum has the potential to save lives.

No one is standing behind you forcing you to be honest, it comes down to personal choice if you tell the truth or not. For people who aren't ready to discuss mental health with their family, it's easy to avoid.

For people who desperately need help but don't have it in them to ask, it's an indispensable resource. It allows a third party to step in and inform your family without you having to take the step yourself.

In some cases, people do reach out and receive disbelief, disrespect or ambivalence from their parents or guardians. Having the school step in can demonstrate to these parents that there is a legitimate problem which needs

dealing with.

Some questions seemed redundant or unrelated. Especially in younger grades, including middle schoolers, these questions can feel absurd.

We get that 173 questions in a row can feel draining especially when some questions have such heavy subject matter. The truth is, as students age, they need to learn from experiences that these questions ask about.

With all that being said, yes, people lying on mental health surveys definitely impacts the data gathered on the responses. However, the surveys also provide people with an outlet to ask for help without ever asking, and it's help that could save lives if the proper steps are taken afterwards.

Even if we don't see the effects immediately, the surveys do hold merit, and they are essential to get some sort of message across.

The holiday spirit is more than just Christmas

by rachel ackerman

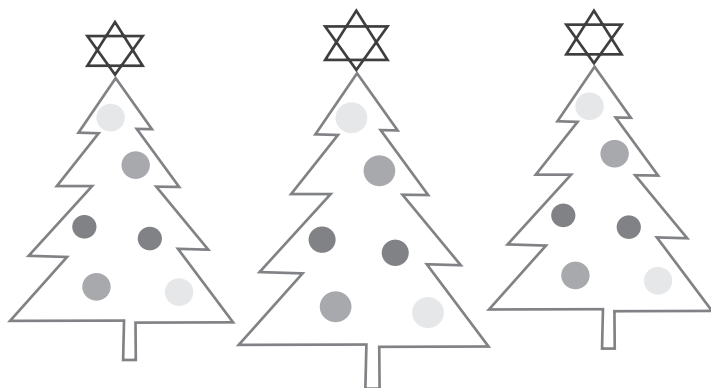
There is nothing Christmassy about dashing through snow. Heck, I probably know more Mariah Carey songs than the average person. So why does the holiday spirit always show up in the shadows of a big Christmas tree?

I acknowledge that the majority of this country celebrates Christmas, so naturally it would be a focus. However, it makes me, an individual who celebrates a different holiday, feel unrecognized. For example, there have been multiple occasions where after an encounter with someone, I am wished a Merry Christmas. Now it doesn't bother me as much, but when I was younger, it was infuriating. Why should someone

assume I celebrate a certain holiday?

During December, many streaming services recommend playlists titled "Holiday Mix" or "Greatest Holiday Hits," not one mentions a song about Hanukkah. How is it a holiday playlist if only one holiday is included? Many popular Christmas tunes were written by those who didn't actually celebrate. For example, "Rudolph The Red-nosed Reindeer" was written by Johnny Marks, who identified as Jewish. Now, I definitely don't blame them, that shiny-nosed reindeer makes one heck of a good song, but it makes me question why he would write about another holiday.

A couple of years ago, I came to a revelation that the Holiday Spirit encapsulated



ART BY RACHEL ACKERMAN

more than just the celebration of holidays, but also feelings. The positivity that radiates in the air is unmistakable. Kindling it unites us, and for me, that's the most important part of the season. That's why I love the songs that are universally about the season like, "Winter Wonderland"—by the way written by a Jew—that focus on something

everyone can relate to. Listening to upbeat music like this boosts my mood and is easy for me to identify with. To me, more songs like these should be made.

My halls may not be decked with lights and a Christmas tree, but they are decked with the exuberant energy of the holidays, and lots of holiday spirit.

Mass shooters and the mentally ill are not the same

by virgil dongre

This March, the Washington Post discovered that around 3,500 mass shootings have occurred since the Sandy Hook shooting.

By the time you've read this, the 10-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook shooting will likely have passed on Dec. 14.

From the date Sandy Hook happened to its 10-year anniversary this year, 3,653 days have passed, meaning an average of 0.96 mass shootings per day have happened since Sandy Hook.

Mass shootings have occurred nearly daily for 10 years.

And each time, instead of supporting the victims, or having a robust debate, I see people begin to blame.

School resource officers aren't doing their "jobs," some say, as if stopping a mass shooter is now a mere occupation hazard. Teachers should be armed, they say, with the same conclusion. Blame a lack of security measures in schools, ignoring how the Uvalde, Texas shooting had most of the county's cops inside the building during the shooting, and they all did nothing.

I remember a couple of years ago seeing a man on a news channel commenting on the most recent shooting at the time at some school. The man was advocating for stronger mental health awareness and treatment methods.

I remember him stating, without qualms, that whoever would shoot up a school was "sick."

But are they?

I asked myself a question after hearing that: are mental illnesses forcing their victims to act without morals?

Of course not.

Someone with bipolar disorder is not more violent than a non-diagnosed person, because bipolar disorder causes mood swings between mania and depression, and symptoms don't include violent behavior, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Someone with schizophrenia often experiences hallucinations, delusions and disorganized thought and speech patterns (depending on the type of schizophrenia they are diagnosed with), but are not prone to violent outbursts nor are more violent, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Even people with sociopathy or psychopathy do not show increased levels of amoral behavior as compared to non-psychopaths, according to studies. Psychopaths can distinguish between right and wrong, and often flaunt those rules to pursue their own interests; but even then, psychopaths only make up 15-20% of the U.S. prison population, according to a study cited by the FBI.

I could continue detailing mental illnesses and how violence and criminal behavior is not linked to them, but suffice to say mentally ill people are not more or less violent than anyone else. Violence is linked to social, environmental, and "contextual factors," more than mental illness, according to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

I cannot imagine a mass shooter being a healthy person, but equally I cannot imagine illness as the reason for their disregard towards human life.

Their actions may be abhorrent to any reasonable person (which they are), but that makes mass shooters bad people, not sick people.

People do bad things not because they are "sick," or unable to tell the difference between right and wrong, but because they think it is necessary. That is not evidence of a "sick" person, or a mentally ill person, but instead a normal person, driven to doing wrong via a variety of factors.

Some of the worst atrocities were justified by their "necessity," and that excuse extends to our shooters. The shooter in Dayton, Ohio justified his murders with a letter, which used far-right rhetoric against immigrants and non-white people as an excuse for him to commit violence.

But it's harder to dissect all the social and political factors that influenced his violence, or reflect on the difficulty of passing gun regulations, or lower rates of bullying and abuse in children nationwide, than it is to blame mental illness.

So it's no wonder why mental illness is always the focus after mass shootings; it is the phantom issue, the factor not involved in violence, that people can safely demonize without remorse.

Simply put, like with almost all of the origins for hurtful mental health representation, it just makes better television.

According to a study published in the Wiley Online Library:

- 80.7% of firearm shooters were not diagnosed with psychosis at time of shooting
- 68% of non-firearm shooters were also not diagnosed
- 45.6% of mass murder "incidents" ended with the shooter dying by suicide
- 66.7% of perpetrators involving academic settings are primarily Caucasian

Study written by Ragy R. Girgis MD, Russell Tyler Rogers MA, Hannah Hesson BA, Jeffrey A. Lieberman MD, Paul S. Appelbaum MD, Gary Brucato PhD

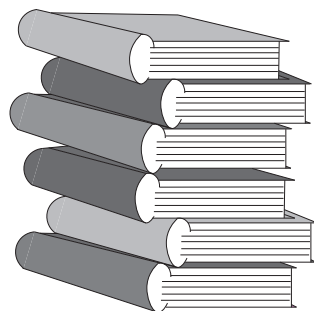
Are IB students destined to be consumed by academics?

by esther lee

Each school year a new grade of 11th graders rise up to the challenge to complete the IB Diploma.

For some that challenge starts earlier than others through their ability to take IB science classes as a sophomore. Though many choose the path of IB, either through pursuing the full IB Diploma or taking many IB courses, not all are actually ready for it. Regardless of previous academic success in past rigorous courses, the time and dedication required to be successful in rigorous courses like IB is all too real and may pose a real challenge to some.

Talking to my friends, most of whom are pursuing the full IB Diploma, it seems as



ART BY REBECCA PAZ

though most are equipped with the ability to sustain themselves running on much less than the recommended hours of sleep a night. With many of them reporting numbers

as low as two and as high as five. I was left to wonder if school really was as taxing for other students as for them. I see this pattern in junior students as well, old habits should die hard, but instead they rinse and repeat. Talking more with friends and peers, I also learned that many of them are seemingly unable to find the time to do things like socializing outside of school—even on the weekends. They dedicate their lives to school, and though academically it has paid off for these individuals, it has taken a lot to get here.

For many IB students—mainly IB Diploma candidates, it seems as though they struggle to maintain a healthy balance between self-care, like getting sufficient hours of sleep per night, and taking time to rest and their academic demands.

Though, not a reflection or criticism of the IB courses or diploma candidates in any way, one must wonder why every year a new class of juniors and seniors continue to struggle to maintain a healthy balance between their personal lives and their academic lives: it seems that eventually the lines always blur, with the academics always gaining superiority over the personal lives.

As a new class graduates each year, the hope is that this habit will not follow seniors into their post-secondary lives.

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Join Reyna Berry, Will Blackburn and Eleanor McAden as they return for the Thanksgiving special. With the original podcast crew joins Marie Kah, Emma Mobley and Rebecca Paz. Also up for discussion are the P.E. tests, the various FCPS surveys and the striking resemblance of Reyna to her aunt.

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