Cultural Camaraderie

Katelyn Waltemyer
Center for Global Engagement facilitates interaction between JMU students from different international backgrounds

NEWS
5

INCLUSIVE INITIATIVE
Thomas Robertson
Local NAACP president encourages diversity in Harrisonburg chapter

NEWS
4

ROMANTIC PURSUITS
Brooke Imperial
JMU students reveal ideal Valentine’s Day dates in survey

CULTURE
21

RICHMOND RACEWAY
Michael Chiaden
JMU alumni and student make impact on Virginia car racing

SPORTS
24
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**Friday**
- Snow Moon Fest at Massanutten Resort 5 p.m.
- JMU women’s basketball vs. Northeastern at Convocation Center 7 p.m.

**Saturday**
- Cookie and Beer Flights at Restless Moons Brewing Noon to 11:59 p.m.
- Valentine’s Winemaker’s Dinner at Bluestone Vineyard 7 to 9 p.m.

**Sunday**
- Valentine’s carriage rides at Edith J. Carrier Arboretum and Botanical Gardens 1 to 4 p.m.

**NEWS**

**DRUG DETECTION**
Cases of fentanyl-laced drugs reported in Harrisonburg

**OPINION**

**‘GREY’ AREA**
Columnist analyzes the ‘Fifty Shades’ trilogy’s popularity

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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 the business office. Comments and complaints should be addressed to Matt Weyrich, editor.
‘See the growth’ Local NAACP president shaped by personal experiences

By THOMAS ROBERTSON
The Breeze

From an early age, Monica Robinson noticed the ways her grandfather fought for the rights of African-Americans in the Harrisonburg community. Watching him work at improving the lives of those around him was the beginning of a life dedicated to social justice that’s led her to becoming the president of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

When Robinson started middle school in 1988, she began recognizing an underrepresentation of black students in organizations like the honor society she was involved in. She found it odd that students of color were being viewed in a different light.

“I just noted that, you know, this is kind of strange that as long as we had one black person involved, then we’ve met the status quo,” Robinson said. “I just noticed that we were treated differently.”

During her time as a student at Harrisonburg High School, a group emerged that called themselves the “Egg Men,” which Robinson referred to as the “high school version of the KKK.” Robinson remembered seeing slurs written on lockers and notes being directed at black students by the Egg Men. When Robinson and other students went to the administration, the school became divided. Robinson said her role in figuring out how to resolve the conflict without fighting opened her eyes to more effective ways of bringing about change.

“I noticed then with being vocal with that issue and complaining about that issue that we had to start figuring out a way to make a difference without it leading to a great big brawl,” Robinson said. “What I did walk away from that day was understanding that this nonviolent type of resistance had a much more long-term impact.”

Out of high school, Robinson attended Hampton University, but returned to Harrisonburg after having a child during her first year of college. She had originally planned to go back the next year, but she grew so close to her son that she decided to put her education on hold. When her son reached kindergarten, Robinson decided it was time to go back to school. She attended Blue Ridge Community College for two years and then transferred to JMU.

After earning her degree and beginning her career in education, she and other members of the community saw the need to revitalize the local branch of the NAACP, as it had fizzled in the past. Once they reactivated the charter, Robinson was elected as the first president of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham branch of the NAACP. On Jan. 17, 2017, about 12 years after being elected to serve her first two-year term as president, Robinson was elected to serve a second term.

“We worked really hard to get things up and going and it worked out well,” Robinson said. “When I look at that activism then to what we’re doing now, I can see our growth. I can see the growth of the people I started with. I can see the growth within myself.”

One of Robinson’s areas of focus has been connecting with other organizations. She’s helped the local branch connect with Virginia Organizing, the Waynesboro and Staunton branches of the NAACP, the Northeast Neighborhood Association and the Interfaith Association to reach the common goal of bettering Harrisonburg.

“Most faith-based [groups] or groups that are fighting for civil rights in town, Monica is among those,” Elaine Blakey, membership chair of the NAACP in Harrisonburg, said. “She’s just of the NAACP in Harrisonburg, said. “She’s just involved in the community.”

Robinson and the NAACP are working toward having an infrastructure in Harrisonburg that’s beneficial to people of all backgrounds and communities, continuing to build a good relationship with local police and increasing membership. The local NAACP branch is stressing the fact that the organization isn’t just for black people.

“Membership is always a big goal of ours,” John Butler Jr., an executive board member of the NAACP, said. “We are trying to outgrow the myth that it is a black organization, or a colored people organization. It is an organization for all people. So we are definitely trying to become more diverse.”

As she’s continued her involvement with the NAACP, Robinson has learned that change doesn’t have to come from huge events or issues that everyone hears about. Rather, she says it’s an accumulation of small, daily efforts that create change.

“Change comes by you being a part of the change-making machine,” Robinson said. “You can’t really ever argue that you’ve been out of the loop if you never even walked near the loop, so you have to be an effective agent of change by putting yourself in the position to be of help.”

Under Robinson’s leadership, the NAACP in Harrisonburg strives to reach its goal of ensuring “political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons.” Ultimately, Robinson says she’s trying to better the lives of others and make a change, just like her grandfather.

“Every person I meet, every connection I make, every bridge that we build, it’s getting us closer toward the goal,” Robinson said.

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By KATELYN WALTEMYER
The Breeze

International students travel several hours via airplane to arrive in a country they’ve never set foot in before. They face the challenge of embracing a new culture and, for some, a new language. When international students come to JMU, they must be able to pass a basic language proficiency test. However, students may still face an abundance of obstacles speaking in their non-native tongue.

In order to increase engagement and expand students’ horizons, the Center for Global Engagement has created a program to diversify international and domestic students through the Conversation Partner Program. International students are at a higher risk of becoming isolated in their new environment, according to Emma Lundeen, the international student scholar coordinator. The program was created around and allows international students to be paired with domestic students in an effort to learn more about the English language and culture and build a potential relationship that may not have otherwise formed.

“Originally, the program was designed to focus on language, but we’ve come to realize that it’s very hard,” Tam Nguyen, a CPP program assistant, said. “We take them into consideration, but we don’t guarantee the matching of the desired language. But the focal point is the interests and hobbies as far as like, if they both enjoy sports, there’s a likelihood of them getting along well.”

This semester’s CPP participants met for the first time on Tuesday. According to first-time participant Jen Bleecker, a freshman international business major, the program provides an environment where both students are able to gain knowledge.

“I would like to learn about her culture and see what her life is like at home, see pictures of her life at home, see pictures of her travels and just get to know her,” Bleecker said. “I want to give back to her too. Like giving her my time, my energy, my experiences, my knowledge about the American culture.”

In order to be paired, students must complete an application process. The application is straightforward and allows the staff to match students based on their interests, hobbies and educational and career goals. For international students, the CPP provides an opportunity to become involved at JMU.

“I want to learn the American culture and American language, so I enrolled,” Jina Song, a senior media arts and design major and international student, said. “I found out about CPP after I arrived here. I think it is [a] very cool and nice program because it helps both students to know other cultures and other countries.”

The Center for Global Engagement hopes to bridge a cultural gap with the Conversation Partner Program. The program helps students connect over common interests and learn more about their separate cultures.
Fentanyl, an opioid commonly found in a powdered form, is being combined with heroin in local areas. Fentanyl is often prescribed, but is also being illegally manufactured. Pharmacies have increased safety measures.

Last year, the Harrisonburg Police Department reported 22 fentanyl-related overdoses, four deaths and 18 injuries. Fentanyl, an opioid medical professionals claim to be 100 times more potent than morphine, is circulating through the Valley. This year, HPD has reported three fentanyl overdoses, one of which resulted in death.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid typically found in a powdered form that’s been reported as being used in the area. However, according to a report by the Drug Enforcement Administration, some forms of the drug are legal.

“Legal forms of fentanyl are prescribed with, or as a replacement for, morphine and are used in both human and veterinary medicine as an anesthetic during surgery, to manage pain after surgery, and to treat chronic pain in patients physically tolerant to other pain killers,” the DEA’s report said.

Brian Logue, a manager at the Sentara RMH Pharmacy, believes fentanyl is contributing to the current opioid crisis.

“Drug overdoses have become the leading cause of death in the U.S. for individuals under age 50,” Logue said. “Right now, based on the CDC data, 115 people or more are dying every day, and there’s over 1,000 visits to emergency departments in the U.S. every day for opioid-related problems, issues and overdoses.”

In particular, fentanyl has shown to be more problematic. It’s being distributed legally, but much of it’s being illegally manufactured in China and Mexico, according to Logue.

Detective Brooke Wetherell with the HPD has seen fentanyl-related cases firsthand. The powerful drug is being combined with other somewhat common drugs in the area.

“Generally an opioid that a lot of people use is commonly known as heroin,” Wetherell said. “When it’s laced with fentanyl, a stronger opioid, it gives the body a lot more damage.”

The DEA has also seen cases of heroin laced with fentanyl, commonly known as “Gray Death” due to its gray coloring. According to Logue, users are mixing fentanyl and heroin for “a more enhanced high,” caused by a faster onset.

DEA studies show that even the smallest amount of fentanyl is toxic to the human body. This heightened potency may increase the risk dramatically for users.

“It can be absorbed through your skin, through your eyes, through any of your mucus membranes,” detective Daniel Long with HPD said. “A very, very small amount is deadly.”

It’s also evident in the DEA’s report that just a small amount of fentanyl may cause other health issues before the onset of death.

“It has been determined that it would only take 2-3 milligrams of fentanyl to induce respiratory depression, arrest and possibly death … When visually compared, 2 to 3 milligrams of fentanyl is about the same as five to seven individual grains of table salt,” the DEA’s report said.

Profit margins for fentanyl are significantly higher than for other opioids. According to the DEA, some organizations are distributing pure fentanyl.

“Due to the elevated potency of fentanyl over traditional opioid drugs (i.e., heroin), criminal organizations can use one kilogram of fentanyl to produce approximately 1 million (1 milligram) counterfeit pills, resulting in potentially 10-20 million dollars in revenue,” the DEA’s report said. “There are also reports that consumers in some areas are seeking fentanyl over heroin, as the ‘rush’ is greater.”

Because of the strength of fentanyl, rehabilitation is more difficult. The HPD reports that it’s almost impossible to tell when a drug is laced, therefore heightening the risk of an overdose or even death. According to Logue, the most common patterns of fentanyl overdose patients show central nervous system and respiratory depression.

Harrisonburg isn’t the only area in Virginia to see high rates of fentanyl. Norfolk and Virginia Beach areas have reported cases of fentanyl-laced cocaine. While Harrisonburg hasn’t seen that particular combination, the HPD, the Drug Task Force and pharmacies are working to reduce the circulation of the drug.

“One of the reasons is people are taking advantage of prescription monitoring programs, and that’s a national database where individuals can be looked up to see how much drug they’re taking over a period of time and if there’s potential for abuse,” Logue said. “That’s all reviewed before the medications go out. We’re also seeing an increased regulation on prescribing patterns at the state-national level.”

The HPD has systems in place to avoid involuntary contact with fentanyl and is working to protect the public from the potentially deadly drug.

“Generally if there is an overdose related to fentanyl, right away there is going to be a lot more action taken as far as safety measures and personal protective equipment.”

Brooke Wetherell
Detective with the Harrisonburg Police Department

“Generally if there is an overdose related to fentanyl, right away there is going to be a lot more action taken as far as safety measures and personal protective equipment.”

By MADISON HAYNES
The Breeze

The Harrisonburg Police Department reports drug abuse in the area.

Local pharmacies and hospitals are working to reduce the opioid crisis. Individual programs and outreach are becoming more popular in the area.

“The Sentara RMH Pharmacy has a ‘Consumer Drug Take Back Program,’ where if somebody has unused medications at home, they can bring it in and dispose it into our return bucket any time the pharmacy is open,” Logue said. “That’s a way to address the opioid epidemic.”

CONTACT Madison Haynes at breezenews@gmail.com. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezenewsJMU.
Negative local impact of fentanyl in 2017

Data courtesy of the Harrisonburg Police Department

22 overdoses  18 injuries  4 deaths
Once accepted into the program, students exchange contact information and are expected to spend approximately one hour per week together to enrich their relationship and knowledge of different cultures.

The program is optional but highly encouraged for international students. According to Lundeen, the main objective of the program is for students to be further integrated into the JMU community.

“Our philosophy is anything that has our international students feeling more engaged in the campus community, that’s our goal,” Lundeen said. “They get a chance to really integrate into the campus community more ... by having that one-on-one connection and it doesn’t have to be a huge time commitment.”

In order to facilitate this goal, the program offers the students an atmosphere in which they are in charge of their relationship with their partner. This allows for the students to have genuine, rather than forced, conversations with each other.

“I am looking forward to helping Jina with the language and understanding the culture and I am hoping to get the same from her,” Bleecker said. “For me personally, what I want to take away from this experience is a friend.”

Bleecker’s international partner in the program is from Korea, which is one of the many countries represented through the program. The CPP has seen international students from countries such as China, Vietnam, Japan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

This semester, there are 31 CPP pairs. Regardless of the country, domestic students have the opportunity to introduce American and JMU cultures to international students.

“Because of those one-on-one connections, the international students have over the semester, they feel way more comfortable,” Nguyen said. “Subconsciously, they’ve become better in academics too because the language barrier, it limits them every time.”

While the CPP doesn’t host weekly meetings, it encourages engaging relationships between the pairs by asking students to meet on their own time. According to Lundeen, the goal is for the students to want to spend time with one another rather than having required weekly meetings.

Currently, the only mandatory meeting is at the beginning of each semester when the pairs meet for the first time. After that, the pairs figure out what to do together based on what they both enjoy.

“I think doing exercise together or go out traveling to D.C. — a friendship is my goal,” Song said.

Another key factor of the CPP is for students to engage with those they wouldn’t have originally considered. Because of this, the program has seen many pairs spend time with each other after the semester has ended.

“For me, the bottom line is an appreciation and deeper understanding of a culture other than their own and with that, a connection to someone else that they may not have met otherwise,” Lundeen said. “All it does is foster a sense of belonging.”

CONTACT Katelyn Waltemeyer at waltemkb@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.

Freshman Jen Bleecker and senior Jina Song, pictured above, were paired up in the Conversation Partner Program. They were both interested in learning more about another culture while getting to know a new friend.
By TRAVIS VALLE

contributing writer

JMU doesn’t shy away from allowing its students to take a more active role in pursuing STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — fields. Programs like the undergraduate human anatomy class allow students to learn from hands-on experiences with the inner workings of an actual human body.

The university has used human cadavers for over 20 years as part of its undergraduate program. Most universities that use cadavers do so as part of graduate training.

“The way we offer anatomy here at JMU, especially at the undergraduate level, is inherently different than what they do at most other undergraduate institutions,” Mark Gabriele, biology professor and director of anatomy, said. “We’re setting them up for success at the next level.”

According to Gabriele, JMU students entering fields pertaining to biology and medicine have a head start on their knowledge and experience with human anatomy. Students pursuing higher education at other institutions, particularly when specializing in physical therapy, tend to perform better in relation to their peers.

“Our feedback from the deans of medical schools and PT [physical therapy] schools suggest that they’re not just getting in, but they’re distinguishing themselves in the anatomy disciplines at the next level,” Gabriele said. “Every year, I get emails from deans of [the] VCU medical school showing that in a class of 150 or more, that the top performers in anatomy are always all the JMU students that were enrolled.”

The lower level human anatomy class, in which students are first introduced to the use of real human bodies, uses plastinated cadavers. Plastinated cadavers are bodies that have been pre-dissected and coated in chemicals to preserve them for repeated use. There are more advanced classes, such as Advanced Human Anatomy, which students can take early on in their JMU career and dissect the bodies themselves.

These classes allow students to observe and interact with a variety of anatomical structures on real human bodies. Allison Gooden, a sophomore nursing major who worked with cadavers in Human Anatomy, believes that working with cadavers gave her a better understanding of a human body that couldn’t be provided by textbooks and illustrated representations.

“I thought it was a huge benefit,” Gooden said. “You could actually see shapes and sizes of real [organs] and really be able to pick it out. You could actually see what you would be working with in real life.”

Gooden entered the nursing program this semester, where knowledge of the human body will be paramount to obtain her degree. She’s already applying the skills she learned from working with the cadavers to her current studies.

“When I have to assess a patient in a clinical setting, I’ll know exactly where the body parts are,” Gooden said. “With the cadavers, I was able to actually see it where it would be in the body.”

Patrick Kilkenny, the anatomy laboratory coordinator for the biology department, offers outreach programs to high schoolers and students from other universities in which they can visit to experience the cadavers firsthand. Occasionally, students from majors unrelated to biology or medicine will also participate in a visit to the cadaver lab to help them better understand their own subjects.

“There’s other JMU classes who utilize our lab as well, and usually we’ll have opportunities during the semester to take advantage of our resources,” Kilkenny said. “We have students who are taking dance who are interested about human movement and the body, so they’ll come in.”

Kilkenny is currently working to coordinate the transition of the anatomy program from East Campus to Burruss Hall. The move will allow the program to increase the number of cadavers available to a given classroom.

“We’re expanding from an eight-cadaver lab to a 12-cadaver lab,” Kilkenny said. “The new laboratory will just be updated with, kind of, the current state of the art of what’s being used in a dissection laboratory.”

The transition will be completed by the 2018 fall semester and will help accommodate any growing enrollment for anatomy classes. Due to these classes being open to all students, both Gabriele and Kilkenny are used to seeing students outside of majors relating to biology and medicine enroll in the class.

“All of the best students over the years in those advanced classes — you might be surprised [by] their majors,” Gabriele said. “We’ve had art students in there that are interested in learning about the human body and how the muscles actually run. It’s really open to anyone.”

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It may as well be a punishment that every year a new installment of the "Fifty Shades of Grey" franchise rolls in right around the time of my birthday. It's a challenge to avoid such a heavily marketed movie that's preceded by and adopted from a worldwide bestselling novel and garnished with all the ingredients of a Hollywood blockbuster: risqué music videos, handsome cast and sex scenes — lots and lots of them. However, when one looks beneath the shiny veneer of this meticulously advertised movie franchise, one will find there's more than just the publicity that's helping it cruise through the box office numbers — rather it's the movie's long-standing popularity among women.

When the books became bestsellers, there was a lot of skepticism about whether the positive reception of the power imbalance modeled by "Fifty Shades" glorified abuse by reconfirming the patriarchal ideals about women submitting to men. On the other hand, some said the overwhelming popularity of the erotic fiction series was a feminist triumph to upturn the conventional wisdom about female sexual desire and show how women, too, are at par with men for being full of erotic potential. Much was being said about where the appeal of such a stereotypical movie plot lies to garner this amount of success. I think the "appeal" of the movie says a lot more about the female psyche than the female role in the feminist movement. The plot of the movie tugs at some deep-seated psychological fears and ideas that still linger in the minds of modern women — the idea of finding validation through a male counterpart, seeking an exclusively monogamous relationship or even glory of being the "hero" of the story by saving one's marriage and husband.

We squint hard enough to track the female lead, Anastasia Steele's (Dakota Johnson) progress is entirely emotional. The true arc of "Fifty Shades of Grey" is the conversion of Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) from his worst self to a slightly better one, which is single-handedly carried out by Ana. She uses her nurturing and submissive attributes to fix his co-dependency issues. It's sick, twisted and menial, but apparently not so self-deprecating.

"Fifty Shades Darker," Christian says, "But when you left, I swore that I would stop it if that's what it took to get you back," confessing to be a sadist and pledging to stop his dominant behavior for the sake of his love for Ana. I think this underling sense of authority that comes with the female lead saving the "damaged" male lead is ultimately what I think wins all the female votes for this franchise.

On the other hand, psychologist Denise Cummings says "the appeal" is also of the monogamy between the lead characters. We live in a time of a tumultuous feminist revolution where the idea of finding support and stability and ideas that still linger in the minds of modern women — the idea of finding validation through a male counterpart, seeking an exclusively monogamous relationship or even glory of being the "hero" of the story by saving one's marriage and husband.

If we squint hard enough to track the female lead, Anastasia Steele's (Dakota Johnson) progress is entirely emotional. The true arc of "Fifty Shades of Grey" is the conversion of Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) from his worst self to a slightly better one, which is single-handedly carried out by Ana. She uses her nurturing and submissive attributes to fix his co-dependency issues. It's sick, twisted and menial, but apparently not so self-deprecating.

"It's sick, twisted and menial, but apparently not so self-deprecating."

Rishmita Aich

Rishmita Aich is a senior media arts and design major. Contact Rishmita at aichrx@dukes.jmu.edu.
A “build-the-change” dart to JMU for tearing down buildings and replacing them with structural behemoths that lack creative, innovative or ecologically conscious design. (Don’t even get me started on Hotel Madison.)

From a recent alumna who wishes you would command a greater standard of excellence, and recognize the impact you have on not only the university population, but Harrisonburg and the Shenandoah Valley as a whole.

A “gotta-love-Wednesdays” pat to JMU for having another delayed opening on a Wednesday.

From a student who just can’t seem to get out of bed in the morning.

A “what-am-I-supposed-to-do” dart to my teachers who say not to come to class when you’re sick, but lower your grade for missing class.

From a student who just needs a rest day.

Send in your DARTS & PATS!
Submit at breezejmu.org
Democracy shouldn’t die with us

SOPHIA CABANA | liberté

Democracy across the globe is diminishing as authoritarian and semi-democratic, semi-totalitarian hybrid regimes become increasingly common, according to The Economist. Even nations that remain democratic, such as the U.S. and many countries in Europe, have gradually fallen from full representative democracy to flawed ones since 2006. This change is slight in most cases, and while the measures used by The Economist to decide what qualifies as a fully democratic system may not be perfect, the global trend involving a rise in authoritarian government actions is difficult to overlook.

At a time when democracy seems to be weakening, it’s vital that people all over the world, and especially in the U.S. as an influential global power, strive to expand civil and democratic liberties for future generations. We mustn’t lose sight of all that democratic principles have done to improve the quality of human life and ensure basic liberties to the people.

According to The Economist, roughly a third of the world’s population lives under an authoritarian regime in places such as China, Saudi Arabia, the Congo and Russia, which was considered a hybrid regime rather than an authoritarian one up until 2010. Even without considering the people who live in hybrid regimes such as Bolivia, Iraq, Pakistan and Ukraine, this statistic is unnerving and disheartening.

Considering how rare democracies are, it’s important for the citizens of fully developed democratic nations to fight relentlessly to keep their rights. We mustn’t merely become the last foolish nations to cling to ideas that the rest of the world has lost faith in: the ideas that inspired democracy must be revived. Even the leading Western democracies of our time fail to see how exceptional democracy is, not only as a system, but also as an idea. In these developed democratic societies, governments have begun to drift gradually further from the principles that once governed us.

France, which has often been considered a flawed democracy according to BBC, fell a little further down the index when its legislature increased the government’s emergency powers. Spain, which is still considered a full democracy, also exhibited some undemocratic actions by suppressing the Catalan referendum with violence, and thus moved down the index as well.

Further east, Japan and South Korea have both moved from secure full democracies to slightly shaky, flawed democracies. Of course, North Korea remains as strictly authoritarian as ever, and is positioned so far at the bottom of the index that there’s virtually no way for it to get any more authoritarian than it already is.

Meanwhile, in the Western Hemisphere, Venezuela has plummeted from a once-prosperous democracy to a hybrid regime and, finally, to a completely authoritarian dictatorship. It’s now become home to countless riots and the only full authoritarian dictatorship. It’s now become home to countless riots and the only full economic collapse in recorded history, according to CNN. Starvation is so prevalent in Venezuela today that people are encouraged to hunt stray animals, forced to eat their own pets and sometimes butcher zoo animals to survive.

Whenever a government becomes so large, powerful and concentrated that it’s no longer subject to consequences, citizens are denied their voice and the entire nation suffers.

Even the U.S. has been slightly shaken lately, and has dropped to the cusp between a full and flawed democracy after a long history of full democratic status. This slight change may be due to political polarization and a general belief that we aren’t using our democratic tools effectively anymore. However, the U.S. is still far from succumbing to any form of authoritarianism, even if our political systems have been slightly corrupted over the years and our legislative system seems broken and inefficient.

We can revive democracy, and we don’t need sweeping political movements to do so. All we need to do is speak openly about our grievances, learn the lost art of civilized political debate, give credit to our political opponents and learn to understand that democracy needs the combined effort and commitment of our entire nation in order to continue.

If we want democracy to remain strong, we must work vigilantly each day to strengthen it. If we want to protect the rights of individuals and contain the power of the government, we must do so unflagingly and unapologetically. We must restore the spirit of our own democracy by rediscovering our faith in the democratic institutions that guaranteed our rights and freedoms in the first place, and we must cling tightly to these rights and use them well in order to avoid losing them. We must ensure that our governments are created by and for the people to ensure their individual liberties, not created to suppress the liberties of others. Reviving the spirit of democracy won’t be easy at home or abroad, but then again, the worthiest goals are rarely easy to achieve.

Sophia Cabana is a freshman history major. Contact Sophia at cabanasl@dukes.jmu.edu.
If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.

— James Madison

THE FEDERALIST PAPERS, NO. 51

Lynn Pasquerella has been president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities since July 2016. A philosopher whose career has combined teaching and scholarship with local and global engagement, she has continuously demonstrated a deep and abiding commitment to ensuring all students have access to excellence in liberal education, regardless of their socio-economic background. Pasquerella is a graduate of Quinebaug Valley Community College, Mount Holyoke College, and Brown University. Pasquerella serves as the third Madison Vision Series speaker this year.

“Education for Democracy”

THE EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Tuesday, February 13th, 3:30–5:00 p.m.

MEMORIAL HALL

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

www.jmu.edu/president/mvs/
Bible doesn’t ban weapons

Biblical view on guns in church bill

SAM JEFFERSON | contributing columnist

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." — Matthew 5:9.

Though this verse may seem to state that those who keep the peace and avoid violence are just by God, there are many people who feel there’s nothing wrong with bringing a gun to church. A bill was recently passed by the Virginia Senate that’ll allow people to carry firearms in churches across the state. While many supporters of the bill saw the former ban on guns in church as archaic residue of the 1800s’ “blue laws,” some people are protesting the law, stating that it isn’t right to bring weapons into a house of worship.

I myself am a church-going Christian, and while the idea of guns in a church might not initially make me feel comfortable, I feel that there’s nothing wrong or sinful about bringing a gun to church, provided that the owner has no intention of using it, but feels the need for a little security. To back up this claim, I must look at the issue through a religious perspective as well as a practical one.

A religious viewpoint on firearms in a church is more complicated than one would initially think. Surprisingly, the Bible doesn’t specifically say whether it’s okay to bring a weapon into a church. The act of carrying a gun is a message in and of itself. To many people, the fact that they carry a gun can show a willingness to use it, and this can be frowned upon by many church members, since a church is supposed to be a place of nonviolence. However, carrying a gun and willingness to use it isn’t necessarily a sin, even if it’s to kill someone.

There are a few verses besides Matthew 5:9 that promote pacifism, but there are also times in the Bible when self-defense is carried out, but never expressly condoned.

Sam Jefferson

Willeford, who lived near the church. When he heard the gunshots, he grabbed his rifle and did what he felt had to be done. Yes, it was guns that killed people that day, but it was also guns that spared many lives. There’s no telling how many people would’ve died if not for Willeford.

It may still be a sore issue for some, but I believe there’s nothing wrong with bringing a gun to church. The law of Virginia remains official, and the word of God doesn’t expressly prohibit such a practice. This doesn’t mean, of course, that you’re supposed to feel good about having a weapon on you anywhere.

Sam Jefferson is a senior writing, rhetoric and technical communication major. Contact Sam at jefferss@dukes.jmu.edu.

Bible doesn’t ban weapons

Biblical view on guns in church bill

SAM JEFFERSON | contributing columnist

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." — Matthew 5:9.

Though this verse may seem to state that those who keep the peace and avoid violence are just by God, there are many people who feel there’s nothing wrong with bringing a gun to church. A bill was recently passed by the Virginia Senate that’ll allow people to carry firearms in churches across the state. While many supporters of the bill saw the former ban on guns in church as archaic residue of the 1800s’ “blue laws,” some people are protesting the law, stating that it isn’t right to bring weapons into a house of worship.

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Art of listening lost

JAZMINE OTEY  

Listening to one another is a form of art. It’s not just hearing what someone is saying, but empathizing and allowing oneself to absorb the emotions behind them. The conversation that’s shared serves as a lens with the potential to provide insight into an individual’s outlook on reality. But it’s easy to succumb to thoughts spinning haphazardly throughout one’s own mind. Before someone even realizes it, they’re not genuinely paying attention to what their close friend, significant other or relative is saying, but rather waiting for their turn to talk.

I can easily confess that there’ve been countless times when someone was talking to me and I wasn’t fully present. As they eagerly tell me about their day or how stressed they are, no matter how much effort I put into listening, sometimes my mind wanders off. On the outside, I appear attentive, nodding and giving a few verbal responses here and there, trying my best to appear interested in what they’re telling me. But despite how much I try to focus, before I know it, I feel my own distracting thoughts trickling into my mind.

When such thoughts take the reins to what I’m supposed to be paying attention to, I’ve mindlessly fallen into the vicious trap of simply hearing what a person is saying rather than genuinely listening to the other person’s point of view.

“We think of negotiation as being about talking, but in fact, it’s really about listening,” Ury said. “If you study the behavior of successful negotiators, you find that they listen far more than they talk. After all, we’re given two ears and one mouth for a reason, listen far more than they talk. At least, as we speak.”

Furthermore, another issue regarding one’s communication skills is a phrase referred to as “conversational narcissism.” Conversational narcissism occurs when an individual steers the conversation away from another person and instead, toward themselves. In some cases, trying to find a way to relate to someone might implement a connection between the two. But in others, it can make an individual come off as self-centered and apathetic.

When someone goes to another person they confide in, the last thing they want is to have the roles of ‘comforting friend’ and ‘ranting friend’ swapped. “When someone goes to someone they confide in, the last thing they want is to have the roles of ‘comforting friend’ and ‘ranting friend’ swapped.”

Jazmine Otey  

Ury expresses that the key to conflict resolution isn’t in communicating, but instead in listening to one another.

“We live in an age we call the age of communication,” Ury said. “Certainly, with a lot of cell phones, texts, tweets and emails, there’s a lot of talking going on. But how much listening can there really be with so much interruption and distraction?”

He further explains that in conflicts such as family feuds, boardroom battles, labor strikes, civil wars, etc., too many people are talking and trying to get their points across rather than genuinely listening to the other person’s point of view.

“We think of negotiation as being about talking, but in fact, it’s really about listening,” Ury said. “If you study the behavior of successful negotiators, you find that they listen far more than they talk. After all, we’re given two ears and one mouth for a reason, to listen twice as much, at least, as we speak.”

Listening to one another is a key element in establishing deeper relationships, mutual understandings and resolving conflict in disagreements. By taking the time to empathize with what a person is saying rather than simply hearing, an individual is showing a great deal of respect for another person’s views. It’s critical that this generation takes steps to become better listeners, such as listening to learn rather than to just be polite, being attentive at all times, asking questions and silencing their own distracting thoughts. By doing so, not only does it have potential to create deeper bonds, but it also provides an opportunity to establish unity in a nation that’s currently divided.

Jazmine Otey is a sophomore writing, rhetoric and technical communication major. Contact Jazmine at oteyj@dukes.jmu.edu.
Show takes flight

JMU students and alumni create TV show to gain attention of large streaming services

By ABBY CHURCH
The Breeze

The day before production for their TV show was scheduled to begin, four friends stood on a porch to make a toast. As they hoisted their glasses in the air, their friend Garrett Pierce said something that’s resonated with them throughout the filming process.

“To our eventual success and to our impending doom,” Pierce said.

With that, Bushkar, senior integrated science and technology major Micah Murray and JMU alumni Zach Morgan and Cole Roberts (’17) embarked on filming their TV show titled "Halfway Boys.”

The idea of the show came about during Morgan and Roberts’ freshman year. While hanging out with friends, the boys were plugging their names into a rockstar name generator site. When Roberts put his name in, “Craig Rush” was the first name that came up. What started with a name snowballed into a joke where the boys mimicked British accents and took on fake personalities.

“At first it was just a bit that we all did,” Morgan said. “And then, it was like, ‘Oh, well what if we wrote some of this down and actually tried to take it somewhere?’”

Everything changed once Bushkar stepped into the picture. Bushkar, an old friend of Roberts’ from middle school, arrived at JMU during the summer of 2016 as a transfer student from Virginia Western Community College.

Bushkar has eight years of filmmaking under his belt and Morgan and Murray describe him as the “kick in the pants” they needed to turn the almost five-year-old idea into something big.

The show is set in a fictional town called Blackstone that’s full of musicians. Among these musicians, a nameless band struggles to make a name for itself. As it tries to find its identity, the group rivals with a successful metal band called "Kill Prison." The band also faces issues with its lead singer, Craig Rush, who’s considered a "megalomaniac" and holds the band back.

Production for the pilot began this past summer and has proven to be a difficult process. For most of the group, this was their first time doing something on a large scale. While Bushkar directs, Murray, Morgan and Roberts write and act. During their first shoot, tensions rose and creative differences caused a scuffle. There were also challenges with scheduling a time when the whole team could meet to shoot.

PHOTOS BY WILL CARMACK / THE BREEZE
Bushkar says that when comparing themselves from then to now, it’s “black and white.” While creative differences still happen, Morgan mentions they learn something new every time they film. Murray describes the experience as a learning curve.

“Overall, I think it’s been a pretty interesting experience for all of us,” Murray said. “We’ve had our challenges, but I think overall, we’ve learned a lot in the process, and I think that’s the most important thing to take away, is that even though we have had our struggles in the beginning, I think we’ve grown so much, like, through each time we’re on set.”

As of now, the pilot is scheduled to be finished sometime later this month or in early March. Currently titled “Halfway Boys,” the name is still subject to change. The group plans on pitching the show to Adult Swim and streaming services like Hulu, Vimeo and Amazon. They consider Netflix a huge goal.

Roberts’ favorite part of the entire process has been coming to agreements on the show’s content.

“I think just everyone sitting around and talking things out and coming together on like a group consensus on ideas is very rewarding because it happens so rarely that we all agree on something instead of compromising,” Roberts said. “When those moments happen, they just seem funnier and more true.”

Throughout the project, Morgan has learned that shooting isn’t a “glamorous process.” While production can be difficult, Morgan says it’s worth it in the end.

“It’s very hard,” Morgan said. “But it’s all worth it when everything’s edited together and you sit down and you watch what you did for the first time, and then look around and all the people who were there doing the same thing over and over and again still laughing at this thing that we made ... it just never gets old.”

The tight-knit group of men hope to someday see their show successful. One of Bushkar’s biggest goals is to make others laugh and smile.

“The way I view stuff like ‘The Office’ or ‘Seinfeld,’ just watching shows like that, the joy that those shows bring me ... to think that we can make something that brings humor to somebody that has virtually no joy in their life other than that, I think that’s why I want to do this,” Bushkar said. “Just because I want people to be happy with what we’re doing and just have a good time watching it, but also get something from it.”

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Written expression

Word is Born Writers’ Society gives students a creative atmosphere

By LEYYAH JACKSON
The Breeze

When people with a passion for creative writing come together, so much more than stories are told — their spoken word becomes art.

Word is Born Writers’ Society is a club that stems from the Furious Flower Poetry Center. Starting as a social club for English majors, the club has evolved into a community where JMU students of all majors, backgrounds and ethnicities can express themselves freely through poetry and spoken word.

“We don’t normally have a chance to write things for class that we want to write,” Byland Jones, a sophomore English and psychology double major, said. “By having [Word is Born Writer’s Society] we’re all kind of allowed to just come together and write whatever we want.”

Word is Born puts the students first and as their co-president, Chase Collins, a senior integrated science and technology major, explains it gives power to the people through poetry.

“It really is a writer’s society,” Charles Smith, a sophomore theatre and media arts and design double major and co-president of the group, said. “This is a group of people who do actually like writing, who have critiques based on their experiences and who aren’t afraid to tell you exactly what you need to hear.”

The society typically meets once a week and sticks with a four-week rotation of what they discuss in meetings. Each week could include different topics or genres, but typically consists of free write nights, prompt nights, share nights and workshops.

During prompt nights, members are asked to create a story from a certain idea. A prompt such as, “What can scare a monster?” can provide inspiration for a poem that a writer may never have thought of before. Share nights give members a chance to present what they’ve written in front of the entire group. Although they vary, workshops could be on writing pieces or actually performing them.
“It’s not just about the writing, there’s a performance aspect as well to these poems and creative works,” Collins said. “We try to encourage at least once a month for our members to get up and speak these words that they are writing down.”

Word is Born always provides members with helpful feedback on how to improve their writings or spoken word for a broader audience. “I never had friends that wrote,” Jones said. “So now that I have more people to give me feedback on [my work], they have gotten progressively more nuanced.”

The club reinforces positivity regularly in their group. Word is Born prides itself on being a non-judgmental, open and safe environment for anyone to get involved. They start their meetings by discussing any good news that’s happened in the world and have what they call a “no disclaimers policy.”

“You’re not allowed to apologize for your work,” Smith said. “We want you to be proud of it... not feel guilty or bad about writing about it. You have that right as a person, you don’t have to apologize.”

On Feb. 15, Word is Born will be presenting its third annual Love Me, Love Me Not Poetry Jam from 7-9 p.m. in Taylor Down Under. In honor of Valentine’s Day, writers will be performing work that’s focused on love, heartbreak and everything in between.

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-Chase Collins, co-president of the club, led a performance workshop at Wednesday night’s meeting.

-Members of the club attend events at JMU together, such as Purple Out at the Bridgeforth Stadium.

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WALK TO CAMPUS
After losing her luggage coming home from a London study abroad trip, senior media arts and design major Morgan Kolson needed to quickly replace her lost clothes. Kolson wanted to find a creative way to make up for the money she spent on the trip, as well as replace her missing clothes that weren’t found until two weeks later. She’d spent years admiring fashion, and after seeing someone sell tie-dye shirts on Instagram, Kolson was inspired to start making her own custom bleached shirts. A trip to Goodwill started a trendy, bleached, work-of-art business — all from the comfort of Kolson’s backyard.

Kolson runs her business through social media. She buys old shirts, bleaches them, sets them to dry for a day and sells them for $10-15. “I had no clothes and I really needed money after my abroad trip,” Kolson said. “So I went to Goodwill and posted three shirts that I made on Instagram, just followed my closest friends — and they were all bought within the hour.”

The business began with T-shirts, but she received almost 50 requests for custom sweatshirts. Ever since, her account became mostly sweatshirt designs. These are Kolson’s favorite to design, which makes it difficult to part ways with pieces she falls in love with.

“I posted my first sweatshirt, and that’s when it really picked up,” Kolson said. “I started gaining a real following, and people from different schools and states started following me. It all happened within a week — it was really on a whim.”

McKinna Pace, a 2017 JMU alumna, was the first to buy a sweatshirt from Kolson. The two are close friends through their sorority, and Pace still remains a constant role model for Kolson. “She’s the person I always looked up to, and she knew that,” Kolson said. “But she reached out to me and was the first one to buy a sweatshirt, and she posted about it on her blog and social media accounts.”

Pace shares a similar interest in fashion and social media. She even decided to help promote Kolson to her New York followers so that she could expand the business.

“I’ve always known Morgan to be so passionate and motivated about everything she does, so of course she did something she was passionate about,” Pace said. “She really made it different from what other people would try to do to make money in school — she did something out of the ordinary. She puts her own twist on it, which is so genius. It’s an honor for me to know her. She always says she looks up to me, but it’s weird because I look up to her.”

According to Kolson, Tie-Dye Dan, a JMU senior communication studies major, had someone from his team reach out to Kolson and ask if she’d be interested in collaborating. While nothing has been finalized, Kolson says the project would start small to see if people liked the idea.

One of Kolson’s biggest challenges is the lack of convenience at school to make the shirts and sweatshirts. At home, she could work with the bleach outside in her backyard, but at school, she’s found she can’t sit in her bathroom and work. This has caused Kolson to turn people away for orders.

“I expected it to die out eventually — but people still reach out to me for shirts all the time,” Kolson said.

Olivia Devoe, a sophomore health sciences major, purchased two sweatshirts from Kolson after being on a waitlist due to multiple requests. She constantly checked her Instagram page to see when she uploaded more designs. However, Devoe says Kolson’s devoted mindset and drive for her business made the wait worth it.

“She’s not afraid to be herself, she’s very quirky and very talented in everything she does,” Devoe said. “I just wish more people knew about her and what she does in general.”

The popularity her business has gained over the past few months shows that Kolson’s work ethic and desire to be unique will pay off in the future.

“Through her passion in this project — it really shows that her future after graduation is going to be so successful, and she’s going to be able to fulfill the things she dreams about and wants to do,” Pace said. “Whatever her mind is set on, she’ll be able to accomplish it. She always seems to have that positive mindset on everything she does.”

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With Valentine’s Day approaching, it’s hard to avoid Cupid’s arrows as people begin to express extra endearment toward loved ones or admirers this holiday. Luckily for JMU students, Harrisonburg and its surrounding areas offer several romantic options to satisfy all couples with eclectic interests.

Every individual is different; some people appreciate simplicity or being outdoors, while others enjoy artsy locations and entertainment.

After polling 25 male and 25 female JMU students, the results indicate how the “perfect date” differs among the sexes.

The students had five choices to choose from regarding their ideal Valentine’s Day date: going on a romantic hike, getting dinner and a movie, visiting an art gallery, seeing a play or taking a trip to a vineyard or brewery.

Lydia Erickson, a junior writing, rhetoric and technical communications and communication studies double major, was one of two women who opted to enjoy a play on Valentine’s Day. She thoroughly enjoyed a play produced by the American Shakespeare Center’s Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia, because of its quality and distinctiveness from the average date.

“I like the dinner and a movie idea but I feel like that’s a normal, typical date,” Erickson said. “Seeing a play is something special for a special holiday.”

Though Erickson traveled to Staunton for her theater experience, JMU also offers performances on campus at the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts. The play “I and You” will be playing Feb. 15-17 at the Forbes Center. Tickets for JMU students are only $6, making this date original and affordable.

Rebecca Harris, a junior WRTC major, shared an opinion similar to Erickson’s. Harris preferred an atypical Valentine’s Day date at an art gallery.

While the art gallery option only received four votes out of 25, Harris made her choice while weighing the pros and cons of the other alternatives presented in the poll.

“I like going to art galleries, and also, I thought it would be a nice place to potentially talk to the person you’re with,” Harris said. “Watching movies are nice, but I also want to be able to talk to the person the whole time and hear what they have to think.”

Fifty JMU students were polled to discover the “perfect date” for this Valentine’s Day. The options consisted of a movie and dinner, a hike, a play, a trip to a brewery or an adventure to a local art gallery.
There are several art galleries in Harrisonburg that showcase various pieces from a myriad of artists. Art shows are available on campus at Duke Hall and in downtown Harrisonburg.

Going on a romantic hike was the most favored date choice among women and the second most favored option among men. This date idea is an accessible and often low-cost experience, especially in Harrisonburg and its surrounding areas. The Shenandoah Valley and the George Washington National Forest are full of hiking trails that range in difficulty and scenery, and while this date can be weather dependent and time-consuming, it’s an enjoyable option for couples who enjoy fitness and the outdoors.

Vineyards and breweries can be pleasant places for a date, as they offer space for relaxed conversation and a diverse selection of drinks and light snacks.

Getting dinner and a movie was the No.1 choice for male students and tied for second choice with five votes from female students. While this date doesn’t leave much room for talking except for the dinner portion of the evening, this classic outing’s simplicity attracts numerous couples on Valentine’s Day.

Jamey Camper, a junior psychology major, was in the majority of male students when he voted for the dinner and a movie option. Camper and his girlfriend often have movie dates, but ensures that Valentine’s Day in particular is more special than an average evening out.

“[Seeing a movie] is just what we do,” Camper said. “For Valentine’s Day, usually I get her more chocolate and flowers than normal.”

Regal Cinemas, Legacy Theaters and Visulite Cinemas in Staunton, Virginia, are showing several films that represent an array of genres.

If couples don’t want to make a trip to the movies and want a cozy night in, there are plenty of romantic movies available on Redbox to rent for only $1.

Though it’s nearly impossible to determine personal preferences for all 22,000 students enrolled at JMU, Valentine’s Day provides a platform to display additional love and affection for the people we care about.

“Being with someone that you don’t mind being with [is love],” Camper said. “Love is coming home and wanting to be there.”

CONTACT Brooke Imperial at imperibn@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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Survey of 25 men and 25 women regarding their ideal date for Valentine’s Day
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Richmond Raceway searches to grow youth racing in Virginia

By MICHAEL CHLADON
The Breeze

Richmond Raceway is a 0.75-mile, D-shaped, asphalt racetrack located just outside Richmond, Virginia, in Henrico County. It hosts the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series and NASCAR Xfinity Series every year.

By Michael Chladon at chladom@dukes.jmu.edu. For more sports coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.

Virginia has many pages in the racing history books. The state is home to one of NASCAR’s longest-running teams, Wood Brothers Racing, and NASCAR drivers Denny Hamlin and Elliott Sadler, among others. There are also over 20 active tracks across the state.

In the capital of the commonwealth lies Richmond Raceway. The track hosts two NASCAR events a year, including a crucial playoff race in September.

The track is in the middle of a $30-million renovation titled “Richmond Raceway Reimagined.” The upgrade will bring an enhanced race-day experience to both fans and teams with a new garage and fan-interaction areas.

In addition to upgrading the facilities, Richmond Raceway is looking to JMU students to help the sport continue to grow.

Richmond Raceway is prepping sports and recreation management students at JMU by giving them a hands-on experience in their Sport Marketing and Sales class. In the last two semesters, students have been given a lecture by James Hall, Richmond Raceway’s director of ticket sales, and then taken to the phones to contact the raceway’s loyal fans.

“The students] are out there talking to our fans, ‘Hey, how did last year’s race go? I saw that you came out. Tell us a little bit about it,’” Hall said. “And they’ll market our upcoming races and give them a special link to buy [tickets] and then we can track and see how they are doing.”

Richmond Raceway’s location allows for its marketing team to reach out to a large community.

“[Richmond Raceway] has the ability to talk to so many diverse audiences because we are a metro track,” Mike Waddell, the vice president of marketing and communications at Richmond Raceway, said. “We are in the city.”

Through this partnership, JMU students also get a sneak peek at the unique difference between motorsports marketing and other sports marketing.

“The difference I would say is instead of marketing a full season where you are having games every week or every other week on a consistent basis over a several month period, we are marketing one weekend in April and one weekend in September,” Hall said. “We are having to capture that fan base’s attention in between races so that we don’t lose that excitement they had in April between [the April race] and September.”

Hall and the team at Richmond Raceway are planning on working with JMU students again this semester. It’s not only the behind-the-scenes staff who’s able to drive motorsports into a new generation. The drivers are bringing their youthful personalities to the sport, too.

Vaughan Crittenden, a JMU alumnus (’14), works with a team of hopeful young drivers from across Virginia in the newly launched Racing Virginia organization. The team includes 13-year-old Timmy Tyrrell, who’s already won two track championships at Shenandoah Speedway, and 16-year-old Macy Causey, who received the NASCAR Young Racer Award in 2016.

Crittenden, who was a staff who’s able to drive motorsports into a new generation. The drivers are bringing their youthful personalities to the sport, too.

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Richmond Raceway searches to grow youth racing in Virginia
SCOREBOARD

MEN’S BASKETBALL
0-18, 3-9 CAA

LATEST RESULTS
Loss vs. Drexel 76-74
Win vs. Towson 79-53

NEXT GAMES
VS. UNCw. -POSTPONED
AT ELON -POSTPONED

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
0-18, 3-9 CAA

LATEST RESULTS
Win vs. William & Mary 88-41
Loss at Elon 50-43

NEXT GAMES
Friday vs. Northeastern
Sunday at Towson

SWIMMING & DIVING
0-2, 4-0

LATEST RESULTS

NEXT MEET
JMU competes at
Sykes Sabot Challenge

TRACK & FIELD

LATEST RESULTS

NEXT MEETS
JMU competes at
Sykes Sabot Challenge

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A fresh start

The Dukes look to bounce back after rough 2017 season

By MANDY BARTHOLOMEW
The Breeze

Senior outfielder Adam Sisk comes in as the Dukes' star player following a strong 2017 campaign. He was the recipient of both an Athletic Director's Scholar Athlete Award and a Second Team All-CAA selection.

The Dukes look to bounce back after a challenging 2017 season, with one of the top prospects in the CAA, senior outfielder Adam Sisk, in right field and a pitching staff stacked deep from starters to closers, the JMU baseball team is looking to make some noise and quiet the doubters on the field this season.

The depth of this year's pitching staff is a factor that head coach Marlin Ikenberry believes could lead the Dukes to be a contender in the CAA for the first time since they won the conference in 2011. The Dukes' most experienced pitcher, senior Colton Harlow, will lead the team on the mound, alongside a young core of pitching talent.

"For the first time, I feel like our pitching is solid," Ikenberry said. "We have a lot of young, talented arms that are showing really well right now. You'll see a lot of different faces in a lot of different roles, especially in the relief and closer role for us."

Some of the those different faces include junior pitcher Christian Bourne and sophomore pitcher Kevin Kelly, who was an All-American as a reliever last year. Ikenberry is looking to use both Bourne and Kelly as starters this season.

Having a lot of young talent in the lineup will make offense a key component for the Dukes this season as well.

"We have a really dynamic offense," sophomore pitcher/infielder Fox Semones said. "We have a lot of speed and a lot of unique abilities to move guys around, get extra bags and move the baseball."

Sisk was crucial to the success of the Dukes' offense last season. He led the team in batting average (.337), home runs (11), runs (55), total bases (108), walks (32), stolen bases (14) and on-base percentage (.449).

"He's kind of the star guy in our lineup," Ikenberry said. "The guys in front of him and the guys behind him have to hit, because he's gonna be pitched to very tough this year, and he understands that."

The senior leadership will carry the Dukes throughout the season. With the outfield anchored by Sisk and senior Mike Sciorra and redshirt senior catcher Zach Tondi behind the plate, Harlow on the mound and redshirt senior Tanner Dofflemeyer and senior Bradley McKay in the infield, this year's team is stacked with veteran talent.

"This season could possibly be my last time playing baseball," Sciorra said. "So I'm just excited to play and be with this team and be a good teammate."

Something that this team relies heavily on is fan support at games. The Dukes feed off the roaring of the crowd as they round the bases after a home run or striking out the side.

"We love the support of JMU fans," Sciorra said. "It's free to get in, and the more people the better, so we hope to see a lot of fans cheering on the Dukes this season."

The Dukes will start their season Feb. 16 at High Point University, with first pitch set for 4 p.m. The Dukes will feature a matchup with the University of Albany starting Feb. 23 at 3 p.m.

CONTACT Mandy Bartholomew at barthoml@dukes.jmu.edu. For more baseball coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
JMU lacrosse freshman Katie Checkosky comes in as high school All-American

By HARRY HOLTZCLAW
The Breeze

With JMU lacrosse returning the majority of its starters who helped it reach the second round of the NCAA tournament, one would think a freshman would have to wait her turn to crack the Dukes’ starting lineup. But with Leah Monticello’s graduation, big shoes became vacant on the attacking end for JMU. Monticello was a captain and honored to the CAA Championship All-Tournament Team in 2017.

Enter Katie Checkosky.

Head coach Shelley Klaes-Bawcombe can’t say enough about the freshman attacker, who’s fresh off not one, but three straight 6A state championship victories with Robinson Secondary School in Burke, Virginia.

“We are trying to breed champions here,” Klaes-Bawcombe said. “Anyone who can come in with that work rate and composure is going to help us continue the winning culture that we have here.”

Klaes-Bawcombe isn’t the only one who recognizes Checkosky’s background. Senior defender Rebecca Tooker — who went to high school less than four miles down the road from Checkosky — knows coming from a winning culture has helped develop Checkosky’s game.

“She’s been out and playing with girls that are really competitive and girls that are going to be playing in college,” Tooker said. “With her having some really good game experience, it puts her a head up against other players.”

Tooker couldn’t have been more right when talking about Checkosky playing well in crucial games. In her senior season, she notched five goals in the state semifinals to help push her Robinson Rams to the state championship, where they would eventually beat Centreville. Three of Checkosky’s five goals came in a 17-second span that helped take the Rams from down 3-1 to leading 8-4 going into halftime.
Friday, February 9
Tipoff at 7 p.m.
Convocation Center

First 100 students get a FREE pair of JMU-branded purple socks!

FREE iPad Mini raffle at halftime!
Checkosky racked up 492 career points in high school, with 277 goals and 215 assists. She was honored as a U.S. Lacrosse All-American her last two years before college. The attacker was also named to the U.S. Lacrosse National Tournament DC Metro Team and VHSL’s 6A First Team All-State her junior and senior years. Although Checkosky has been busy working on her game behind the net, she’s made plenty of time to soak up the JMU campus and community she loves so much.

“I came here for the first time at the end of my freshman year [in high school] and fell in love,” Checkosky said. “I got to watch a practice and the sunset was beautiful and Coach Shelley is amazing and it is really a welcoming environment.” But sunsets and lacrosse aren’t all the freshman loves about JMU. Follow Checkosky on Twitter and you’ll quickly find out she’s a JMU football fanatic who made sure to be in attendance when ESPN’s “College GameDay” came to Harrisonburg.

“I really enjoy the football team,” Checkosky said. “We slept in because we had to leave for Navy later that day, but we ended up getting out to the Quad around 10 and stayed until everything wrapped up and then we got on the bus and headed to our tournament.” Checkosky seems to be enjoying every second of her time in Harrisonburg, just as many JMU fans will enjoy watching her score goals and facilitate the offense, starting Saturday against No. 3 UNC.

CONTACT Harry Holtzclaw at holtzchw@dukes.jmu.edu. For more lacrosse coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
BY HARRY HOLTZCLAW
The Breeze

JMU softball will have a much different look than last year’s 52-8 team that lost in Waco, Texas, to Baylor in the NCAA Regionals. The Dukes graduated three of their nine starters and lost NFCA Division I National Player of the Year Megan Good to a season-ending knee injury in January.

The senior pitcher, who’s dominated the circle for the Dukes, plans to redshirt and return for her senior campaign in 2019. To add to the trio of graduated seniors and Good’s injury, Loren LaPorte has taken over as head coach after former skipper Mickey Dean left the program to coach at Auburn.

“Most of the biggest thing for me is to be who I am and be myself,” LaPorte said. “The girls know me, I am not Mickey Dean. It’s a little different being the boss, but the transition hasn’t been too difficult.”

LaPorte has been with the Dukes as an assistant coach for five years, focusing her work on the infielders. She initially coached at Radford with Dean. “This will be my first year coaching without him by her side. Although there’s a bundle of fresh faces in the dugout, JMU was selected to win the CAA, as announced by the conference. The Dukes’ biggest returner is CAA Rookie of the Year Odicci Alexander, who was .340 batting average while regularly hitting in the two-hole. Sophomores shortstop Sara Jubas and utility Sydney LaScola, who were both named to First Team All-State in 2017, and holds both the JMU and CAA records for career RBIs with 181. The freshman pitcher/outfielder ranked first in Florida Class 8A with a 0.43 ERA her senior season of high school.

“The Dukes also bring in infielder Lyseney Meeks and utility Sydney LaScola, who were both named to First Team All-State in 2017, to accompany pitcher/outfielder Hannah File, who was a 2017 Indiana Sports Awards Softball Player of the Year finalist. However, the highlight of the freshman class is infielder Sara Jubas. “Sara is a stud shortstop,” LaPorte said. “Her range is incredible. Offensively, she finds a way to get on base. She can be a power hitter, a line-drive hitter and she can use the short game.”

Jubas batted a staggering .729 her junior year at South Fayette High School in McDonald, Pennsylvania. The freshman was a three-time Almanac Diamond Dozen selection and should make an immediate impact in the middle infield and at the plate.

“It’s been a pretty big transition,” Jubas said. “It’s very different. The speeds are very different compared to high school. The ball moves a lot more; I’m just getting better every day.”

The Dukes will open their season in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, on Thursday in a five-team tournament. Two weeks later, JMU will head down to Jacksonville, Florida, to play in the Green & Gold Classic, followed by the Malihini Kipa Aloha Tournament in Honolulu, Hawaii.
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