Local police work to prevent child pornography in Rockingham County

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Upcoming Events

Friday
- Dancescapes at Forbes Center for the Performing Arts - Mainstage Theatre 8 p.m.
- Christmas Coffeehouse Benefit Concert at Park View Mennonite Church - Fellowship Hall, 7 p.m.

Saturday
- Holiday Art Market at Larkin Arts, Noon - 6 p.m.
- Winter Wonderfest on the corner of South Main Street and Bruce Street, Noon - 6 p.m.

Sunday
- Holiday Carriage Rides at Edith J. Carrier Arboretum, 1 - 4 p.m.
Fake phone numbers, Facebook profiles and dating site accounts are used in stealthy undercover operations by the Harrisonburg Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Members of ICAC use false identities to capture sex offenders and pedophiles as well as investigate other sex crimes.

While ICAC has around 61 task forces that represent over 15,000 law enforcement and prosecution agencies, two of these task forces are in Virginia. The local branch located in Northern Virginia/Washington D.C., which the Harrisonburg Police Department is affiliated with, has proven effective in its investigations. It's operated by the state police and made up of law-enforcement officials who put their lives on the line to save one child at a time.

Chad Morris is one of these officials. Morris is a special agent with the bureau of investigation for the Virginia State Police. He occasionally teaches a computer crimes course at JMU, and has been working with ICAC for six years.

Morris spends his time investigating and performing undercover operations unseen to the Harrisonburg public. He said that when looking at local arrest reports, the numbers of arrests are elevated because of how efficient the Harrisonburg branch of ICAC is luring potential criminals to Harrisonburg and detaining them.

"If you look at the number of offenders arrested [in Harrisonburg] ... you might see what looks like more here, because we're very active in looking at those types of offenders," Morris said. "Versus if you go to Shenandoah County and look at their circuit court records, you're probably not going to see as many child pornography arrests there ... I live here, I work here — this is my backyard. I'll charge a lot of folks in this court because I have a good working relationship with the Commonwealth attorney."

Greg Miller is an investigator for the HPD. He's worked with Harrisonburg ICAC since 2008, and often deals with the detainment of child predators. He and Morris have worked on countless cases together, but Miller experienced some cases involving JMU firsthand.

"The cases that have occurred in Harrisonburg — including JMU students, professors and Harrisonburg residents — aren't unusual. Miller said that while JMU has a larger population than Eastern Mennonite University and Bridgewater College, that doesn't necessarily mean all cases in the area revolve around the JMU community. Many cases involve the elementary and middle schools in surrounding localities.

Miller said he often receives phone calls from parents of children saying they've been approached by an older individual that seemed suspicious, or attempted to engage in questionable activity.

"What we might do is then take over and assume their identity and start talking with those individuals," Miller said. "They initiated with a [real] 13-year-old, and it went too far. So we take it over trying to reach them, meet them, arrest them and see what else they might have on their computers and things like that. So that's a snowball effect."

Miller is highly trained and believes the key to being undercover is to never use specifics with a potential perpetrator.

"If I'm undercover, I wouldn't say a specific act, because that heightens [the situation] and then everyone starts looking at that stuff," Miller said. "We say this all the time when we're teaching and talking to other people — trying to make it stop. It's not going to stop."
According to Morris, many of those who are detained are “travelers,” meaning they come from out of the area to meet the child.

“We used to get travelers from Ohio, Maryland and Pennsylvania — and they would travel down and meet us at JMU at the Starbucks and they’d get off the interstate,” Morris said. “We’d meet them there and arrest them and do our takedown … we did that about 12 or 13 times.”

ICAC works to protect all those browsing and sharing information, no matter the age or gender, as social media becomes increasingly popular with younger generations. Undercover agents work with most forms of social media.

“Any social media platform that can reach out, there is a possibility that we could have something there, trying to [stop it],” Miller said.

Both Morris and Miller dedicate their lives trying to keep the general public safe. JMU takes similar action when it comes to its faculty and staff.

Bill Wyatt, JMU’s director of communications and university spokesperson, believes JMU does everything to keep predators out of the university. According to Wyatt, the university follows strict protocol when prospective students apply.

“For prospective students who apply, on the application, it asks if you’ve ever been convicted of a felony,” Wyatt said. “Any time someone checks the ‘yes’ box, then we investigate the nature of the crime … If a non-traditional student, somebody who is 50 years old and 20 years ago they were convicted of some non-violent crime, the committee could consider them for admission to the university. It all depends on the circumstances and the crime.”

The committee that examines the cases is made up of the dean of admissions, the university attorney and one representative each from the counseling center, public safety department and student affairs.

Ultimately, the decision is made by President Alger, the vice president and individuals in enrollment management.

“There’s no hard-and-fast rules about certain crimes versus other crimes,” Wyatt said. “The primary thing we’re looking at is, ‘Is this individual a threat to the university community? If we feel as though they are a threat, even if they have a 4.0, we’re going to deny their admission.”

Safety is the main concern for both JMU faculty and city officials. Morris and Miller try to bridge the gap between uncovering a case and the perpetrator actually acting on it.

“We try to locate, identify and arrest an individual as soon as is practical,” Morris said.

The tactics undercover investigators use are for the greater good. Harrisonburg ICAC is trying to make one less child become a statistic.

“Our No. 1 focus is, ‘Is this individual that we’ve talked to a hands-on offender?’” Miller said. “Are there any persons out there, any victims out there, that we need to reach out to and get them help?” That’s our goal.”

Morris and Miller’s jobs often go unseen and unrecognized, but they both feel the job is worth it.

“Not being able to get everybody, that is it,” Morris said. “Sometimes it’s hard to say ‘no,’ … it’s hard to turn a blind eye.”

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The local branch of ICAC investigates incidents in other areas out of its jurisdiction, such as Fredericksburg. While some child pornography incidents occur at JMU, other Virginia universities also have similar cases.
On Sundays, the tiny Mabel Memorial Chapel is filled with four-part harmony as members of its new congregation sing hymns a cappella style. What the church lacks in size is more than made up for with its extensive history.

Dr. Lucien G. Heneberger, medical director of the U.S. Navy during the Spanish American War, built the chapel. Located at Reservoir St., the chapel has stood tall for 119 years. On Easter Sunday in 2007, it seemed that members of the congregation might’ve been attending the last service inside Mabel’s historic walls.

First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg — the mother church of Mabel Memorial — was looking to sell the valuable lot on which the church stood.

“We asked if we could have our last Easter service here at the chapel,” Helen Foley, a member of Mabel Memorial for approximately 60 years, said. “It was somber for a lot of people.”

After that service, First Presbyterian posted a “For Sale” sign on the lot and locked out members of the church. The doors to the chapel would remain locked for nearly 10 years.

March Warner purchased the chapel in June of 2016, but he doesn’t consider himself the owner because he believes churches belong to God.

“It seemed like the right thing to do,” Warner said. Warner said he didn’t feel he had close ties to the community around the church. He considers Annapolis, Maryland, his residence, though he does have a home here.

After years of neglect, the church was in need of extensive renovations. One year later, Mabel was ready to hold its first service in 10 years on Easter Sunday.

“It was the exact 10th anniversary of the closing, so it wasn’t a quick process,” Warner said. “It was a rebirth.”

Many of the members now are new, and weren’t there to see Mabel Memorial’s closing. The Southeastern Mennonite Conference brought in six families from other churches this year to form the core of the congregation at Mabel.

“We are here not just to start another Mennonite church,” Dave Miller, a new Mabel Memorial member, said. “That’s not our point — it is to meet the needs of the community and that is the sole purpose [of why] we’re here.”

John Swartz, pastor at Mabel Memorial, said he’s seen his congregation embody this desire to serve the community.

“The families here are families that are very interested in outreach, very interested in ministry,” Swartz said. “There’s a little more energy at a congregation like this.”

The members of Mabel will be putting that passion for outreach to work on Wednesday when they’ll treat JMU students to “free comfort food” for finals week.

“We’re simply trying to follow God’s call,” Miller said. “There’s 25,000 people invited to this food event — well, there won’t be 25,000 here, there may not be 10. We don’t know that. I do expect to see God’s work done, one way or the other.”

This won’t be the first time Mabel Memorial and JMU have crossed paths — the relationship is actually over 100 years old. Heneberger built a schoolhouse to go along with the chapel one year after it was first built in 1898. When JMU was founded in 1908 — originally called the State Normal and Industrial School for Women in Harrisonburg — the school used classrooms at the schoolhouse and chapel.

On the Saturday before Easter of 2007, JMU’s Alpha Tau Omega fraternity — which is no longer on campus — held a fundraiser to try and help save the church. Now, it’s the chapel trying to help JMU students.

In addition to the occasional services that began on Easter, the chapel started weekly Sunday services in October. Foley and the new church members look forward to the chance to sit in the pews of what they see as such an important piece of history.

“I always said … that this church would never stay closed, it would never fall down, because God has a purpose for this church standing,” Foley said. “And here we are today.”

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This season, the community is coming together with several businesses to collect for those in need. During the fundraiser, the team is collecting both material and monetary donations to give to the local families.
TOY | ‘He came back and had purchased five bicycles – it gives you chills’

from page 7

During the first week in October, families apply to become a part of The Salvation Army’s Angel Tree by providing proof of income, expenses and number of people living in the household. The Angel Tree allows the children from those families to put five wishes on the tree. These wishes could be anything from a board game or favorite toy to a pair of shoes or winter scarf.

Most of the time, all five wishes are provided, but sometimes holes are left on the tree where a child’s wish wasn’t granted. With Toy Convoy, those holes are filled by the donations collected across the Valley and given out on distribution day. This year, families can pick up these toys Dec. 15 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.

Kim Wentz, regional resource development director for The Salvation Army, has been involved with distribution day for the past 17 years. She continues to be amazed at the surprising generosity she experiences by locals who aren’t familiar with the program.

“I was in Waynesboro two years ago when this gentleman walked up and asked what we were doing,” Wentz said. “He came back and had purchased five bicycles — it gives you chills.”

Thousands of children benefit and depend on the Toy Convoy each year. Alone, there are 1,401 children from Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. There are also 348 children from Staunton, 650 from Augusta County and 356 from Waynesboro who’ll now have presents to open on Christmas morning.

“It allows them to be just like everyone else,” Wood said. “I believe that every child wants to believe in Santa Claus, and this gives them the opportunity to continue to believe.”

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

By ANDREA BRUSIG

Every minute, around 20 people are physically abused by their romantic partners in the United States. In 2014, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance received and provided support for 5,554 hotline calls.

To help those in the community who’ve experienced abuse, the Bare Naked Ladies club is spreading joy this winter by hosting a holiday drive for the New Directions Center, a shelter for individuals impacted by emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Bare Naked Ladies is an organization on campus that promotes self-love and female empowerment. This semester, they’ve been raising money and donations for the New Directions Center, a Staunton-based organization whose focus is to help women, men and children affected by different forms of abuse. BNL hosted a drive for the center last year as well, and collected clothing items for the center’s residents.

Giuliana Luna, a senior international affairs major and president of BNL, believes that their holiday drive is a way to encourage self-love to individuals beyond JMU students.

“We really believe that beauty is so much more than one-dimensional — it’s so much more than physical,” Luna said.

Loving who you are and being a confident person is truly what shines out of yourself and makes you beautiful. We live in this area for such a short period of time, but there are people from around this area that could benefit from what we do.”

The organization also created beaded bracelets this semester with uplifting words, and sold them on campus. They raised over $100, which will be donated to the center along with the items collected.

“A lot of times, we as women have extra boxes of tampons or bottles of shampoo — just all these extra items that we don’t necessarily use,” Luna said. “But donating them can really make a difference to someone. This is a community that we’re a part of, so this is a way to go beyond the JMU bubble.”

Mary-Clement Staley, a senior biology major and secretary of the club, contacted the center and organized the drive.

“It’s really cool to see that people want to take time out of their day to give back to the community,” Staley said. “We’re very fortunate, and some people aren’t that lucky.”

BNL emphasizes the importance of coming together as a group to make an impact in the community, both in and outside of JMU. While the organization is large, Luna reminds the group that their individual actions don’t go unnoticed.

“My favorite part is showing the members of our club that they can make a difference,” Luna said. “A lot of times when you’re just one person in a group of 100 people, you feel like maybe your voice doesn’t matter. But every single contribution makes a difference when you come together as a group with a passion.”

Parker Draper, a freshman nursing major and new BNL member, posted about the holiday drive on her Facebook page in time for Thanksgiving break.

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“My neighbors were actually super helpful — they gave me canned goods that they weren’t using, and I got a few monetary donations as well,” Draper said.

Throughout her first few months in the organization, Draper says she’s learned more about what it looks like to build others up, as well as loving herself while growing in positivity and self-acceptance.

“We are empowered women trying to empower other women by spreading the message of self-love and self-care,” Draper said. “Self-love isn’t just looking in the mirror and telling yourself that you look good, just like self-care isn’t just taking a bubble bath and doing a face mask. I’ve learned that it’s actually a lot more than that — for someone to genuinely love themselves can be a very difficult thing.”

Events such as these serve as a reminder to students that living an impactful life can extend beyond JMU. “This is something so much greater than yourself and even JMU,” Luna said. BNL looks forward to hosting the holiday drive each year, and members have loved watching the connection with the New Directions Center develop. The drive will take place until the end of the semester, and Staley plans on delivering the items herself. The organization will also write encouraging notes to the individuals.

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Local:

With the goal of solving overcrowding issues, the Harrisonburg School Board voted to approve the construction of a new high school Tuesday. All board members voted in favor of the project. The architectural firm chosen to build the high school estimated the new structure will cost approximately $76,000,000 without factoring in a sports facility.

National:

A group of Democratic legislators declared their fellow party member Al Franken must resign from his post as junior senator of Minnesota on Wednesday. Franken, the former “Saturday Night Live” actor, was accused of sexual harassment by seven women — one of whom was a military veteran. He made apologies to his accusers but disputed details of their version of events.

World:

President Donald Trump is expected to become the first world leader to acknowledge Jerusalem’s status as Israel’s official capital. The U.S. will move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as part of this course of action. The decision, a campaign promise, could greatly upset U.S. allies in the Muslim world while Palestine’s chief representative Husam Zomlot called the decision a “kiss of death.” Upon recognition of Jerusalem, the U.S. would abandon a long-standing policy that the historic city’s status be resolved as part of peace talks with Palestine.

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Conquer finals week

While finals week can be stressful, JMU offers a variety of options to combat anxiety during the difficult academic period.

Grab your ibuprofen and Red Bull — it’s finals week. Does this time of year trigger laughter due to lack of sleep delirium? How about when you realize in order to pass your GenEd class, you’re going to have to try harder than you do for a course for your major? Oh, and most importantly, you find yourself wearing out/f_i nd yourself wearing out/f_i ts for a course for your major? Oh, and most students to relieve stress and gain energy. Take your bed. If this is the case for you, put down the Red Bull, take a breath and read. Finals week is going to test you both mentally and emotionally, but that doesn’t mean you have to be miserable.

JMU offers plenty of on-campus resources to get you through the week, and — make sure you’re sitting down — maybe even enjoy some moments.

Ranging from East Campus to the Student Success Center, there are programs in place for students to relieve stress and gain energy. Take Madison Union for example. Located nearly in the middle of campus, this building offers extra study space with meeting rooms open to students avoiding crowded libraries, according to building manager and senior business major Careen Lumicao.

If you’re looking for more opportunities to stretch out the tension that can only be explained by a 20-page research paper, Room 419 in Madison Union offers Madison Meditates. These hour-long meditation sessions are taught daily by various instructors ranging from professors to local yoga therapists.

Perhaps you find yourself locked in Rose Library as an integrated science and technology major, hoping to get the knot out of your neck during the 30-minute break you allow yourself mid-cram session. According to Nina Geleta, a senior fitness assistant at UREC, the center is offering massages in the Wellness Center. In addition, there are group exercise classes offered to target stress reduction and can be found on the online weekly calendar.

If the idea of being surrounded by other people, even in a calming environment, has you begging for the next bus off campus, try a nap lounge. Available on both sides of campus, you can have a cozy getaway in a room dedicated for nodding off. You can credit fellow Duke Caroline Crooke, a senior psychology major and sleep researcher, for the student-run movement that led to Festival’s inclusion of a Nap Nook. Located below the dining portion of Festival, the Nook was created by Crooke to give students what they all crave most — sleep.

According to an article posted by JMU Communications, “Studies show that students are more successful in the classroom when they receive a full night’s sleep. According to an article in ScienceDaily, Dr. Kohler of the Florida Sleep Institute found that “A teen who regularly gets enough sleep will have improved academic performance, a positive attitude towards their education, and be able to better interact socially with their peers and teachers.”

“This research is [indisputable],” Crooke said. “Sleep is strongly correlated with success, physical health, and mental well-being.”

Lounges are also located throughout Madison Union for your sleeping disposal. The newly added recliner lounge in Taylor Down Under has eight leather chairs to sink into and escape the endless amounts of reading and another outline-related papercuts. With the dim lights and quiet atmosphere, the most important task is setting an alarm to prevent melting away all potential study hours.

Overall, remember balance is key. Even if you don’t let yourself leave one of the go-to study headquarters known as our beloved on-campus libraries, take advantage of their alternatives to study. Going from the art stations to Starbucks’ warm and cozy atmosphere gives you time to breath. Pack yourself at least one item that can comfort you as well as a snack to hit the reboot button on your metabolism. Avoid foods that are high in fats and sugars to prevent the infamous post-PC Dukes cramps. Try a well-balanced meal — like the quinoa bowls at SSC or the Asian salad from Top Dog. If you’re craving something with the warmth of a homemade meal, try E-Hall or D-Hub. Being on campus all day doesn’t mean you have to completely neglect your self-care.

Seek out moments of mindfulness, release tension by going to a UREC kickboxing class — even if you have to pretend the punching bag is your cumulative final exam — and take care of your body. By rewarding your physical and mental health, you’ll find an overall improvement in your well-being, and therefore foster more sustainable study habits. Good luck my fellow Dukes and worst-case scenario — Cs get degrees.

Becca Roithmayr is a senior communication studies major. Contact Becca at roithmrk@dukes.jmu.edu.
DARTS & PATS

A “crying-in-the-club” pat to Breezers for making this semester the best one yet.
From a copy editor reluctant to graduate.

A “please-come-fix-my-door” dart to my apartment complex for ignoring my pleas for help.
From an angry resident.

An “are-you-kidding-me” dart to my co-worker who’s no longer a vegan.
From someone wondering why we had to eat cauliflower puffs for the last three months.

A “thank-you” pat to my professor for promising to bring food to our final.
From a student running low on dining dollars.

A “who’s-a-good-boy” pat to my roommate’s dog for making my life better.
From a student whose own dog is over 200 miles away.

A “clean-up-after-yourself” dart to JMU students leaving their trash in ISAT.
From a student who wants fellow Dukes to represent the university better.

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**Double Take:** Supreme Court weighs First Amendment rights in same-sex marriage case

The U.S. Supreme Court began hearing Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission on Tuesday. The case is centered around a baker’s decision to not make a wedding cake for a gay couple five years ago.

Discrimination at its finest

The legal definition of what constitutes speech is currently being debated. The case of the Colorado Baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a gay couple is about whether making a cake for a wedding is a form of speech. A gay couple came into the cake store and asked if they could request a wedding cake. When the owner discovered the couple was gay, he refused to make it, saying it went against his religious beliefs.

The problem with that is there’s legal precedent for limiting what religious freedom does or doesn’t allow. In the case of Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. City of Hialeah, the city tried to ban a religious community from sacrificing animals on the basis that it disturbed some of the residents. However, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the church, because animals were being killed similarly to how farmers slaughter animals for human consumption. Ergo, if two groups have functionally similar activities — whether it be racial, religious or any number of other group — one group can’t be banned from doing functionally the same thing as another. So, applied to this case, if a straight couple asked for a wedding cake and the baker agreed, they would be compelled to make the same cake for a gay couple.

What’s also important to note is there’s a difference between a religious marriage and a government one. A religious marriage — one performed outside of government — doesn’t have any legal meaning. Its symbolic meaning doesn’t hold any value outside that religion. In contrast, a government marriage is one that’s recognized as legal and valid for purposes such as taxes. When talking about religious beliefs and marriages, one must be aware of the difference, and recognize that the government marriage is primarily for legal purposes and in that sense doesn’t clash with religious marriages and their associations.

The baker in this case argues that because he’s a “cake artist,” — each wedding cake he makes is custom designed and takes a fair amount of time — his cake should be considered equal to speech. What that fails to recognize are the other people who participate in a wedding, including the florists, invitation designers, caterers and so on. These people are hired to make bouquets or create menus, regardless of the sexual orientation of their clients. The identity of their clients shouldn’t inhibit their ability to perform their job. In this sense, the cake company was hired to perform a job they regularly do. It was only when a gay couple asked them for a wedding cake that it said no.

In the 2015 gay rights case in which gay marriage was legalized, the Court set the legal implication that there’s functionally no difference between a straight and gay couple, and thus it falls under the Equal Protection Clause. This decision prevents individuals from denying service to anyone simply because of their sexual orientation. As stated by David Cole — a respondent for the Colorado Civil Rights Commission — in the Tuesday hearing, “There was no request for a design. There was no request for a message. He refused to sell them any wedding cake. And that’s identity-based discrimination. It is not a decision to refuse to put particular words on it.”

Liz Todd is a freshman chemistry major and member of both Madison Equality and the LGBTQ and Ally Education Program. Contact Liz at toddej@dukes.jmu.edu.
**Service isn’t a right**

**MATT WEYRICH**

The Supreme Court is in the midst of deciding one of the most pivotal same-sex marriage cases in its history this week. While the 2015 case guaranteeing the right to a same-sex marriage changed the entire landscape of the gay-rights movement, Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission has several implications that go beyond equal opportunities for same-sex couples.

When Jack Phillips, the baker who owns the cake shop, turned down David Mullins and Charlie Craig’s request for a wedding cake in 2012, he argued it went against his religious beliefs to participate in a same-sex wedding. Regardless of whether or not the cake had a written message on it — something never discussed between Phillips and the couple — Phillips’ cake would’ve been a main centerpiece of an event he strongly opposed.

This case isn’t a question of whether or not same-sex couples should receive fundamental equal treatment. The 2015 decision guaranteed gay and lesbian couples would be seen equally by the federal government. In the private sector, however, this case raises a much larger fundamental problem. Americans are guaranteed many rights in the Constitution — more rights than many countries across the globe have even considered. Nevertheless, there’s a right that’s not included anywhere in the Constitution, Bill of Rights or any amendment: the right to service. By law, private businesses aren’t required to serve anyone. It’s their right as a company to serve who they wish.

By requiring a baker to serve gay couples a wedding cake, it opens the door to a range of possibilities that’ll only polarize this country further. If this decision is passed, an artist could be required to paint adult entertainment because a client requested it. Perhaps a neo-Nazi will walk through the door of a jewelry shop and ask for a Swastika engraved into a necklace. With this legal precedent in place, no one would be able to prevent these situations from happening.

These may seem like far-fetched examples, but if the Supreme Court decides not to uphold religious beliefs as strong moral reasoning for refusing service, it won’t be able to allow private entities to point to other moral reasons for doing the same thing. If the law is upheld, however, this decision will still positively benefit both parties. A gay baker would be able to deny service to a straight couple because it would go against their beliefs.

Even without a law in place, the baker is still negatively affected by his decision not to serve Mullins and Craig. Since refusing the couple, Phillips has lost 40 percent of his customers and more than half of his employees. If society sees his decision as the wrong one, the free market will take its course and Phillips will eventually go out of business.

The decision is simple: No one is required to buy cakes from his shop, so he shouldn’t be required to sell them to anyone either. If this case involved a government entity, this would be a much different conversation. That’s where the 2015 case protects same-sex couples and grants them protection under the Equal Protection Clause.

The Constitution was put in place to protect the rights of private citizens. Stripping away those rights, like the First Amendment, in favor of nonexistent ones, like the right to service from a private company, will only create more problems than it’ll solve.

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**GO DUKES!**
A few drinks of liquid courage and you’re on top of the world. Suddenly everyone at the party is a potential new friend, and those feelings you were drowning in only 30 minutes ago are gone.

As a freshman, I hadn’t discovered how alcohol sometimes brings out the worst in people — I only saw the best. As a college student, you soon learn alcohol intertwines itself in almost every off-campus social event.

I remember arriving at college and going to my first apartment party. Everyone seemed so friendly and confident — full of a rare kind of zest for life — and suddenly everything was exciting. Chanting “USA” in unison with a hundred strangers felt like a war cry blanketed with a strange sense of belonging. This period of obliviousness lasted a very short time, however, and as the months continued, I saw those same people around campus and couldn’t recognize the insecurity that seemed to follow them. The girl who’d become my “best friend” in line for the bathroom didn’t even remember meeting me, and the guy who divulged his life story on the back porch, walked past me with absent eyes. I soon began to realize that although alcohol made connecting easier, it dulled the authenticity.

Binge drinking is a growing phenomenon in our culture today. At universities across the country, students use alcohol as a form of “social lubricant” in an attempt to forge new relationships and increase their level of comfort in awkward social interactions. “Liquid courage” gives individuals the extra boost they need to segue into new relationships that would, under other circumstances, not be created. For many students, the transition from high school to college is one that brings many internal struggles to the surface. Students often find issues of self-esteem, social anxiety and gender differences become extremely difficult to deal with in their daily lives while being so far from home. Recent studies at Boise State University found first-year students typically have the highest level of alcohol consumption as a group. This coincides with the idea that as a freshman, your sense of self and need for belonging are at their most vulnerable. It makes sense that this is the time when alcohol would be used most to alleviate anxiety during social interactions.

More often than not, alcohol becomes a coping mechanism to deal with many of these concerns. For example, in a study published in Psychology of Addictive Behavior in 2008, it was found that social anxiety was a common motivator for drinking among college students at universities across the country. Although alcohol is proven to reduce and prevent social anxiety because of its psychological and physiological effects, the results are temporary in nature. Research has shown that social anxiety disorder and alcohol negatively reinforce one another. The study also found social anxiety was proven to motivate college students’ engagement in drinking games.

There seems to be a common theme found in alcohol usage among college students — a fear of connecting. I find it strange that everyone craves connection yet fears it simultaneously. To me, what it all comes down to is suppressing difficult emotions and searching for an easy way to release them. It’s easy to make a few drinking buddies to call up when you want to have a good time. However, the real trial comes when it’s time to cultivate lasting bonds — people who’ll be there for you when the going gets tough.

Hannah Robinson is a senior communication studies major. Contact Hannah at robinshl@dukes.jmu.edu.
IT’S LIKE A MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST WHERE
ALL THE ANSWERS ARE RIGHT

A

B

C

D

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By KAILEY CHENG  
The Breeze

The stage will come alive at the end of this week. Accomplished dancers will spice up the room and make the theater their home as they perform eight distinct pieces, each illuminating a different aspect of the dance world.

Since the beginning of fall semester, the Virginia Repertory Dance Company has been preparing for its fully produced major concert Dancescapes. The show will take place from Thursday to Saturday at 8 p.m. and on Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts Mainstage Theatre.

Performances will feature choreography by both faculty and nationally known guest artists, with some of these artists traveling to JMU from places like North Carolina and Washington, D.C. Leading up to the event, dancers' schedules have been occupied by continuous practice. The company rehearsed two and a half hours every day. If a guest artist comes in, practice happens on a weekend when the artists stay for a few days to teach the piece.

“We work with the guest artists [all day] and all night learning the piece,” Erika Hahn, a senior dance major, said. “It’s been very intensive for the most part.”

Thanks to the wide variety of choreographers, Dancescapes will feature diverse pieces, each encompassing unique aspects of dancing. The company will be performing all genres of dance, and there’ll be a little bit of everything. No one piece is the same.

“I think Dancescapes is a very unique show this year,” Hahn said. “It showcases different styles of dancing. Out of all the pieces, I’m most excited for Rubén Graciani’s piece. It’s very physical and includes intricate movements.”

As the new director of the School of Theatre and Dance, Graciani’s choreography will be his debut work for the performance, as well as for his career at JMU. Graciani created a dance that accentuates physical movement, and it proved to be a challenge for the students, as they didn’t have much time for rehearsals.

“I can’t wait to watch the students grow in the brief amount of time that I’ve worked with them and see them be able to tackle all this different movement material,” Graciani said. “It’s a strong choreography with a strong emotional charge. They jumped in feet first. They took it on willingly and with a ton of energy.”

Graciani’s piece, “We Will Not Stand Alone, Pt. 1,” will be the closing number of the night featuring the whole company.
“The piece is imbued with this idea in that we’re stronger together than apart,” Graciani said. “There are images of people doing things individually and then doing things as a group, but stronger.”

Another one-of-a-kind piece that will be performed is called “True Confessions: My Boyfriend Mic,” choreographed by artistic director Shane O’Hara. “My piece is really bizarre,” O’Hara said. “It’s more of a dance theater piece and I really like it because the performer has freedom. It’s funny, and a lot of people think that dance can’t be funny.”

With an array of special performances to look forward to, students will be able to sit down and observe the diversity of the pieces with a dynamic show. Tickets are priced at $14 for regular admission, $13 for JMU faculty and staff/seniors (62 and older) and $12 for JMU students.

“I invite people to try not to connect the pieces, but to just enjoy each piece for its own little world,” O’Hara said. “For audience members, the biggest thing is to just enjoy the evening and appreciate these dancers, as they worked hard to reach this certain level of execution. You can get the physicality and how they work together as a company, and a lot of people don’t realize that something like this was happening here at JMU.”

CONTACT Kailey Cheng at chengks@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.

All the different pieces incorporate diversity and show originality. The artistic director Shane O’Hara, choreographed a piece he described as “bizarre” and anticipates it will get a laugh from the audience.

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SPANISH AT SPOTSWOOD

JMU Spanish course submerges students in dual-language program with Harrisonburg community

By ABBY CHURCH
The Breeze

When students from JMU’s Practical Spanish course enter the bustling kindergarten classrooms at Spotswood Elementary, they’re met with a flurry of activity. Starting their school day by saying the days of the week and months of the year and singing songs in Spanish, it’s a typical morning for the students in the newly implemented dual language program at the elementary school.

Among the students in the classroom and many other classrooms like it, several Spanish-speaking countries are represented, such as Honduras, Puerto Rico, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic. While students from Practical Spanish are there to assist teachers in teaching the kindergarteners English and Spanish, JMU students also get to learn more about the language through its use in an intellectual sense and through the kindergarteners’ multiple dialects and regional vocabularies.

“The language is alive,” Karine Kline-Gabel, a professor for the course, said. “[My students are] kind of getting to be more a part of its daily use and it’s academic use.”

According to JMU’s course catalog, Practical Spanish is a Spanish course that enables students to mingle with the Spanish-speaking community through placement in schools or service agencies. Kline-Gabel explained that the concept of SPAN 492 came to fruition about 10 years ago as a result of the department wanting students to have an impact on the community because of the large Spanish-speaking population.

The class originally focused on language acquisition and students helped with translation as well as teaching members of the community how to speak English. It wasn’t until recently that the course began to work specifically with children.

Kline-Gabel’s students are placed in one of the four dual enrollment programs in Harrisonburg’s elementary schools. These programs, which go from kindergarten to seventh grade, give children the opportunity to learn in both Spanish and English and bring the two groups of speakers together to assist each other.

“In a dual classroom, [the students] each at some point will be able to help each other,” Kline-Gabel said. “In other words, students who have stronger English skills will be able to help the kids that don’t, but then when they’re learning in Spanish, it’s reversed. And so what we’ve seen from that is that many of these kids actually start socializing in much more diverse community in that dual program as opposed to the non-dual program.”

For the past two years, students have been placed at Spotswood Elementary, where Kline-Gabel says around 70 percent of the students are of Hispanic origin. The dual enrollment program at Spotswood is the newest in the school system, and support from JMU in getting it started was eagerly accepted.

Students in Practical Spanish go to Spotswood once a week for about two hours to assist teachers with their lessons and facilitate group activities as well as help students one-on-one. The class then meets once a week to discuss what they’ve learned and apply their observations in the elementary school classroom to what they’re learning in Practical Spanish. While the class covers topics like DACA, the history of immigrants in the community and immigration issues in today’s society, it’s primarily focused around the assets of dual language programs. Students in Practical Spanish also report back in weekly Spanish journals, giving them the opportunity to not only practice their oral skills, but writing as well.
The Spanish course gives students opportunities to speak the language with elementary school kids.

Through JMU’s Practical Spanish class, students are able to make connections and relationships with other students who may not have had the access to a college education and make the idea more accessible. While JMU students aren’t required to stay at Spotswood past their two-hour session, Kline-Gabel says some choose to stay through the lunch period and observe the students on a social level.

After searching for a way to practice her Spanish and work with children, Kristin Zimney, a senior media arts and design major and a Spanish minor, decided to take the class. She works with kindergarteners at Spotswood and mainly focuses on working one-on-one with students who need extra attention.

While Zimney helps in teaching the children, they teach her too.

“It’s a really good way to practice my Spanish and it’s so fun with kids who are so young but speak better than you, so they make me better at speaking Spanish,” Zimney said.

Zimney applied for a Fulbright scholarship to teach English language in Spain after graduation. She says her experience at Spotswood is preparing her for what she might experience if she receives the scholarship.

Cecilia Martinez, a senior business management major with a Spanish minor, also works with kindergarteners at Spotswood. Her favorite part of her experience has been the relationships she’s formed with the children she helps teach. During one class, all the students came up to her and gave her a giant group hug.

“When you’re stressed out with your exams and all that stuff sometimes you just need that,” Martinez said. “It’s such, like, an encouraging and uplifting thing. And especially knowing that you’re helping them, but they’re also like developing a relationship with you and like, that they get excited to see you, or like that they [want to] tell you like, ‘Oh I did this over Thanksgiving break, it’s so cute.”

Martinez has witnessed the benefits of dual language programs firsthand and is able to connect with the students through her experiences. Coming to the United States from Bolivia at a young age, dual language programs were instrumental in her learning English.

“I came here when I was in second grade so I didn’t know English,” Martinez said. “So it’s the same thing but backwards. Like, back then I didn’t know English and I had to have people help me in English.”

Sometimes the students Martinez works with are reluctant or apprehensive to speak Spanish, and she says she relates to them because she was the same way when she was a child.

“I was like, ‘Oh I don’t [want to] talk in Spanish,’ and all of that stuff, and now I’m like, ‘I love my culture,’ and I’m just like, ‘Why was I like that?’” Martinez said. “So I know a lot of these kids go through that too, so just like that connection to me, like, people were able to help me and learn English, I want to help them and help them learn the opposite.”

Practical Spanish places a new group of JMU students in dual enrollment programs every semester. While students aren’t allowed to take the course more than one time, most find themselves wanting to go back to the classrooms to help teach again. Some even decide they want to pursue teaching after completing the course.

Kline-Gabel is grateful for the opportunities afforded to her JMU students to work with these groups of children in the community and believes that’s what makes the class so exceptional.

“I have found that whether you are a student that has experience with kids or has no experience, both of those students will get so much out of this because it’s that exposure that they have not ... had the chance to have that I think makes this so, so special,” Kline-Gabel said. “We are so lucky to have the school right down the road from us where we can in a sense make these observations, and we don’t have to send them to another town to do it or to another city because it’s right here in JMU’s backyard.”

CONTACT Abby Church at churchae@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.
JMU a cappella group reflects on its dynamic while preparing for ’90s concert

By TRACI RASDORF
The Breeze

As the semester comes to an end, JMU’s female a cappella group Note-oriety is just getting warmed up. These singers create their own sound and enjoy performing whenever they’re given the chance. The group is currently preparing for its last concert before winter break and chose a theme many students can relate to — a ’90s throwback.

“Back in October, I started floating some ideas for concert themes,” Emma Wagner, a sophomore English major and public relations director of Note-oriety, said. “I thought of a few ideas and everyone was really passionate about the ’90s theme.”

While many only see a group’s final performance, there’s a great deal of work and practice that goes into picking music, arranging performance, and we work at making that vision come true through rehearsal and repetition,” Clinard said.

Note-oriety has made a name for itself not only in the JMU community, but in the world of a cappella across the nation. It’s been featured in BuzzFeed, Huffington Post and USA Today, has over 500,000 views on YouTube for its cover of Beyoncé’s “Pretty Hurts.” It performed at The Varsity Vocals International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella in 2016 which is a competition featured in the film “Pitch Perfect.” It’s also performed at the United State of Women Summit in 2016 in Washington, D.C., where only six musical acts across the nation were chosen to perform.

For Maggie Rabe, a senior music major with a concentration in vocal education and previous music director, the ’90s throwback concert will be her last performance with the group. As she says goodbye to Note-oriety, she reflects on her time with the group.

“This is my seventh semester in Note-oriety and my entire experience has been really great,” Rabe said. “I have been through a lot of busy times with this group, like recording our album my first semester. It’s been extremely rewarding because a lot of unexpected experiences have happened to me and I never thought that auditioning for a college a cappella group would get me some of the most meaningful I’ve had in college. I really believe that your experiences shape you and I wouldn’t be where I am and who I am without every person I have encountered in this group.”

Finding one’s place at JMU can take some time, but Note-oriety captures the meaning of making its mark on not only the JMU community, but also each other.

Note-oriety will perform its ’90s throwback concert Sunday at 1 p.m. in the Festival Ballroom.

“Get ready for a lot of energy and excitement on stage from a group of girls that just genuinely love to make music together,” Clinard said. “We’re here to have fun, so we’re going to have a lot of cool costumes for the ‘90s theme and a variety of music including a few new premiere songs.”

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Maggie Rabe
Senior music major

“The bonds I have formed with each member that has passed through this group have been some of the most meaningful I’ve had in college.”
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Crafts for Christmas

By AALIYAH MCLEAN
The Breeze

It’s that time of the year when students start shopping for family and friends. The air is filled with cheer and everyone comes together and starts giving. For those who love homemade crafts, events, Larkin Arts, an art store downtown, will be hosting its sixth annual Holiday Art Market on Saturday.

This annual event is an event that will feature local artists and vendors selling their products. It’s a part of Harrisonburg’s holiday festival, Winter Wonderfest.

With a total of 10 vendors, the Holiday Market boasts products that include wood art, photography, shirts and jewelry, all of which are homemade. Wicky Alldredge is one of the many vendors who’s looking forward to the atmosphere of the market. He created Wics Hot Art, a business that sells wood-burning portraits.

“Some of my favorite memories from the Holiday Art Market are meeting and just talking to other artists and customers,” Alldredge said. "Alldredge is a 67-year-old retired worker who started a new hobby creating wood burnings, also known as pokerart. Wood burning is a form of pyrography—the art of using fire to create words or images.

"It all started as a hobby, until my wife said I couldn’t keep them in the house anymore," Alldredge said. "She said I had to start selling them."

Alldredge started his wood-burning art after deciding to create a pelican for family members, since it was their favorite bird. He enjoyed making it, as well as making others happy.

“I give a lot of pieces to family, but it makes me happy to know others have my art hanging in their houses,” Alldredge said. "If I see something I like, I try it out and burn it."

Alldredge has suffered some health issues this past year, so he hasn’t been able to create as many pieces as expected. Despite this setback, he’ll be selling his wood art with motorcycles, animals and old cars at the event.

Cara Walton, owner of Cara Walton Photography and Crafts, is a photographer who’ll be selling her photos along with tie-dye items.

“My favorite photo I’ve taken is a shot of a window that I took in my grandmother’s house before it was sold by my uncle,” Walton said. “I last visit to meander the empty place. It stirred up a lot of memories for me.”

Will Miller, a junior media arts and design major, is excited to attend the event as an amateur photographer and see what local artists have to offer. "Larkin Arts is one of my favorite places to shop for art supplies and art materials," Miller said. "I like to look for personalized gifts for people that mean something."

Miller not only looks forward to these events to support the artists, but also looks at the market as a chance to compare them to his own photography skills.

“I like looking at other people’s photography because it inspires my own,” Miller said. Everyone has a different style of shooting and editing, and when I see things that are interesting, whether it be shooting style, composition or any other manipulable feature, I like to implement it into my own practice."

The Holiday Art Market is the perfect time to support local businesses and pick up some last-minute Christmas gifts.

“This is always my favorite event because I love to see the smiles on families’ faces when they purchase my art,” Alldredge said. “And it’s always nice to meet new artists to find ways to collaborate [with] or support them.”

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at mcleanaj@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.
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- Hampton Inn (Covenant Dr)
- Hampton Inn (University Blvd)
- Holiday Inn Express
- Double Tree
- Quality Inn
- Microtel Inn & Suites
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- Ramada Inn
- Motel 6 (South Main)
- Residence Inn
- Sleep Inn & Suites
- Super 8

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- Fox Hill
- Hunters Ridge
- The Mill
- North 38
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- South View
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- Stone Gate
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- Overlook
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CAMPUS PARKING (PRE-GAME)
- C3 (Cardinal House)
- C5 (Cardinal House)
- C10 (Phys/Chem)
- C11 (Festival)
- C12 (Festival)
- D2 (Phys/Chem)
- D3 (Festival)
- D6 (Festival)
- R1 Cardinal House
- R4 (University Plaza)
- R5 (University Plaza)
- R-10/ R-11 Parking Lot

CAMPUS PARKING (POST-GAME)
- C3 (Cardinal House)
- C5 (Cardinal House)
- C10 (Phys/Chem)
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The Dukes (12-0, 8-0 CAA) were victorious in the second round of postseason play this past Saturday, beating the Stony Brook Seawolves 26-7. They’ll now play host to the Weber State Wildcats (11-2, 7-1 Big Sky Conference) in a Friday night lights edition of college football.

Wildcats head coach Jay Hill and his staff pulled off a brilliant upset this past week against No. 14 Southern Utah, following their opening-round victory over the Western Illinois Leathernecks. The winner of this FCS quarterfinals contest will play in the semifinals on either Dec. 15 or 16.

1. Continuity for the Dukes

The Dukes played a tremendous game of football this past week, dominating in all aspects of the game. Despite being outgained by the Seawolves on offense 301-304, the Dukes managed to possess the ball longer than Stony Brook, convert on all four red-zone attempts and throw for more passing yards and touchdowns.

“The biggest thing for us on offense was being consistent,” head coach Mike Houston said. “We got off to a fast start last week and we’re going to have to try and get off fast again this week.”

On the defensive side of the ball, the Dukes carried their regular-season success into the postseason. They kept the Seawolves out of the red zone, prevented third-down conversions on over 70 percent of attempts and forced five interceptions from junior quarterback Joe Carbone.

“We were all just on the same page,” redshirt senior defensive lineman Andrew Ankrah said. “We want to continue to ride out this wave that we’ve got going and get to a national championship.”

Momentum is everything in postseason play, so look for more of the same from the Dukes this week when they face the Wildcats.

2. Protect Schor

One area the Dukes hope to improve on this week is protecting senior quarterback Bryan Schor, who was sacked five times by the Seawolves’ defensive front on Saturday.

The Dukes have struggled at quarterback safety this season, allowing 2.33 sacks per game — which is 76th in the FCS. These woes carried into the postseason, as Stony Brook defensive linemen had their way with the Dukes’ offensive line and put a lot of pressure on Schor.

“Honestly it just comes down to handling your assignments,” redshirt senior offensive lineman Aaron Stinnie said. “You’ve got to be sound on your job and it’s a big piece of communication and honing in on your technique.”

This will be a tall task for the Dukes this week when they face a Wildcat defensive front that’s tallied 37 sacks throughout the season — an average of 2.85 sacks per game. They’re led by senior defensive lineman Cardon Malan’s 7.5 sacks on the year, with junior linebacker Legrand Toia (5.6) and sophomore defensive end Jonah Williams (4.5) following right behind.

“We’re facing one of the top defenses in the country,” Houston said.
“They do a great job of showing a lot of different looks, being very active, playing very hard, so we’re going to have to do a good job of communicating our protections.”

The JMU offensive line will need to turn things around this week when it faces a lethal Wildcat pass rush.

3. Contain Cantwell

While the JMU offense will be protecting its senior quarterback, the Dukes’ defense will aim to contain Stefan Cantwell, the 25-year-old dual-threat quarterback from South Jordan, Utah.

Cantwell has been a monster for the Wildcats this season — throwing for 2,740 yards, 23 touchdowns and only six interceptions and picking up 550 rushing yards to go along with seven rushing touchdowns. He ranks 19th in the FCS in passing yardage, 17th in points responsible for per game, 10th in passing efficiency and eighth in points responsible this season.

“The big thing with him is he’s 6-foot-2, 220 pounds,” Houston said. “So if you hit him from the side or something like that, he’s not going to go down — you’re going to have to tackle this guy like a big running back.”

JMU will aim to put pressure on Weber State’s quarterback, keep him inside the pocket and force errant throws. While the Dukes have had success at getting to the quarterback all season — 3.58 sacks per game, which is fourth in the FCS — they were stood still by the Stony Brook offensive line last week and weren’t able to record a single sack.

For the Dukes to walk out Friday night with a win, they’ll need to limit the two-way capabilities of Cantwell and ensure they get consistent hits on him.

4. Prevent third-down conversions

Third-down conversions are a huge factor in any football game and you won’t find many teams better at converting those attempts than Weber State. The Wildcats have moved the chains for 44 percent of their third-down attempts, 14th best in the FCS.

“It comes down to preventing a manageable third down,” Houston said. “If they’re sitting there with third and 2 all day long, they’re probably going to do really well. If we have them down at third and 8 or third and 9, then I think our chances are a lot better.”

While the Wildcats are one of the best at these conversions, the Dukes are one of the best in the nation at preventing them — allowing only 29.9 percent of attempts, eighth best in the FCS.

“They’re definitely a good team offensively,” Ankrah said. “We just have to keep doing what we do and be us. That’s our motto, ‘be us,’ because we know what we can do if we’re all focused, doing our jobs and we’re all ready to go.

Solid play on first and second down will make a huge impact on third-down attempts, so look for the Dukes to make life difficult for the Wildcat offense and get it off the field after its third-down attempts.

CONTACT
Blake Pace at paceba@dukes.jmu.edu. For more football coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
JMU men’s basketball has had an up-and-down start to the season, going 3-7 in its first 10 games. A bright spot for the Dukes, however, has been the play of freshman guard Matt Lewis, who took home CAA Rookie of the Week honors for the week of Nov. 19-25. Lewis was able to drop 32 points, grab nine rebounds and only commit one turnover in his two games against Appalachian State and Radford that week.

Lewis played in all 10 of JMU’s games this season, but has yet to start one, as all of his production has come off the bench. He’s currently third on the team in scoring, averaging 10.5 points per game. Lewis has found his role as the sixth man on the roster.

“Right now, I think I’m starting to really find it,” Lewis said. “I’m a young player and college basketball is really different from high school in terms of physicality, but I’m really starting to find my way and it’s starting to click.”

Lewis had the best game of his young career against Appalachian State on Nov. 22, putting up season-highs in points (26), rebounds (7) and minutes (44), all without giving up a single turnover. This turned out to be a crucial performance, as JMU was able to scrape out a hard-fought win in double overtime, with a final score of 105-99.

Head coach Louis Rowe has taken notice of Lewis’ fast start and the versatility he brings to the team. Lewis has played both guard positions and small forward for JMU and has performed admirably at both of them.

“JMU only has four more games and an exhibition contest before its CAA matchup start with a Dec. 30 contest against Northeastern. The Dukes will have to continue to put together tough wins if they wish to compete for the CAA title this year, following a disappointing 2016-17 season that saw them finish 7-11 in conference play. With Lewis coming off the bench, they just may have a shot.”

By CONNOR MCCARTHY
The Breeze

JMU men’s basketball has had an up-and-down start to the season, going 3-7 in its first 10 games. A bright spot for the Dukes, however, has been the play of freshman guard Matt Lewis, who took home CAA Rookie of the Week honors for the week of Nov. 19-25. Lewis was able to drop 32 points, grab nine rebounds and only commit one turnover in his two games against Appalachian State and Radford that week.

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Head coach Louis Rowe has taken notice of Lewis’ fast start and the versatility he brings to the team. Lewis has played both guard positions and small forward for JMU and has performed admirably at both of them. Rowe has been especially impressed with how Lewis has taken care of the ball, as he’s only committed five turnovers this season. While Rowe is happy to see Lewis producing, he isn’t surprised — it’s what he expects of Lewis and all the freshmen. He has faith in his young players, and hopes they’ll continue to reward him.

“He’s a really talented young man,” Rowe said. “I thought he would be able to come in and have the type of impact he’s had, and his talent along with all of these guys has been crucial in getting past the learning curve of Division I basketball, and honestly, I think we’re just scratching the surface.”

The Dukes’ other two top scorers — senior guard Joey McLean (14.2 PPG) and redshirt junior guard Stuckey Mosley (19.5 PPG) — have also benefited from Lewis’ play. The two are starters, so knowing that they have a guy like Lewis coming in for them can help them get more necessary rest during games. Lewis has also been helped by them, as they’ve set the standard for JMU men’s basketball this year.

“He’s really eager to learn and eager to get on the court,” McLean said. “He always ends up playing with a good mindset.”

Early greatness
Freshman Matt Lewis’ career impresses off bench

By CONNOR MCCARTHY
The Breeze

JMU men’s basketball has had an up-and-down start to the season, going 3-7 in its first 10 games. A bright spot for the Dukes, however, has been the play of freshman guard Matt Lewis, who took home CAA Rookie of the Week honors for the week of Nov. 19-25. Lewis was able to drop 32 points, grab nine rebounds and only commit one turnover in his two games against Appalachian State and Radford that week.

Lewis played in all 10 of JMU’s games this season, but has yet to start one, as all of his production has come off the bench. He’s currently third on the team in scoring, averaging 10.5 points per game. Lewis has found his role as the sixth man on the roster.

“Right now, I think I’m starting to really find it,” Lewis said. “I’m a young player and college basketball is really different from high school in terms of physicality, but I’m really starting to find my way and it’s starting to click.”

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JMU only has four more games and an exhibition contest before its CAA matchup start with a Dec. 30 contest against Northeastern. The Dukes will have to continue to put together tough wins if they wish to compete for the CAA title this year, following a disappointing 2016-17 season that saw them finish 7-11 in conference play. With Lewis coming off the bench, they just may have a shot.

CONTACT Connor McCarthy at mccartcs@dukes.jmu.edu. For more basketball coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter at @TheBreezeSports.
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The Dukes are just three wins away from winning back-to-back championships. They’re without the graduated Khalid Abdullah (left), but Jimmy Moreland and co. have been a lethal unit throughout 2017.

By JAMES FARIS
The Breeze

Last season, the JMU football team made history by winning its second national championship in school history under first-year head coach Mike Houston. This year, the Dukes are 11-0 and the No. 1 seed in the FCS playoffs. JMU has won 24 games in a row and is the heavy favorite to repeat as champions. After a 26-7 win over Stony Brook in the second round of the FCS playoffs, JMU has advanced to play Weber State in the quarterfinals.

However, it hasn’t always been smooth sailing for the Dukes, as there’ve been struggles, slow starts and close calls, like the Richmond matchup when JMU won on the final drive of the game. It’s fair to question whether this team is as good as last year’s, and the only way to find out is through an analysis of JMU’s season so far. Here’s how the Dukes stack up against both the 2016 team and other Division I teams, which will determine if the Dukes are overrated or underrated as they head deeper into the postseason.

**Offense**

This season, the JMU offense has fallen a bit from last year’s incredibly productive unit. The Dukes are averaging over 429 yards per game and 370 per game against CAA opponents, down substantially from last year, when the offense averaged 507 and 521 yards per game, respectively. It’s unclear if the drop of 131 yards per game in the CAA from last year to this year is a sign of a strengthened conference or the absence of playmakers like Khalid Abdullah.

Still, the Dukes are putting up 35.9 points per game, good for 10th in the FCS. JMU is averaging 6.05 yards per play on the season, and 5.36 yards per play against CAA foes. For reference, the Dukes averaged 6.92 yards per play in 2016 and an astounding 7.23 yards per play against conference opponents. JMU picked up 380 first downs in 2016, the most in the FCS, which translated to over 25 per game. This year, the Dukes have managed 248 through 11 games, or 22.5 per game, which is 12th in the FCS.

One consistency for the JMU offense has been senior quarterback Bryan Schor. In his first year as a starter, Schor led the Dukes to a 14-1 record and a national championship victory. He posted outstanding numbers, including a 3,000-yard season, a 4.8 to 1 touchdown-to-interception ratio, a completion percentage of 73 percent and a passer rating of 129.2. This year, Schor has been asked to do a lot more without Abdullah and Cardon Johnson, who was lost for the season back in the third game of the year.

"[One] difference [between last year and this year] is that we were relatively healthy all throughout last year," Houston said. "This year, we’ve battled significant injuries from the get-go."

Despite the hardships, JMU’s senior signal caller is throwing the ball over 6.4 times more per game and is on pace for 3,140 yards and 273 completions, which would both be increases. Due to the less-consistent running game, Schor has been forced to step out of his comfort zone as the offensive leader. Both his 2.99 touchdown-to-interception ratio and passer rating of 99.8 are considerably lower than last season, but he has less consistent weapons around him. Even though the numbers say that Schor is less efficient than last season, he might be more valuable to this offense than ever.

**Defense**

On the other side of the ball, the Dukes boast the most intimidating defense in the FCS and one of best defenses in Division I. JMU has allowed just 235 yards per game this season and only 335 per game to regular-season CAA opponents. What’s even more impressive is that the Dukes are allowing just 3.6 yards per play and 3.68 yards per play against CAA teams. By this metric, JMU has the best defense in the nation, and the competition isn’t even close. The defense that’s allowed the fewest yards per play in the FBS is Alabama, which surrenders 4.0 yards per play. The Crimson Tide lead the country in red-zone defense when it comes to limiting touchdowns, as they’ve allowed just nine touchdowns on 30 drives.

"Incredibly, the Dukes have managed to significantly improve what was one of the best defenses in the nation in 2016. Last year, the Dukes allowed 344 yards per game and 357 per game to CAA opponents while surrendering 5.12 yards per play and 5.39 yards per play to conference foes. Those impressive numbers are nothing in comparison to what JMU has done on defense this season. The Dukes are allowing 109 less yards per game and are a mind-boggling 1.52 yards per play better in 2017. To put that number in perspective, giving up 1.5 yards less per play would turn the 38th-best defense in the NFL, the Indianapolis Colts — who give up 5.9 yards per play — into the best defense in the league, as the league-best Jacksonville Jaguars give up 4.5 yards per play. Against conference opponents, the difference has been even more drastic, as JMU has allowed 121 less yards per game while giving up 1.7 less yards per play."

**Better or worse in 2017?**

It would appear that while the JMU offense has taken a step back after losing key contributors, the defense has significantly improved from a season ago. Some would say that while statistics can be compared from year to year, there’s no way to tell if JMU football is definitively better than a season ago. However, with advanced stats and metrics, we can conclude that the Dukes are a better team than the group that won the national championship last year.

Net yards per play is a metric that takes the offense’s yards per play and subtracts it by the number of yards per play allowed by the defense. If the total is positive, the team is above average and usually outgains opponents in yardage, while a negative total is a telltale sign of a below-average team. Net yards per play isn’t always a perfect indicator of a team’s success, but it’s a metric that professional football analysts use to evaluate teams because it’s the best objective measure of a team’s overall success. This season, JMU has a net yards per play of 2.26, which is a drastic increase from its 1.81 mark last season. This means JMU isn’t just consistently outgaining opponents, but the Dukes are doing so by even more than they did during its national championship run a year ago.

Players and coaches sense that there’s something special about this year’s team, which is poised to make another run at an FCS title.

"The seniors always want to go out with a bang," redshirt senior defensive lineman Andrew Ankrah said. "Last year’s seniors wanted to go out with a bang as national champions and we have the same mindset [this year]."

"The path to Frisco, Texas, the site of the national championship game, runs through Bridgeforth Stadium. The Dukes know they have both the experience and talent to repeat as champs."

"I think one similarity is that everyone’s focused on the same mission," redshirt-senior offensive lineman Aaron Stinnie said. "We’ve got that same family and brotherhood in the locker room."

Although the offense has been less productive, this is proof the defense’s improvements have more than made up for it. While it would be jumping to conclusions to say the Dukes are a lock to repeat as national champions, the numbers don’t lie — JMU is better than last season.

**Contact**

James Faris at farisja@dukes.jmu.edu. For more football coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
### Breakdown of JMU football statistics

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<tr>
<td>Passing yards per game</td>
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<td>Defensive points allowed per game</td>
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<td></td>
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*While the Dukes’ offense has regressed in 2017, its 8.83 defensive points allowed per game leads the FCS.*

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 3-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ◆

◆ Moderate  ◆◆ Challenging  ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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**Opinion Section Editor!!**

breezeeditor@gmail.com
https://joblink.jmu.edu/postings/2537

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**King Crossword**

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