

Annandale High School's

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VIRGINIA GOING BLUE



Recent bills that have been passed by the Democratic majority in Virginia include the LGBTQ non discrimination act, clean energy bills and gun restricting bills.

VA lawmakers making big changes in the state legislature

BY MANNY PRECHT
Co-Editor in Chief

In a political climate like the one we live in today, any strides towards bettering our democracy and building the equilibrium between different races and sexes is a step in the right direction.

With the Virginia primary elections arriving soon on Super Tuesday, which way the state will lean might not be that difficult a question.

For one, in the recent Virginia statewide elections, Democrats won big: earning control of both the Senate and the House of Delegates for the first time since 1994.

"The Democrats have taken control of the majority of the population areas: Northern Virginia, Richmond and the Hampton Roads area," History teacher Jonathan York said.

"It's the will of the people, I might not agree with all of the bills and legislation they proposed but the majority of the people want them so give the people what they want," York said.

In addition, in recent months, the state government has passed groundbreaking legislation; all of this legislature falling along the lines of liberal beliefs.

To start, the Virginia House of Delegates approved the Equal Rights Amendment on Jan. 15, making Virginia the 38th state to pass the

amendment. The amendment was approved 59-40 in the House and 28-12 in the Senate.

The victory was a huge win for many in the state who had been pushing for a constitutional guarantee of legal rights regardless of sex.

Although the decision itself does not ratify the amendment in the Constitution, it's approval was symbolic nonetheless; representative of the changing political climate in what was formerly the heart of the Confederacy.

The E.R.A. promised equal rights to women, and was aimed at improving pay equity for them, strengthening domestic violence and sexual harassment protections, and blocking discrimination against pregnant people and mothers.

Not only was the victory itself a symbolic moment in Virginia history, but the support behind it was a testament to the changing political climate in the state.

Led by a woman for the first time in 401 year old history, House of Delegates leader Eileen Filler-Corn and many other women filled the

courthouse where they watched history take place.

"For the women of Virginia and the women of America, the resolution has finally passed," Filler-Corn said, in a Washington Post article.

The amendment's approval not only marks history in Virginia, but sets the standard for Southern states across the nation, some of whom have already seen a surge in Democratic support.

"What happens in Virginia impacts the entire country and will reverberate across the globe," said Betty Folliard, the founder of ERA Minnesota, in an article from the New York Times.

The success of the E.R.A. was not the only push for liberal policy in the state, a majority of Virginia state policy was effectively reshaped at the beginning of February.

Decade old bills were dismantled with a large sweep of new, progressive replacements.

Bills to raise the minimum wage, let local governments remove Confederate

"This is a bill about civil society. It's about what we do in the civil world."



—MARK SICKLES
Virginia House of Delegates

statues, transform the energy landscape in response to climate change and grant legal driving privileges to undocumented immigrants were all passed by the House of Delegates.

Incredibly, all of the bills passed on a single day, Feb. 10.

In addition to the new bills, old Conservative policies are being dismantled within the state.

For one, Virginia legislature is now cutting back abortion restrictions like mandatory ultrasounds and the 24-hour waiting period. This is a huge change from previous legislature that required transvaginal probes before abortion.

Virginia lawmakers have also passed a LGBTQ nondiscrimination bill, becoming the first southern state ever to do so.

The bill is groundbreaking, adding sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in housing, employment and public accommodations.

It also establishes a new framework for people who feel they've been discriminated against to take legal action against the offending party.

The discrimination is far reaching as well, adding LGBTQ discrimination to a list ranging anywhere from race to veteran status.

Despite the seemingly all positive

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FCPL announces program for adult students

BY SUAD MOHAMED
Co-Editor in Chief

Fairfax County Public Library has teamed up with Career Online High School to create an education system for adults.

It allows adults to earn a high school diploma and a workforce readiness certification from the comfort of their home and through an accredited county high school.

Applicants must be at least 20 years old, have at least an eighth grade education, have a library card, and have access to the internet.

Career certifications that are available include a variety of topics ranging from child care education to one for those who want to be a certified protection officers

This program will prove to be beneficial compared to most programs for adults that are already out there.

A high school diploma is more widely accepted than a GED by colleges.

Additionally, having a career certification means that the student has more skills in the workplace, facilitating better employment.

Also, the class is online and self-paced with the help of an academic coach, so the students are able to work at their own pace and time as they juggle their day-to-day lives.

"I think that it is great that they are giving adults this opportunity," junior Anjum Ashraf said. "There are many adults that never got the chance to complete their education and now that they have kids and a job, but this program should help them out."

To apply, those who are interested must take a self-assessment on the Fairfax County website to test eligibility. They will then be contacted by a librarian.

Heritage Night and Just World return

Students celebrate and appreciate cultures for the unique school event

BY MANNY PRECHT
Co-Editor in Chief

Heritage Night, accompanied by the Just World Festival, will return for another year at AHS.

Both events will be held on Friday, March 6.

In previous years, both events have been very successful.

The night starts with all clubs, honors societies and other organizations serving food or items of their choice at the Just World Festival.

AHS students, families members and all others are welcome to enjoy the booths and what they have to offer.

The Just World Festival will cost \$5 and the fee will cover admission to the Heritage Night event as well.

Heritage Night is one of the unique events that AHS holds every year.

The night is important for many different students for a variety of reasons.

For one, many students enjoy the culturally enriching songs and dances that are on display at Heritage Night.

For performers, the night is an empowering experience that allows the celebration of many different cultures.

In addition, Heritage Night is a testament to the diverse student body at AHS.

"I enjoyed going to Heritage Night last year," senior Zak Belkayat said. "My favorite part had to have been watching the different cultural dances or meeting Ryan McElveen."

An appearance from Ryan



Seniors Tarik Darweish and Kaleab Mengistu perform their original song inspired by the cultures represented at last year's Heritage Night. "That was one of the best part," senior Mitchell Eggert said. "It went hard."

McElveen illustrates how important of an event Heritage Night is.

This year, both the Just World club and Leadership are hoping for another success in both events.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the new countries that joined this year," Heritage Night coordinator Laila Elbahy said.

In addition to the coordinators, past performers are ready to come back for another performance.

"I plan on performing again and representing my country," senior Tarik Darweish said.

The celebration of cultures is important to all students and attendees of Heritage Night.



Senior Tarik Darweish performs at last year's Heritage Night, representing Palestine. Darweish and his partner sent a power message with their performance, promoting the peace and freedom of Palestine from the country's conflict with its neighbor Israel.

Should Sanders be the nominee?

AHS student survey results

This survey was distributed through W4 and English classes on Feb. 19 and Feb. 20. A total of 224 were collected: 75 seniors, 54 juniors, 42 sophomores, and 53 freshman replied. The candidates are listed in order of popularity by the senior class.

	9th	10th	11th	12th
 Bernie Sanders	30.1%	50.0%	51.8%	44.0%
 Michael Bloomberg	24.5%	7.1%	14.8%	21.3%
 Donald Trump	5.6%	4.7%	11.9%	9.3%
 Pete Buttigieg	1.8%	9.5%	1.8%	6.7%
Don't Know	16.9%	16.7%	11.1%	5.3%
 Elizabeth Warren	7.5%	4.7%	3.7%	4.0%
 Joe Biden	9.4%	4.7%	2.3%	4.0%
 Amy Klobuchar	0%	0%	1.8%	2.6%
 Tom Steyer	3.7%	2.3%	0%	0%

BY ADAM SHAWISH
Editorials Editor

Standing strong after three victories in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Nevada, Bernie Sanders is a main contender for the Democratic nominee.

As of Feb. 24, Sanders is in the lead with 28% national polling average. However, he is behind Pete Buttigieg in the number of delegates. Buttigieg has 22 and Sanders has 21.

Most of the candidates are the same. They all have slightly different variations of the same ideas, but their main points are the same.

However, there are only three candidates that have a chance to be the nominee. These are Sanders, Biden, and Bloomberg.

They are polling the highest and have the most name recognition. Although this is all based on The New York Times data from Feb. 24.

Sanders should take the presidential nominee and move on to the general election to face Trump. He has had the most news coverage and he has had the most individual contributions. Sanders has the money and know-how to win this election.

Sanders has also struck a chord with young voters. They believe Sanders will fight for their future.

He is focused on issues that matter to this demographic. Some of these issues are college costs, debt, and climate change.

While many candidates also focus on these issues, Sanders is



Senator Bernie Sanders is running for the Democratic Presidential Nominee so he can face Trump in the general election.

the only one that has been constantly fighting to help.

Biden and Bloomberg are major competitors. They are very close to Sanders in the polls and have individual contributors. What they lack is the delegates.

Biden is past his prime. He might have been able to win in 2016, but not now.

What every candidate needs is the young and minority vote. In New Hampshire, Sanders gained more black, white,

Latino, Asian American and Native American votes than Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton combined according to Politico.

This means that he will be able to win votes against Trump in areas that have a large percent of minority voters.

Sanders is one of the best candidates and will help the United States become a better and stronger country.

Virginia begins dismantling Confederate symbols and names

BY FATIMA SAYED ELTAYEB
Staff Writer

Almost 160 years ago, the American Civil War took place and changed the world forever. Virginia played a large role in the war.

After the war, schools, parks, and statues were named after confederate generals and officers. With Virginia becoming a blue state in recent years, these names have caused many problems, especially in Southern Virginia.

People who were offended by the statues of Confederate soldiers such as Robert. E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson petitioned to have them removed. This angered many people who still shared Confederate beliefs and caused extreme tension.

The naming of these schools is extremely offensive and it can make many students uncomfortable, especially students of color. The Confederacy is a negative representation of America's history and was in support of owning slaves. This is why it's such a huge controversy.

People have been fighting for the removal and name changes of Confederate statues and schools, but there are some who argue that the removal of these statues and school names is wrong because it's a part of our history.

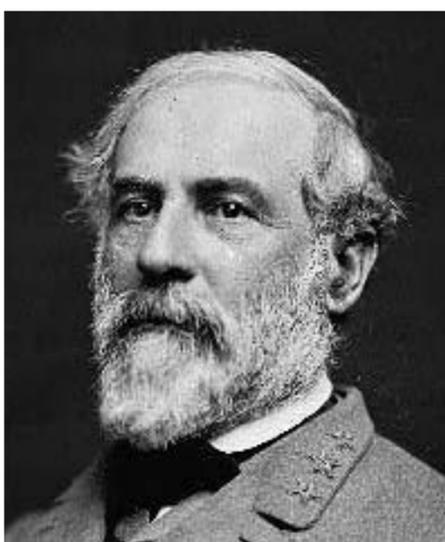
Typically, the ones arguing to change the names are of the younger demographic while the



Washington-Lee High School was named after Robert E. Lee. It was recently changed to Washington-Liberty High School in 2019 in an effort to erase Confederate symbols and names from Virginia.



Robert E. Lee High School was named after Robert E. Lee. Fairfax County Public Schools plan on changing the name to something more inclusive.



Robert E. Lee was a Confederate general during the civil war. He fought for Virginia and had many schools and parks named after him.



J.E.B. Stuart High School was named after Confederate general, J.E.B. Stuart. It was renamed to Justice High School in 2017.

people who want to keep them are older.

Northern Virginia, many of the Confederate named schools are being changed. Schools such as Washington-Lee have renamed Washington-Liberty and Justice High School had been known as J.E.B Stuart High School.

Back in October of 2017, the Fairfax County School Board voted to rename J.E.B. Stuart to Justice High School. Washington-Liberty High School, formerly known as Washington-Lee also voted for a renaming of the school. According to WUSA9, the idea for the renaming came about after the deadly protests

of white supremacists that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia. In recent news, the Fairfax County School Board voted unanimously to discuss the plans of potentially renaming Robert E. Lee High School.

Since Northern Virginia is a diverse and versatile part of the state, many people believe that

school names should be changed. As stated previously, it is arguable that renaming schools, parks, and statues is "erasing" history. Virginia's history has been embedded in many ways. There are other ways to remember the history of our state, it doesn't have to be something that's negative such as

Confederate named schools.

People shouldn't view the Confederacy as "southern pride." It is impertinent and reminds people of the pain and suffering that African American slaves faced during their fight for freedom.

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Annandale High School
Vol 65, Issue No. 6
4700 Medford Dr.
Annandale, VA 22003

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Published monthly, The A-Blast will not print any material that is obscene or libelous; or that which substantially disrupts the school day, or invades an individual's right to privacy. The A-Blast is an independent, open forum for discussion that is printed at the Springfield Plant of The Washington Post.

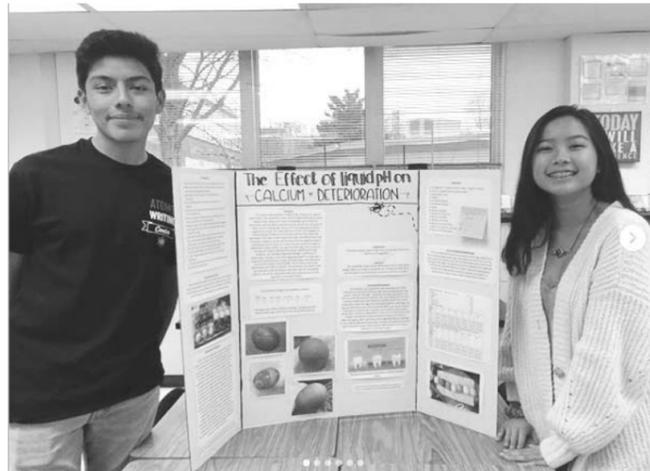
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Post of the Month

The best Instagram post on The A-Blast page.



the_ablast Students chosen to move onto the next step of their science fair project presented their projects on Feb 5th after it was rescheduled. One of the projects presented was by sophomore Sakina Azhar, which focused on the effect of nitrogen on the creation of compost. "It was easy to manage however I had to remind myself to take data," Azhar said. "The experience was memorable because it taught me about a subject I was curious about." (📷: Cassandra Quach)

How do you feel about Trump being acquitted?

MICHEAL BELEKE
sophomore

"I think he needs to go. I was watching the State of the Union Address for my government class, and I don't like the way he was stating things and attacking other people. He needs to get out of the office for the government to be functioning in a correct manner."



PEYTON BUCKELEY
junior

"I don't like that he was acquitted because what he did was unethical. It was wrong, and although he didn't break a specific law, that type of bribery just looks bad on a president. He should have been removed from office."



GRACE KLIEWER
junior

"I don't think he should have been acquitted. There was so much evidence proving him wrong, and the fact that there were no witnesses only helped his case."



ARIS HILL
sophomore

"I don't think he should still be in office anymore. He made a lot of bad decisions that affected many people and should be held accountable for his actions."



BRENDA AREVALO
freshman

"I feel like he shouldn't have been acquitted because even if he wasn't for those crimes, he has still been disrespectful to a lot of people. The fact that he did get acquitted doesn't make him any better of a person. He's still a bad person, in my opinion."



EMMA THLUY
junior

"I'm not sure why he was found innocent on all charges when the evidence is there, and he literally admitted to it without even knowing. If the senate allowed witnesses and evidence and held a fair trial, then things would have been different."



PHILIP BIRD
junior

"I do not know enough about the entire situation. I do know that Trump's actions sound very shady."



JANE ELKINS

Are students spending too much time on screens?

BY CERYS JONES AND JANE ELKINS
Staff Writer and Editorials Editor

In recent years, technology has become a necessity for education. Students watch videos, take tests, complete assignments and use sites like Google Classroom and Blackboard in almost every single class. Computers have become such a crucial part of a classroom that it is now normal for high school students to have their very own school-issued laptops. This gives students a great tool for finding the information they need throughout their time in the classroom and while at home. Along with that, technology greatly benefits teachers. They can use hundreds of different sites and online resources to improve their methods of teaching and help keep students more involved.

Other online tools like grading software and online assessments can help teachers save a lot of time that time can be used for more valuable learning experiences like working with students who are struggling. It helps facilitate teaching by making things more accessible.

However, while parts of technology in the classroom can be very beneficial, some ponder if the addition of school computers causes students to spend too much time behind a screen.

A study from Common Sense Media reported that the average teenager spends almost eight hours a day on their phone, which is approximately a third of their entire day. That combined with computer use substantially raises that number.

Now there is no exact amount of hours that is recommended but the general consensus of all medical professionals is the less the better. This is because it can be detrimental to the brain and eye development.

Ayesha Malik, a pediatric optometrist at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, helps people understand more about the possible dangers of long screen use.

"Our eyes need breaks from close-up focus," Malik said. "While people are on their devices, their eyes are adjusting to having that screen close to their face and this causes additional strain on their eyes."

In fact, extended screen time is linked to nearsightedness as a recent study by Children Hospital of Philadelphia has shown that that strain on people's eyes over a long period of time slowly wears them down.

Another aspect to consider is the effect of screen time on the brain. It is said to have caused a decrease in literacy skills and brain processing speed due to its effect on

the frontal lobe and subcortical parts of the brain. However, all these statistics show how bad screen time is, school computers are not to blame. For one, they are used for educational purposes and are only used

to further education and development, not hinder them.

The issue that we should be worrying about is the new generation of kids growing up with smartphones, tablets, and other internet-enabled electronic devices and becoming dependant on them.

There is no good reason to have kids glued to electronics if it is not for an educational reason.

It is not fair to put the blame on school-issued computers when there are children who spend all their time on the electronic devices that are given to them by parents.

Some kids refuse to eat or use the bathroom without having their eyes and hands glued to a phone or tablet.

If students truly care about their health they will reduce the amount of time they spend on screens doing unnecessary internet searching and social media use.

Implementing technology into our education system has greatly improved how we learn as students.

We are in the age where the addition of cellphone is accepted by society even though it can cause serious health risks, so why put the blame on school-issued laptops?

"When kids are using devices, their eyes cannot take the strain over long periods of time."



-Ayesha Malik, Pediatric Optometrist

Trump's acquittal serves as proof of a divided country

BY JANE ELKINS
Editorials Editor

Feb. 5th, 2020 marks the date where President Donald Trump was officially acquitted of both articles of impeachment by the Senate.

For the first article of impeachment, abuse of power, only 48 senators out of 100 voted for impeachment and as for the second, obstruction of congress, only 47 out of 100 senators voted to convict him. In order to remove a President, at least 66 votes are needed. These results were unsurprising considering how each Senator, except for Senator Mitt Romney, voted along party lines.

The articles of impeachment were brought by the House Judiciary Committee and were later passed in the House of Representatives, where Democrats currently hold a majority.

The House Judiciary Committee originally started investigating the issue because of a phone call between Trump and Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy where Trump said he would withhold military aid

unless Ukraine provided information about Hunter Biden, the son of presidential candidate Joe Biden, who had previously worked in Ukraine.

The phone call is an impeachable offense because Trump urged the Ukrainian President to look into the family member of a current presidential candidate. Trump even suspended \$400 million in military aid pending Ukraine's promise to investigate Joe Biden's son. This is a clear example of soliciting foreign influence in an election, an action that clearly undermines the democratic process.

The Republicans ignored this evidence and spun the whole situation back on the Democrats and the media. In fact, Trump and his defense team have only claimed that the phone call was harmless and then made the whole situation seem like some sort of bipartisan witchhunt. This only furthered Trump's agenda of claiming that the Democrats have been out to impeach him ever since he was elected. The Republican Senators and Trump supporters chose to ignore the evidence that the President used the power of his office to pressure Ukraine and are only focused on dividing America.

Another concerning aspect of this situation was Trump's unwillingness to participate in the proceedings. From the beginning, Trump immediately attacked the whistleblower and the Democrats who started the investigation instead of trying to prove his innocence. If the President had a legitimate reason for the phone call with Ukraine and truly had nothing to hide then he should have refuted the claims with his own reasons and evidence.

To make matters worse, the only Republican who voted to convict Trump is now being blackballed by the Republican community. This just shows how Trump's tweets and the current posture of the Republican party have created a hostile environment that forces Republican senators and Congressmen to vote along party lines or risk their political futures.

When violations of basic standards of democracy are alleged to have taken place, politicians must stop voting along party lines and start doing what is best for the country.

Senate voting results

Article 1: Abuse of power

48 voted YES **52 voted NO**

Article 2: Obstruction of Congress

47 voted YES **52 voted NO**

MAKIN' THE GRADE

DC Defenders shock fans

A The new XFL team the DC Defenders has amazed football fans all over the DC area. The XFL is a somewhat new professional football league that just started their inaugural season. The league has 8 teams all over the country and the DC Defenders so far have a winning 2-1 record, which is pretty good start considering the record of the other football team in DC, the Redskins, constant losing record.

Spring season tryouts start up

A Winter sports district and regional tournaments are finally coming to an end in the next few weeks. With that comes the spring sports season, and more importantly, their green days and tryouts. Spring sports bring soccer, lacrosse, tennis, and outdoor track, which are our most competitive and popular sports with almost 90 kids trying out for boys soccer last season.

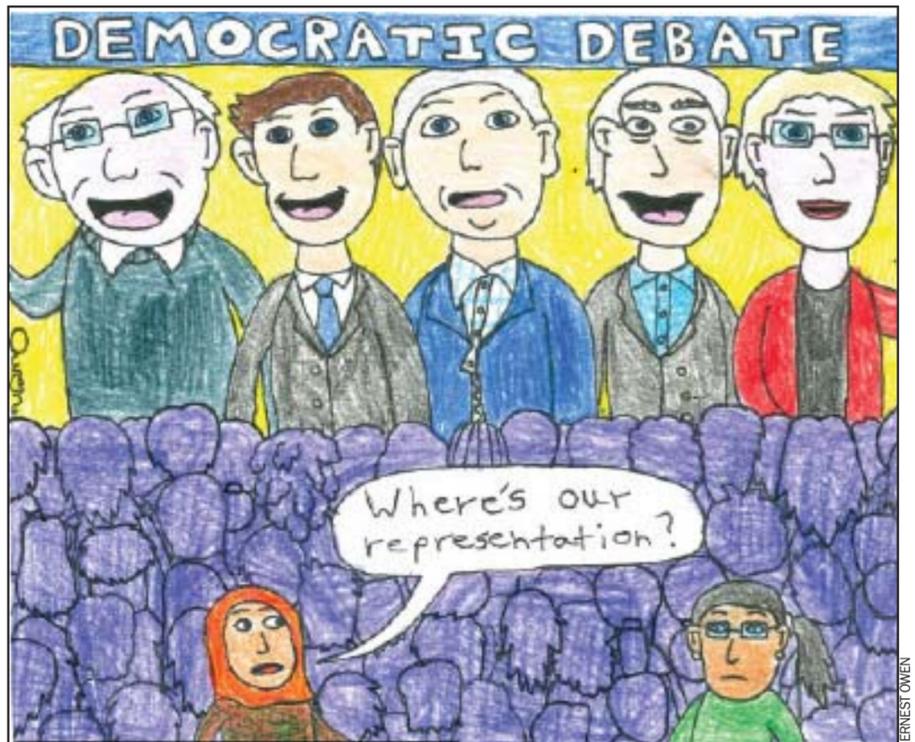
Potential coronavirus vaccine is announced

B A biotherapeutics pharmaceutical company named Valix has announced a potential vaccine for the coronavirus. The coronavirus has affected thousands all of the world and a vaccine to this awful virus would help millions. The chairman of the company has said that they have isolated and identified a certain strand of the virus that could be a great candidate for an effective vaccine.

Gun girl causes protests at colleges

F Kaitlynn Bennet has gone viral all over twitter for being a "conservative media personality" and a "strong believer in the second amendment." She became well known for her YouTube videos where she goes to college campuses and tries to prove to students on why the right to carry a gun at all times is necessary. When she announced that she would be going to Ohio University to film a video, hundreds of students showed up in protest of what she stands for.

Cartoonist Corner



ERNEST OWEN

Verónica Olea @voricac
No entiendo a las personas que pierden tiempo discutiendo si es #femicidio o no por acto cometido por hombre o mujer y sabe cuanto cosa mas. Asesinaron a un #humano, ¡Nos estamos destruyendo! ¿que tanta discusión, pruebas, justificación requiere eso? #NiUnaMasNiUnaMenos

Paco De Miguel @PacoDeMiguelF
#JusticiaParaFatima Ya pónganse a trabajar gobierno culero.

Ivette Zubiaga @ivettezubiaga
Las niñas NO se tocan, NO se vic NO se matan. #JusticiaParaFatima

Dime negra, dime bruja... @soyangclabruja
#Femicidio que vergüenza que aún no les cale nada, es un asesino sin excusas!!!

Paola Gutierrez @peacock729
Mujeres de #mexico si tenemos que andar solas por las calles hay que pelear como mujer. Lévense tijeras, sal, lo que sea. Hay 220 #Femicidio de lo que va 2020. #NiUnaMas

Diputada Loreto Carvajal @carvajaldip
Necesitamos protección real para las mujeres!!!! Ana Viveros siguió el conducto regula denunció, pero no recibió la protección que necesitaba y se transformó en la sexta víctima de #femicidio en lo que va del año.

Pame Zapeta @Pamm_Zapeta
Ahora me he vuelto más paranoica con tanta noticia de #femicidio

Juan @Juanpi80salinas
Xq seguimos aceptando que las respuestas judiciales frente a la violencia de género sean medidas que no impidan concretamente a los violentos llegar al #femicidio? Las perimetrales y botones antipánico no son suficientes y todos lo sabemos. Hasta cuando lo vamos a permitir?

Celebrando el Festival de Just World y Heritage Night

Just World es un evento anual organizado por el Just World Interact Club aquí en AHS. Pasan todo el año preparándose para este evento que tiene diferente comida y música. Este año ellos organizan su evento el viernes 6 de marzo de 4-6pm. Su tema de este año es “Sé el cambio que deseas ver en el mundo”. El mismo día, a las 7pm, habrá Heritage Night en la que se mostrarán diferentes culturas a la escuela con ropa cultural, bailes y discursos. Se presentarán países como Bolivia, Etiopía y Vietnam. Estos dos eventos solo se celebra una vez al año y es algo en cual todos deben atender. El evento entero será de las 4 a 9 de la noche. El festival es gratis pero el show tendrá boletos de cinco dolares.

Numero de homicidios femenino sube en Mexico

BY BRENDA HUAMANI
Editora de Noticias

Según estadísticas recientes dadas por el gobierno mexicano, el número de mujeres asesinadas en México se ha aumentado en gran medida a lo largo de los años. Recientemente, la gente se ha reunido y comenzó a protestar por la muerte de Ingrid Escamilla, de 25 años, y Fatima, de 8 años.

Según CNN, Escamilla fue asesinada por su pareja, Gustavo Madero, después de que afirmó que Escamilla lo había amenazado y atacado. La apuñaló hasta la muerte, la despellejó y le quitó los órganos para esconder cualquier evidencia posible. Los ciudadanos se enfurecieron con el periódico local,

“La Prensa”, después de publicar una fotografía de la escena del crimen en su portada.

Un par de días después de que se anunció la muerte de Escamilla, Fatima, de 7 años, fue reportada como desaparecida. Se había ido con una mujer desconocida el 11 de febrero y fue encontrada muerta un par de días después. Su asesinato fue tan espantoso, y cuando el público fue informado, estallaron disturbios en toda la nación.

Cientos de miles de dólares se ofrecen a cualquier persona con información sobre la mujer desconocida y la familia de Fátima sigue culpando a la policía por el incidente. Creen que la policía no hizo todo lo posible para salvarla. Asesinatos como estos han estado sucediendo en toda la nación de México

cada año y todavía no han dado cuenta de una razón para ello. Los alborotadores también han estado culpando

“Nos dicen que llevemos cosas para protejernos pero creo la seguridad es algo de que nadie debería preocuparse.”



—CHRISTINE TRIEU senior

Celebrando el Mes de la Historia Afroamericana

BY BRENDA HUAMANI
Editora de Noticias

El mes de la Historia Afroamericana comenzó hace casi un siglo. Se inició sobre la idea principal de que los logros de los afroamericanos no se apreciaron como deberían ser.

Es una celebración anual que se celebra durante todo el mes de febrero. Este año se celebrará del 1 al 29 de febrero. Según varias fuentes, este mes fue elegido específicamente debido a los cumpleaños de Abraham Lincoln y Frederick Douglass, dos hombres quienes fueron celebrados por la comunidad afroamericana por varios años.

El comienzo del mes de la Historia Afroamericana está acreditada a Carter G. Woodson, quien quería que su gente tuviera una voz en el país después de ser silenciada durante tanto tiempo.

El nació de padres que habían sido esclavos y trabajó desde una edad bien

joven. En su vida, él llegó a estudiar en Harvard para obtener un doctorado en Historia y desde ahí comenzó el proceso de llamar atención a su comunidad.

La celebración comenzó con sólo una semana, pero con tiempo, ganó tanta atención y popularidad que se extendió a todo el mes de febrero. Este año será celebrado un día extra debido al año bisesto.

Este evento se inició en los Estados Unidos, pero también ha sido reconocido en países como Canadá y recién ha comenzado a llegar al Reino Unido, entre otros países.

Este mes se celebra de diferentes maneras. En Washington D.C., hay recorridos, conferencias y muchos otros eventos. También está el recién inaugurado Museo Nacional de Historia y Cultura Afroamericana que abrió en septiembre de 2016.

Este museo tiene varias exhibiciones destinadas a enseñar sobre las

vidas afroamericanas que han avanzado en la sociedad estadounidense. Esto incluye cosas como una fotografía de Althea Gibson, quien fue la primera afroamericana en ganar un gran título en el Campeonato de Francia de Tenis y un leotardo usado por Gabby Douglas, una gimnasta afroamericana muy exitosa.

Otras personas que contribuyeron en gran medida a los avances dentro de la comunidad afroamericana son personas como el Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. y Rosa Parks.

Dr. King dedicó su vida al avance del Movimiento por los Derechos Civiles. Promovió su método de no violencia y desobediencia civil y con él tuvo mucho éxito. A día de hoy, su discurso “I Have a Dream” es uno de los más famosos debido al Movimiento por los Derechos Civiles y la historia general.

Hay dos lados diferentes en la forma en que se celebra el Mes de la

a su gobierno por no hacer lo suficiente, específicamente, a su presidente, Andrés Obrador.

Ha habido personas de diferentes países que comenzaron a compartir hashtags para seguir difundiendo conciencia para evitar que ocurran eventos como estos.

“El otro día estaba en Twitter y vi ‘Fatima’, algo de quien todos estaban hablando en la nación. No sabía a qué se refería hasta que leí varios artículos hablando de una niña fue brutalmente asesinada en México,” dijo senior Christine Trieu, “Esto me asustó porque incluso en Estados Unidos, como niñas, se nos dice que estamos en más peligro que los chicos. Nos dicen que llevemos cosas como spray de pimienta y otras cosas que nos protegerían de cualquier

daño y creo que la seguridad es algo de que nadie debería preocuparse.”

La mayoría de veces, la razón detrás de los movimientos es porque la gente está cansado de cómo se está desarrollando su nación. En este ejemplo, vemos miles de mujeres mundial viniendo juntas a protestar sobre cosas como el abuso, desigualdad y juicio con cual sufren en sus propias comunidades.

“Dicen que tenemos igualdad, pero socialmente no es así,” dijo senior Eilleen Ngo-Tran, “Las chicas tienen que hacer todas estas cosas para protegerse del peligro que ni siquiera debería existir.”

En México, la razón por cual a ganado tanta atención es porque el gobierno no está haciendo nada para ayudar la situación.

¿Crees que un mes es suficiente?



YEABSERABABU
freshman

Creo que sí es suficiente porque muestra todas las cosas que los afroamericanos han logrado a lo largo de que han sido tratados tan mal y cosas así por el respecto.



SHAWNTAE JACKSON
sophomore

Sí, es suficiente tiempo porque es un gran mes para que afroamericanos como yo podamos darnos cuenta de lo lejos que hemos llegado a través de la historia



DAWUD BUNDU
junior

No, porque no creo que la historia de alguien deba estar confinada a un mes. Deberían ser los doce meses del año.



JASON REYES
senior

No creo que es suficiente porque la historia afroamericana es demasiado amplia como para limitarla a un mes. También creo que las compañías se aprovecha de la comunidad durante este tiempo.



ELIZABETH DULA
senior

No porque sólo tener un mes hace que parezca que sólo un mes es suficiente para celebrar el logro de la historia afroamericana y es algo que debe celebrarse durante todo el tiempo y no debe reservarse durante un solo mes.



KALUNGA NSEKA
senior

Sí. La razón por la que creo esto es porque la tierra ha existido durante mucho tiempo entonces hay muchos eventos importantes que han sucedido. Por eso yo diría que un mes está bien.

Humanos de Annandale

Señora Herman Profesora de Ingles



¿Por qué enseñas inglés?

Obviamente, la mayoría de las personas se convierten en profesores de inglés porque les encanta leer y quieren compartir ese amor con los demás, específicamente con los jóvenes. Esto es muy cierto para mí. Sin embargo, también elegí enseñar inglés debido a mi carrera anterior como publicista. En esa carrera, me encargaron escribir una variedad de materiales de prensa y marketing para mis clientes, incluyendo comunicados de prensa, entradas de blog, artículos forrados, publicaciones en redes sociales, etc. Rápidamente descubrí que los tipos de escritura que mis maestros me pedían que escribiera en la escuela secundaria no se alineaba con la escritura que se me pidió que hiciera en mi carrera. Cuando me di cuenta de que quería ser profesora, elegí inglés porque quería ayudar a los jóvenes a aprender a escribir de maneras diversas (es decir, no sólo ensayos) para prepararlos mejor para el lugar de trabajo.

¿Quién es tu inspiración (s)?

Hay tanta gente que me inspira que no podría elegir sólo uno! Hoy en día, tenemos la suerte de tener muchos ejemplos de mujeres fuertes que usan su voz para abogar por lo que es correcto, en lugar de aceptar pasivamente lo que es fácil o lo que siempre se ha hecho. Esta gente me inspira. Sin embargo, cuando veo a un estudiante trabajar tan duro en algo y finalmente “conseguirlo”, o llegar a una idea increíblemente creativa o una interpretación lista para usar de algo que estamos leyendo, me inspira trabajar más duro y ser mejor como maestro.

¿Cuál es tu parte favorita de venir a la escuela todos los días?

Me gusta que cada día es diferente, en términos de lo que estoy enseñando y lo que obtengo de mis estudiantes. A veces esto puede ser estresante, pero el cambio constante hace que mi trabajo sea más interesante.

¿Estás orgullosa de la diversidad en Annandale High School?

Por supuesto! Elegí trabajar en Annandale, a diferencia de otras escuelas secundarias de FCPS, porque quería enseñar a estudiantes que venían de una variedad de orígenes diferentes, muchos de los cuales eran diferentes de los míos. Estoy orgullosa de que, debido a la diversidad de Annandale, estoy constantemente aprendiendo de las experiencias e historias de mis estudiantes. Mis alumnos me dan la oportunidad de crecer y aprender con ellos, y de desafiar mi propio privilegio.

Bajo cuarentena federal por el virus

BY BRENDA HUAMANI
Editora de Noticias

En semanas recientes, varios se han estado enfermando y el epidémico que empezó en Wuhan, China tiene a algunos preocupados que su gripe anual sea algo más grave.

Esta enfermedad se llama coronavirus y es más común en animales como perros y gatos. Lo que muchos no entienden es que hay varias variedades de este virus.

El que está pasando de persona a persona es una nueva variedad del virus y los médicos todavía no entienden de dónde empezó ni el efecto que va tener ahorita y en el futuro. Es probable que vino de un animal, pero ahora que se está pasando entre persona, es algo más grave.

El virus puede causar síntomas como la fiebre y problemas respiratorios, síntomas igual a la gripe que le pasa a la mayoría en el invierno o también puede tener ningún efecto. El número de las muertes que ha causado este virus no puede compararse al número de víctimas que ha tenido la gripe.

Este virus ya ha pasado la frontera de varios países, incluyendo la de los Estados Unidos. Según CNN, más de mil personas han muerto por el virus, la mayoría en China, y ha habido más de cuarenta y cinco mil casos mundial.

Ahora lo que están haciendo varios



CDC.GOV

países es que han estado poniendo a la gente debajo de cuarentena.

En Japón, un gran crucero con más de tres mil personas fue puesto debajo de cuarentena por varios días. Es uno de cuatro cruceros que fue puesto debajo de cuarentena pero el único que ha tenido casos del virus en donde también hay norteamericanos.

Los otro cruceros que no han tenido casos confirmados no han tenido acceso a ningún puerto por miedo y por seguridad. Las personas en estas situaciones se tienen que quedar en el crucero por varios días hasta que digan que es seguro que salgan de ahí.

Los que vienen en aviones de Wuhan o lugares cerca a Wuhan a los Estados Unidos, han estado puesto debajo

de cuarentena en bases militares por un periodo de catorce días o hasta que todos salgan negativo con el virus.

Una cuarentena federal no ha ocurrido en los Estados Unidos hace más de cincuenta años. La última vez que pasó fue por la epidemia de la viruela. Ahora que esta pasando otra vez, esta causando caos entre la gente.

La vida de los que están debajo de cuarentena no es ideal. La mayoría son encerrados en cuartos para prevenir que estén en contacto con otra gente.

En este tiempo, el Centro para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades, ha estado distribuyendo toda la información que sabe y está tratando de prevenir la contaminación a otra gente

Why is this page translated in Spanish?

This section was created with the intention of expanding our reach as a publication towards the growing population of Spanish-speaking students. As one of the most diverse schools in Fairfax County, Spanish has become the second most spoken language at our school, accompanied with an extensive ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program.

The goal of The A-Blast is to inform and entertain the largest possible group of readers. Las Noticias Destacadas is a collection of articles of relevant news affecting the hispanic community, written in Spanish. We hope that this section will allow the A-Blast to be a more inclusive and diverse newspaper.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SUAD MOHAMED

A lot of students have been calling for the opportunity to take mental health days so they can miss school, which can make them feel even more overwhelmed.

Should students take mental health days?

BY SUAD MOHAMED
Co-Editor in Chief

According to the Centers for Disease Control, mental health issues have been increasing more and more every year amongst young people.

As reported in 2018, 7.1 percent of school aged children have been diagnosed with anxiety, while 3.2 percent have been diagnosed with depression.

In 2019, another CDC report noted that 70 percent of teenagers see symptoms of both illnesses in their peers and themselves, too.

These rates are the highest they have ever been since the CDC began recording these statistics.

It is predicted that the numbers are even higher for children who have not been diagnosed yet.

In order to tackle this issue, many districts around the country have begun allowing students to take days off of school in order to deal with their mental health.

Counties in Oregon and Utah started implementation of these laws, while states like California and Florida are still working on these legislations.

In Virginia, Montgomery County, which includes Blacksburg, lobbied their local school board to allow them to take mental health days as well.

The vote went through and now students have the opportunity to take days off when they and their parents feel like they are mentally unwell.

The number of absences allowed range from one day per semester to an unlimited number. FCPS offers one mental health day per year.

The basis behind these rulings and opinions is that there should be no stigma around mental health issues, which should be treated the same as physical illnesses.

Using this logic, proponents of these changes argue that if students are able to take a sick day for something like the flu, then they should have the same opportunity if they are battling things

like depression and anxiety.

"If someone were to break their leg or start vomiting, no one would force them to go to school," senior Safia Ahmed said. "So I don't understand why people who are suffering through something like anxiety are not being given the same leniency and time to recover."

This argument is valid especially when it is considered that most of the time, the root cause that makes young students feel so overwhelmed is school itself.

Students have hours of homework at a time and could possibly be facing bullying.

Adding these stressors to those that come from things like difficulties at home only worsens a student's mental state.

"Going to school and having to deal with more pressures will just make things worse," Ahmed said.

However, several concerns can be raised regarding these legislations.

Some who do not totally agree with allowing mental health days argue that some students may take advantage of this opportunity in a negative manner.

Specifically, they claim that there may be students who use mental health days to just slack off and skip class.

To resolve this, some say that this freedom should be limited. Some say to a certain age group, and some say it should only be permitted if a student has a doctor's note.

"I think that if mental health days were to exist, they should only be for high schoolers," senior Anoosh Tauqir said. "I don't want to say that younger students don't deal with issues, but they sometimes conflate things, and need to use that time to figure out how to deal with issues."

Regardless of the differing opinions on the topic, it should be something that is discussed within all school districts to determine its value and how it could help or hurt students.

Conservative policies dismantled by Democratic majority

CONT. Page 1

Aspects of the bill, it still faces some disagreement from those like Delegate Dave LaRock who claim that the bill infringes on religious freedom.

"There are many people in this commonwealth who would say that their religious convictions are part of who they are," LaRock said.

Regardless of disagreement from the opposing political party, the LGBTQ nondiscrimination bill has made history, furthering a liberal resurgence in the state.

Although the bill might overshadow others that were either passed or set in motion in the second week of February, the others still follow the trend of liberal ideals.

Bills to impose new restrictions on firearm access including universal background checks and a red flag law also headlined the action earlier this month.

Another bill moving forward was the Virginia Clean Economy Act which has the goal of eliminating electric power sector carbon emissions and promoting distributed renewable energy and

energy efficiency.

The massive flow of bills will also affect school communities like ours at AHS, as a bill for schools to provide menstrual products was approved in the Senate.

The parameters of the bill require free menstrual products in all public school bathrooms.

The bill applies to 5th through 12th graders which, according to the Virginia Department of Education, includes 132 school districts and almost over 630,000 female students.

"I think that if schools are going

to offer these services, it would benefit girls who are a part of low income families who can't afford the products themselves," senior Dani Villaroel said.

In addition to their access in schools, the tax on menstrual products has been totally eliminated with another new bill.

"I think it's a good idea because the way that we [females] have to pay for our own products is unfair because it's just a part of our life," senior Guinevieve Tran said. "I think the products should be completely free."

With both the House of Delegates and the Senate controlled by the

Democrats, it was clear that the political spectrum was leaning left in Virginia.

However, without action, it was unsure whether the liberal agenda would succeed in the state.

With the amount of historic bills and sheer amount of bills that have been passed or are in the works, it is clear that Virginia has turned into a solid blue state.

News Briefs

Band Pyramid Concert

The Band department will be hosting a concert featuring players from the schools that feed into Anandale on Wed. Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Chorus' "Considering Matthew Shepard" Concert

The chorus department will be holding a concert honoring Matthew Shepard, the victim of an anti-gay hate crime, on Thurs. Feb. 27 at 1 p.m. in the auditorium.

Basketball Regional Championships

Both Boys' and Girls' Basketball teams will be playing their championship games at Fairfax HS on Sat. Feb. 29 at 6 and 7 p.m., respectively.

Indoor Track State Championships

The Indoor Track team will have their state championships on Sat. Feb. 29 in Hampton, VA at 9 a.m.

Super Tuesday

Virginia, along with other states, will be holding the presidential primaries on Tue. March 3. There will be no school on this day.

Just World Festival

The Just World club will be hosting its annual Just World Festival on Fri. March 6 from 4 to 6 p.m.. Admittance is free.

Heritage Night

Leadership will be hosting its annual Heritage Night right after the Just World Festival at 7 p.m. on Fri. March 6. Food will be served to attendees from 6 to 7 p.m. Tickets will cost \$5.

ALL NIGHT



CLASS OF

2020

GRADUATION CELEBRATION

Annandale High School PTSA
presents the

Annandale High School

All Night Graduation Celebration 2020

Games • Music • Prizes • Entertainment • Food

Thursday, June 4, 2020

11:00 p.m.–5:00 a.m.

Audrey Moore RECenter

8100 Braddock Road

Annandale, VA 22003

Tickets Now Available!

SAVE! Tickets are \$35 through Feb. 28!

Tickets: \$45 through June 1 or \$60 at the door.
(\$20 Free/Reduced Meals)

Ticket forms are available in the
front office or online at
www.annandalehsptsa.org

Are plagiarism checkers worth the hassle?

BY NATHAN FERSON
Academics Editor

You've seen it before. Last night was the night everyone crammed in all their work for the big project.

You overheard some students talking about sharing work, but you decided to stay away from it. A few minutes into class, the teacher calls some students out into the hallway. They've been caught plagiarizing.

Although this isn't a common occurrence for most students, peer-to-peer plagiarism along with other forms of plagiarism are a real problem in schools today.

Plagiarism comes from the Latin word "plagiarius" meaning thief or burglar. Copyright laws that protect against plagiarism have not existed for most of human history, with the first primitive sets of laws coming to fruition in the early 1700s in Europe.

These laws were mostly in regard to things that involved large sums of money, tending to be more ambiguous with creative protection.

In the modern era, plagiarism is highly regulated in schools and the workplace. It is an offense punishable by law but is usually dealt with extrajudicially in schools.

Some businesses have even been created for the sole purpose of

detering students from taking the work of others.

In recent years, Turnitin has become the most widely used of all the plagiarism checking programs. Universities and high schools all around America and even internationally use the program, but it is not without controversy.

Many students (mainly in America) have accused Turnitin and programs like it of burdening them with a "presumption of guilt" due to the fact that they have to submit their work regardless of whether or not they're suspected of plagiarism.

Other students have accused Turnitin of using student's submitted work for commercial purposes, as Turnitin keeps every piece of submitted work stored in their permanent database. In 2006, Mount Saint Vincent University banned Turnitin amid controversy that the government could access papers turned into the program.

Some teachers at Annandale find plagiarism checkers to be quite useful.

"I mainly use SafeAssign for my early level students and it helps me root out essays that have too much copy and paste material or are fully plagiarized," Digital Arts teacher Carmen Lucas said.

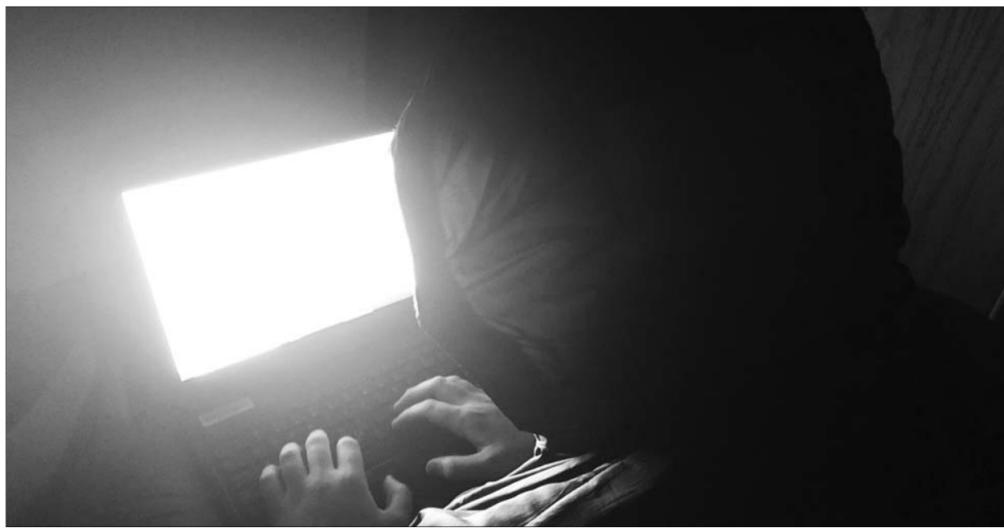


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION OF RYAN CHAREST BY NATHAN FERSON

Although Turnitin is the most popular plagiarism checker, Annandale uses programs like SafeAssign and the built-in Google classroom checker to check for plagiarism. SafeAssign requires students to submit their essay to a checker that takes several hours to scan the document. The checker then gives the student a percentage of their document that's

plagiarized.

However, this number is not accurate due to student's quoting of sourcing throughout the paper.

"I feel like SafeAssign is used mainly for student's to check themselves rather than for teachers to punish students," senior Alieu Kama-ra said.

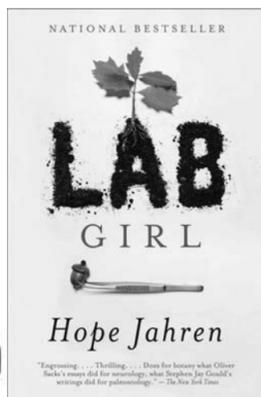
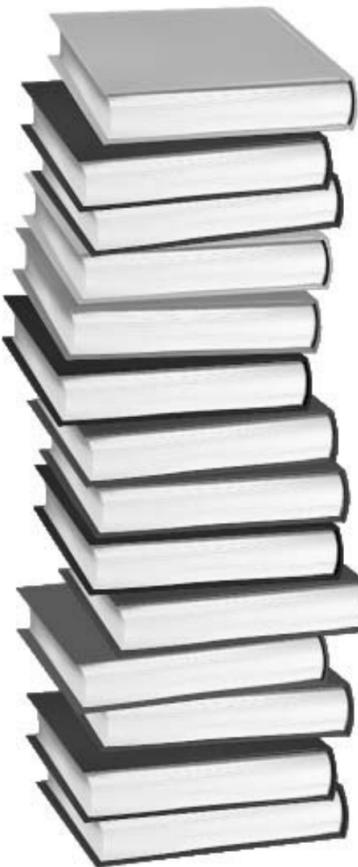
SafeAssign is not without critics

though, as many students believe that SafeAssign is an inaccurate assessment of a student's level of plagiarism, as a mathematical equation cannot determine whether or not a student intended to plagiarize.

Regardless of opinion, the use of Plagiarism checkers is likely to increase in the coming years.

Librarians recommend books

Veteran librarians Pat Brown and Jane Scharankov have transferred their love for reading into an engaging and fulfilling career. In this issue, they give their picks for some of the top books that they would recommend to Annandale students along with some of their favorite books currently and of all time.

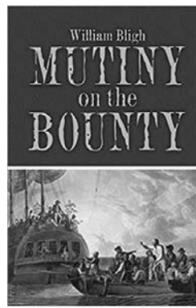


Lab Girl

Recommended by: Ms. Brown and Ms. Scharankov

Lab Girl is a 2016 memoir written by geochemist and geobiologist Hope Jahren. Jahren's memoir is separated into three parts: one details her younger years, the second is the account of the beginning of her science career, and the third a final section is dedicated to the advancement of her science career up to present day. The chapters alternate topics, with one chapter being about the life of Jahren and the other being about her research in the biological field. The book is mainly about the life and research of Jahren, but has undertones of perseverance despite mental illness and misogyny in the science field. "This

book is great for girls with an interest in the sciences, but it can also be a great read for people who are on the spectrum, as it demonstrates that you can still live your life to the fullest regardless of your negative thoughts," Scharankov said. Jahren, who has autism, has excelled in the scientific field, opening labs and winning multiple geoscience awards. "I like Lab Girl because it has a strong female main character and shows a woman succeeding in a field that they are underrepresented in," Brown said. Lab Girl is available for check out at the library or to be purchased on Amazon for \$8.54.



Mutiny on the Bounty

Recommended by: Ms. Brown

Mutiny on the Bounty is a 1932 historical dramatization novel written by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. The novel follows the true story of the mutiny against Lieutenant William Bligh, the commander of the Royal Navy vessel, the Bounty. Bligh's vessel sets out in 1787 to deliver fruit from Tahiti, but suffers a mutiny by the crew who are displeased with Bligh's aggressive and unfair leadership. "This is a swashbuckling, well written novel, which is why it is one of my all time favorites," said Brown. Mutiny on the Bounty is available to rent at the library or on Amazon for \$15.54.



King Hereafter

Recommended by: Ms. Scharankov

King Hereafter is a 1976 historical fiction novel written by Dorothy Dunnett. The novel follows the story of a young Macbeth, a Scottish earl in the 9th century who's taste for intrigue precedes his situation. MacBeth starts off with a small amount of land as a young boy, then transforms into a warrior that boasts his own empire as he grows older. "This is a very difficult read, so I wouldn't recommend it to everyone, but it's filled with rich Scottish/English history and is very well written," Scharankov said. King Hereafter is available on Amazon for \$16.40.



Children of Blood and Bone

Recommended by: Ms. Brown

Children of Blood and Bone is a 2018 fantasy novel written by the young African American author Tomi Adeyemi. The novel follows Zélie Adebola, a young girl who seeks to restore magic to her her once great kingdom of Orisha, which is now oppressed by the starkly anti-magic ruling class. "I love this book because it has a strong female lead, takes inspiration from West African culture, and picks up very fast," says Brown. Children of Blood and Bone is available to rent at the library or to buy on Amazon for \$10.43.

Senior Elizabeth Dula powers through IB

BY NATHAN FERSON
Academics Editor

Q: What clubs are you in?

A: I'm in French Honors society, National honors Society, Math honors Society, Science Honors society, and atoms writing center.

Q: What is your favorite IB subject?

A: My favorite subject is IB Biology.

Q: What made you decide to do the IB diploma?

A: It seemed like an interesting program and I wanted to challenge myself because colleges always recommend taking the most advanced coursework available, and the IB diploma has a reputation for being very rigorous.

Q: What skills do you think the IB program has taught you that can help you later in life?

A: How to handle multiple things at once. The amount of times I've had tests in every single class, or projects due back to back across multiple classes taught me the importance of planning out my week ahead of time and focusing on knocking out the easier homework first so I have time for the bigger things.

IB Spotlight: Profiles of Diploma Candidates



ELIZABETH DULA

Dula, in her final year of IB candidacy, continues to excel in her rigorous set of IB classes while balancing them with multiple honors societies and other after school activities.

Q: Where do you see yourself in ten years?

A: In ten years, I hope to be working a job that I have a passion for while leaving room for travel and leisure.

Q: What advice do you have for future IB candidates?

A: My advice to future IB candidates is to invest in a good planner, either physical or online, and put in all your assignments and activities so you know what your week is going to look like. This lets you know if you need to finish all your hw earlier so you can work on a project or study for a test or if you have a day with a lighter workload so you have time to do something else.

SUDOKU

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Junior Idrissa Kargbo used to wear a medical mask as protection from possibly contracting the Coronavirus. He stopped soon after because people thought he had the virus.

Should students fear the Coronavirus?

BY JAMILEH HAMADEH
Health editor

The Coronavirus has spread drastically in a short period of time, infecting over 75,000 people since the outbreak started in December.

The virus was first detected in a market located in Wuhan, China. Wild animals like birds, snakes and bats were being illegally sold and traded to thousands of civilians in China.

Health officials say that the virus was transmitted from animal to human when the trading and buying took place at the market. The Coronavirus is typical among animals much like the ones that were being sold, which is part of why tens of thousands are infected today.

Although students should be extremely concerned of the virus infecting them, some worry about their families in the affected countries. Sophomore Anh Nguyen has a lot of family who live in Vietnam, which is one of the countries that have been infected by the Coronavirus. His uncles and aunts say they are afraid of the virus possibly infecting his grandparents since it is more endemic among elderly people.

"My aunts have told me that in Vietnam there is no one out and about in the streets like usual," Nguyen said. "Usually, it is super busy outside, but now people are staying inside and avoiding going to markets or anywhere outside in public."

Nguyen has been keeping in touch with his family over in Vietnam to ensure that they are safe.

The virus has now spread to over 25 countries like the United States, Canada, Germany and more, and has infected thousands in China alone with a climbing death rate.

Not much is known about how the new Coronavirus spreads, however medical experts are providing information based on what they know from past Coronavirus strains.

What is known is that the Coronavirus, like many other viruses, spreads through close contact and also "via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes," according to the Centers for Disease Control.

FCPS has been monitoring and being very cautious about the situation to ensure the health

Coronavirus had already spread to the United States," junior Idrissa Kargbo said "I used it to protect myself, but instead people thought that I had already been infected with the virus, so I stopped wearing it."

This fear can be seen in other students as well.

"I'm afraid of the virus because it has caused many deaths. I would not want it spreading to my family or friends," sophomore Hana Wasuge said.

they can take some of the worry away from some of the people who are truly concerned."

Many social media users on popular platforms like Instagram and TikTok have been posting viral memes and videos about the Coronavirus.

"When people make fun of the Coronavirus itself, it is not really a big deal, but once they start bringing race into it, that's where it gets really rude," Granadoz and her friend, junior Miriam Esquivel said.

Many people have responded to these viral videos begging them to stop posting.

This does not limit the fear though.

"I am scared of the virus because after seeing videos on Twitter of people who have been infected, it really came to my attention that this is serious," Esquivel said.

Although the student who was being tested from George Mason University has been cleared from having the virus, there are still a couple pending results in our area.

"Hearing about the student from George Mason University really worried me because it is so close to us, even though it was not actually a case," Esquivel said.

According to DCHealth.gov, there were five people being closely monitored for the virus in the area.

Four people have come back negative and one result is still pending.

While this is not a deep concern for students in FCPS, it still worries several students and staff since this is a spreading epidemic.

Here at AHS we have a 24 hour rule, which essentially states that if you have a fever or have been vomiting, you are not permitted to attend school for the next 24 hours.

"If the case is a fever, you must be fever free with no medication," Weik said.

The 24 hour rule is a very effective way to prevent the spread of any colds or viruses and should be used by everyone.

"I am not too concerned about the Coronavirus because we have not seen anything in our area so far. Still, some students have concerns regarding the virus."



—AMY WEIK
School Health Aide

and safety of the community. However, that does not stop the fear of some students.

"We have had some students come into the clinic having some concerns and questions about the Coronavirus," School Health Aide Amy Weik said. "They come in with a fever or cold symptoms wondering if they have the virus."

Walking in the hallway, students have been spotted wearing medical masks, much like the way people are doing in China to help prevent the virus.

"I wore a mask because I heard the

Most affected countries:

- China: 74, 251
- Singapore: 81
- Japan: 74
- Thailand: 35
- South Korea: 31
- United States: 29
- Taiwan: 23
- Malaysia: 22
- Germany & Vietnam: 16



As of 2/19/20

WASHINGTONPOST.COM

The symptoms of the Coronavirus are much like those of the common cold. The most common symptoms to be recorded are fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Since the Coronavirus has already reached the United States, it has now become a new health precaution for many people, while others simply brush off the entire situation with no concerns.

"Personally, I am not too worried about the virus," junior Evelyn Granadoz said "I feel like people make the jokes that they make so that

Five ways to steer clear of a spreading virus

Digital body thermometer

When you feel like you are coming down with a sickness, be sure to check your body temperature to ensure that you are not catching a fever. Your average body temperature should measure around 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit.



Cold medicine

Once you begin to feel a cold coming on to you, it is important to take immediate action. There are many cold and flu medicines as well as other medicines that can help prevent your cold from becoming progressively worse.



Hand sanitizer

Hand sanitizer is an easy and effective way to keep your hands clean and eliminate germs. This is a cheap and helpful item to keep with you and works especially well in schools and work places. It is important that you wash your hands with soap and water, but hand sanitizer is a great alternative.



Vaccines

Keeping up with your vaccines is a very important thing to do annually. Most of them will prevent you from catching any sicknesses and keep your immune system strong enough to fight away any virus. The flu shot is highly recommended during flu season.



Disinfecting wipes

Wiping down your work space and your phone can eliminate germs almost completely. Your belongings carry bacteria throughout the day, making them some of the dirtiest things that you touch in a day. Your phone carries all types of bacteria.



Sprinting into Spring

Class of 2020 athletes prepare for their last season of high school sports

PHOTOS BY DANIEL VO



Senior Carter McGraw prepares to pitch during a baseball practice. "I'm looking forward to competing for a district championship and to see how we grew from last year," McGraw said. "It's bitter sweet because I love playing with the guys but it's ending too soon."



Senior Umi Hermann prepares to receive a ball during lacrosse practice. "I think this season will be pretty good. We only lost one senior so it's going to be the same team and we can build off what we did last year," Hermann said. "I'm really sad that this is my last season, but I'm happy about all the friends I made."



Senior Allauna Harrison gets up to bat during softball practice. "I'm excited for this season, especially the new field, with it being last," Harrison said. "On top of that, I'm really excited to play T.C. Williams because we played them very competitively last year like we do every year."



Senior Walter Hernandez passes a ball around with fellow teammates during a soccer Green Day. "We're playing some good teams this schedule, so it's going to be fun," Hernandez said. "I want my family to come out and some people from our grade to come out to watch us play."



Senior Lindsey Keyes stretches before soccer practice. Keyes has played the sport all throughout high school. "I'll miss the coaches and playing with my teammates the most," Keyes said.



LEFT: Senior Jae Sung Kim practices shooting goals during a boys lacrosse Green Day. "This season is looking really good, though our defense has more work to do. Our schedule is looking great and we're seeing a positive win to loss season," Kim said. "Being my last season, I plan to go really hard, not miss the experience, and shred up the field with my teammates."



Senior Vy Luu prepares to pass the ball to another teammate during a girls lacrosse practice. "This is going to be a good season," Luu said. "I have a feeling that I'll do my best given it's my last year playing."



Senior Maddy Kim practices her shooting skills during a soccer warm-up. "I'm excited for the new memories that we are going to make as a team this season," Kim said. "We had 6-10 record last season and I hope we can bring home more wins this time around."



ALL PHOTOS BY MIA ANTEZANA

Junior viola player Freddy Henriquez-Pinzon and sophomore viola player Matthew Kim practicing *Waltz No. 11* by Dimitri Shostakovich, Arr. By Paul Lavender, before performing on stage. "I like *Waltz No. 11* because it's a very technical piece and it's fun to play," Henriquez-Pinzon said.



Senior Jack Dalrymple as he leads the Sister Act cast in their dance routine.

ATC hard at work for the spring musical

BY MARAM IBRAHIM
Staff Writer

The Annandale Theatre Company has been hard at work for the 2020 Spring musical, *Sister Act*, since Feb. 3.

"All of our rehearsals have been productive," musical director and theater teacher Katie Brunberg said. "We have a really great cast, and I know this show is going to be fabulous."

Brunberg is excited to display the talent of the school and called it simply "extraordinary."

"This show is sure to be a blast," she said. "The music is, as the kids say, 'a whole bop.'"

According to Brunberg, there is incredible enthusiasm and dedication to the musical.

"People are coming in having done work on their characters, which makes rehearsals much more fun," she said. "The more work the actors do ahead of time, the more discoveries we are able to make in the rehearsal room. We still have a lot of work to do, but I am confident we will get it done."

The students also agree with this statement.

"We have accomplished a lot during the past few days," student choreographer for the musical Miguel Orozco said. "These students put their best into this show. I can't wait for everyone to see it."

The spring musical will have its red carpet premiere on Wed. April 22 at 7 p.m. while the rest of the show will run on Fri. May 1 and Sat. May 2 at 7 p.m. and Sun. May 3 at 3 p.m.

Any questions should be directed to Brunberg's room.

Orchestra prepares for assessment

BY ERNEST OWEN
Staff Writer

The orchestra held their pre-assessment concert on Thursday, Feb. 21, to prepare for their annual assessment concert taking place on March 13-14.

Something that is unique about the pre-assessment concert is that, with the exclusion of the masquerade concert, middle schoolers are invited to perform alongside them.

"Having the middle schoolers join us is a big deal for them, especially," Orchestra conductor Larissa Marian said. "They get to perform in a high school stage, interact a little bit with high school students, get to see the setting and they get to know our environment a little bit better."

Marian said that it kind of brings home to them that "oh, this is what I am going to be doing next year."

That isn't the only thing that makes this concert unique, however, as the pre-assessment concert also serves as a simulation of sorts.

Marian invites teachers from different schools within the county to serve as mock judges and provide feedback that will help the orchestra better prepare for assessment.

"We hold four concerts every year," Marian said. "The purpose of our concerts is to have a real-life goal for the students to look towards as well as to serve our school and community, by providing music for our community. But specifically, assessment is unique in that in addition to a concert, we are also going to be judged."

Another way the orchestra prepares is by having warm-ups related to the music that is being played and bringing in sectional coaches for each instrument that will allow the players to have a better understanding of their music.

"Around this time, students have experienced growth," she said. "They've been playing for a while during the school year and they've been practicing, so real growth starts to happen."

Marian believes this is the right time to bring in guest artists to work with the students in a small group setting.

One last thing the orchestra does to prepare itself is listening to videos of other orchestra's play the same pieces and assess them.

The orchestra then proceeds to grade them by using the VBODA grade sheet, the same rubric the judges use during assessment.

The orchestra also uses this technique to grade themselves by recording and listening to their own performances.

"Music is an ongoing art," Marian said. "[I am such a big advocate and supporter for the orchestra because it unifies the left and right side of the brain, and it addresses the whole person." Marian believes that no matter the person, there is always room for improvement.

The orchestra has been focusing on things such as tempo, pulse, rhythm and intonation.

"Coming back from this concert, we

"There is always something to improve on, and that is the exciting thing about music."



—LARISSA MARIAN
Orchestra conductor

Students audition for the pit

BY INSAF BOUZANA
Staff Writer

Most people believe that to be in the musical they must be able to sing or dance.

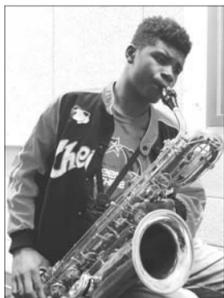
There is a third option, however, and that is by joining the Orchestra/Band Pit. It is taking a different direction this year by making students audition to perform.

"We wanted to give the students a chance to prepare ahead of time and we wanted to make sure we had the best players we could for each part," band and pit director Joseph Witkowski said.

The auditions were held on Feb. 21, and students were also required to fill out a Google form to audition, which just asked about availability and what instrument was being played.

For the actual audition they were required to perform four excerpts from the musical and a scale of Witkowski's choosing.

Witkowski looked for great musicianship along with accuracy for each individual player.



D'yontae Jackson, 10
Bari Saxophone

"I am auditioning to become a better player. I want to get better at my instrument because after high school, I plan on becoming a professional saxophonist. I've never done the pit before, but I've heard from others that it is a good way to improve."



David Miller, 10
Tenor Saxophone

"I am auditioning because it is a great experience to make music alongside people that are acting and to improve in music. I think, by doing the pit, I will have a lot more knowledge of my instrument and the sound around me when I am playing."



Savannah Jones, 11
Violin

"I want to audition because I enjoyed it last year, and I like playing outside of our orchestra with the other instruments. It's a different experience. I really hope to get experience from playing with other people and practicing with my friends."



Iلسon Guevera, 12
Clarinet

"I'm auditioning for pit because I've done it for the past two years and have enjoyed it immensely. If I make it in, I think I'll be able to continue to expand my horizons and it will help be able to have an idea on how to make future pieces I'd like to compose."



Janine Impat, 12
Violin

"I want to audition for the pit because it's a great opportunity for me to expand on my musical skills. I think being in pit will help me be able to play with other instruments and how to phrase very well on the violin."

Artist Spotlight: Senior violinist Jocelyn Blas

Why did you choose the violin?

I wanted to play it freshman year but they said it was full, so I did it sophomore year. I wanted to play in the orchestra because both of my siblings played orchestra and my brother did band in high school.

How has your experience in orchestra been?

It's actually been really fun. We make a lot of great memories together and [Marian] is a great teacher.

How do you feel you have improved since sophomore year?

I think I improved a lot. I was a shy girl, but I have become more confident by playing.

Do you plan to continue on with music after you leave high school?

I feel like I might continue it as a hobby. I actually want to buy a violin myself and [continue to] teach myself.

What do you want to improve on as a violinist?

I want to improve on intonation, dynamics, and confidence.

How had being in orchestra changed your life?

I have been able to make more friends because orchestra is like a big family. We do events together like bake sales and performances at retirement homes, and that helped a lot with performing in different audiences.



Jocelyn Blas practices *Amazing Grace* before going on stage.



ABOVE: Blas, along with senior violinist Leena Jahed, tunes her instrument before going on-stage for after school rehearsals. BELOW: Blas practices *Sahara Crossing* after school.



AHS EMBRACES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Growing up black in white America

BY KADIJAH JANNEH
Special to The A-Blast

Growing up the concept of racism was complex and odd to me at first. I knew that for reasons beyond my control, I would be treated a little differently from time to time, but that was all my little brain was able to grasp. As I grew up though, these concepts became more apparent and familiar to me.

One day I was sitting in class and a girl next to me screamed because my hand accidentally brushed against hers. I was confused as to why she would scream over something that little, but she soon began screaming that "black people are dirty" and she then said something along the lines of "that's why their skin color is like that, it's because they don't wash." At this point she was crying hysterically and I soon too began to cry. I was seven years old then.

Fast forward a couple of years. My mom and I go to New York in the summer and we were staying at the Waldorf Astoria. It was a beautiful and expensive hotel that my mom had always wanted to take me to because it is shown in her favorite movie, *Coming to America*. That was one of the best trips I had ever had. I knew that when I grew up, I'd live in New York just because of that experience. The trip went sour just as we were about to head back to Virginia. My mom went up to the valet parking booth in order to get her car back and the man at

the booth said something along the lines of, "You must have the wrong hotel. I don't think people like you could afford a place like this."

My mom caused a scene and complained to the manager and the staff apologized to us many times, but that didn't make it any better. On the drive back to Virginia the whole car was dead silent. I was thirteen years old then.

Being black in white America is such a funny thing. Blackness is a sort



Kadijah Janneh poses in her traditional clothing on Eid. The picture was taken after she finished doing henna on herself and to the members of her mosque as a free gift.

of trend nowadays yet black people are still marginalized. I see my Afrocentric features such as my big lips and darker skin celebrated on caucasian and lighter and skinned women, but black women are still held to Eurocentric beauty standards such as having looser curl patterns or straight hair and a smaller nose. I am told by people who don't experience things such as what I described above that I should "get over it" or "stop complaining," but these same people bump to rap music talking about the struggles of Black Americans. Being black in "white" America, more specifically a black woman, is being constantly reminded of residual societal effects of the enslavement of people who looked like me and constantly being silenced because if I speak up I'm stereotyped as an "angry black woman."



Kadijah Janneh performs a cultural Sierra Leon dance in traditional clothing during Heritage Night in 2019.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important to you?



MIKU MENGESHA
freshman

"I think it is important to celebrate Black History Month because as a black person, I find it important to celebrate our culture."



DELINA GEBREHWOT
freshman

"I think celebrating Black History Month is important because it allows people to get together to learn about the culture."



YUSUF NOORE
sophomore

"Because I'm black and Martin Luther King Jr. wants us to celebrate what he did for us and I am a proud black person and love to celebrate my culture."



ANDREA SEGOVIA
sophomore

"I think it's important to celebrate all cultures and it's important to celebrate different cultures."



OMIAR AHMED
junior

"It's important to celebrate Black History Month because it gives me a chance to show people that I am proud to be black."



PRINCESS AGYEMAN
junior

"Because I am a black female, I think celebrating how far black people have gone is important to recognize."



ABBY KITILA
senior

"I think it's important to recognize the influential historical figures, like during the Civil Rights Movement, and also to recognize black culture."



PHILLIP HARRIS
STEM teacher

"I think it is important to celebrate because blacks have contributed a lot to our nation. With all these things being celebrated in our nation, to me, when we go to our history classes, we just don't learn about it."

Incredible inventions you didn't know were by African American innovators

BY MARIAN OSMAN
In-Depth Editor

There are many products that many people use on a day to day basis that were created by an African American. Most of these products are mistaken to be created by another individual. Some were used for special occasions and could have saved someone's life if it did not exist.

Since it is Black History Month, it is time to give credit to those responsible for these inventions.

Here are five inventions that were created by black people and are an important factor to the U.S. history and our lives.

1 GAS MASK

As most people who have taken history class know, during World War I there were new inventions. Some examples of these inventions include tear gas and other poisonous gases. These gases were being thrown at enemies to kill the soldiers and make them suffocate to death. Soldiers never knew what could be thrown at them or when they could be attacked, so having a gas mask was an important part of staying alive when you were in the trenches. In 1912, Garrett Morgan created a safety hood, which was later called a gas mask. This prevented firefighters from dying when they had to enter a fire to save people. The safety hood, had tubes that acted as filters to bring in air that was breathable. Morgan also used his gas mask to save workers who were in a tunnel explosion and were having trouble breathing, as they would not exit the tunnel. He later went on to work on traffic signals, as he realized there were too many car accidents happening.



This is a picture of Garrett Morgan's gas mask, which was originally called a safety hood and patented as a breathing device.

3 BLOOD BANK

Charles Richard Drew was a surgeon who received his degree from Columbia University. He wanted to figure out if there was a way to separate red blood cells from the plasma, and if it could be stored. He figured out that he could store blood for a long time, helping with blood transfusions. This was the stepping stone for the Red Cross, which comes to schools like AHS to collect blood to help people who get in accidents and need blood transfusions immediately. Blood banks also played a big war during World War II when Drew began to work for the military and set up blood banks for the Navy and Army. He later quit from this job because of the segregation that he faced, as he was told to give white soldiers blood that was only donated from white people.



Charles Richard Drew is pictured working in a lab observing blood cells under microscope.

4 CARBON-FILAMENT LIGHT BULB

Whenever most people are asked about who created the light-bulb, they answer with Thomas Edison. Actually, there was a team that was working with Thomas Edison to create the light bulb. One of those members was Lewis H. Latimer. He first worked with Alexander Graham Bell in creating the telephone. Edison created a light bulb that would die out at most in 15 minutes, which would make it expensive for it to buy because people would need to buy multiple of them to light the house for a day. Latimer made improvements to the light bulb and used carbon instead, since it would last longer. This helped lower the production costs, and this gave everyone a chance of being able to light up their house even if they couldn't afford it at first.



Lewis H. Latimer is pictured next to a carbon-filament light bulb that he invented.

5 SHOE LASTING MACHINE

Jan Matzeliger was born in Surinam but came to the United States when he was 21 and worked at a shoe factory in Massachusetts. Hand lasters were the ones who put shoes together. Hand lasters had one of the hardest jobs on the assembly line, but they got paid the most. At this time, shoes were expensive to purchase and took a long time to make. Hand laster's that were skilled would usually complete about 50 pairs of shoes a day, which was still slow. Matzeliger didn't know how to speak English, so he began to attend school so that he could start up a machine that would create shoes in a faster and efficient way. Years later, he created a shoe lasting machine that could produce 150 to 700 pairs of shoes in one day.



Jan Matzeliger is pictured working on his shoe lasting machine invention.

5 movies led by black actors

BY KRISTINA REGMI
Staff Writer

February is known as Black History month, and what is a better way to celebrate black history month than watching movies that represent African Americans in the film industry?

Black History Month has been celebrated on February by presidents of the United States since the late 70s.

Movies like "42" and "Loving" display and present how life was difficult for African Americans back then.

Most of these movies are connected to history and are not talked about in most history classes.

It gives us a perspective and viewpoint on black lives as it focuses on their struggles and complications as growing up black.

Here are the top five movies that show different black actors and actresses in different types of movies.

They are of all different genres, from science fiction to sports and historical fiction.

If you are interested in learning more about Black History Month or learning about things that you never knew about then you will enjoy these movies.



Hidden Figures (2016)

Genre: Historical Fiction, Drama

This movie revolves around three African American women, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson who were the true women behind the launch of John Glenn into orbit. In the beginning they were treated differently and were denied basic rights such as using the same bathroom as white women.



Black Panther (2018)

Genre: Science fiction, Fantasy, Action, Superhero

The movie takes place in Wakanda, a well developed kingdom in Africa. It looks different from the outside, but once inside it has developed technology. T'Challa has to save and protect his country while being both the king and the Black Panther.



Malcolm X (1992)

Genre: Romance, Historical Drama

This movie is a biography about Malcolm X, who is played by Denzel Washington. The movie starts off about his childhood in Nebraska, where his dad gets killed, and his mom gets put in a mental institution. The movie then switches to his teenage life then his adulthood. The movie shows his death as well as the events after his death.



Loving (2016)

Genre: History, Drama

This movie shows the interracial couple Richard and Mildred Loving, played by actors Joel Edgerton and Ruth Negga, who got married in Virginia and were arrested for it. They took their case to the Supreme Court (Loving v. Virginia), which eventually allowed interracial marriages to be legal.



42 (2013)

Genre: Sports, Drama

The movie revolves around Jackie Robinson, an African American in a baseball team where he goes through many conflicts and racism, who is played by actor Chadwick Boseman. The movie starts in 1945, where Jackie Robinson gets an invite by Branch Rickey, played by actor Harrison Ford, to the Brooklyn Dodgers, a Major League baseball team.

Recognizing influential African Americans

BY KRISTINA REGMI
Staff Writer

February is dedicated to honor Black History, and many African Americans, particularly those who helped shape the society we have today. They fought for civil rights, freedom, and racial equality for colored people so African Americans now can have the freedom they have now. Here is a list of individuals who made a significant difference to our country:



FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1818-1895)

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery, and soon later escaped from slavery. Douglass became an important leader during the abolitionist movement. He helped convince President Abraham Lincoln to let slaves serve in the Union Army during the Civil War, and he made sure that the abolition of slavery was the main goal of the war. Douglass did not only support rights for African Americans, but he called for rights for women as well. Douglass supported women's suffrage

and even signed the Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls.



HARRIET TUBMAN (1820-1913)

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery but escaped to the North for freedom.

Tubman is famous for being the "conductor" of the underground railroad, where she helped hundreds of slaves escape from the South to the North for freedom. She was given the nickname "Moses" for never losing a "passage". She also helped the Union Army during the Civil War by working as a nurse, cook, and a spy. Tubman also supported the women's suffrage and helped Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony raise funds. There have been talks to replace U.S. president Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with Tubman.



LANGSTON HUGHES (1902-1967)

Langston Hughes was a poet, social activist, and playwright. He was an active leader during

the Harlem Renaissance, which was the turning point for black history. One of his most famous poems is "Harlem", which aims attention at the dreams of African Americans during the 1950s. This poem is also referred to as "Dream Deferred." Hughes used his play and novels to promote and advocate racism and injustice for being black.



ROSA PARKS (1913-2005)

Rosa Parks is famous for not giving up her seat to a white passenger on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and getting arrested for that matter. This event helped start and inspire the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Rosa Parks became active in many organizations that were created to end racial discrimination and inequality for African Americans. She was also part of the Montgomery National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which still exists and serves people of color today. In addition to organizations, she participated in many marches like March on Washington, which was a march for jobs and civil rights for African Americans.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (1929-1968)

Martin Luther King Jr. is one of the most important and famous civil rights leaders. He was a Christian minister and activist who used nonviolent protests during the African American Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, King and many other African Americans boycotted a bus in Montgomery, Alabama that prohibited African Americans from sitting in the front seat of the bus. This event led to a change in bus laws and prevented segregation on buses. In a march for civil and economic rights in Washington D.C., King delivered a legendary speech "I Have a Dream" that became well known to everyone across the country, and called for change in America.



BARACK OBAMA (1961-)

Barack Obama made history when he became the first African American to become the president of the United States. He was the 44th

president of the United States from 2009 to 2017 and served as an Illinois senator before he became president. He was also the first president to be born outside of the contiguous United States, as he was born and raised in Hawaii. As president, Obama signed the Affordable Care Act (2010) or simply known as Obamacare, which helped millions of Americans that were low-income, get lower costs for their health insurance.



This is a picture of African Americans protesting for the rights and equality that they were denied during the Civil Rights Movement.

What happened to the Black History Bowl?

BY BRENDA HUAMANI & FRANCIS MONTEVILLA
Spanish Editor & In-Depth Editor

If there is one in-school event that many people forward to, it is the annual Black History Bowl.

As a unique tradition held by AHS, the Black History Bowl is a quiz bowl that tests students on their knowledge of black history topics, which range from music to science to civil rights. Participants consist of four groups representing each grade level, each one consisting of five students. By committing to participate, the students must memorize several facts from a packet provided by the event organizers and compete against other grade levels for first place and a prize of \$100 for their class with an additional \$100 for the winning group.

The event is usually held towards the end of February during an extended W4, as Black History Month comes to a conclusion. However, the fate of this year's Black History Bowl remains unknown.

Usually, the organizers for the Black History Bowl are the National Black Studies Honor Society with the help of the Black Student Union (BSU). However, from the beginning of the year,

new sponsors were assigned to BSU, which has complicated the status of having a Black History Bowl. "Our sponsors are new to Annandale, so they want to learn more about the bowl before we decide to help run it in the future," senior Kadijah Janneh, president of the Black Student Union, said.

"The Black History Bowl is going to be held, I just don't know if it will be held in the month of February, which it should be," Phillip Harris, who is the regular Black History Bowl host speaker, said. "I would prefer the history teachers to be involved to review the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes, just like we've done in the past. But, I do believe that the pictures and the music should be much more lively and correspond to what we're doing with the computers now."

Nonetheless, BSU still hopes to help out with any preparations that may come up if it is decided that there will be a Black History Bowl. Regardless of the decision, BSU will also be holding other events such as "Chill and Paint," which will be held in early March. "We are also going to have days where all club members wear attire that represents black culture, such as dashikis and other fashion associated with black culture," Janneh said.



Class of 2019 participants from the 2019 Black History Bowl introduce themselves at the start of the event.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY FRANCIS MONTEVILLA AND MARIAN OSMAN

JUDE NAWAY



A mosque pictured at nightfall by senior Lamis Osman in Khartoum, Sudan, which is the capital of the country. "It was beautiful to see in person," Osman said.

Taking a trip to the homeland

BY LAMIS OSMAN
Special to The A-Blast

This winter, my sister and I took a trip to Sudan. It has been seven years since we last visited, and the most exciting part of the trip was being reunited with family we have not seen for a long time.

It is a very difficult thing being so far from people who love and care for you, but when reunited, the feeling can not be compared to anything else. Family is the most important thing to us and being able to reconnect with everyone was so heartwarming.

The trip to Sudan was about a 13-hour flight, which was extremely exhausting. Although I was tired from the night before, I was too anxious and excited to fall asleep.

Upon arriving at the airport, we were greeted by all my uncles, aunt, and cousins that we have not seen in the past seven years. I was overjoyed, and everyone was beyond happy to see each other.

Although the main reason for our trip was reuniting with family, another reason was to visit and sightsee Sudan. Going to Sudan, I had this preconceived image of Sudan based on my visit seven years ago.

Upon arriving, however, I noticed a vast difference from what I remembered. The city has completely transformed. I found that there was a lot that was new and different.

I could see that there were a lot of constructions of new buildings, and renovation of older buildings that I did not recognize from my previous trip.

There were also a lot more new restaurants and cafes throughout the cities. My favorite restaurant was called Root's, which was an Italian restaurant. I frequently visited this restaurant as they served a variety of pasta, which I really loved.

Another place I frequently visited during my trip was the Nile River. The Nile River is a tourist attraction site, as it is considered to be the longest river not only in Africa, but also in the world.

Throughout my stay, I took many boat rides in the river and was able to look at and enjoy the various beauties that lay in Sudan.

The most memorable night of my trip was actually by the Nile. When we first arrived it was around the evening and the sun was getting ready to set. We then got our coffee and sat alongside the river and watched the sunset. It was an extraordinary moment that I will cherish for my life.

In addition to that, I also spent my time going out with my cousins to various festivals and concerts. We always strived to make the most out of every day as our time there was short.

My trip to Sudan made me feel at home, and I felt I was welcomed because I was surrounded by people just like me.

Although we had only stayed a short time of three weeks, we managed to make the most of it. All my friends and family enjoying all the aspects of this beautiful country and had a great impact on me and it's a trip for the books.



Lamis Osman, far right, is out with her friends and sister to visit Sudan's many sceneries.

Locusts infest East Africa

BY DUC NGO
Staff Writer

In rural areas of East Africa, in countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, there are dark clouds of buzzing locusts. These dark clouds will spread and grow into a plague unless something is done.

The swarms of desert locusts are quite huge in size, with the largest swarm in Kenya being 37 miles long and 25 miles wide, as reported by the Smithsonian Magazine. These swarms are also affecting neighboring countries of Kenya such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, and Djibouti. This is not just some nightmare for entomology, but could quickly translate to a severe case of famine.

"The fact that I didn't know anything about this, and I don't hear any of my friends talking about this is shocking to be honest," senior Hakim Idris said.

Each square kilometer of a swarm contains as much as 40 to 80 million locusts, and each swarm can cover 150 kilometers in one day. Since each locust can eat as much as their body weight in plant materials, a swarm can turn any



Locusts, pictured above, are responsible for ravaging East African communities.

farmlands on its path a barren land. A medium-sized swarm is estimated to be able to eat the same amount of food as the population of Kenya.

Experts have credited this outbreak to an increase in numbers of cyclones in this region, giving East Africa more rainfall and fairer weather. Last fall, this region received the highest amount of rainfall in recent years (120% to 400% increase compared to normal), therefore fueling this growth of locust populations.

Keeping in mind the destructive power of the swarm, it also happens that the region they are wreaking havoc in has been in is home to 20 million people who have already been facing food insecurity. If left unchecked, it's been

estimated that the swarm could grow 400 times by June. This will then be categorized as a plague, which could last for a decade or more. So the clock is ticking and it is critical to deal with this problem before there is a dire consequence.

"I hope that President Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia will speak up more about this topic, since she promised the nation to promote and raise awareness for the farmers in the region," freshman Ruftana Beyene said.

"Because more than half of Ethiopia is rural, the people tend to get their foods from village farms that the locusts are decimating, and I could only imagine that this will increase the food insecurity," junior Kalkedan Malefia said.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GOV



Germany Shooting

A far-right extremist killed nine people on Wednesday, February 19th in Germany. The shootings took place in Shisha bars which were deliberately chosen by the suspect as Middle Eastern and other Asian immigrants are customers there. Five among the nine dead, have been identified to be Turkish citizens. The suspect was found later that night dead alongside his mother, after hours of manhunt.

Murder in Lesotho

Prime Minister of Lesotho, Thomas Thabane, is to be charged with murdering his former wife Lipolelo Thabane. Lipolelo Thabane was found dead in 2017, just days before Thomas Thabane took office. His current wife Maesaiah Thabane has already been charged with murder charges of the former first lady. She is now out on a bail of just \$67.

Brazilian Senator

Brazilian Senator Cid Gomes was shot in the chest in a standoff with military police. The standoff came after Gomes tried to intervene and stop a strike by driving a bulldozer into a crowd of military police protesting low wages. After being shot, Gomes was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he is now in a stable condition. Following this, Public Safety Minister Sergio Moro has issued the deployment of federal security forces where the strike is being held.

Venice Carnival

Annual Carnival that is held in Venice, Italy has been cut short in an attempt to control an outbreak of Coronavirus that has been growing within the country. The number of people reported to have been infected with the virus in Italy has now reached at least 133. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has ordered a quarantine of towns in Northern Italy such as Veneto, where the festival takes place. Universities and schools have also been suspended until further notice.

Earthquake in Turkey

Nine dead and 37 injured after an earthquake that took place on Sunday in Eastern Turkey. The magnitude-5.7 quake centered on Iran's west province, but the impact was largely in its western neighbor Turkey. Among the nine dead were three children.

Immigrant stories: Coming to America

How sophomore Michael Bekele made his journey from Ethiopia to the United States

BY BROOKE FEKRU
International Editor

Sophomore Michael Bekele first came to the United States from his native country, Ethiopia, when he was just ten years old.

Bekele's father decided to make a monumental decision and come to the U.S. in hopes of providing a better future for Bekele and his siblings.

"My father came to the U.S. first and started the process to bring my mother, my sister and me," Bekele said.

It was not long after his father came to the U.S. that his mother, sister, and Bekele got news about their visas being approved.

Following this news, however, Bekele's mother decided to stay back with his sister and send Bekele to the U.S. first.

"My sister was just finishing her last year of high school and my mother wanted to wait until she graduated instead of moving," Bekele said.

So at the age of ten Bekele was booked a one-way ticket to America.

"I was extremely scared because I was alone, and did not really know anyone," Bekele said.

Bekele recalls the night he departed. "I remember the whole night just being confused and not really knowing

what was going on," Bekele said. In fact, it was not until his mother and sister began to cry Bekele knew he was leaving that night.

The flight to the U.S. took 14 hours, and only had one stop in Italy.

Recounting his flight experience Bekele said, "at first I was anxious and scared, however, because I was so exhausted from the previous day I fell asleep quickly and was not awake for most of the flight."

Bekele arrived in January, and says it was snowing really hard that winter.

"Coming from Ethiopia, where it just hailed ice, which happened rarely too, it was shocking for me at that moment," Bekele said.

Getting accustomed to life in America was not extremely hard for Bekele.

"I attended an international school while I was in Ethiopia, which really helped me to learn English and to an extent learn about America in general," Bekele said.

One thing that Bekele did grapple with however is the diverse community present within America. "Growing up, I only interacted with people from my own culture and ethnicity, but coming here it was very different," Bekele said.

This was especially hard for Bekele as he was in elementary school and made him feel isolated and disconnected from

his cultural identity. "It was hard to fit in because everyone had their own cultures and languages," Bekele said.

However, as he began to grow up he learned the value of appreciating the diversity that was present in the community while still connecting with his Ethiopian identity.

"I attend an Ethiopian Orthodox church, which is a great way to interact with the Ethiopian community here," Bekele said.

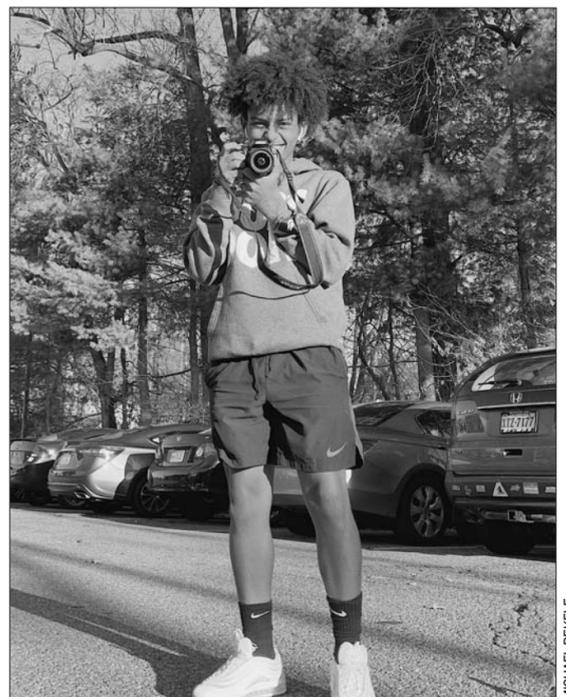
In addition to that Bekele says that attending Annandale, which has a large population of Ethiopian and Eritrean students, he is able to have a sense of community within the school.

"I run cross country, which has a lot of Habesha runners," Bekele said.

Bekele is also taking part in the upcoming Heritage Night as part of the Habesha group representing Ethiopia and Eritrea.

"I am really excited and have invited all my friends and family because I want to show how I can represent my culture," Bekele said.

After completing high school, Bekele plans to attend college and major in international business or international relations while minoring in photography. In the future, he hopes to move and live the remainder of his life in Ethiopia.



MICHAEL BEKELE

Fashion around the world

Anjum Ashraf, Bangladesh, 11

Q: How would you describe Bangladeshi fashion?

A: It is very extravagant. Clothes are filled with a lot of sequins and gorgeous, detailed patterns.

Q: What is the most unique piece of clothing from Bangladesh?

A: A unique piece of clothing in Bangladesh is the lungi. It's worn by men as casual clothing. It's a piece of cloth in the shape of a long skirt that's knotted at the waist.

Q: What is your favorite piece of clothing from Bangladesh?

A: Urnas are my favorite piece of clothing because they add a lot to an outfit. An urna is basically a long scarf and I usually drape it over my shoulder.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANJUM ASHRAF

Kelly Tieu, Vietnam, 11

Q: How would you describe Vietnamese fashion?

A: My Vietnamese heritage traces back to the south, the warmer parts of Vietnam. There, common folk can be found with loose fitted clothing and bright, breathable fabrics.

Q: What is the most unique piece of clothing from Vietnam?

A: Nón lá, which translates to leaf hat in English, is a commonly worn hat by farmers and other civilians to provide shade from the harsh sun. It's a Vietnamese trademark.

Q: What is your favorite piece of clothing from Vietnam?

A: My favorite piece of clothing would have to be the traditional ao dai with long sleeves and high necklines.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY TIEU

Najma Abikar, Somalia, 11

Q: How would you describe Somali fashion?

A: Fashion in Somalia is very unique. Women wear a lot of long dresses and cover themselves. Sometimes, they wear long veils to cover their faces too.

Q: What is a popular fashion trend in Somalia?

A: Colors like orange and red are a really big trend in Somalia.

Q: What is the most unique piece of clothing from Somalia?

A: It is very hard to choose one thing that is very unique when all the clothes in Somalia are one of a kind. I believe all the clothes in Somalia are unique because they have patterns that are made to stand out.

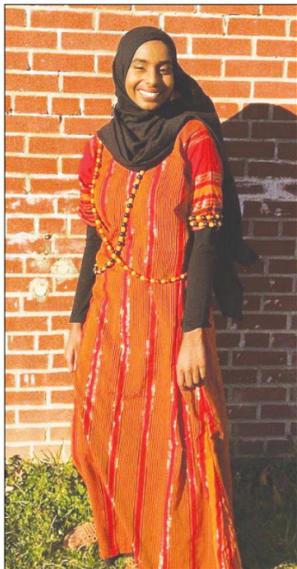


PHOTO COURTESY OF NAJMA ABIKAR

Litzy Ramirez, Mexico, 12

Q: How would you describe Mexican fashion?

A: Mexican fashion is very vibrant and fun. The colors in each piece of clothing stand out. A lot can be seen from a distance.

Q: What is the most unique piece of clothing from Mexico?

A: A unique piece of clothing would be a huipil. A huipil is a common traditional handmade top or dress that usually has many colors.

Q: What is your favorite piece of clothing from Mexico?

A: The typical Mexican handmade dresses have always been my favorite. They are very comfortable and I love wearing them.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LITZY RAMIREZ

Elizabeth Dula, Ethiopia, 12

Q: How would you describe Ethiopian fashion?

A: Ethiopian fashion is very diverse because there are so many tribes and groups, but overall it's very vibrant, colorful, and unique.

Q: What is the most unique piece of clothing from Ethiopia?

A: A kemis (traditional dress) almost always has a scarf called a netela, which covers the back and shoulders. When attending church, the two layers of the netela are opened and can cover your hair.

Q: What is your favorite piece of clothing from Ethiopia?

A: My favorite piece of clothing is called kaba. Usually worn during weddings by a bride and groom, it reminds me of royalty.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH DULA

Sadaf Khan, Afghanistan, 12

Q: How would you describe Afghani fashion?

A: I would describe Afghanistan's fashion as very pretty, modest, and unique.

Q: What is a popular fashion trend in Afghanistan?

A: A very popular fashion trend in Afghanistan is two-piece tops and pants. Both men and women can wear them.

Q: What is your favorite piece of clothing from Afghanistan?

A: My favorite piece of clothing from Afghanistan is called a Chapan. It is like a jacket or vest with beautiful and intricate designs all over. It was originally designed for men, but many women wear it now.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SADAF KHAN

Talkin' with Thonny



BY THONNY ANWAR
Lifestyles Editor

I just finished presentations in my IB Literature class. At the end of every presentation, my teacher requires the class to give one compliment and one suggestion. I am worried about giving a suggestion though. I'm afraid my teacher will dock points from the student if it's something that she didn't notice before. What should I do?

Sincerely,
A concerned student

Dear concerned student,
I also take IB English, and I also wonder if the criticism we give to our fellow classmates results in possibly getting points taken away from their presentations.

Personally, I think giving criticism is just going to make someone get better and help them in the long run.

To get a definitive answer, I asked IB Literature I teacher Stephanie Hanson about it.

She was quick to say that other students' criticism definitely doesn't impact student grades even if it's something she hadn't noticed at first.

The organization aspect for IB rubrics is very minor. If you already got points taken off for a small reason, one more thing isn't going to make a difference.

Now you know that you are free to give suggestions to your classmates after presentations.

Don't worry about hurting their feelings either because it's likely that they're as eager to move on as much as you are.

This Valentine's Day, I received a lot of treats and gifts from my friends. I am really thankful that my friends cared so much to get me things and make me feel special, but I can't help but feel bad. I had nothing prepared to give them because I didn't know we were giving out treats. Does receiving these gifts from my friends and not giving anything back make me a bad person?

Sincerely,
A worried valentine

Dear worried valentine,
Just because someone gives you a gift does not mean you have to give them something in return. Your friends chose to get you treats for Valentine's Day.

A lot of people choose to believe that it is common courtesy to give something back just because they give you a gift, but I personally think that gifts are given with the intent of showing love and how much you care for someone.

They can also be given as a way of showing how grateful you are, but they are certainly not given to repay people for receiving something from them.

There's no need for you to feel bad about receiving these gifts, and I don't think you are a bad person.

Instead of worrying, be grateful for your friends and how much they love you. Remember that friendship isn't transactional.

Fashion Spotlight: Hunter Duggan, 11

Q: Where do you like to shop?

A: I have decided to quit supporting the fast fashion industry, which means I don't shop at any stores you would find in the mall. I only shop at second-hand stores or from independent designers.

Q: What is your favorite accessory?

A: I really need to get better at accessorizing, but I would have to say a belt or a choker can do a lot for an outfit.

Q: What's your favorite season to dress for?

A: Spring is the perfect weather for my style. I can layer one shirt on top of another without sweating, but I can also wear a skirt without freezing.

Q: What do you wear on bum days?

A: I wear sweats or pajamas but in the summer, my bum days are more like shorts and a t-shirt just because it's easier. Recently, I've been trying to at least wear jeans on my bum days.

Q: Do you dress to impress or for yourself?

A: I dress for both. If I'm by myself at my house, I won't dress up and I'll stay comfortable. At the same time, I also don't really care if people in public don't like what I wear.

Q: What is your favorite pair of shoes?

A: My favorite pair of everyday shoes is a pair I thrifted of old, brightly colored high top Nikes.

Q: What is a fashion trend you dislike?

A: I'm generally in support of any trend that makes people feel good about themselves, although the whole "sagging" thing never grew on me.

Q: Who is your fashion inspiration?

A: My fashion journey began with Melanie Martinez, but I've grown a lot from that. Notable names would have to be Grace Vanderwaal, Jessie Paega, and Stella Rose as well.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HUNTER DUGGAN

Junior Hunter Duggan wears a pastel pink turtle neck with a teddy bear zip up and oversized light wash jeans.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HUNTER DUGGAN

Duggan wears a knee length navy dress paired with a petticoat and tan high heels.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KARLA MERCADO DORADO

Senior Kathleen Lewis works as a tutor and helps her fellow peers study and prepare for school assignments. "I find it fulfilling when I help other people out," Lewis said.

Senior volunteer helps out around the community

KARLA MERCADO DORADO
People Editor

While students are expected to work hard in their classes and get involved in extracurriculars, there is one other aspect to the ideal profile of a student: community service.

While most high schoolers may be at home sleeping or only working on school, senior IB Diploma candidate Kathleen Lewis finds time in her busy schedule to think about others first.

Students of all ages are becoming more involved in their communities, assisting with fundraising events for different organizations or helping out underserved groups in their neighborhoods.

High schools in Fairfax County offer a graduation cord and a Civics Seal as incentive to complete community service hours during a student's sophomore year, and then continue to promote the importance of civic engagement the remaining years.

For many kids, this incentive is seen as more of an inconvenience, as teachers constantly push their students to meet the minimum amount of hours required.

Lewis is one of the students who views it as another opportunity to do what she most enjoys, which is helping those in need.

"My mom always told me that if someone is hungry or in need of

something, it's always best to offer it," Lewis said, a philosophy by which she tries to live every day.

"I recognize that I am able to have things. Don't be afraid to offer it help because you can always have a second chance or more food, access to clothing or a warm house, while some people don't have those same opportunities," Lewis said.

It is this mindset that has inspired Lewis to partake in number of community service projects throughout the neighborhood.

Lewis' week begins on Monday, with a trip to the Bright Horizons Early Education & Preschool Daycare Center located near the Inova Fairfax Hospital.

There, she spends time with kids playing games, doing puzzles and crafts, and reading to them during storytime.

Thursdays are super busy, as she dedicates her afternoon first to kids at nearby Braddock Elementary through National English Honor Society's Atoms and Eagles program, and then to other members of the community at a food bank sponsored by the local United Methodist Church.

Every last Sunday of each month, she visits the Leewood Healthcare Center nursing home with her youth group at Ravensworth Baptist Church. There, they sing hymns, read scripture, and just sit down and chat with the residents to brighten their spirits.

During the day, she's a Teacher Assistant for IB Business teacher Howard Dwyer, and also sets aside time to peer tutor friends in different subject areas.

Lewis cites her desire to become an educator as one of the main motivators for her work with kids and education, as well as her experience with her grandparents as the reason why she helps older adults with special need at the nursing home.

Outside of physical service, Lewis likes to keep the kindness going with donations to non-profit organizations such as The Wounded Warrior Project, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, and the Trevor Project whenever she is able.

When asked about how she maintains such a busy schedule, she said she uses a timing system to space out tasks, trying to use her time as wisely as possible.

"If you want to do something, you're going to make time to do it. So that means staying up a little bit later than normal or not talking to your friends when you're doing homework. Utilizing your W4 time is also important," says Lewis.

Her work for the community is impressive, but could be intimidating for some students who may want to start helping out but are concerned about schedule conflicts or burn out. Here's what Lewis has to say to students who may be hesitant about adding regular volunteering to their daily lives:

"Any chance you get to be happy, or give a compliment, or make someone else's day, you should take it. Change is change, no matter how small."

Should community service be required in school?



JASSON RODRIGUEZ
freshman

"In some cases, yes, because it allows students to actually get out from home and do something productive for once, like help with church, help with schooling, or fundraisers. It can also help build more on the school so we can do more things on school grounds."



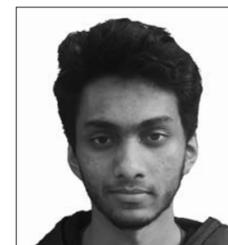
DANIEL DIAZ
sophomore

"No, not really, because if people don't want to support the community, that's their problem, and if they do support it, they should get something out of it. So no, I don't think it should be required, but the Civics seal is a pretty cool goal to strive for."



ALEJANDRO ERAZO
junior

"I think community service is an important part of developing as a person, and it has become a natural part of high school and college life, so making it a requirement would not change much about the current system, other than adding a bit more pressure."



ZAHIN HOWLADER
senior

"Community service is important because it helps people become better citizens, but I don't think it should be required because it adds extra stress for some students."



Senior Kathleen Lewis poses in front of Bright Horizons Early Education & Preschool Daycare Center with friends and fellow volunteers, Christine Trieu and Kani Khaled, who are also seniors.

HUMANS OF ANNANDALE

My freshman year I participated in cross country and made it onto the varsity team. The following spring I ran spring track. One of my strongest events is the 800 meters. This year, I did cross country again and I am anticipating doing spring track once again this coming spring.

I felt like doing sports as a freshman really expanded my friend group and helped me know more upperclassmen, which came in handy because they gave amazing advice.

Also, the track and cross country coaches are unbelievable. They are so understanding and they know how to push you just enough for you to excel as an amazing runner. I would definitely encourage taking up track or cross country because it's such an encouraging, positive community of people.

Something you may not know about me is that I suffered with severe anxiety and depression in the beginning of my sophomore year. I even had to stop sports for a while and I felt like I was losing all the things that made me, me.

I felt very lost and confused why I was fighting a battle that I felt so defeated in. But as I kept working on myself, slowly but surely, I saw myself coming back as the stronger person I didn't know was underneath all the pain. I had to remind myself daily that you have to just let your life unfold itself and where life takes you



JENNA CAPPELLO
sophomore

is where you were meant to be led.

Your life isn't going to be perfect, but in your flaws is what makes your life yours. I also had to learn how to love myself even on the bad days when I didn't even want to get out of bed. I had to learn to embrace the now and stop doubting myself and my strengths.

I had to keep going despite the struggles and let me tell you, you won't believe the amazing, more resilient person that comes out of all the suffering. I am always here if you ever need advice.

Remember to love yourselves and be kind to yourself everyday. Also remember seeking help doesn't classify you as weak.

WHO AM I?

I went to school at...
New York University

I was born in...
Scranton, Pennsylvania

My favorite book is...
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

My favorite author is...
Ernest Hemingway

My favorite movie is...
"Rocky"

Before teaching at Annandale...
I was teaching at Sandburg Middle school in Alexandria.

I chose teaching because...
I loved English as a student and I wanted to pass that on to future generations and influence young readers and writers.

My greatest fear is...
snakes!

I chose to teach at Annandale because...
of its diverse population. I had also heard really good things about the English department here.

My favorite food is...
pizza!



My favorite topping...
I like it just plain with cheese

In my free time...
I like to do yoga, I like to read, and I like to write.

Use a QR Code scanner to reveal Who Am I?



Game over? Esports club canceled

BY DUC NGO
Staff Writer

The hype was growing within the walls of AHS leading up to the debut date of the Esports club earlier this month.

Ultimately, there was no debut of the Esports club. In fact, the after school activity will have to be delayed until the next school year.

This is because of the new decision by Fairfax County Public Schools to ban Fortnite from all high school esports events.

FCPS made this decision right after Kentucky schools made similar rules for their students.

Kentucky schools made this decision based on the agreement that Fortnite is too violent to allow students to play the game on school grounds.

The company that outsources and provides the game was also banned.

The Kentucky High School Athletics Association stated that "there is no place for shooter games in schools," as reported by the *Lexington Herald Leader*.

"This doesn't quite come as a complete surprise for me, since video games have always had a bad reputation to some people, especially adults," senior Ryan Charest said.

Fortnite is a cartoonish approach TPS (third person shooter), battle-royale game.

The game features no gore and incorporates quirky, brightly natured characters.

In Fortnite, players can either join a group or play alone, surviving through skirmishes, eliminating other players with firearms until their team or themselves becomes the last one standing.



Senior Ryan Charest enjoys playing video games any chance he can get even if that means playing during school.



DUC NGO

PlayVS, which FCPS and many other schools contracted for their esports program, added Fortnite without authorization.

This action without authorization most likely added more fuel to the flame, and thus resulted in the delay of Annandale's proposed Esports Club.

"Within a day that this article had come out, FCPS followed suit and immediately barred the company," Elliot Merker, who would have been the club's sponsor, said.

PlayVS is a private, California based company that gives high school students all over the United States the chance to compete in esports events.

They established the live streams, the venues, and the organization of tournaments.

Founded in 2018, by Delane Parnell, the company organizes League of Legends, Smite, and Rocket League tournaments, with its latest addition being Fortnite.

"I think it's kind of strange that they make a case against Fortnite, but ignores the other games like League of Legends and Smite," senior Mitchell Eggert said. "All of them still have violent aspects within their gameplay."

PlayVS organizes each school year to have two competition seasons. The first fall season lasts from October to

January.

The second spring season lasts from February to May. Each season has an initial two weeks of preseason, afterward by eight weeks long regular season, followed by the playoffs. At the end of each season, one team will receive the title of champion.

"We had a full roster, a full seven teams worth of students ready to go," Merker said. "That makes it 21 students that were selected, that signed up, and the day before the registration date, FCPS announced that we are not allowed to participate."

Aside from PlayVS's lack of concern for authorizations, there has been

a long-running concern over school shootings that many officials arbitrarily linked to violent games featuring guns.

Games like CS: GO (Counter-Strike: Global Offensive), PUBG (Player's Unknown Battleground), alongside the Call of Duty, and Battlefield franchise is looked upon as inspiring such violent acts and would have little chance to be accepted into school organized esports tournaments.

"This disappointment is not only from the students but there is actual school staff that were very excited about this, myself included," Merker said. "It's sad to say it, but if the county made a decision, then it is what it is."

Students weigh in on the upcoming XFL season

BY CYRUS ASSADZADEH
Staff Writer

With the NFL playoffs coming to an end, football fans are excited for the return of the XFL.

"I'm ready for the season to start and more football," freshman Robel Asefa said.

While some students may be excited for XFL, others may not be as interested but are happy that there is more football to watch.

"It's not that interesting to me," freshman Moe Ibrahim said. "But I like that, thanks to the XFL, there's more football to watch after the NFL season is over."

The XFL is a televised football league, similar to the NFL, but has some rules that are changed to make the game more fast-paced and unique.

There are many ways that the XFL has changed the rules to make football faster paced.

First, they set down the play clock to 25 seconds, unlike the NFL, which has a 40-second play clock.

In addition to shortening the play clock, the XFL had also shortened the halftime to be 10 minutes long.

The XFL has also made many other various changes to the rules of football that have made the game more unique and enticing.

Teams can go for 3 point conversions after scoring, there can be two forward passes behind the line of scrimmage.

The XFL officially debuted in 2001 and initially had good reviews, but eventually declined later on in the first season as fans lost interest.

Some causes of the loss of interest were poor quality commentators and performances of the teams.

Something that may be a boost to the XFL's popularity in the D.C area is the addition of a new Washington based team. The D.C defenders exploded on the scene with the hiring of Pep

Hamilton as the head coach. The team has also made history by winning the first game in XFL history. There are 8 teams in the XFL that play.

However, there is now an additional team called "Team 9" that includes a roster of players in different positions that can be used to fill up roster spots on other teams in case of injury.

"I think that the addition of Team 9 is good," freshman Malcolm Kent said. "When there's a missing player from another team's roster because of an injury or something like that, other players who want a chance at the spotlight will have the opportunity to play and to prove themselves on the field."

It seems like football fans are excited and intrigued by the XFL and the season is only getting started. This alternative to the NFL has fans thrilled and optimistic about it.

XFL games are showcased on Saturdays and Sundays on ABC, Fox, ESPN, and FS1.



Bradley Sylve (left) and Cardale Jones (right) are two of the most popular players who have agreed to have joined the DC Defenders.

EOB DAGNICHIEV

Do you think the XFL will be successful?



OMER MOHAMMED
freshman

"It's cool that there's another professional football league, and it gives other talented football players a chance to play in a high-quality football league."



ROBEL ASEFA
freshman

"I'm excited for the DC Defenders and the XFL because it will be cool to see another local professional football team other than the Redskins."



HAMZA HUSSEIN
freshman

"I think the DC Defenders and the XFL won't do very good, especially since the Defenders are playing at Audi Field, which is a very big stadium, so there probably won't be a lot of fans."



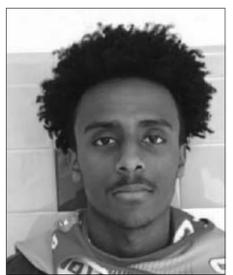
KARLYN FLORES-ORTEGA
freshman

"I think the XFL won't do good because it will always just be in the shadow of the NFL and will probably never be as popular either."



PIERO VERNAZZA-CORTEZ
freshman

"I think that the XFL will kind of be like the AAF, and won't do good and maybe go bankrupt."



LEOULE YARED
sophomore

"I don't think that the XFL will be as successful as the NFL because the NFL has all the stars, unlike the other professional football leagues."

Feburary sports trivia! Can you get them all right?

Q1: How many total career goals does NHL Hall of Famer Wayne Gretzky have?
A. 894
B. 1,005
C. 726
D. 668

Q2: Who broke Joe Theismann's Leg?
A. Roger Staubach
B. Lawrence Taylor
C. O.J. Simpson
D. John Riggins



Q3: What was the name of the minor league team Tim Tebow played on in 2019?
A. Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp
B. Hillsboro Hopps
C. Syracuse Mets
D. Binghamton Rumble Ponies

Q4: Who wore jersey number 45 for the Chicago Bulls in 1995?
A. Micheal Jordan
B. Scottie Pippen
C. Steve Kerr
D. Ron Harper

Q5: Which Washington National player hit a home run in his MLB rookie Debut?
A. Ryan Zimmerman
B. Trea Turner
C. Spencer Kieboom
D. Carter Kieboom

Q6: Who won the 2019 NCAA softball world series?
A. Florida State
B. Florida
C. UCLA
D. Oklahoma

Q7: Who won the XFL championship in 2001?
A. D.C. Defenders
B. San Francisco Demons
C. L.A. Extreme
D. Houston Roughnecks

Q8: Which NFL team drafted Drew Brees?
A. L.A. Chargers
B. New Orleans Saints
C. Dallas Cowboys
D. New York Giants

Q9: What NBA team relocated to Oklahoma City in 2008?
A. Baltimore Bullets
B. Seattle SuperSonics
C. San Diego Clippers
D. Vancouver Grizzlies



Q10: Who Coached the 1981 US Olympic Men's Hockey team?
A. Jim Craig
B. Mark Pavelich
C. Mike Eruzione
D. Herb Brooks

Q11: What year did baseball become an Olympic sport?
A. 1992
B. 1995
C. 1996
D. 1999

Q12: What year was NASCAR created?
A. 1979
B. 1948
C. 1930
D. 1970

Q13: What is the name for the left side of the tennis court for each player?
A. Ad court
B. Od court
C. Duce court
D. Base court

Q14: What is the record for red cards given in a single soccer game?
A. 36
B. 16
C. 6
D. 34

Q15: Which player supposedly put a fifty year curse on the Detroit Lions?
A. Dutch Clark
B. Greg Candry
C. Bobby Layne
D. Earl Morrall



Q16: What country was home to the world's first soccer league?
A. Scotland
B. Italy
C. Germany
D. England

Q17: What team owns the longest winning streak in NBA history?
A. Los Angeles Lakers
B. Miami Heat
C. Chicago Bulls
D. Golden State Warriors

Q18: What was the first NHL team to win back-to-back Stanley Cup titles?
A. New York Rangers
B. Montreal Canadiens
C. Ottawa Senators
D. Vancouver Canucks

Q19: Which sport made its Olympic debut during the 1920 Summer Olympics?
A. Figure Skating
B. Soccer
C. Tennis
D. Ice Hockey

Q20: Which two countries participated in the first international soccer match?
A. France and Italy
B. Germany and England
C. Scotland and England
D. Portugal and Spain

Q21: Who holds the best rookie passer rating in NFL history?
A. Drew Brees
B. Dak Prescott
C. Tom Brady
D. Dan Marino



Junior Glory Nseka (285 lbs.) beats West Potomac opponent to push into State Tournament. He was the youngest Atom that qualified for the tournament.

COURTESY OF ATOMS ATHLETICS

Wrestling triumphs in playoff season

BY TYLER PLANK
Sports Editor

The Atoms have closed the season in a successful manner, even if it hasn't happened the way they've hoped.

The Atoms finished second in the districts but were able to pass on four wrestlers into the regional tournament.

Seniors Patrick Lee (182 lbs.), Ryan Fowler (152 lbs.), Dylan Weaver (170 lbs.), Michee Nseka (285 lbs.), and Junior Glory Nseka (220 lbs.) all represented AHS in this year's regional tournament. Weaver and Lee both took the regional championship for their weight classes.

Every wrestler finished within the top ten and were anxiously waiting for the state tournament.

"The mentality was to literally take it one match at a time and not look ahead," said Coach Joshua Damico. "The goal was to get our five districts champions to the State Tournament, and we did that by having them focus on one match at a time."

As the state tournament finished up on Feb.

22, the Atoms were preparing at high intensity with a simple mindset.

"For the state tournament, we're telling the wrestlers to win the next point or win the next position," said Damico. "We're trying to get the wrestlers to place as high as possible and by focusing on the next point and next position they will do just that."

The strategy worked really well, and Weaver took second place in the state tournament. Michee Nseka also took fourth place in the tournament.

Michee won his first match but lost the next one which set him back to fourth place.

Weaver won his two matches to get into the state championship and lost a close match in the championship round.

At one point, Weaver had a 7-1 point advantage in his first match and won by pin in his second match.

Even the wrestlers who didn't place did a good job during the tournament. Lee came back from being behind by five points in his match, but still wasn't enough to place.

The training for the tournament was at the same level as it had been all season.

As for the physical training, they kept it the same as they had all season with simulated matches. It's worked so far and they're keeping the same method. With weight issues not being a problem, they've been able to practice strictly on wrestling.

"Drilling, situations and live wrestling. None of the wrestlers have weight issues we need to focus on, which is great because they were able to focus on doing what they needed to do to go 1-0 for regionals," said Damico. "They could focus on the goals of winning the next point and next position for the state tournament."

Even though the team had worked hard and been successful, there are still challenges they have to face. The primary focus was to build confidence and be more mentally prepared. It paid off in districts and they wanted to carry it into states.

"For regionals the toughest opponent I felt for some of our wrestlers were themselves; some wrestlers had a bad regional tournament last year and we wanted to make sure that didn't happen again," said Damico. "At some point, they had to tell themselves that they were the better wrestler and go out and show it. For the state tournament,

they were all difficult opponents; if anyone got taken lightly, that's when upsets happen."

The season for the Atoms has been very successful and it's paid off in everyone's eyes. They've had their share of setbacks, but were able to keep moving and keep a winning attitude.

"I feel the team performed well; we finished 11-9 as a team and were wrestling well all year. We were hit with a bit of injuries, illnesses, and quitters throughout the year that prevented us from reaching our full potential," said Damico. "But the starting 13 who wrestled at districts, wrestled their best when it mattered and it helped us have a successful season."

Season Recap

2nd In Districts

Top Ten in Regionals

Placed 4th and 2nd in states

Lady Atoms struggle to find hope in regionals

BY TYLER FOTI
Staff Writer

The Lady Atoms have had a very rough season as they ended the long winter season with a record of, 1-21.

On Feb. 14, the Lady Atoms fell in the Gunston District quarterfinals to the, 6-16 Mount Vernon Majors, by a score of 37-25. With the loss, it now officially ends their chance at a district title.

The Lady Atoms have worked all season on improving on their basketball skills and knowledge, through it all they have only won one game but they worked as a team and they know they did their best.

During the long winter sports season, the Lady Atoms girls have dedicated so much of their time and put forth so much effort into their basketball season.

They have stayed after school every day and practiced for two hours at a time all

while balancing time with family, friends, grades, homework, school and for some extracurriculars.

"We struggled this season to find our balance on both ends of the court," Fawn Tucker said. "However we continue to show resilience and as a coach, that's something you must always be grateful for."

Taking away from family and relaxation time, during winter break the Lady Atoms girls went out and practiced multiple times with the team to improve not only as individuals but also as a team.

"This season has been rough for us but we have tried our best to keep playing as hard as we can even if we are playing a better team," freshman Amanda Salisbury said. "If we can improve on finishing and getting the little things right we will be a much better team next year."

But not everything this year has been bad for the Lady Atoms as everybody on the team has

gotten better in multiple categories, not just with basketball.

"We have improved on working better as a team which has led to us staying connected on the court better," Salisbury said.

Head Coach Fawn Tucker shared a similar perspective on the Lady Atoms season as well.

"Our team has grown not only as basketball players but also as young ladies," Tucker said. "Going through a tough season will either make you or break you, and this season has certainly made the Lady Atoms tougher competitors on and off the basketball court."

For the seniors, this was their last year of eligibility for high school basketball, so the closure of winter sports also brings around a wave of sadness for those girls.

Now that the 2019/20 girls basketball season is over many of the athletes are now transitioning to spring sports, but now with all, they've learned from the season and everything it had to offer.



Freshmen Hailey Garrish gets shot blocked against Westfield. Garrish was one of the four freshman girls who played on varsity this season, she also started in a handful of games.

COURTESY OF RICH TINK

Track team finishes playoff run 2nd in district tournament



Senior Cynthia Nguyen runs the 400 at the Gunston Hall tournament on Jan. 31

COURTESY OF CYNTHIA NGUYEN

BY CYRUS ASSADZADEH
Staff Writer

The track season is coming to the near end after the highly successful Gunston Hall Divisional Tournament and regional championship.

On Feb. 1 at the divisional tournament, AHS took first place in the boys 3200 meter run, girls 1000 meter run, girls 55 meter hurdles finals and prelims.

AHS also took second place in the boys 1600 meter run, boys 4x800 meter relays, boys high jump, boys shot put, girls 300 meter dash, girls 1600 meter run and in the girls high jump. They would finish 2nd in the district.

The team was still trying to prove they could continue their success just a short nine days later at the VHSL Region 6C Championship in Landover, MD.

From Feb. 10-12, the team competed

at regionals for the hope of having a few state qualifiers.

The team did fairly well as the boys managed to take 3rd place in shot put.

Meanwhile, the girls had a great tournament, placing 2nd in the 55 meter hurdle, 3rd place in high jump, and 4th place in shot put.

Throughout the entire season, the AHS indoor track team has worked hard to dominate other schools since the beginning.

They've had their fair share of ups and downs but they managed to pull together throughout the season.

"We've performed a lot better than expected. We've had a lot of improvements in athletes after a rough start at the beginning of the season," Senior Omar Avenando said. "While the season continued, we improved

and we're going to end off great. Improvements are still needed but there are great things to come."

With states coming up, on Feb. 28, the Atoms have been working to maintain athleticism but to also work on being mentally prepared. As of now, they're taking it easy to prevent their qualifiers from getting injured before the competition.

"We're running and training of course, but we're tightening up for the states. We're not trying to do any practices that are too hard but we're still working to maintain our conditioning," said coach Julian Scarbrough. "We're trying to prevent any injuries."

It's been a relatively quiet season for the track team, but they do tend to heighten the intensity for the spring season and plan to add district championship to the record book.

Spring Sports begin to heat up AHS

BY TYLER FOTI
Staff Writer

As the temperature rises and the layers of clothes decrease, it is evident that the seasons are changing once again, not only with the weather but also with the sports here at AHS.

As winter sports are ending, it means that athletes from across the school are transitioning into a new sport and season to try and earn a spot on their desired team.

Tryouts for softball, baseball, lacrosse, tennis, track and field, and soccer begin on Feb. 24.

There are plenty of options for students to choose from with this

upcoming sporting season.

Many athletes won't even start on their new sport until they're finished with playoffs overlapping from winter.

For some athletes around the school the transition from winter sports into spring sports will be hard for them.

This could be for several reasons, some athletes, especially seniors, will just miss their winter sport as it will be their last time playing that sport in high school.

Also, that sport could be their favorite, so moving on to a separate sport that they might not like as much could be difficult.

"I'm gonna miss basketball season. I had a lot of fun and made a bunch of new friends and memories during it,"

Freshman Emmanuel Adomakoh said. "I think at first it will be hard to transition to track but once the season gets started I think it'll be fun."

But there are other athletes who just cannot wait to get into the swing of spring sports and have been preparing for it to start.

"In order to get ready for soccer in the spring I've been going out to practice with a coach," said freshman Santana Florero. "We do different sessions where we practice dribbling, passing, shooting, etc."

One thing is for sure though, whenever a new sporting season is starting up it always brings a little excitement to the students and the school.



Senior Vy Luu practices lacrosse skills to get ready for tryouts

Varsity team prepares for regionals

Annandale matches up against Fairfax for the first playoff round

BY EVAN BURITA
Sports Editor

As the Atoms' regular season comes to a finish, the varsity team will compete in the regional tournament after qualifying from the district playoffs and finishing with a record of 11-13.

They played an away game against the Fairfax Rebels in the first round on Feb. 24. The tournament is single elimination, meaning the Atoms must win the game to advance to the next round in the playoffs. The final score of the game was not available during press time.

The Rebels finished the season with a record of 17-7. They dominated West Springfield in their district quarterfinals, 63-36. Fairfax was then defeated by Lake Braddock in the district semifinals with a score of 85-68.

Overall, Fairfax had a strong season and need to be taken seriously.

The Atoms wanted to focus on small details that need to be fixed ahead of their matchup in order to have a chance at victory.

Fairfax is a very dangerous team with speed and physicality. AHS needed to pay attention to their opponent's strengths to stay in the game.

"We have to grab defensive rebounds and get back in transition and stop any early offense," sophomore guard Leoule Yared said.

Also, the players all agree that it is necessary to play well with one another and put forth maximum effort.

"For the team to be successful in regionals, we have to really play with and for one another," sophomore forward Amanuel Tucker said. "We also have to pay attention to details and make sure we do all the little things right. Most importantly every single player has to give one hundred percent effort."

The talented varsity roster will receive several players from the JV team for the tournament, including freshman shooting guard Andrew Niels, freshman guard Davida Rahranaivo, freshman forward Emmanuel Asante, and sophomore forward Aris Hill.

These players were moved up to varsity due to their hardwork and

skills they showed during their games on the JV roster. They are expected to contribute to the varsity Atom's success for regionals.

"It is an honor to be moved up to varsity," said Niels, who averaged around 20 points per game this season. "I get to work with new guys and try and help the team win. The opportunity is helping me improve as a player. I can contribute to the team by spacing the floor and knocking down shots."

The Atoms finished their regular season very strongly, as they won several games and performed well on senior night.

The team hosted senior night on Feb. 6, where players were recognized for their commitment for the basketball program and got to play in their final home game. The freshman, JV, and varsity teams all cruised to victories against Mount Vernon, with the varsity team winning with a score of 79-50.

Senior Ryan Adams scored 31 points and converted 8 of 10 free throws. Freshman Joede Mebane scored 12 points and had 10 rebounds. John Awoke scored 8 points and had 6 assists. He converted 6 of 6 freethrows.

The freshman and JV teams also played extremely well. The freshman team beat Mount Vernon 60-57 off of a game winning 3 and set of free throws in the final minute of the game.

During the JV game, the players played great defense, forced turnovers, and the offense shot efficiently.

The final score was 76-53, as they destroyed Mount Vernon.

Sophomore Aris Hill finished the game with a season-high 23 points.

The team's next test was against T.C. Williams, which is among one of the best teams in the region. The Atoms fell short of victory as the JV team lost by 2 points after being on the wrong end of a controversial foul call, which denied them of game-tying free throws.

The varsity team played in a low scoring defensive battle in the first half, which ended with the Atoms leading 25-21. In the second half, the game opened up and both offenses scored more.

The T.C. Williams players were very quick and strong, which was too much for the Atoms to handle at times.

The Atoms ended up losing the game with a score of 68-77.

On Feb 14, the Atoms rematched Mount Vernon in the first round of the district playoffs.

Once again, the Atoms completely dominated their opponents and won the game 81-66.

This pushed the Atoms on to the next round of the Gunston District playoffs, the semifinal.

The Atoms played West Potomac, which finished the regular season at the top of the district.

The Atoms lost 53-44, but their overall performance at districts earned them a spot in the Occoquan Regional Tournament.

Overall, this has been a great season for the Atoms and the players have improved greatly. The coaches learned a lot about the team and what needs to be done to prepare for next season. The team hopes to perform well in the regional tournament and believe they have the talent and determination to make a



Freshman Joede Mebane jumps for a layup in the Atoms district win against Mount Vernon.

RICH FINK PHOTOGRAPHY



Senior Lukas Tabja-Diaz guards the Mount Vernon guard near half court during a game on Feb. 14.

RICH FINK PHOTOGRAPHY

Atoms send several swimmers to regionals

Swim season comes to an end

BY EVAN BURITA
Sports Editor

The swim season has come to an end, and the Atoms had many positive achievements.

Twenty-two swimmers and divers were sent to regionals due to their high placements at districts.

The regional meet took place on Feb. 8 and 9 at the Oak Marr Rec Center.

Some important performances include Nathan Tran placing 16th for 100 meter butterfly and 8th for dive, Rachel Tran placing 13th for dive, and Madison Cruz placed 16th for 100 meter breast stroke.

"Personally I didn't do as well as I could have for dive, but for swim I did alright. I was hoping to go to states for dive but I messed up on two dives."

The swimmers also reflected on their seasons, both as a team and individually.

Although the Atoms finished with a losing record, they can take away many good things that may help them for next season, such as their increase in team bonding and



Olivia Cruz, Eleanor Stenberg, Chelsi Lilli, and Maya Mann all swam at regionals on Feb. 8

dropping of times.

"The season went really well," Chelsi Lilli said. "It was super fun because I made a lot of new friends and became closer with others. I dropped a lot of time throughout the season, so I'm happy I didn't disappoint myself."

The swim team has recorded losses against many talented regional teams, such as Falls Church, Oakton, and Woodson.

Despite some of these losses by large margins, the Atom swimmers showed a lot of promise and potential in some of their meets,

such as their 149-131 win in a dual meet against Robert E. Lee.

Many of the swimmers dropped time and showed good team spirit, which the team believes is necessary to be successful in future meets.

A large portion of the team will continue to train with summer swim teams during the offseason to improve their technique and gain strength for next season.

Both the boys and girls squads have very few seniors graduating, meaning a large amount of talented swimmers will be returning to the team next year.

The freshman and sophomores will become more developed swimmers with better technique and the rising seniors will help lead the team and help the underclassman be better swimmers.

The Atoms swim team has built a strong reputation for developing great swimmers and needs to work hard to make the team the best it can be.

The team hopes to send more swimmers to regionals next year and improve their record against other teams in the Gunston district.

Athlete Spotlight: Joede Mebane

BY EVAN BURITA
Sports Editor

Freshman Joede Mebane plays basketball for the Atoms varsity team. He is 6'3 and plays power forward. He has taken on the challenge of playing varsity as an underclassman with great confidence and has had tremendous improvement as a player throughout the season. Although play time is always up for grabs on the talented roster, Mebane averages 5.5 points per game and 4.1 rebounds per game. He looks forward to working with the basketball program for years to come and looks to get even better as a player.

Q: What is your favorite part about basketball?

A: "My favorite part about basketball is when ever I'm down or not in the mood, I always get happy when I'm in the gym and get things off my head."

Q: How did you discover your interest in basketball?

A: "My mom made me play recreational in 4th grade, then I hated it, and in 7th grade all my friends were really good at it, and I wanted to be better than them, and then I started taking the game seriously."



Mebane protects the ball from the Mount Vernon defenders as he drives to the basket.

Q: What are your strengths as an athlete?

A: "As an athlete I'd say my athleticism is very good, and I play very hard. My finishing when it comes to practice is really not that good, but in a game, my finish is key to what I think is our successful team."

Q: What are your goals for the remainder of the season?

A: "I think our team has the potential of winning states. Our roster has the talent to go all the way. We need to focus up, and we'll be unstoppable once we reach our full potential."

Q: How does it feel to be playing varsity as a freshman?

A: "It feels amazing to have this opportunity at a young age. My game grows a lot when I play on the varsity level. The experience really helps my game, and I feel blessed to have the opportunity."

Q: What is your favorite memory of playing for Annandale so far?

A: "The best part of the season was playing with my teammates and making new friendships. My teammates and I went through the ups and downs of the whole season, and that is something special."

Q: What game did you perform your best in?

A: "The game I performed best at was the T.C. Williams game at home. That game I had my first ever double-double on varsity. I had 12 points and 10 rebounds."

Q: Do you plan to play basketball in college?

A: "Yes, I plan to take my skills and encouragement to college."

RICH FINK PHOTOGRAPHY

Music world loses yet another young artist

BY ALEX BURITA
Entertainment Editor

In the late morning on Feb. 19, fans were shocked when they read alerts informing the death of Bashar Jackson, better known as Pop Smoke.

At the age of 20, Jackson was unexpectedly shot to death by four masked figures during a home invasion of the Los Angeles residence he was staying at.

"It is another tragic lost Pop Smoke will never be able to live up to the potential he had," junior Alex Seok said.

It is suspected that this occurred because he posted his uncensored address publicly on social media earlier on the day he died.

This was most likely inadvertent as the post thanked fans for sending gifts.

This tragedy again brings world attention to a trend that has been increasingly plaguing young rappers on their rise to success.

This rise was also highlighted by the deaths of Lil Peep, XXXTentacion, and Jimmy Wopo, who were also shot on their rise to fame.

As for the men who shot Pop Smoke,

they have not yet been identified.

The likely motive was jealousy or personal beef with Jackson.

Similar to the death of Juice WRLD, Pop Smoke's death brought grief from other famous figures in the rap world such as Nicki Minaj, 50 Cent, Gunna, and Chance the Rapper.

His death came just a day after his new mixtape: Meet The Woo, V.2 hit number 7 on the Billboard 200.

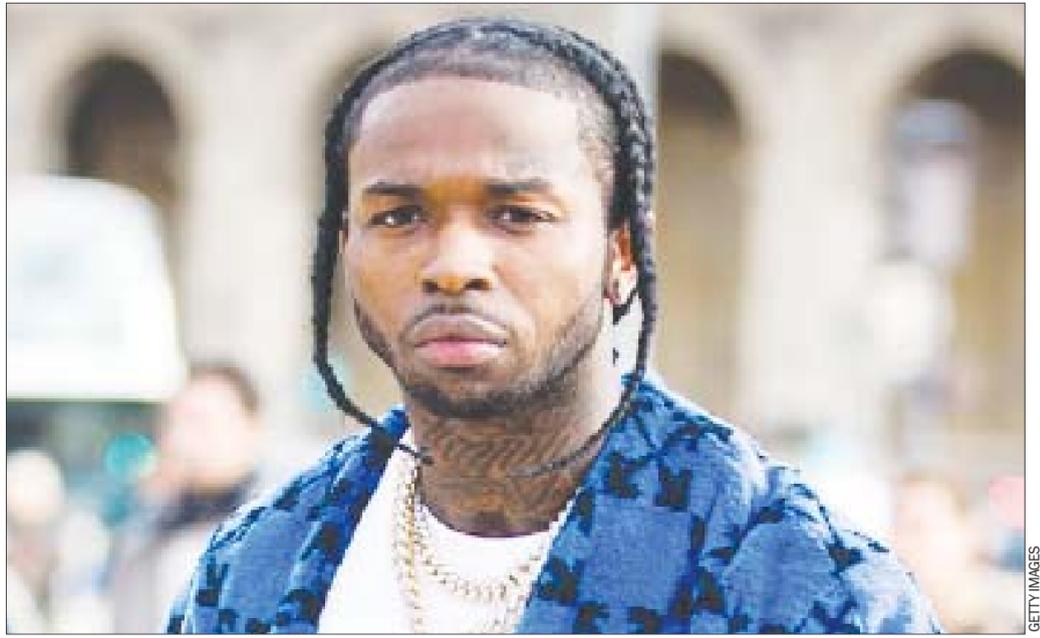
His most famous productions came during his collaborations with artists such as: Lil Tjay, Travis Scott, Callboy, Jackboys, and Nicki Minaj.

The week following the release of the mixtape, a deluxe edition was added that featured remixes with Nav, Gunna, and PnB Rock.

This would have been the beginning of Pop Smoke's lucrative career, as he was planning to go on tour starting in Washington D.C. not even two weeks later.

"I believe we need to start knowing more about these upcoming rappers before others are taken too soon," junior Isaac Nebyu said.

Although Pop Smoke only had a two year career, he will be remembered as a talented artist that rose to fame quickly.



Pop Smoke was killed during a home invasion at age 20 in his home. His career as a rapper was just getting started.

GETTY IMAGES

Netflix comes out with second season for Narcos: Mexico

BY SUAD MOHAMED
Co-Editor in Chief

Earlier this month, Netflix released the second season of its crime thriller, Narcos: Mexico.

Originally, this new season and the one before it were supposed to serve as fourth and fifth seasons to the original show, Narcos.

Based in Colombia, that show chronicled the life and dealings of Pablo Escobar, the infamous drug cartel leader in Colombia.

However, Narcos: Mexico was eventually developed to be its own show.

"I think that it was smart of the producers and directors to make it its own separate show," junior Sumaya Ahmed said. "Even though the concepts of the two shows are similar and they attract the same audience, there is a big difference in the plot and focus of the two shows."

Narcos: Mexico explores the growth and conflicts of drug cartels in solely Mexico, as can be inferred by the title.

In the first season, the show captures how Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo

discovered the profitability of drugs and started his drug trade, turning it into a big operation which came to be known as the Guadalajara cartel.

The season ends with Felix killing the main DEA agent coming after him, known as Kiki Camarena, and leveraging the government to give him protection.

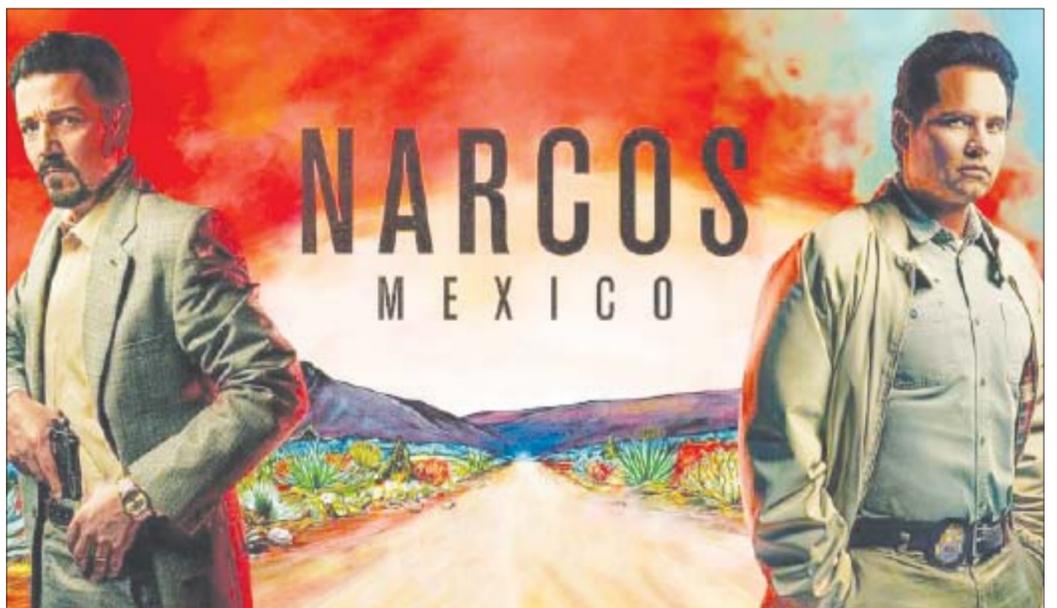
However, the second season sees the fall of the drug kingpin's success.

He faces many struggles, with most of his companions becoming disloyal due to pressure from other cartels and the Mexican government.

Eventually, he builds ties with Colombian cartels, who need to use Mexico's proximity to the U.S. to smuggle drugs across the border.

However, this leads to the U.S. and the DEA applying more pressure on the Mexican government, who want to join NAFTA and build an alliance with the U.S.

Overall, the second season garnered a lot of good reviews. It was just as good as the first season and was easy to watch.



Fast and furious on another ride

BY ERIK RIVAS
Entertainment Editor

For many *Fast and Furious* fans, it was safe to say that *The Fate of the Furious* would not be the last ride.

This was proven correct with the release of the trailer for *F9* which is set to release in May of 2022.

Many got tired of the franchise after the seventh movie and thought it would be the last one since the death of star actor Paul Walker.

Walker's character Brian O'Connell is said to make a surprise return, as it has been six years since he passed away.

A character who made a return in

the trailer and was predicted by many fans to die was Han Lue.

"The few recent ones have been more repetitive in what they do now, junior Evelyn Granadoz said. "At this point I know what to expect and what will happen."

Overall, the main consensus by many fans is that the series should come to an end, as it has been over 19 years since the first release.

The main idea of the newer movies has simply changed.

"I have always been a big fan of the fast and furious series. When the first movie came out, it was based on cars and more racing than anything else," junior Isabella Rodas said. "As the

series goes on, the movies have started to include more action than cars."

The trailer starts with Vin Diesel's character, Don Toretto, saying he can't live his life a quarter of mile.

Toretto says that no matter how fast they are, the past will catch up to them and that he just did.

At this point the gang has already reunited.

Toretto claimed the past was his abandoned brother.

"I am really looking forward to this movie, and I can't wait to watch it," sophomore Trisha Tran said.

However, it seems like the new *Fast and Furious* movies are just giving character siblings we did not know about.

Boogie returns with new album

BY ERIK RIVAS
Entertainment Editor

Julyus Dubose, popularly known as A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie, has now released another album, titled Artist 2.0.

This new album, which was released last week, marks his third ever.

His previous albums were *The Bigger Artist* and *Hoodie SZN*, which were released in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

The album contains 20 songs and has features from other well known artists such as: Young Thug, Roddy Ricch, Gunna, DaBaby and Lil Uzi Vert.

"Some of the songs on the album are good, as I enjoyed listening to them," junior Nalin Rawat said. "Of the albums I have listened to from A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie, Artist 2.0 is one of the better ones."

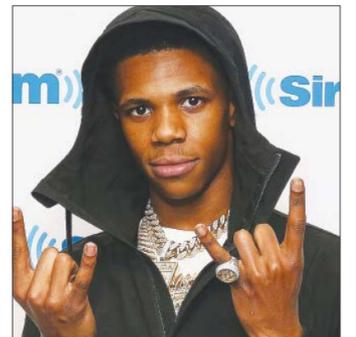
The album's title is Artist 2.0 because it sequel's his 2014 debut mixtape, Artist.

One of the more notable songs on the album is one of his singles, "King Of My City," which was released in late

January

A Boogie, however has not released an album since 2018 which was *Hoodie SZN*, and it topped the Billboard 200 albums chart.

"He is very catchy and his music is relatable, he writes about stuff we all go through with heartbreak and about his dad," junior Elizabeth Ortiz said. "He also stays humble unlike other rappers."



Key events

- Post Malone with Swae Lee Thurs. Feb. 27 at Capital One Arena
- Billie Eilish Wed. Mar. 18 at Capital One Arena
- Aventura Mar. 3 and Mar. 5 at Capital One Arena
- Nick Cannon with Wild 'N Out live Fri. Mar. 13 at Capital One Arena
- Broccoli City Festival Sat. May 9 in Washington, D.C.

Free apps of the issue



Facetune2: Best Selfie

Facetune is what you need for the perfect portrait. Incredible features include smooth skin, artistic tools, shiny eyes and bright smiles.



Geev: The Zero Waste

An app for donating objects and food between individuals. You can join the fight against food waste. You can also give away your stuff.



HomeCourt - The Basketball

Use your iPhone to capture and analyze how you play. You will learn skills in a way that feels less like training and more like a video game.



Draw Climber

Funniest race game. Draw your own legs and anything will make you run, and if you get stuck, draw something else.



Roblox

Roblox is the ultimate virtual universe that lets you play, create and be anything you can imagine. Millions of worlds to explore and play together anytime, anywhere.

Which streaming service gives more?

Apple Music

With Siri and Apple Watch compatibility, Apple Music is a well-rounded streaming service that complements the user's needs in music, and how they listen on an Apple Device.



Benefits

- Three plans, family, student, and individual
- Siri and Apple watch integration
- Over 50 million tracks
- Human-curated Beats 1 radio station
- Personal playlists

“Apple Music is really easy to use, but sometimes it acts up. I hope that they let us have more personalized features.”



—CHELSI LILLI
freshman

Amazon Music

For an ad-free, on-demand service, Amazon Music Unlimited can give you access to over 50 million songs. You can also summon Amazon music with Alexa as well.



Benefits

- Large music library
- Playlists curated to the user
- Cool lyrics
- Alexa-specific features
- HD and Ultra HD sound quality for headphone users

“There are a lot of songs that is easily accessible and Amazon gives you a lot of features when using prime as well.”



—JON MILIAN
sophomore

Google Play Music

For those that have downloaded music from the internet, Google Play Music is right for you. With both free and paid versions, you can upload over 100 thousand audio files and stream it as well.



Benefits

- Good quality for audio
- Huge library to choose from
- Affordable plan
- Easy-to-access music locker
- Option to buy from Store

“I used this app when my Apple Music was canceled. At first it was easy to use but you can only upload music.”



—WILMER LOPEZ
freshman

LiveXLive

Previously known as Slacker Radio, LiveXLive gives you access to a variety of stations and the usual music genres that other stations have.



Benefits

- Excellently stations
- Fun playlists
- Informative DJs
- News updates from time to time
- Nice design

“When it was Slacker Radio it was at it's peak, but with all of the advertisements, the app is basically useless.”



—EMILY CALLAO
senior

SiriusXM

For those that loved listening to the radio inside a car, SiriusXM has now launched an “Outside The Car” package that lets users listen in on an app or a web browser



Benefits

- Numerous live talk, sports, and channels
- Able to rewind tracks
- Recommends songs for you
- High-profile and exclusive content

“This service is so useful when I was in the car without any radio. It connected instantly and I was fine.”



—SUMAYA AHMED
junior

Spotify

Those that love to hear a variety of music on different devices, have playlists curated for your taste in music, and also free, Spotify is the best well-rounded choice.



Benefits

- Up to several profiles for premium accounts
- Select albums before they're released
- Store audio files on desktop
- Over thousands of playlists

“Spotify is always better than Apple Music, but sometimes the personalized playlists are creepy.”



—HAMID KAMARA
junior

Tidal

Tidal has different prices ranging from \$10-20, music lovers that want high-quality audio should choose Tidal if you don't have the excellent audio equipment



Benefits

- Excellent sound quality
- Themed playlists
- Exclusive content
- Early access to select tickets for concerts and games as well

“It's kind of expensive at first, but if you want good quality music, Tidal is a good choice.”



—EMILY MARTINDALE
sophomore

YouTube Music

Once purchased, YouTube Music gives you music without any ads and you can finally play it with your phone turned off. Google users that like to listen to music should purchase this



Benefits

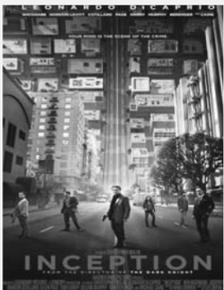
- Decent library of music
- Integrates well with Google applications
- Convenient service
- A lot of artists and songs to choose from

“I stuck with YouTube because every artist uploads on this and it is pretty cheap as well.”



—MOISES MARQUEZ
senior

Watchlist of the Issue



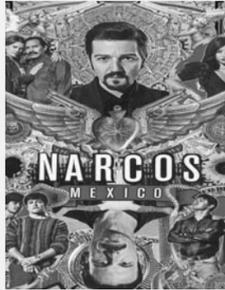
Inception (2010)

Dom Cobb, a thief, enters people's dreams to steal secrets, which proves to be dangerous (Netflix).



The Lion King (2019)

A young cub, Simba, gets banished and struggles to get back to his kingdom (Disney Plus).



Narcos: Mexico (2020)

Following the death of Kiki Camarena, the DEA tries to take down the Mexican Cartel (Netflix).



6 Underground (2019)

A billionaire fakes his death and recruits a team of operatives to take down a dictator (Netflix).



Toy Story 4 (2019)

Woody and friends embark on a road trip, but a detour shows Woody what he really wants his life to be (Disney Plus).



The Mind Of Aaron Hernandez (2020)

Through a series of interviews, this documentary shows how Hernandez turns to a convicted killer (Netflix).



Arrow (2020)

In season 8, Oliver Queen looks to help the greater good and tries to save the multi-verse from aliens (Netflix).



To All the Boys I've Loved Before (2018)

A quiet girl's life is turned upside down when her love letters are mailed to her crushes (Netflix).

Playlist of the Issue



BLUEBERRY FAYGO

Lil Mosey
Single (2020)
The Seattle rapper puts out a hot single before the release of his first album of the year.



I DO IT (FT. BIG SEAN, LIL BABY)

Lil Wayne
Funeral (2020)
Lil Wayne releases his first album in two years and this trio makes the highlight.



KING OF MY CITY

A Boogie Wit da Hoodie
Single (2020)
The NYC rapper tells us all about his home city in a classic A Boogie banger.



YELL OH (FT. YOUNG THUG)

Trippie Redd
Single (2020)
Trippie and Thugger team up for his first single since his album.



INTENTIONS (FT. QUAVO)

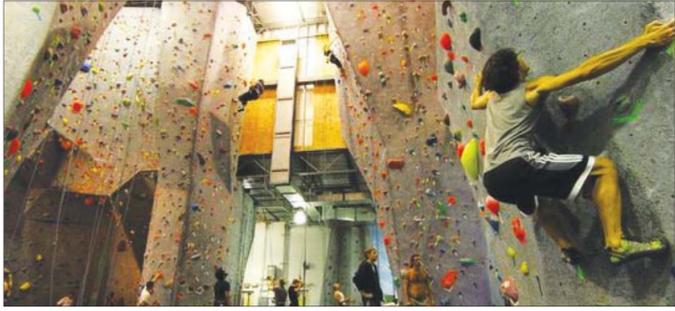
Justin Bieber
Single (2020)
Justin releases his second single with the hit Atlanta rapper a week before his album debut.



QR CODE

Scan the QR code to access the Playlist of the Issue with additional songs on Spotify.

FOUR FUN WAYS TO EXERCISE



SPORT ROCK CLIMBING CENTER

Rock climb at Sportrock

If you're looking for a unique way to exercise with a little bit of thrill, rock climbing at SportRock may be perfect for you.

Sportrock Climbing Center in Alexandria has 60 foot climbing walls, boulders to free climb and a regular gym that overlooks the center.

You can choose to climb a route on the smaller 20 foot walls, or challenge yourself on one of the 60 foot ones.

Regardless of your knowledge and experience, there is something for everyone.

Climbing shoes and harnesses are required to climb walls and are

available for rent at the front desk.

If you want more freedom and are willing to try climbing without a harness, there is a free climb boulder and wall, which are closer to the ground and have soft mats underneath to help prevent injury.

The best part about rock climbing is that it really doesn't feel like exercise.

In the moment, you're thinking more about where to place your hands and feet and focusing less on how hard your body is working out.

Website: <https://sportrock.com>
Address: 5308 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria, VA 22304
Prices: \$15-40 per session



ELENA LEOPOLD

Go crazy at Kazaxe

The Kazaxe dance class in Springfield is a mix of latin inspired dancing and cardio that is aimed to give participants an aerobic based workout.

When you first walk into the warehouse where Kazaxe is taught, you see a huge stage where the instructor dances.

Classes start with a warm up to medium/fast paced Latin music. You're joined in the huge room with 40 plus other people, all dancing to the same music.

The dance moves and cardio exercises are very fast paced and dynamic. At certain points in a song,

the instructor will pause and let everyone get a quick water break.

One of the best parts about Kazaxe is the environment.

People taking the class are there to have fun and get a unique workout in, and the energy in the room is very high. Seasoned dancers often help the newbies get a grip on the complex dance moves.

Everyone is very friendly and taking the Kazaxe class is one of the best ways to have a fun workout.

Website: <https://kazaxe.com/>
Address:
Prices: \$30-50 per session



SPARK YOGA STUDIO

Stretch out at Spark Yoga

Yoga is one of the most relaxing ways to exercise.

It helps increase flexibility, better your blood flow, strengthens your muscles and overall helps to calm you down.

It's a perfect activity to do with a group of friends, or even to do alone if you want some peace and quiet.

Spark Yoga, located in Mosaic is one of the best yoga studios around.

The family owned and operated studio teaches classes for people of all ages and skill levels.

In a class, you learn different sequences of poses that are aimed to strengthen and heal your mind and body.

Even though they specialize in yoga, there are also classes that teach meditation, arial and barre skills if yoga isn't your activity of choice

Overall, Spark Yoga is a great place to workout and relax your mind and body.

Website: <https://www.sparkyoga.com/>
Address: 2987 District Ave #120, Fairfax, VA 22031
Prices: \$20-45 per session



ZENGO CYCLE

Go for a spin at Zengo Cycle

One of the most underrated ways to exercise, cycling is a full body workout that anyone can enjoy.

At Zengo Cycle, classes are aimed to strengthen every muscle you have.

When you arrive, tons of stationary bikes are set up in rows, facing on bike in the front, one which the instructor teaches.

Everyone picks a bike and starts a small warmup dictated by the instructor.

Music and the instructors directions fill the room while you cycle.

Unlike riding a normal bike, you don't face any obstacles and ride a nice smooth cycling session.

The instructors and people around you are very motivational and push you to be your best.

Website: <https://www.zengocycle.com/>
Address: 2905 District Ave, Fairfax, VA 22031
Prices: \$20-50 per session

Upcoming events in the D.C. area

Concerts

Post Malone-Runaway Tour
Feb. 27 at 8 p.m.
Capital One Arena

Billie Eilish- Where Do We Go?

World Tour
Mach 18 at 7:30 p.m.
Capital One Arena



Lauryn Hill
March 7 at 9 p.m.
The Kennedy Center

The Lumineers
Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.
Capital One Arena

Sport games
Washington Wizards vs. Brooklyn Nets
Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.
Capital One Arena

Washington Capitals vs. Philadelphia Flyers
March 4 at 7 p.m.
Capital One Arena



How should you workout this weekend?

1. How do you like to de-stress?

- a. Watching your favorite show
- b. Hanging out with friends
- c. Doing something active
- d. Eating food

2. Where do you like to spend most of your time?

- a. Indoors
- b. At sports practice
- c. Outdoors
- d. Your bed/couch

3. On the weekends you find yourself...

- a. Binge watching Netflix
- b. Doing something active
- c. Spending time with friends
- d. At the mall

4. When you first wake up you...

- a. Do your morning routine
- b. Check your phone
- c. Make coffee or tea
- d. Check the time and go back to sleep

5. Pick a dessert

- a. Cake
- b. Ice cream
- c. No dessert for me
- d. Cookies

6. If you're outside you are most likely...

- a. Going on a walk or run
- b. Walking around the city
- c. Having a picnic with friends or family
- d. Dreaming (because who spends time outside)

7. At a sports game you would be...

- a. On the field/ court
- b. Cheering your favorite player on
- c. Walking around with friends
- d. At home

8. What is your dream job?

- a. Actor/actress
- b. Doctor
- c. Stay at home spouse
- d. Librarian

9. When going through your camera roll, you mostly see...

- a. Screenshots of funny tweets
- b. Pictures of nature
- c. Pictures of you and your friends
- d. Pictures of cute animals

9. What is your dream vacation

- a. Hiking in the Grand Canyon
- b. Scuba diving in the Bahamas
- c. Sightseeing in London
- d. Visiting Disney in Florida

10. Your favorite clothing brand is...

- a. Nike
- b. Supreme
- c. Lululemon
- d. Forever 21

If you picked mostly A's:
Go rock climbing
(See above for more information)

If you picked mostly B's:
Take a Kazaxe class
(See above for more information)

If you picked mostly C's:
Take a Yoga Class
(See above for more information)

If you picked mostly D's:
Take a spin class at Zengo Cycle
(See above for more information)

South Block surpasses expectations

BY ELENA LEOPOLD
Weekend Editor

As healthier and more organic foods are becoming more popular, juice bars, like South Block are popping up all over the country.

South Block offers a wide variety of juices, sandwiches, smoothies and acai bowls.

When you walk in the door, the first thing you see is the huge menu and ordering counter. The juice bar has a rustic yet modern vibe with wood and metal accents scattered around the room.

After you choose from the huge selection of foods, drink and bowls, you get to watch as your order gets prepared.

One of the more popularized items on the menu are acai bowls.

Ranging from healthier options like the warrior bowl that has fruit, granola and protein powder, to sugary options like the nutella bowl.

You can also choose to make your own acai bowl if you want something more specific. The smoothies, sandwiches and other items on the menu can also be customized.

My only complaint with the menu is that some locations offer certain foods while others do not.

Breakfast items and sandwiches are the main options that differ from place to place, so looking at the menu on the South Block website before you go is a good idea.

In terms of service, orders are prepared fairly quickly. It took roughly 15 minutes to make one PBJ bowl and two Cali bowls, which was very timely.

The employees working at the Westmoreland St. South Block were very friendly and helpful. I ordered the Warrior Bowl, and was customized to fit some fruit allergies and had a lot of specifications.

Everything came out superbly and tasted amazing even though I changed a lot.

The prices at the south block are not as amazing as the food. You get a good amount considering how much you pay, but \$9-\$13 per item can get pricey very quickly.

All things considered, South Block is a great place to get a healthy snack.

The food is very good, and the only few things that disappoint are the



ELENA LEOPOLD

The PBJ bowl and Cali bowl available at South Block for \$11.

menu, inconsistency and prices.

As long as you aren't a frequent visitor of the South Block, you shouldn't be breaking your bank to buy smoothies and bowls.

Even the, the quality and deliciousness of the food is well worth the price.

Key Information

Address: 2121 N Westmoreland St, Unit B, Arlington, VA 22213
Hours of operation:
Mon-Fri: 7am - 7pm
Sat-Sun: 9am - 5pm
*Accepts Apple Pay



SOUTH BLOCK JUICE CO.

The extensive menu at South Block features smoothies, acai bowls and other breakfast foods.



SOUTH BLOCK JUICE CO.

The modern exterior design of South Block. There are benches available to sit at when the weather is nice.