

The Breeze

JMU'S AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPER SINCE 1922

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Spend, leave

By **FILIP DE MOTT**
The Breeze

On Madina Safdar's encounter with the Afghan refugees, her heart dropped.

"If someone were to ask me, 'What was the saddest thing you've ever seen?' I will tell them it was that," she said. "They were all children."

Safdar — a recent JMU graduate and an Afghan herself — volunteers in the Northern Virginia community, seeking to bring some level of comfort to those forced to flee their home. But while her efforts address the suffering of others, she lives with her own apprehensions.

Reminiscent of the footage that has escaped Afghanistan — showing the desperate attempts of many to leave the country — her own family remains stranded there. As of Monday, her husband and his newborn son have spent in the airport for over a week; in

the pushing and shoving, the infant was injured.

"I think the U.S. is 100% at fault," she said. "100%."

Spending, spending, spending

The withdrawal of U.S. troops out of Afghanistan this past year could've marked the end of a productive era.

Instead, with thousands dead, trillions spent and even more lives overturned, the fall of Afghanistan shows one thing: Military spending doesn't always equate progress.

According to a detailed financial breakdown by Forbes, the U.S. supplied the Afghan forces with around \$83 billion in training and equipment since 2001. The aim here, as repeated by countless administrations, was never to nation-build but to suppress the terrorist threat, leaving future security to freshly trained Afghan forces.

see **MONEY**, page 13

Counseling care

By **MIKE STALEY**
The Breeze

Rural communities in Augusta, Greene, Page, Rockingham, Rockbridge and Shenandoah counties will have 100 JMU graduate students assist their behavioral health providers over the next four years.

The Federal Health Resources and Services Administration gave a \$1.6 million grant to the JMU graduate psychology department for their Rural Interdisciplinary Service and Education: Unlimited Potential program. Amanda Evans, associate professor in graduate psychology and leader of the RISE-UP project, said this grant will give 100 students in the clinical mental health counseling, school counseling and school psychology programs \$10,000 stipends as they practice and work in high needs communities.

JMU's graduate psychology department has a focus in counseling services, and its

three programs have placements within rural communities. Evans took her previous grant application experience and applied for this grant to receive funding over the next four years to promote building resources within these communities.

"Substance use has just accelerated because of [COVID-19]," Evans said. "The numbers are growing, and there is nobody there to help."

Robin Anderson, department head of graduate psychology, said that along with the stipends given to JMU students, the rest of this grant will go toward creating facilities and modules open to JMU faculty, students and other behavioral health care professionals.

Anderson said the programs had previously sent students to these communities unpaid even when the need for behavioral health was apparent. Now, selected students are assisting nearby counties with incentives not previously offered to them.

see **SUPPORT**, page 9



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Letter from the editor

The Breeze took legal action against JMU last week. Here's why.

On Aug. 17, I filed a lawsuit against JMU. On Thursday, Aug. 19, The Breeze ran that suit on the cover of our print edition. We are committed to transparency throughout this process, so I want to, as the editor-in-chief, take a few words to explain how we arrived at this point and why we at The Breeze have taken this step.

One year ago last week, JMU was bringing students to campus for the fall 2020 semester, and COVID-19 cases were on the rise. In response, The Breeze filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request asking for a record of daily case data broken down by dormitory. We did so in the name of transparency so that JMU's community could make informed decisions about their health.

FOIA is a federal law designed to promote accountability of government and public leaders to the people they serve. As JMU is a public, federally funded university, it falls under FOIA.

However, the university partially denied our FOIA, saying it couldn't break down case information by dormitory without compromising student privacy. From previous JMU Director of Communications Caitlyn Read:

"Per federal patient privacy law (HIPAA) the university cannot release "individually identifiable health information," or information

that is a subset of health information, including demographic information. Therefore, the portions of your request related to the "number of positive student tests, broken down by number per campus dormitory," and "number of positive student tests, broken down by self-reports from off-campus students" is denied."

However, the U.S. Department of Education's 2019 guidance letter on HIPAA applicability at public colleges and universities is clear on medical records maintained by a campus health clinic, such as the JMU Health Center. HIPAA doesn't cover those records:

"Records on students maintained by the campus health clinics and other health care facilities operated by such institutions ... will be either education records or treatment records under FERPA, both of which are excluded from coverage under the HIPAA Rules."

Additionally, at the state level, the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) own data privacy policy is clear. In its own dataset releases, data on groups of students with less than 10 members isn't released.

Residence halls on JMU's campus hold many more than 10 people.

Over the next few months, JMU slowly released more information to The Breeze. At this point, we have that daily locational data from

Sept. 17, 2020, through April 30, 2021. What we don't have, however, are the numbers from Aug. 17, 2020, to Sept. 17, 2020 — the period when JMU saw its worst spike in COVID-19 cases.

After a year of conversations with the university, we've moved forward with seeking a redress through the justice system with a writ of mandamus, a petition asking the government to make a public body do something — in this case, to release that COVID-19 data from before Sept. 17, 2020.

We didn't make the decision to file a suit lightly. Last week marked one year since we started this process — one year of conversations, one year of FOIAs, one year of discussions with our advisors in the School of Media Arts and Design's journalism department and outside legal counsel. With no options left, we've taken the route we have left — through the courts.

People may argue that those numbers are no longer relevant. However, our purpose is two-fold. Part of this is data, and part of this is precedent. If The Breeze is granted its writ of mandamus, the university will be made to either hand over the data or offer an explanation as to why it can't. But that's secondary to the larger issue here.

If the writ is granted, the case will establish a lasting precedent that the university cannot

deny future Breeze journalists — or anyone else — this kind of legally public data, that it cannot lean on inapplicable statutes and make false claims to avoid transparency to its community.

We also cannot forget that it was James Madison himself who introduced the First Amendment, covering the freedom of the press.

People may also question our timing. The answer is a simple one: Last week marked one year from when we began requesting this data, and with the Delta variant's impact on the JMU community, we want to guarantee a heightened level of transparency from the university with cases resulting from this new strain.

As The Breeze moves forward through this process, we are committed to complete transparency to our readers. Our news editors, Kamryn Koch and Ashlyn Campbell, will be leading the coverage of the proceedings. As I'm directly involved in the suit, I'll be abstaining entirely from interacting with or editing their reporting on this matter.

We're committed to this, and we won't be backing down.



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MISSION

The Breeze, the student-run newspaper of James Madison University, serves student, faculty and staff readership by reporting news involving the campus and local community. The Breeze strives to be impartial and fair in its reporting and firmly believes in First Amendment rights.

Published on Thursday mornings, The Breeze is distributed throughout James Madison University and the local Harrisonburg community. Single copies of The Breeze are distributed free of charge. Additional copies are available for 50 cents by contacting our business office. Comments and complaints should be addressed to Jake Conley, editor.



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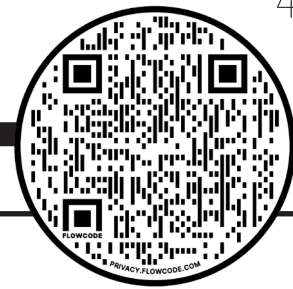
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While some cited science and the right to choose as reasons for opposing vaccines and mask mandates, others pointed to previous vaccine experiences that informed their decision to march. Mckinley Mihailoff / The Breeze

Mandate debate

Protesters march against masks and COVID-19 vaccination mandates

By **MCKINLEY MIHAIOFF**
contributing writer

“No Vax Mandate,” “Masks = tyranny,” “Nothing good is forced,” “Coercion does not equal consent” and a glittery “Nice day for revolution” poster are some of the few signs that could be seen across from JMU’s University Health Center (UHC) on Aug. 21. Individuals from across Virginia gathered in a march to oppose masks and COVID-19 vaccination mandates 10 days after JMU issued an indoor mask mandate regardless of individual vaccination status.

Virginia Freedom Keepers (VFK), an organization founded in 2019, set up the march on JMU’s campus as well as a similar protest the same day at Virginia Tech. VFK posted on its Instagram account to promote the event to its members and followers. Erin Philogene, a board member for VFK, said that parents and college students throughout the state reached out to VFK for help in facilitating the march to promote their platform.

“We are for informed consent, and we oppose forced medical mandates,” Philogene said. “That would include vaccine

and mask mandates and testing.”

For the fall 2021 semester, JMU announced that indoor mask mandates would return in order to stay in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and has pushed for students and staff to be vaccinated. If students aren’t vaccinated, they’ll be required to test for the virus once a week and will continue with practices from the 2020-2021 academic year, such as daily health check-ins on the LiveSafe app.

“We need to stand for medical freedom. I fought for freedom for 21 years, but I think I fought the wrong battle. There’s medical tyranny trying to take away our freedom.”

Jim Gallagher
Virginia resident

Two small groups formed at each end of the sidewalk, with a third larger group standing toward the middle of the Mason Street Parking Deck. As cars passed, some honked in support. On one occasion, people rolled their windows down and shouted, “Screw the vaccine!” Another time, it was, “Yeah, that’s right! Freedom of speech!”

Just as frequently, however, were those against the signs, with one person even calling for the protesters to “have fun at the hospital.” Another person was waving a

mask at the groups as they drove past.

The crowds in attendance weren’t larger than 15 people at once, but the people who protested came for varying reasons. Caroline Kennedy said that, as a former biology major, she’s hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccine because there’s still so much that’s unknown.

“I come from the scientific perspective,” Kennedy said. “This is still an experimental vaccine—it did not undergo the normal studies most vaccines are required to go through. No one can answer any of the questions about the long-term effects that it could have.”

The three vaccines widely available under emergency use authorization (EUA) in the U.S. are Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. The CDC has released scientific briefs on the types of testing completed, recorded efficacy for the mRNA vaccines — Pfizer and Moderna — and gathered information on the adenovirus (J & J). As of Aug. 23, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fully approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 16 and older.

Kennedy said the choice of whether or not to get vaccinated has become politicized.



For the fall 2021 semester, JMU announced that indoor mask mandates would return in order to stay in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Mckinley Mihailoff / The Breeze

“We’re alienating kids against each other: vaccinated vs. unvaccinated,” Kennedy said. “A lot of people want to make it seem like you’re a Trump-loving Republican [if you aren’t vaccinated]. I’m a lifelong Democrat.”

A man standing with the march’s first group then stepped in and shared his reasoning for attending the march. David Ross, the father of a college student and a brain injury physician, explained that physicians use government sources in order to keep up to date on medical articles as they’re published.

“Since COVID, I’ve lost a great amount of trust in those sources,” Ross said.

After a patient that Ross treated for a brain injury was vaccinated, he explained that there was a significant increase in negative side effects that weren’t present beforehand. Common side effects from any of the COVID-19 vaccines include pain and redness at the injection site along with chills and fever. In rare cases — 11.1 in cases per million — the Pfizer vaccine can cause anaphylaxis. A rare side effect of the J & J is thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS), which involves blood clotting.

“I’ve seen it with my own eyes,” Ross said. “And so, I’m here to support medical freedom and the right to choose.”

There were other participants also marching for the right to choose, one of the signs reading, “My body, My choice.” This phrase, commonly used when discussing abortion rights, has taken on a new definition regarding body autonomy with the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines.

“I believe in keeping our freedoms,” Virginia resident Laurie Bennet said. “For abortion, it’s my body, my choice, but with this vaccination, they’re not staying true with that.”

Among the groups of protesters, there was a child standing with one group holding one of the signs created for the event. Harrisonburg City Public Schools announced in a July 17 board meeting that masking indoors would continue until the CDC announces otherwise.

“My family has a lot to do with [why I’m protesting],” Philogene said.

While some cited science and the right to choose as reasons for opposing vaccines and mask mandates, others pointed to previous vaccine experiences that informed their decision to march. Virginia resident Jim Gallagher was directed by his

commander in the Air Force to get a mandatory Anthrax vaccine in 1999.

“Having suffered through this experience, I don’t want anyone else in the world to face the choice I had to face,” Gallagher said.

“I made the wrong choice because I lost my health that day ... We need to stand for medical freedom. I fought for freedom for 21 years, but I think

I fought the wrong battle. There’s medical tyranny trying to take away our freedom.”

Christina Skaggs, a board member with VFK, held a sign that read, “I was injured by vaccines.” Skaggs said she developed an autoimmune condition after getting the Hepatitis B vaccine. She said this now puts her at higher risk to develop further autoimmune conditions from other vaccines.

“It’s not ethical to say that I should have to inject those things into my body in order to participate in the free and open society that we have in the U.S.,” Skaggs said.

Protestors stood along the streets across from the UHC holding signs, and a few were seen walking through JMU’s campus before they disbanded.

Protestors stood along the streets across from the UHC holding signs, and a few were seen walking through JMU’s campus before they disbanded. While everyone who attended the march had different reasons for protesting, they came together to support a common cause — eliminating mask and COVID-19 vaccine mandates for all.

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This week's



from City Council

GRAPHICS BY CONNOR MURPHY / THE BREEZE

By **KAMRYN KOCH**
The Breeze

1. Council debates approval of large upcoming events

City council was asked to consider the special event application requests for three upcoming events: the Block Party in the 'Burg on Aug. 28, the Best.Weekend.Ever on Sept. 4 and Eastern Mennonite University's (EMU) Homecoming celebration Oct. 16.

Special events manager Matt Little said the Block Party in the 'Burg is an annual event in which incoming JMU students, the Marching Royal Dukes and other attendees walk from campus to court square to participate in activities and familiarize themselves with downtown Harrisonburg. The event is hosted by JMU Orientation and Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) and is scheduled to take place between 2:30-4:30 p.m. this year.

The council discussed the event's implications regarding the spread of COVID-19. When deciding whether to enforce wearing masks, Mayor Deanna Reed made the point that Gov. Ralph Northam has no longer issued a mask mandate for outdoor events. Both she and councilmember Chris Jones said they'd feel uncomfortable mandating something that the governor currently isn't.

Reed said the city's vaccination rate is at 65%, while JMU's and EMU's student populations are at 81% and 90%, respectively. Though even with those rates — and especially in light of the city's lower rate — Jones said he has reservations about unvaccinated attendees and the spread of the Delta variant, which is affecting vaccinated individuals. He also expressed concern about the number of people heading downtown at once and the pressure put on restaurants that are currently

understaffed and attempting to enforce healthy practices.

"I'm hoping that the businesses are prepared for what that looks like," Jones said. "The restaurants unfortunately can't handle but so many people right now because of the lack of service chefs and hosts."

Vice Mayor Sal Romero said if the council decided to approve the request, its members should be ready to be responsible for the event's outcomes — including a possible COVID-19 outbreak. Reed said she thinks people need to "take responsibility for themselves."

Councilmember Laura Dent proposed the implementation of a vaccination booth and signage to encourage attendees to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. She said that because the attendees will mostly be new students, it may be helpful to present this information to that population. Reed responded by saying that while she likes Dent's ideas, it'll be hard to convince people to follow these guidelines if they aren't already.

"We've been in this for two years, and if people don't know what to do by now, they just don't want to do it," Reed said. "I hate to be that blunt about it."

Reed, in response to safety concerns with the Block Party, suggested a headcount cap be established for attendees. After consideration, Jones partially walked back his concern due to the fact that the Block Party's timing largely avoids the typical lunch and dinner rushes downtown.

Little also presented the Best.Weekend.Ever event hosted by HDR, which he said aims to

2. New organization promotes regional economic development

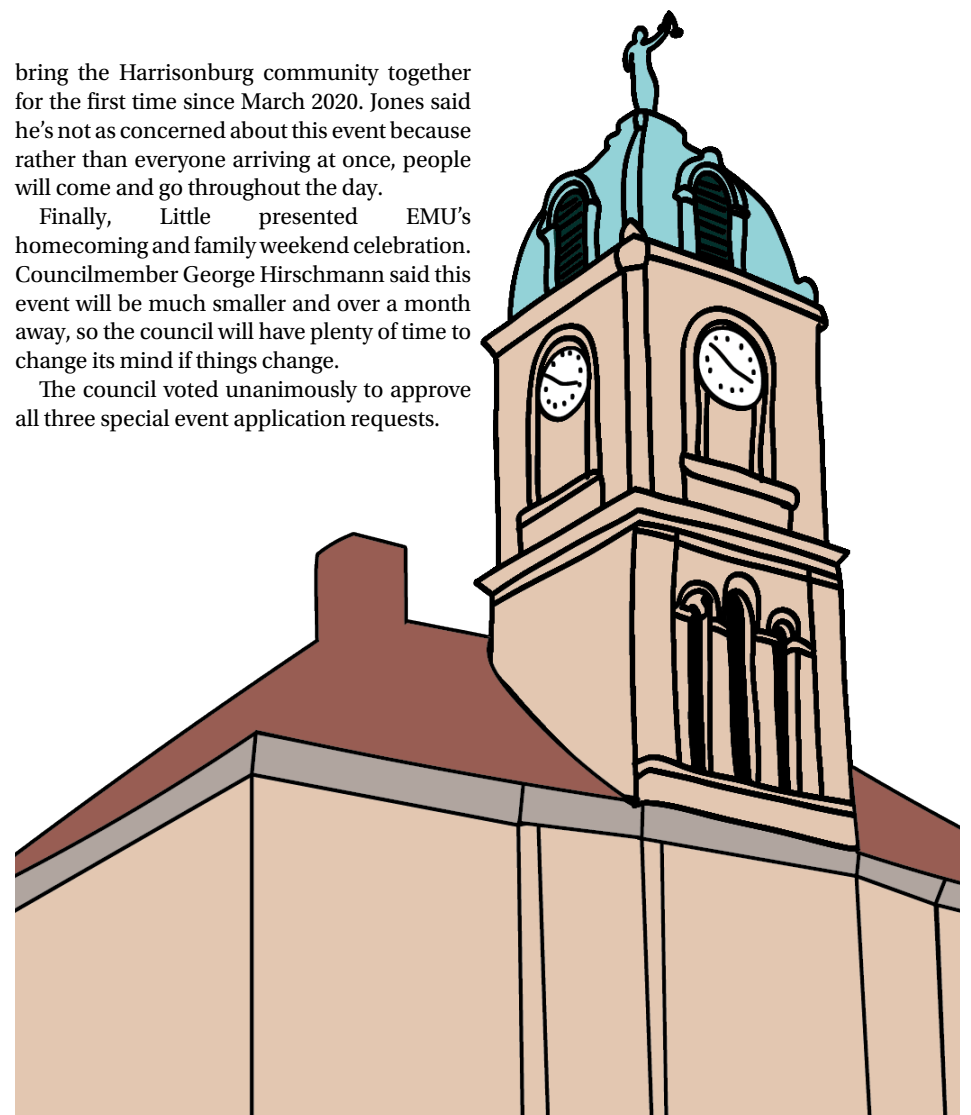
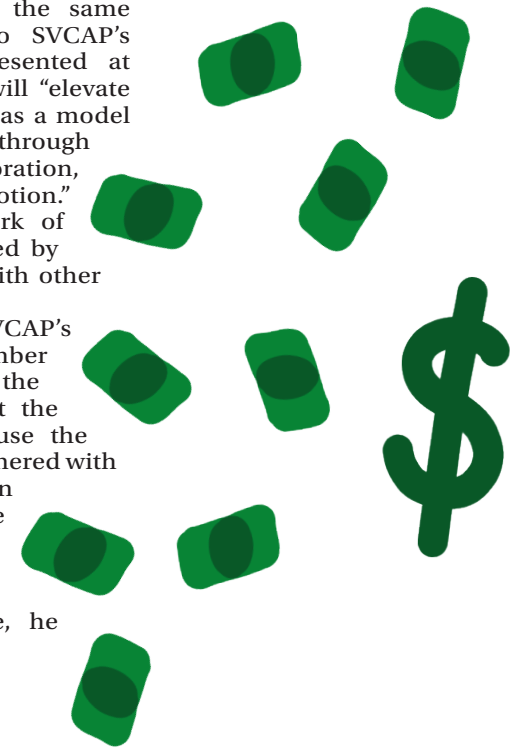
City council voted unanimously to join and affirm the Shenandoah Valley Collective Action Pact (SVCAP) in an effort to further economic development in the region.

SVCAP's Aug. 17 unveiling was led by Melissa Lubin, dean of JMU's School of Professional and Continuing Education, and Nick Schwartz, an associate dean and associate professor in the same program. According to SVCAP's informational flyer presented at the meeting, the pact will "elevate the Shenandoah Valley as a model of economic success" through "commitment, collaboration, solutions, and promotion." The flyer said the work of SVCAP will be facilitated by JMU in collaboration with other community partners.

After attending SVCAP's unveiling, councilmember Jones said he felt that the council should support the pact as a group because the council has already partnered with those who are signed in the pact. Jones said he would attend further SVCAP meetings as a point man for the Council. In the future, he

said, the council and the pact would discuss ideas, write letters of support and work together on grants and collaborative projects.

"That support from us as a body or as an individual goes so far in the business community," Jones said. "I think through this pact — us doing it together — I think it just sends a really strong signal throughout the Valley."



3. JMU students propose inclusion of ballot boxes on campus

During the meeting's public comment, two JMU students advocated for the incorporation of absentee ballot boxes on JMU's campus for November's gubernatorial election.

Charles Conner, junior political science and history double major and chairperson of JMU's Student Government Legislative Affairs Committee, continued his public comment from the last council meeting but made a different proposal after some revision and discussion with the local registrar's office. This time, he proposed to establish absentee ballot boxes on JMU's campus Oct. 18-20, 27 and 28 from noon to 3 p.m. and 5-8 p.m.

Leia Surovell, sophomore chemistry major and vice president of JMU's College Democrats, also proposed the inclusion of ballot dropoff boxes at JMU in areas of high foot traffic like dining halls. She said around 80% of students are registered to vote and have said they're comfortable with early voting — the majority of JMU's students voted early in 2020. However, she said JMU students turn out to vote at about 30 percentage points lower than registration.

"As first-time voters, students face barriers to participating in elections, including barriers to access and lack

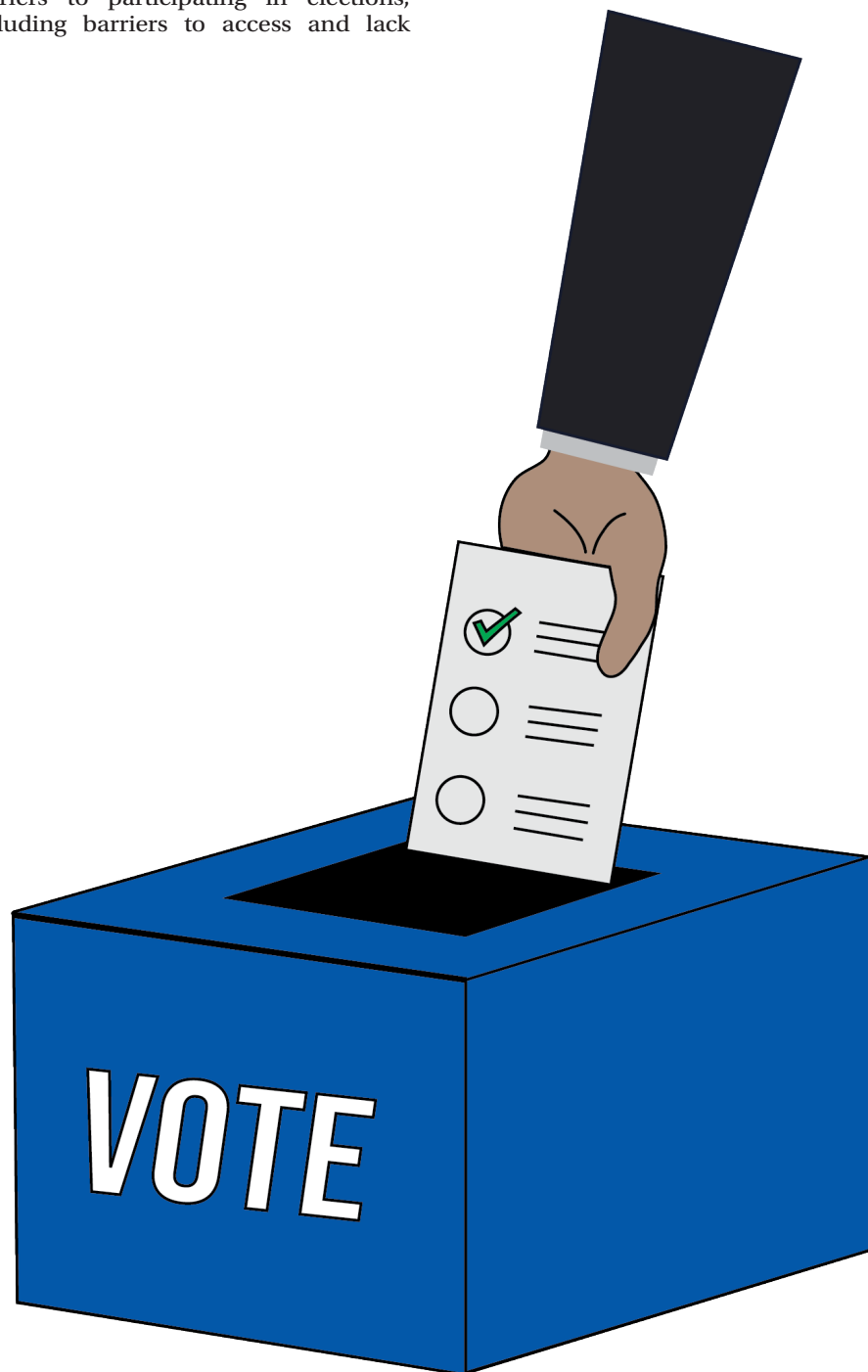
of knowledge regarding where to cast a ballot and what the process entails," Surovell said. "Students can also have trouble making time to vote and finding the correct precinct."

Surovell said the JMU Center for Civic Engagement is prepared to work alongside the College Democrats, College Republicans and Student Government Association to recruit students to staff these drop-off boxes and provide educational programming that'll "increase informed participation."

"We are part of the Harrisonburg community and want to be good stewards of this community," Surovell said. "We look forward to working with the city and electoral board increasing access to the ballot."

Jones suggested libraries as a potential location for the ballot boxes. No other comments were made by the council regarding this issue.

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Literacy for all



Delta Sigma Theta alumnae donate Little Free Library

By **GIA YODER**
contributing writer

Right outside the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center at 620 Simms Ave. in Harrisonburg, alumnae from JMU's Delta Sigma Theta Sorority unveiled a new Little Free Library. The efforts were led by the 2014 initiates of the Iota Alpha chapter.

Delta Sigma Theta is a historically Black sorority that was founded at Howard University in 1922. JMU's Iota Alpha chapter was chartered in 1971 and was the first Black student organization on campus.

Janaye Oliver, a 2014 alumna of the Iota Alpha chapter, said the group was interested in giving back to the greater Harrisonburg community, specifically the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center, since the center had been an important factor of their time in Delta Sigma Theta.

"Our organization has always emphasized the importance of sisterhood, scholarship and service," Oliver said. "We wanted to extend our reach beyond campus."

Michael Parks, the director of communications for Harrisonburg, said he believes the location of this Little Free Library

will make it easily accessible.

"[Delta Sigma Theta] reached out to us looking to do something good for the local community," Parks said. "It's right in the middle of the Northeast neighborhood, and it's a facility that is very easy for children and families to walk to."

Oliver said the alumnae reached out to friends and family on social media requesting book donations that would be added to the library's collection. They received over 200 books in all the languages they had requested.

One of Delta Sigma Theta's public service focuses is educational development. Jasmine Rountree, a 2014 alumna of the Iota Alpha chapter, said one of the main goals in setting up the library was to aid K-12 students struggling with their reading skills.

"Our primary desire is that this will assist in promoting literacy," Rountree said. "There are a lot of school-aged children who aren't at the reading level they should be, so we hope that this increases reading levels among that group."

However, the books aren't only for school children. Rountree said the library can be used as a resource for adults looking to improve their literacy.



Oliver said the Delta Sigma Theta alumnae collected over 200 books for the library. Christine Brady / *The Breeze*

"We believe this will also be a good tool for those who may need to improve their reading skills to get a GED diploma, obtain a job or gain citizenship," Rountree said. "The best thing about all of this is that it's free, it's available all day every day and you don't need a library card to access it."

Oliver said the alumnae wanted the catalogue of books to be representative of the diversity of the wider Harrisonburg community in an effort to bring people closer to their neighbors because over 75 languages are spoken within the Harrisonburg City Public School system.

"Reading and storytelling are important in every culture," Oliver said. "We decided a Little [Free] Library that included books from some of Harrisonburg's most spoken languages such as English, Arabic, Spanish,

Kurdish and Russian was the best way to give back and bring people together."

Rountree said she hopes those who access the Little Free Library are excited to share and learn from the books available.

"We want patrons to have fun with it," Rountree said. "Donate your comic books, your cookbooks and books about your culture. Take a book about a topic you know nothing about. We want this experience to be similar to bargain hunting — you never know what you might find, but we hope that you'll find something good."

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For more information, qualifications, and to apply, please go to <https://joblink.jmu.edu/postings/9864> or visit joblink.jmu.edu and reference posting number "J1803."

JMU

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Step toward support

JMU counseling and psychology students provide aid to rural communities



Along with the stipends given to JMU students, the grant will go toward creating facilities and modules open to JMU faculty, students and other behavioral health care professionals. Breeze file photo

from **SUPPORT**

Evans said these modules and facilities will go toward giving free and continuing education to people that need this information to get their licenses in clinical mental health. She also said the programs will be offered to any mental health professional, no matter their affiliation with JMU.

Anderson said the goal of the program is to expand the number of students in rural communities because of their need for mental health providers.

"With more students having the experience of working in rural communities and understanding what that is like," Anderson said. "Then more students as they graduate will choose to work in these rural communities."

Anderson said the students in the graduate programs are preparing to be school counselors, school psychologists and clinical mental health providers. She also said the stipends will attract more students to understaffed areas where connections and networking can be made and will make an impact in these areas by giving them more resources they can go to.

Evans said the students in the school psychology and counseling programs have their placements in schools in rural areas. She also said students offer individual counseling and offer connections to families to ensure their children are receiving the mental health services that they need, and students in the clinical mental health programs are often placed in counseling agencies to give individual counseling and group advocacy for students.

Monica Cooper, a graduate clinical mental health student, is currently in the

RISE-UP program working with the Arrow Project, a nonprofit company to give mental health services to youth in Waynesboro, Staunton and Augusta counties.

"I really want to be a part of that dedicated goal of everyone being taken care of and heard in every way possible," Cooper said.

Cooper started working for the Arrow Project in August and will continue her internship with the nonprofit until May 2022. She said what really drove her to this project was the advocacy and creating an environment for youth mental health and ensuring that no one was left behind.

"We provide services to both people who look up the word 'therapy,' as well as people who have 15 or more years of mental health issues," Cooper said.

Cooper said the clinical mental health program gears students toward careers in both mental health clinics and hospitals.

Evans said this program is designed to give the graduate students inside access to jobs and careers in a field that needs help and qualified people. She also said that oftentimes, these students continue their career in the placement or similar areas to the placement they were given.

Evans and Anderson both emphasized the necessity of these students and health care professionals in the rural communities due to the increase of need for them. As people were in quarantine and isolation during the height of the pandemic, Evans said mental health awareness was needed to match the rising severity in the local counties.

CONTACT Mike Staley at stale2ma@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.



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Want to praise someone or get something off your chest? Darts & Pats is the place to do it. Submit your own at breezejmu.org.

A "You-saved-me" pat to the one person who was leaving their spot in the Warsaw parking deck right as I pulled up.

From someone who barely got to class on time.

An "I'm-so-excited!" pat to my new professor for really going above and beyond and making class interesting with your expressive lectures.

From someone who notices the extra effort.

A "Thanks-for-the-help" pat to the upperclassman who helped me get to the right hall.

From a first year who is already enjoying JMU.

CRT at JMU?

The facts of critical race theory are still under debate, so it shouldn't be taught

PARKER BOGGS | contributing writer



college. Its supporters argue the theory is a way to discuss the racist past and present decisions of the U.S. However, what this theory actually teaches is widely disagreed upon.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a Black lawyer, scholar and one of the leaders who helped establish critical race theory, said in an interview with Vanity Fair that critical race theory grew from a "post-civil rights generation."

"So we wanted critical to be in it, race to be in it," Crenshaw said in the interview. "And we put theory in to signify that we weren't just looking at civil rights practice. It was how to think, how to see, how to read, how to grapple with how law has created and sustained race—our particular kind of race and racism—in American society."

Critical race theory, at its core, suggests that white supremacy and racism are built into American institutions, including the judicial and legislative systems. The U.S. hasn't had a perfect past, but teaching children and young adults that the U.S. is a racist country built on white supremacy is wrong and unfair. This type of indoctrination can be used to teach impressionable kids to hate themselves, each other and their country based on contested

far-left ideology.

A common argument is that without the theory, race relations can't be talked about in the U.S. In actuality, the opposite is true. Schools, especially those for young, elementary-aged children, aren't outlets to discuss divisive rhetoric. Schools up to the collegiate level are often places where students are tested and graded on their ability to listen, understand and repeat the material taught to them like it's indisputable fact. One may feel as if they can't debate their professor about class material they disagree with without putting their future at risk.

Right now, young children aren't debating the topic in the classrooms; it's their parents who are trying to have a conversation about the validity of what this theory claims and are being silenced. Many supporters of critical race theory don't want to have a conversation about whether or not it's true; they want it to be accepted as fact and for the people who disagree to disappear.

A recent article from The Hechinger Report states, "if you don't want critical race theory to exist, stop being racist." Stating that people who don't support the theory are racist is totalitarian and a manipulative way to silence opposition.

Currently at JMU, Hak-Seon Lee, associate

professor for the political science department, said his department doesn't have critical race theory implemented into the curriculum, but he believes it should be included.

"[A] good number of courses provided in the department covers the [critical race theory] as a part of various topics related to political implications of racism and racial discrimination, etc," Lee said. "The theory should be taught in any political science and social science courses in general that covers topics such as race and politics, inequality in American society in various dimensions ... it should



The issues brought up in CRT are still under heavy debate. Matt Young | *The Breeze*

be added to gen ed courses that covers humanities and social sciences."

The divisive theory has reached the attention of state school boards and legislatures. For example, on June 14, Florida's state Board of Educators passed a measure to prohibit the teaching of critical race theory in classrooms across the state. This was pushed by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL), who urged the board to see that instead of teaching about the past, it was just another way of "trying to indoctrinate [children] with ideology."

In Loudoun County, Virginia, parents are also protesting the use of critical race theory. During a school board meeting that addressed the theory, Xi Van Fleet, a parent in the Loudoun County school system, said the theory is similar to Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution in China, which she endured before immigrating to the U.S. Fleet's comments should concern people in a way that should show people critical race theory shouldn't be taught in classrooms.

If and how institutionalized racism works in the U.S. is an important discussion to have. However, that's a discussion for fully grown adults — not developing children. Students shouldn't be taught far-left ideology as fact. If the truth of the theory is still under such heavy and widespread debate, it's not ready to be taught in schools.

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Divisive opinions about racial issues shouldn't be taught. Matt Young | *The Breeze*

Editorial Policies

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Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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GREED, LIES AND VIEWS

Streaming services are taking millions of dollars from their actors by breaching contracts

GRACIE BROGOWSKI | contributing writer



When it comes to actors, a large amount of their income is through post production revenue. Now that films are also being added to streaming services, the streaming revenue should be shared with the talent.

The only downfall is that it affects the profit distribution. “Black Widow” star Scarlett Johansson — as well as Emma Stone (“Cruella”) and Emily Blunt (“Jungle Cruise”) — are currently

However, Disney seemingly disagrees with that statement.

Disney+ has become one of the most popular streaming services available. When it was first launched, the service offered every movie, short film and show that Disney had the rights to. When COVID-19 hit, Disney+ created the premiere access option. This way, viewers can see theatrical films safely at home, but they have to pay an additional \$29.99 on top of the \$7.99 monthly fee.

legally fighting Disney on this, as they said they feel it’s unfair that the company’s making a bonus profit and not giving them any revenue.

“Black Widow” was originally scheduled for May 2020 but was rescheduled for July 2021. It received a major amount of attention — according to the Wall Street Journal, the movie made \$60 million nationally and \$318 million internationally. However, that’s not the official total: Through Disney+, the movie made an additional \$60 million. Unfortunately, none of

the \$60 million went toward the talents.

In Disney’s defense, it didn’t predict the pandemic, so having to switch release plans may not have been crossing the executives’ minds when writing Johansson’s contract. However, another Wall Street Journal article mentions other companies such as Warner Bros. — who owns HBO Max — were able to adjust the contracts for each of the actors to ensure that a fair share of the profit was obtained by the talent.

Johansson is continuing the law suit, and while the media continuously covers it, Disney’s legal team is trying to portray it as an orchestrated public relations stunt from the actress. Fox Business explains that Disney’s representative claimed Johansson made \$20 million dollars and that the suit is meritless. An article from CNBC points out that adding “Black Widow” to Disney+ and not splitting any of the proceeds cost Johansson \$50 million.

“To be

honest, [Disney’s lawyers are] doing their job and protecting the company in terms of at least the public relation image of this lawsuit,” JMU media law professor Roger Soenksen said.

Another plot twist that occurred when Johansson’s suit became public was Stone and Blunt hinting to the tabloids their ideas of suing Disney. According to Cosmicbook News, their movies — “Cruella” and “Jungle Cruise” — were also released on premiere access when they were told it would be a theatrical release only. Now that Johansson has the lawsuit in action, these women are debating doing the same since Stone and Blunt had a similar agreement in their contract.

Asking one’s employers to do something as simple as changing the payment distribution from a movie that made hundreds of millions of dollars is reasonable. An actor’s payment comes from a pre-set-up salary and a small percentage of what the movie makes when it’s released, according to Networthbro. Although Johansson’s contract says theatrical proceeds, that’s not the only way the movie made money, so it’s not the proper way to pay the actors.

“The contract itself is not a valid contract that a stipulation within that contract has been changed. They need to go back and shut down and renegotiate that changing the distribution model has a significant impact,” Soenksen said.

Although it wasn’t brought up the day Disney and Johansson created her contract, the company wouldn’t be in so much trouble at the moment if they did what Warner Bros. did with its contract. “Black Widow” made a large profit when all of the money is combined, so sharing some of the Disney+ proceeds won’t cause something as catastrophic as bankruptcy for this corporation. Rearranging contracts and doing an equal distribution seems like a fair request, not an unreasonable demand.

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Disney should pay actors for premiere access regardless of the contracts in place. Matt Young | The Breeze



Disney+ premiere access should be paying actors what they deserve. Matt Young | The Breeze

Give them freedom

Spears' inability to escape her conservatorship shows how the rights of disabled individuals are suppressed

KEN KENSKY | contributing writer



Despite her fame and fortune, pop singer Britney Spears is stuck in a conservatorship she just can't seem to shake. According to Virginia Code, a conservatorship is enstated when an appointed individual becomes responsible for the estate and financial affairs of another person who's deemed "incapacitated" by the court.

In some cases, this is a beneficial arrangement, as the incapacitated person receives help managing their personal business. Unfortunately, it's not always that simple. In many cases, the conservator takes advantage of the power they have over their conservatee, exploiting or even abusing them.

Spears claims to be stuck in this situation today. As early as 2016, Spears said in confidential court records obtained by The New York Times that she's "sick of being taken advantage of" and has felt "forced by the conservatorship into a stay at a mental

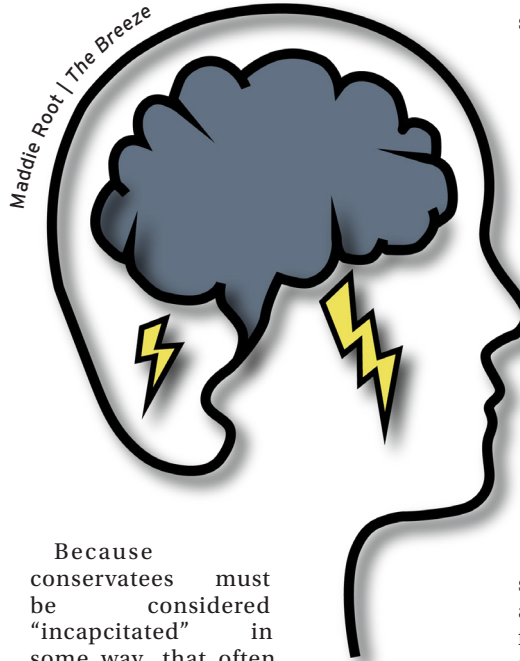
health facility and to perform against her will." In a 2021 appearance before a Los Angeles Superior Court judge, she even disclosed that she's being forced to keep an IUD in her body, preventing her from getting pregnant.

Britney was initially placed under a permanent conservatorship in 2008 after a series of rather public mental health crises. She lost control of her finances, estate and her autonomy.

Since then, the #FreeBritney movement has gained popularity. Fan theories about her being admitted into a mental health facility went viral in 2019, with speculations that she'd been admitted against her will. More recently, Spears has spoken out about the abuse she endured in a testimony against her conservatorship.

"I was in denial. I've been in shock. I am traumatized. I just want my life back," Spears said.

If it can get that bad for Spears, imagine how bad it can get for those with no platform to speak out. People across the country with physical and mental disabilities have been stuck in similarly abusive situations for years before Spears' case was popularized. The National Council on Disability estimated in 2018 there are 1.3 million active guardianship or conservatorship cases in courts.



Because conservatees must be considered "incapacitated" in some way, that often means disabled individuals. To begin a conservatorship, the courts must essentially deem that the potential conservatee doesn't deserve the right to autonomy. This is often framed as being "for their own good."

Conservatorships may work well for some people, but the system is too easily abused. This isn't surprising if one adult is given full control over the financial, medical and personal decision-making of another adult.

"I think one of the things to keep in mind during these types of discussions is a concept that evolved through the Disability Rights movement. It's called 'nothing about us without us,'" Joshua Pate of JMU's disabilities studies faculty said. "No decisions should be made about a population without consulting that population or inviting them to be a part of the conversation."

Like everyone else, people who are disabled deserve to have autonomy in their lives. Spears has legions of loyal fans lending their support to her struggle, but there are those who aren't as fortunate. Pass laws to protect their freedoms. Magnify their voices. And yes, #FreeBritney. But also free the many people who are having their rights and autonomy stripped from them in abusive conservatorships.

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Despite helping U.S. efforts during the war, many Afghans have been left behind. Courtesy of Tribune News Service

America's withdrawal from Afghanistan abandons allies and a failed foreign policy.

from page 1

Nine days after 9/11, President George Bush promised to “direct every resource at our command ... to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network.”

It didn't translate effectively. As reported by NPR, the Afghan military was plagued by inefficiency and corruption. Some troops couldn't read or write and the Afghan military forces became heavily dependant on U.S. support.

Yet, the narrative of an improving Afghan military drove D.C. policy and spending habits.

“I think the winner ... in the last 20 years is the military-industrial complex,” Bernd Kaussler, a professor of political science at JMU said, “[It] made a huge amount of money at the expense of both political and economic development in Afghanistan.”

One example cited by Kaussler involves Supreme Foodservices AG, which was found guilty for overcharging the U.S. military for food delivery. Their prices reached into the millions.

Quoted by Market Place, Mark Cancian, from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said, “We didn't have a good sense of what it was going to cost ... so contractors were basically able to charge whatever they wanted.”

A state with borders drawn by the British, Afghanistan encompasses many different ethnicities and ideologies. With little to export, it maintains small economic potential and remains one of the weakest economies in the region.

In other words, it had little to gain from a centralized government or neo-liberal economy. Americans still pushed for that with mixed success.

“One thing that always hovered over the government in Afghanistan was the issue of legitimacy — as long as there was an occupying

military force,” Kaussler said. “It wasn't just the U.S. It was, you know, all of the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] member countries.”

Societal development was one way to build loyalty and stability to the Afghan government. Yet, according to a Washington Post investigation, the U.S. approached this without much forethought, outdone by an appetite for spending.

“We were building roads to nowhere,” one cited Special Forces advisor said. “With what we spent, Afghanistan should look like Germany in 1955.”

Instead, with the withdrawal of U.S. troops, such spending inadvertently benefitted the Taliban.

The group, a predominantly Pashtun group, was at one point a source of refuge for Al-Qaeda — the reason behind its clash with the U.S. Having once been in power in 1996, they're aim is to establish a rigid form of Islamic law.

White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan delivered the news, earlier this month: “We don't have a complete picture, obviously, of where every article of defense materials has gone,” Sullivan said in a Forbes article. “But certainly, a fair amount of it has fallen into the hands of the Taliban.”

Economic and ethical crises

The regime, now empowered by military triumph and American weaponry, has cast a presiding shadow of fear over the nation. Most would probably agree that memories of public executions and human rights infringements are hard to forget from when they were last in power in the 90s.

Diba Sultan, a JMU senior, understands the alarm. Before her birth, her father fled Afghanistan for the same reason.

“Once the Taliban came ... there was a certain way you couldn't dress, you had to be really strict,” she said. “If he was going to have daughters, that's not an environment where

they were going to thrive.”

However, despite the speed of the Taliban's takeover, some hope that economic pressures may slow down a return to earlier models of government.

According to The Wall Street Journal, banks have closed, while basic commodity prices increased up to 50%. Certain imported goods have become hard to find. The U.S. dollar has become a rarity, lowering the Afghani-to-dollar exchange rate by 10%. Only rent has become cheaper, with so many having fled.

But for Afghanistan's economy to restabilize, much of it depends on international action and investment.

That's because, despite the 20 years of pseudo nation-building that have occurred in Afghanistan, the country continues to be heavily reliant on outside aid for economic stability: Around 75% of the nation's public spending is fueled by foreign assistance.

Since the takeover, billions of dollars in investment have been halted for the near future.

But, as reported by Aljazeera, continuing to not provide the needed funding creates an ethical dilemma for the organizations responsible, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It's a choice of giving up on assistance and allowing an economic collapse, or continuing it and inadvertently financing the Taliban.

Kaussler pointed out another challenge for the new regime: “They're not administrators.”

With thousands evacuated, the bureaucrats that usually sustain the governmental infrastructure will have to be replaced by the less experienced, Kaussler said. Returning to human rights abuses and failing to administer the country responsibly could spell trouble for the Taliban.

Even the U.S.'s withdrawal might prove a burden.

“There's not that much cohesiveness in the

Taliban, either,” Kaussler said. “The glue that held them together was the opposition to the occupying force.”

Frictions could erupt. Maybe.

A humanitarian responsibility

According to Reuters, it's currently unclear how many Afghan refugees are being brought into the U.S. What's evident, however, is that many are willing to help.

Harrisonburg's Church World Service (CWS), an organization that helps secure safety for those fleeing conflict, doesn't say with certainty if it expects to receive Afghan refugees. However, it understands the severity of the crisis.

“We are gravely concerned about the situation in Afghanistan. This is a devastating blow to human rights, peace, and democracy and particularly to the rights of women and girls,” Emily Bender, the development and communications coordinator at CWS, stated through email.

She encourages those who hope to help to contact their office.

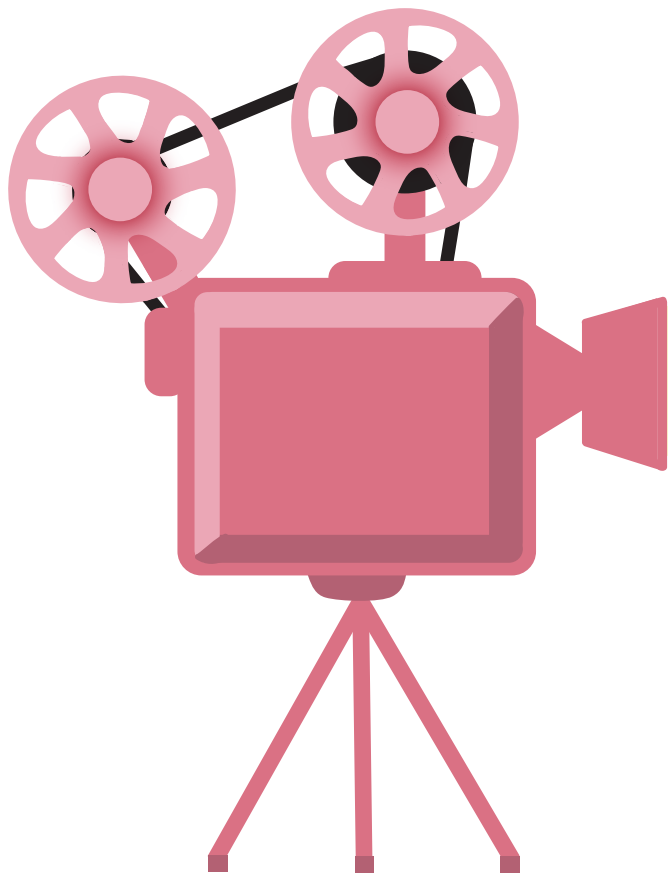
Meanwhile, both Safdar and Sultan have already taken time to help out. Making efforts to raise donations and money for the newly arrived, some stories of hope emerged.

“We didn't have anything. We were not prepared,” Safdar recalls. But upon making an Instagram ad, she describes how the “entire” Afghan community came to help out: “We got over \$10,000 in one day, I think.”

Still, there are lots left behind.

When asked about the future, Sultan has a straightforward request: “All I want and all that the people of Afghanistan want is just peace. Just give us peace, that's all we want.”

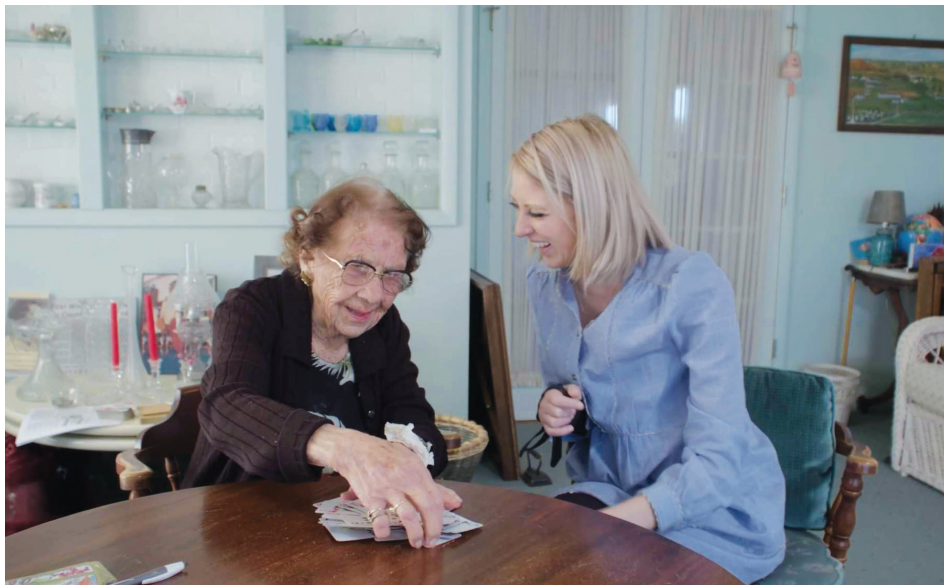
CONTACT Filip De Mott demottfs@dukes.jmu.edu. Filip De Mott is a journalism and international affairs senior.



LIGHTS, CAMERA, *Libby*

Graphics by Amy Needham / The Breeze

JMU alumna showcases spirit & spunk of local legend



McAvoy, Libby's great-great niece, directed, wrote and narrated the documentary detailing Libby's 106 years of life. Photo courtesy of Caitlin McAvoy

"I think that's what makes Libby so special. She's just okay with everything and with everyone, and I think that's what I want to take away from her – not that she's perfect, but that she's okay with not being perfect at all."

Caitlin McAvoy ('15)

"Libby" director

By **MICHAEL RUSSO**
The Breeze

"Get up and dress up and show up, no matter what."

This is the mantra Elizabeth "Libby" Custer lived by and shared with countless others in her 106 years of life, spent almost entirely in Rockingham County. And, when learning about Libby, there's a certain quality about the woman that her great-great niece Caitlin McAvoy said makes her so remarkable.

"I knew Libby my whole life, and I knew ever since I was young that she was someone special," McAvoy ('15) said. "It seemed [everyone] that knew her felt ... this privilege of getting to know her for her tenacity and generosity and her wicked sense of humor. She was so funny."

That's why McAvoy decided to create a documentary about her great-great aunt.

McAvoy said she initially had the idea for the film as she and her brother pondered life after college, and the thought lingered as she auditioned for acting roles in New York City. When McAvoy had a challenging day of auditions, she kept thinking, "What would Libby do?" She decided it was the right time to begin the project, so she returned to the Valley and started filming in winter of 2018. Inspired to share Libby's story and spirit, McAvoy directed, wrote and narrated a documentary about one of Rockingham County's most influential residents alongside filmmaker and editor Chloe Shelton.

"Libby herself [had] a lot to say and she —" Shelton said, pausing to choose her next words. "I'm so glad that she was able to say it and that [McAvoy] captured her saying it, but there's so much to learn from Libby ... I get very emotional every time I watch it. I was emotional the whole time I was editing it. There were scenes that I cried every time I tried to work on them."

Shelton said the editing process took months of hard work to narrow down 12 hours of raw footage into just under 40 minutes while encapsulating Libby's X-factor and wisdom. As the world shut down in the wake of COVID-19, McAvoy said the pandemic's impact on the film and theater industry actually helped the crew focus their time and effort into achieving that goal.

"The pandemic ended up being a big silver lining in many ways for the project because it was hugely time consuming and a labor of love," McAvoy said. "It took that slowdown of everything else and our other work in theater and film for us to be able to buckle down and to get it done."

The film first premiered in March 2021 at the "Women in Film" Festival in Lynchburg, Virginia — an appropriate launch for a trailblazer like Libby, who would've celebrated her 108th birthday that month. It then debuted at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society (HRHS) on Aug. 18-21 to coincide with the Rockingham County Fair, which Libby helped found and attended every year — even in her old age.

"She was one of the first female leaders in numerous arenas, and in a small southern town, that's especially remarkable for her to take that on," McAvoy said. "She was able to rise to areas of leadership really effortlessly. It wasn't a question of her sex or gender, it was that, 'Well, this woman is the best person for the job. We need to put her as our president or on our board or as our leader.'"

In addition to coordinating the first County Fair, McAvoy said, Libby, her sister Ruth and her father ignited the turkey industry in the Shenandoah Valley by learning how to incubate turkey eggs. Their innovation led to an economic boom for the region, and Rockingham County is now considered the turkey capital of the world.



"I've done a man's job all my life. I mean, I have always worked hard. I did anything that came along that needed to be done. Just take things as they come."

Elizabeth "Libby" Custer
Local legend

Libby was famous for her mantra, "Get up and dress up and show up." Screenshot from YouTube

"I've done a man's job all my life," Libby said in the documentary, echoing McAvoy's words. "I mean, I have always worked hard. I did anything that came along that needed to be done. Just take things as they come."

Libby said in the film that she'd often work more in the family business' factory than in the office so she could be alongside others. She held the mindset that there was never anything she didn't like to do, just some things she liked more. Above all, Libby always put others first.

"Her only aim was to help [and] to see where the needs were and to be there and meet them," McAvoy said. "She didn't care about the title, she didn't care about the prestige. She just wanted to roll up her sleeves and get to work."

Libby's reputation wasn't limited to the family business — she was also an artist. Though Libby may have called her work "scribbling," the film shows McAvoy in awe of her great-great aunt's oil paintings and murals, which she made for anyone who asked for them — and all at no charge, with the exception of a business commission.

Many of Libby's friends and family spoke to her character throughout the documentary. They shared sentiments that she was always kind and served as a role model, among many other kind words. One friend and fellow bridge player said that's why Libby lived so long — so that she could show others how to live and, of course, how to "get up, dress up and show up."

"I think that's what makes Libby so special," McAvoy said in the film. "She's just okay with everything and with everyone, and I think that's what I want to take away from her — not that she's perfect, but that she's okay with not being

perfect at all."

Penny Imeson, director of Rocktown History at the HRHS, has worked at the Society for 10 years and spent time with Libby, who still volunteered there well into her 100s. Imeson explained that the documentary's debut at the HRHS was a big success and memorable for all.

"People were laughing, there were some poignant moments, and I saw some tears," Imeson said. "There are more stories to tell, but it's really a precious archive, and people will be able to see it in the future and continue to learn and enjoy Libby Custer."

"Libby" has also received praise at film festivals like London Shorts and GenreBlast Film Fest and is still in festival contention. DVDs and posters are currently available to purchase on McAvoy's website, and she plans to distribute the film wider next March so, she says, a larger audience can learn from Libby, too.

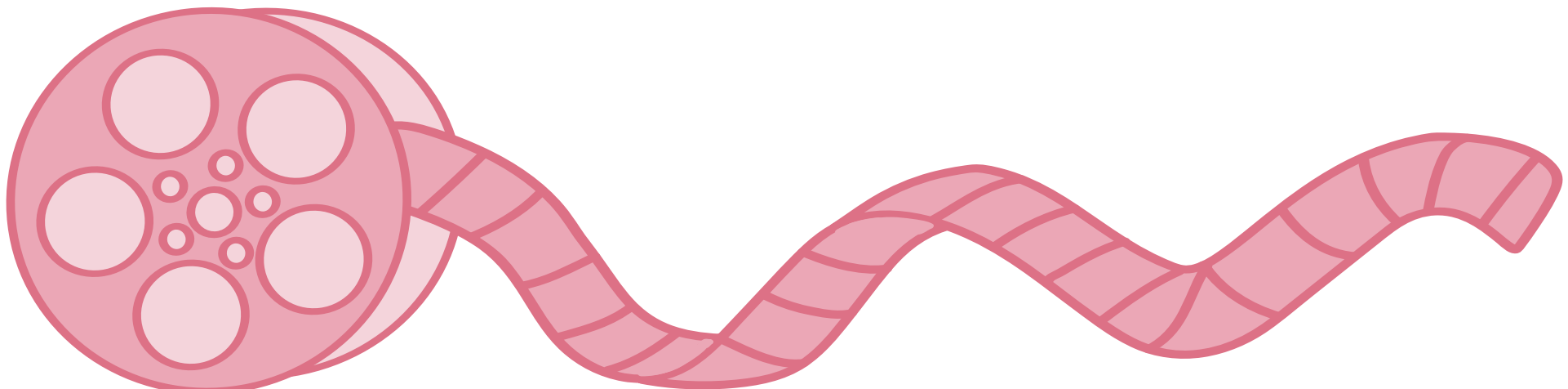
As she pondered Libby's legacy, Shelton said — much like McAvoy — her favorite thing about the trailblazer was her indescribable greatness.

"Everybody loves her, [but] nobody knows why," Shelton said. "Nobody can put their finger on what made Libby so special, and I don't think there's really a way to verbalize that. I think you have to watch the whole documentary and just see whatever you get, but I hope everybody gets something to find their little Libby spark."

CONTACT Michael Russo russomw@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter and Instagram @Breeze_Culture.



The film first premiered in March 2021 at the "Women in Film" Festival in Lynchburg, Virginia, and is still in festival contention. Poster courtesy of Caitlin McAvoy





Comedy troupe gets creative to keep the laughs coming

By **CAITLIN FERNANDEZ**
The Breeze

"I got your back."

That's a traditional saying for members of the JMU improv team, New & Improv'd. It's a reminder that even though the improvisation performers are vulnerable on stage — or on screen during the pandemic — the performers rely on one another and bond closer together as a supportive family.

Members say the close-knit bond among the group — going all the way back to the founders of the troupe in 1999 — helps the actors not only find their rhythm when they're on stage, but when the pandemic altered practices and performances. With the uncertainty and stress of COVID-19, New & Improv'd was able to adapt and find a way to keep comedy alive through their friendship and creativity.

Lucien Anderson, a junior geology major and club "newbie," said the troupe had to adapt its improv games during practices through the pandemic and work on verbal rather than physical creativity.

"We really had to adapt to being creative with our words as opposed to being creative with some of our movements because that's all we had to use," Anderson said. "So, we had

to be able to pick up a bit more creativity in scenes in general."

Because all practices were moved to Zoom, New & Improv'd performers embraced character work by focusing on being more descriptive and developing the plot rather than relying on physical humor skills.

When practices moved back to being in person but masked last spring, members had to readjust once more with a new appreciation for performing live.

Kat Sparagno, a senior media arts and design major and the New & Improv'd director, said one of the most substantial changes and most difficult challenges for the team was having to adapt to the absence of an audience's energy, laughter and in-person suggestions while performing online. She said the troupe has adapted to virtual audiences by putting out polls on social media platforms like Instagram for improv suggestions to use during the show on Zoom.

"This year, we've kind of been just confined to the screen," Sparagno said. "A big part of performing is [feeding] off that energy that the audience gives."

Those social media interactables give the actors a semblance of true audience interaction.

YES, AND?



Sparagno (right) said that when they're "confined to the screen," the troupe often misses the energy from live audiences. Photos by Matt Young / The Breeze

Although they've been unable to hold shows in person this year, the troupe has been able to perform live on Facebook. Jacob Smolsky ('21), a justice studies major and the former assistant director for New & Improv'd, said he enjoys improv because he never knows what's around the corner.

"It's comedy, but you don't know what to expect," Smolsky said. "You go to a play, and you're like, 'Oh, well, you know, it'll be about this,' and you kind of know what you're going into. You never know what to expect in improv."

Improv varies every time, since audience suggestions are always different. Anderson, dubbed "The Noob" by his troupe members, explained that improv games have underlying structures for the performers to go off, and actors must know where the starting and ending points lie. However, the No.1 rule of improv comedy is that there are technically no rules — the performer has to use what they know.

"The first thing that pops in my head, I'm saying," Smolsky said. "It's stressful because you always want to put on a good show, but ... you're just relying on your own humor and your own skills. You don't need anything else."

Improv may sound intimidating to newcomers. However, while someone's comedy skills can always get better, Anderson said, the soul of improv is trust and partnership.

"You will never be alone," Anderson said. "You will always have someone to work off of. If you don't have an idea, you have to be the support for the partner anyways, so if you draw a blank, your partner is going to get your back as well."

Some may also assume that improv artists must have a quick, sharp wit to be able to be good on stage, but Sparagno said that's not always the case. She said improvisers should follow their intuition, and the punchlines will come naturally.

"For someone who's never done improv before,

"We really had to adapt to being creative with our words as opposed to being creative with some of our movements because that's all we had to use."

Lucien Anderson

New & Improv'd member

I would say trust your gut instinct," Sparagno said. "The first thing that comes to mind is usually almost always funny."

While many New & Improv'd members come in with a background in high school improv or theater, the team encourages everyone, no matter their skill level or experience, to audition. Smolsky said that even though each member has different major and career interests, the troupe has bonded through its craft.

"I do think it is comedy that brings us all together," Smolsky said. "When you do comedy with people, I feel like you're kind of vulnerable. Sometimes jokes don't hit, stuff goes wrong, but, like, you're putting yourself out there, trusting your teammates and everybody else in the troupe." As auditions are coming up for new additions to the improv troupe, the group looks for the same qualities in every potential member — trust and chemistry.

"Some people will come in and they will never have done improv in their life ... [but if] the personality fits well, we're willing to do that challenge," Smolsky said. "Somebody could come in and be a flawless [improviser] and be really witty and everything, but if they don't get along with us at all ... then it probably wouldn't work out because so much of improv is trust."

New & Improv'd focuses on who has the most personality, creativity, ability to take and use notes and ability to think on their feet in order to be a compatible scene partner for the group. Auditions are usually competitive — there are members who have never given up and auditioned for two or three years before being able to claim a spot on the team.

Potential new members are also given a chance to get their feet wet by attending workshops held by the club before auditions. This year, the workshop will be held Sept. 1 for the Sept. 2 auditions the next day.

Comedy has been an escape for the New & Improv'd crew this past year, as it has been for many others like their audience members and other JMU comedy clubs. Even for those who have no experience or prior interest in improv — especially for those who want an hour away from the stresses of life or a rough day — Smolsky recommends attending a show.

"[It's] somewhere where you can go and laugh and just laugh at us making fools of ourselves," Smolsky said.

CONTACT Caitlin Fernandez at fernance@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter and Instagram @Breeze_Culture.



Anderson (right), dubbed "The Noob" by the troupe, said that in improv, no one is alone because there's always someone else acting as a partner and supporter.

Healthy Harrisonburg

5 best plant-based restaurants in the 'Burg

By **CHARLOTTE MATHERLY**
The Breeze

Between JMU's freshman festivities and the return of upperclassmen, a substantial portion of Harrisonburg's population returned last week.

Once-empty streets are now crowded with an influx of students and the anticipation of a new semester. This may be especially true for JMU freshmen as they wander the Friendly City for the first time.

Often, with fresh beginnings can come renewed mindsets, the inspiration to harness life for oneself and the desire to establish healthy habits. Both newcomers and returning Dukes alike can benefit from a healthy meal — here are five of the best restaurants in the 'Burg with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

Greens & Grains Cafe

Greens & Grains is the go-to stop for healthy eats in Harrisonburg. With a wide selection of salads, wraps, sandwiches and soups, one can't go wrong with a visit to this cafe, centrally located at the corner of Port Republic Road and Devon Lane. There's a hearty vegan black bean soup and the Vegan Delight salad, which is loaded with tofu, chickpeas, tomatoes, carrots and other veggies, along with a balsamic vinaigrette. Customers can also create their own salads, choosing from a wide variety of fresh greens, fruit, veggies and meat. Sandwich lovers should try the Napa Veggie sandwich — a hefty load of black beans, corn, tomatoes, avocado and more on potato bread.

Grilled Cheese Mania

Half a mile down S. Main Street lies the holy grail of gluten-free and vegan grilled cheese. Grilled Cheese Mania boasts an expansive menu of gourmet grilled sandwiches, most of which can be accommodated to one's preferences by removing meat and substituting three items — Chao dairy-free cheese; Smart Balance vegan buttery spread; and one's choice of the vegan or gluten-free bread, Dave's Killer Bread and Canyon Bakehouse brands, respectively.

For the simple classic, one should order the Vegan Chao Grilled Cheese or the gluten-free Johnny — but newcomers shouldn't limit themselves to the safe choice. Top-notch picks like the Mama Mania, a tomato-pesto sandwich, already exist on the restaurant's gluten-free section of the menu. This particular grilled cheese is extra special — it's named for owner Kathleen Mania-Casey's own "Mama Mania," who she said showed love for her family and friends through her cooking.

The Little Grill Collective

For those craving a healthy breakfast or brunch, The Little Grill Collective is second to none. Although vegan and gluten-free options are limited here, a delicious tofu scramble can be subbed into almost any dish — such as the breakfast burrito or the Love Wrap — for no extra charge, guaranteeing a tasty meal

for vegetarian visitors. There's also hearty buckwheat pancakes, and any bread can be toasted with vegan butter. Located on N. Main Street, The Little Grill Collective is the perfect stop for Sunday brunch with friends.

BoBoKo Indonesian Cafe

When looking for a healthy version of ethnic food, BoBoKo Indonesian Cafe is the place to go. Located at Ice House on S. Liberty Street, BoBoKo serves up traditional Indonesian food. Vegan and vegetarian options are at the forefront of its menu, with tofu and tempeh offered in nearly every dish. Inclusive alternatives to traditional meals like the vegan rendang — slow-cooked jackfruit instead of beef, accompanied by coconut milk, spices and vegetables — are BoBoKo's specialty. The staff is accommodating and friendly, and they're willing to make any changes to their set menu, including modifying the use of oil to ensure the healthiest meal possible. There's even vegan fried rice, which can be difficult to find elsewhere. BoBoKo Indonesian Cafe is undoubtedly Harrisonburg's gold standard for tasty vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free ethnic food.

Heritage Bakery & Cafe

When out strolling the farmers market or popping in and out of storefronts, the Friendly City's occupants are bound to get hungry.

Heritage Bakery & Cafe on S. Main Street is the perfect stop for a simple and healthy breakfast or brunch. From the tangy avocado toast — garnished with radish, lemon, green onion and the optional egg — to the sweeter honeycrisp apple toast, Heritage doesn't disappoint. Gluten-free bread is available at this quaint cafe with abundant outdoor seating, as well as gluten-free and dairy-free pastries that change throughout the week. Some days there are decadent blueberry muffins; other times, one can find various flavors of the cafe's tasty macaroons. But customers don't have to leave it up to chance — Heritage posts its pastry case inventory on Instagram every morning with special indications of allergy-friendly menu items. Due to its downtown location just a short jaunt from the farmers market, Heritage Bakery & Cafe sells out fast, so it's best to go early.

Although all of these restaurants have a wide range of healthy and allergy-friendly products, none of their meals are guaranteed to be 100% free of gluten, meat or dairy. People with celiac disease or other food allergies and sensitivities should talk to the staff at each restaurant to figure out the best choice for them.

As JMU enters a new era, many Dukes may be starting the semester with a renewed focus on health and fitness. Some may even try to avoid eating out, but they don't have to. This semester, Dukes should add these five local businesses to their restaurant rotations.

CONTACT Charlotte Matherly at thebreezeculture@gmail.com. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter and Instagram @Breeze_Culture.



Maddie Root / The Breeze

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Tougher against the champions

Photos by Matt Young / The Breeze

JMU men's soccer prepares to host No. 1 Marshall to kick off the 2021 regular season

By **CRAIG MATHIAS**
The Breeze

JMU men's soccer opens its 2021 campaign with the defending national champions, Marshall, coming to Harrisonburg. This is the second time in three years the Dukes will play their first game against the NCAA's No. 1 ranked team, with 2019's season seeing JMU host 2019 then-preseason No. 1 Wake Forest.

Entering the season, JMU has been voted preseason favorites to win the CAA. On top of this, head coach Paul Zazenski said he's confident after the team's performance in each preseason game this month and that it'll translate to success in its season opener.

"I'm pleased with the group," Zazenski said. "I think they came in fit and ready to work, [and] I'm just ready and excited to get the regular season underway."

On top of showing high-level commitment to the team on the field, redshirt sophomore midfielder Clay Obara said the combination of on- and off-the-field interaction between the team is what can help JMU gain its desired result.

"We have a really tight-knit group," Obara said. "If we can translate that chemistry we have together from off the field to on the field, we should be able to put out a good product on Thursday night."

Redshirt junior defender Tyler Clegg also said that his fellow teammates have taken strides in the buildup to the Marshall game.

Despite losing players from last season, he said others have stepped up to maintain a strong core.

"The team looks good," Clegg said. "We have a strong group coming in, and we didn't lose too many people from last year so we already have good chemistry with each other."

While the Dukes lost names such as goalie TJ Bush and defender Tom Judge, every team, including Marshall, handles the task of replacing players that depart each season. Marshall saw winger Jamil Roberts — the 2020 NCAA Tournament's Most Outstanding Player — and midfielder Pedro Dobella — a 2020 Second Team All Conference USA member — graduate last spring.

Marshall, 13-2-3 last season, also enters the season as the favorite to win Conference USA, on top of the No. 1 ranking in the country. Zazenski said he respects the Thundering Herd's honors while also understanding that it doesn't mean JMU's preparation for the game will be different than if it was any other team.

"Marshall's obviously coming off an exceptional season," Zazenski said. "I think with any high-level opponent and high-level game you have to be healthy, you have to be prepared and you have to be lucky — and that's for both sides."

Obara said he also resonates with the idea that every opponent should be treated the same. He said that considering a team's

ranking or its past accomplishments can make players afraid when the focus must remain on a positive outcome.

"We're not afraid of any opponent we play," Obara said. "We're going to treat them as if we were playing any other team."

As a defender, Clegg said he focuses on making sure no mistakes are made within his fellow defenders. In order to come out of the game with a result, Clegg and his fellow defenders must avoid risks that could cost the team a goal.

"It's mainly just [about] keeping the zero [on the scoreboard] and not taking any chances in the back," Clegg said. "We just have to stay focused throughout the game and [make] no stupid giveaways."

The game is set for a 7:30 p.m. kickoff Aug. 26, and it'll signal the start of JMU's 2021 journey in hopes of another CAA championship, which would be its fourth in four years. Zazenski said he's eager for the opportunity to commence a season with historic implications against a team to the stature of the Thundering Herd.

"I think it will be a high-level college soccer match," Zazenski said. "Both teams have quality on both sides of the ball, and we're just looking forward to the opportunity."

"We're not afraid of any opponent we play," Obara said. "So we're going to treat them as if we were playing any other team."

Clay Obara

Redshirt sophomore midfielder

CONTACT Craig Mathias at mathiack@dukes.jmu.edu. For more soccer coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.

Photos by Christine Brady / The Breeze



GO FOR IT ALL



DEFEAT THE ODDS



Photos by Courtney Ryder / The Breeze



No. 24 JMU field hockey's determination drives through training camp

By **MADISON HRICIK**
The Breeze

Emotion is a powerful weapon for JMU field hockey.

After a nail-biting ending to the 2020 season, the Dukes return to the field hockey complex ready for what the new season may bring. Despite the harsh overtime loss in the CAA championship, the team views it as fuel for its fire.

"We're not going to base our game off of that one thing," junior midfielder Emily Harrison said. "We want to work every day to show everyone what we can truly do."

Head coach Christy Morgan enters her seventh season as head coach since her rehired in 2014, but all that matters is leading her team to the national tournament. Following an intersquad scrimmage last Friday, she said her determination lights a fire underneath the team.

"The game is a very complicated game, but our job is to simplify it for us," Morgan said. "We expect to compete, and we expect to come out and play some really good hockey to make us a better team and a bigger threat."

Looking at the new season, JMU has a focus on its connection on the field. Field hockey requires a deep team connection and communication, making it a vital part of any

team's success. Throughout training camp, players including junior forward Eveline Zwager have taken it upon themselves to become a more vocal force on the field.

"I play a very different role on the team than many others, whether it's captain or not," Zwager said. "It's good to know people look up to me. It gives me confidence to keep working hard to be that bigger leader than I've been in the past."

While watching the team play, the Dukes want fans to see the passion they have for the game. Although the fall season doesn't allow for team chemistry to foster as much as the spring season did, the team said having multiple new faces helped build trust and connection with each other.

Alongside team chemistry, there's a new stress of physicality on this team this season. The players aren't afraid to chase down the ball, force their opponent to make a quick decision and cut off any advancing plays. The quick defense comes from a tough mentality and stamina in each player's athletic ability, something that Morgan believes her team has come prepared for.

"They've done the work, and that work is going to pay off," Morgan said. "There are some younger ones that have come in super fit, ready to learn and are going to be really good for this team."

Now beginning the season with a national

ranking on top of the preseason polls, the Dukes not only have the backing of JMU fans but from opposing coaches as well. Zwager said she takes pride in the preseason rankings and that it gives the team confidence knowing that JMU is the "team to beat," but work is still needed to prove it.

"It's definitely a good feeling to know we're doing the work and it pays off," Zwager said. "But, we still have to stay within ourselves and keep working just as hard because that's how we got to this point."

With that target on their backs, the Dukes say they feel ready to defend not only their home turf, but also their national ranking. CAA champion Delaware earned the No. 17 national ranking, but they aren't the only team the Dukes will see. JMU faces six nationally ranked teams, including two top 10 teams — No. 5 Louisville and No. 9 Maryland.

"We really want to protect our house," Harrison said. "When teams come to our field, we're going to play our game and set our tempo, but we still want to take that even further to away games as well."

Every player on the field requires connectivity between the others, allowing for individual development to blend into the team's chemistry. For example, sophomore forward Tori Carawan saw playing time as a freshman but will have a larger opportunity

in the new season. She remained a dominant force during the team's scrimmage on Friday, creating passes and scoring several goals.

Zwager, Harrison and redshirt junior midfielder Caroline Cahill also bring their own presence to the lineup this season, returning with a mission. Cahill scored the game-winning goal to send the Dukes to the conference championship last season. Zwager was the CAA Player-of-the-Year, and Harrison had a breakout season. The biggest emphasis for Zwager, though, is bringing leadership to the team in their own ways.

"[Carawan] has some of the best speed in the nation, alongside [Harrison]," Morgan said. "They've done a lot of work this summer and are going to be better than ever this season."

The Dukes hold a strength of schedule, and will be tested with each game they play this season. Nevertheless, Morgan and the rest of JMU are determined to win it all.

"We want to win — every game," Morgan said. "To do that, it's about approaching this as one game at a time and playing our hockey."

CONTACT Madison Hricik at breesports@gmail.com. For more field hockey coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.



JMU volleyball celebrates a point against William & Mary in the spring. Photos by Christine Brady / The Breeze



Head coach Lauren Steinbrecher talks to the volleyball team on the way to her 200th career win.

HUNGRY FOR THE CROWN

JMU volleyball prepares for the fall season with a championship mindset

By **MADISON HRICIK & SAVANNAH REGER**
The Breeze

It's been two years since Sinclair Gymnasium was its electric self, and JMU volleyball had Godwin Hall rocking; two years since maskless players threw shirts during starting lineups and since PA voiceover James Hickey spoke the famous "Godwin Hall, get on your feet" before the Dukes prepared for a set or match point.

JMU volleyball is back home with a full slate of games and one mindset — taking back the CAA crown. With the team on the brink of the regular season, the Dukes are motivated to work for the first CAA championship since the 2017 season.

"We have so much potential," JMU volleyball head coach Lauren Steinbrecher said. "We've gotten better in 10 days time and I'm interested to see where we can get by the end of the season."

The Dukes have changed across the board from their last time in a packed Sinclair Gymnasium and even from the spring season that ended a few months ago. One of those

is the leadership and how underclassmen phenoms like junior middle blocker Sophia Davis, setter Caroline Dozier and senior libero Savannah Marshall, have shifted the leadership to a more experienced status.

Although JMU sees many freshmen and sophomores step up to the plate early on, in the spring, Davis, Dozier and sophomore outside hitter Miëtte Veldman all saw significant playing time as underclassmen and were key faces for the Dukes program. As the team turns the page to an experienced look, Davis says that she wants to use her experience to help guide the incoming freshmen as the season gets underway.

"I've been trying to be more of a leader and step up to be more of a presence on the court," Davis said. "[I'm] trying to be more of a point-scorer and more of a presence that people can look up to."

JMU's lineup will also look different because of new faces from both the transfer portal and incoming freshmen. Steinbrecher says she has high hopes for the freshmen and new players on this year's roster and that it has the potential to continue the success.

Redshirt sophomore outside hitter Julia de Sa transferred to Harrisonburg from Florida Southwestern State College, where she was on the 2019 All-Suncoast conference first team and is the FWS All-time kills leader. de Sa brings experience and depth as she has three more years of eligibility.

"She came here to give us more depth in the outside position," Steinbrecher said. "She's energetic, and her work ethic will bring a lot to our program."

Notable freshmen joining the Dukes include middle blocker Annie Smith and libero Jayden Clemmer. Steinbrecher has said how Smith has stood out in camp and, with her resume before JMU, she has potential to make the starting lineup. The Florida native is the all-time block leader at The King's Academy and is shaping up to be a solid second to Davis.

Clemmer will be an important piece to JMU volleyball as a freshmen libero, looking to learn under Marshall. Marshall has dominated the libero game for JMU for three seasons and, as she graduates after this season, Clemmer will look to take her

spot and be a consistent piece in the Dukes lineup.

"The freshmen have come in and done a fantastic job," Steinbrecher said. "We have two depth liberos who have come in and done a fantastic job."

On the sidelines, Steinbrecher introduced assistant head coach Michael Hency to her staff in July. Now that he's working with the team, his international and previous collegiate experience has given Steinbrecher confidence in his ability to work with the team.

"He's coached at high levels and won championships everywhere he's been, and he played at a high level," Steinbrecher said. "He's a great human ... he's added some new ideas and thoughts that I think can make a big step in the program."

Before taking on the CAA, JMU will kick off the season with the annual JMU Invitational tournament, giving the Dukes their first look at a filled Sinclair Gymnasium.



"We'll have players with the ability to just come up off the bench and really provide something the entire year."

Lauren Steinbrecher

JMU volleyball head coach

JMU took advantage of the summer, staying in Harrisonburg throughout the break and into fall training to keep everyone ready for what's to come. Not only will the Dukes take on the familiar CAA foes — including CAA champion Towson — but they'll further challenge themselves with new nonconference opponents from around the country.

"We just have so much depth on this team," Steinbrecher said. "We'll have players with the ability to just come up off the bench and really provide something the entire year."

The team will travel south to Alabama State for the first time immediately following the Invitational. Although it is a brand new opponent for the Dukes, it won't be the last time this roster ventures through uncharted territory.

JMU will take on Ohio State to close out the nonconference slate of the regular season — making it the second time in program history these two battle it out. The Dukes last saw the Buckeyes back in 1992 where JMU fell in three sets, but history doesn't intimidate what the team has in mind.

"It's exciting playing teams where you never know if you'll play them again," Veldman said. "It's going to be a good challenge for us to play against really good teams."

Once CAA play begins, JMU will return to its weekend series brought on during the 2020 season. Each conference foe will face the others both on Saturday and Sunday, then not again until the conference tournament. The series was something the Dukes took advantage of last season, going 3-0.

The biggest difference the 2020 weekend series schedule has compared to this season — JMU plays every conference opponent. The Dukes only saw a few foes in the spring season but now take on every team in the CAA for a full-conference ranking.

A high conference ranking early on could be a major boost for JMU, already coming in second in the preseason poll. Yet, the team has a target on Towson's back, looking for a way to take down the back-to-back CAA champions.

JMU will hold home court advantage against the Tigers during the regular season, but the conference tournament will take place in Towson, Maryland. Although the atmosphere will be different, the team says its not afraid of the challenge.

"There's no doubt that Towson is a program and has done great things over there," Steinbrecher said. "It's fun to be the chaser this time and try to beat the best, including going there and trying to beat them there to bring the championship back to Harrisonburg."

The volleyball season is one of development and determination, allowing the upperclassmen to pass the chalice to the underclassmen, all while fighting for a spot in the NCAA tournament come December.

CONTACT Madison Hricik and Savannah Reger at breezesports@gmail.com. For more volleyball coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.



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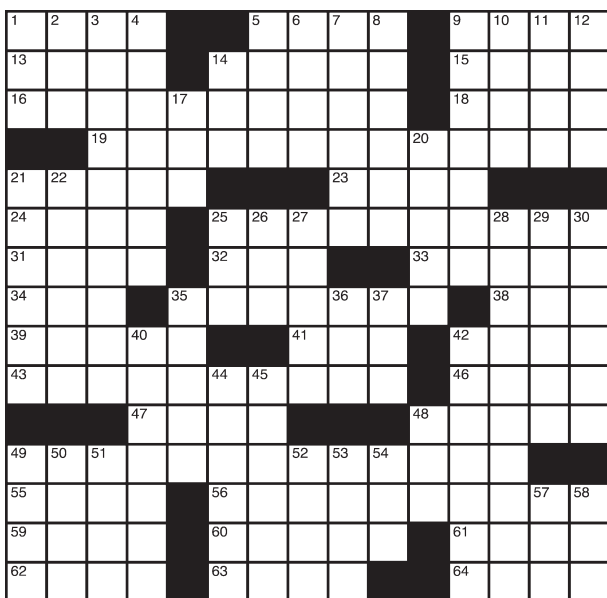
FOR RELEASE AUGUST 26, 2021

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Group for whom "Drive" was a Top 10 hit, with "The"
- 5 Sarge's charges, briefly
- 9 Finishes in the bakery
- 13 Part of an agenda
- 14 Fracas
- 15 Bar purchase
- 16 Wanted things
- 18 Santa ___: Sonoma County seat
- 19 Kin of urban legends
- 21 Shows
- 23 Wander
- 24 James of jazz
- 25 Possible result of a bankruptcy filing
- 31 ERA, for example
- 32 Suffer
- 33 Some, in Potsdam
- 34 Dirt alternative, at times
- 35 Minimally
- 38 Member of the 2019 World Series champs
- 39 Large quantity
- 41 Beethoven preceder
- 42 "¿Qué ___?"
- 43 "That's some bargain you got!"
- 46 Assist badly?
- 47 Indian nurse
- 48 Jacques' title, in a children's song
- 49 Dated jokes ... and what the ends of four Across answers are, in a way
- 55 Guitarist's gadget
- 56 Tennessee Williams specialty
- 59 King toppers
- 60 Brazilian range ___ do Mar
- 61 Architect Saarinen
- 62 Leader
- 63 Egyptian vipers
- 64 "Glee" character, usually



By Chris Sablich

8/26/21

- 2 Put away
- 3 Vacation destination
- 4 Greet with a grin
- 5 Prefix meaning "all around"
- 6 Rapper with a clock necklace, familiarly
- 7 Et ___
- 8 Salt, say
- 9 Begin, for one
- 10 Hip
- 11 Alleviate
- 12 Places to relax
- 14 Cry from a litter
- 17 ADA member
- 20 Tube, so to speak
- 21 Grant
- 22 Staple, e.g.
- 25 Monopoly token that replaced the iron
- 26 Unlike Abner, actually
- 27 École attendee
- 28 "Kingdom by the sea" maiden of poetry
- 29 Come-on
- 30 Executor's concern
- 35 "What's in ___?"



- 36 Motorists' org.
- 37 NBC weekend show
- 40 Clueless
- 42 Castle feature
- 44 Stuffed Indian pastry
- 45 Macduff and Macbeth
- 48 Hale
- 49 Sign of healing
- 50 Snack from a truck
- 51 Primatologists' subjects
- 52 UMD athlete
- 53 Some crop units
- 54 ___ Building, now 30 Rockefeller Plaza
- 57 Exist
- 58 "... the morn ... / Walks o'er the dew of ___ high eastward hill": "Hamlet"

DOWN

- 1 "Le ___": 1636 Corneille play

3	9							2	4
	1	7	2	9					3
2									
			4						
		1	3	6	5	7			
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4	8							3	5

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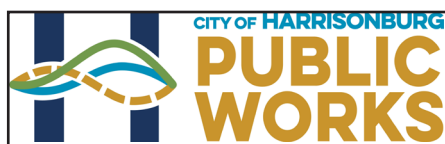
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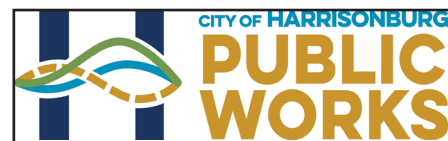
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